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As a journal of theology and pastoral life, *Quaerens* is committed to the noble mission of deepening the modern-day Christian’s understanding and praxis of the faith, of fostering an atmosphere of dialogue with cultures and religions throughout the world in general and throughout Asia in particular, and of promoting a scholarly theological discourse that addresses the specific pastoral needs and questions of our time.

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Fr. Pedro Peláez's Unpublished Letters on the Secularization Controversy

Prof. Emmanuel Luis Romanillos

Prologue

Two hitherto unpublished letters written by the Philippine-born secular priest Father Pedro Pablo Peláez, “fearless advocate of the rights of the Filipino clergy,” highlight the heated controversy in mid-nineteenth-century Philippines pertinent to the curacies held by the native clergy. A royal decree from Madrid had decreed the parishes in Manila Archdiocese to be handed over to a religious order. This major question of secularization and Filipinization of curacies had tremendous repercussions in our history. The two lengthy letters were dated 18 December 1861 and 10 March 1862, both written by Father Peláez, vicar capitular of the cathedral chapter and apostolic administrator of the Metropolitan See of Manila *sede vacante* following the demise of Archbishop José Aranguren, and addressed to the governor general of the Spanish colony. Both letters are included in a voluminous dossier kept at the Archivo

Histórico Nacional in Madrid, Spain, in the *Ultramar* section in *Legajo* 2211/1.

The priceless dossier further contains Governor General José Lémery's notes, his letter to the Overseas Minister in Madrid, General Assessor Pareja y Alba's comments on Father Pedro Peláez's letter, Archbishop José Aranguren's letters written in 1848 and 1849 to the Spanish Governor General as well as the important letter written by members of the Manila cathedral chapter in support of Father Peláez's cause, all pertinent to the raging secularization dispute. This protracted controversy was an impassioned conflict that embroiled the Archbishop of Manila, Augustinian Recollects, Jesuits, Creole and native diocesan clergymen.

Historians like O. D. Corpuz in *The Roots of the Filipino Nation* (1989), Antonio M. Molina in *The Philippines Through the Centuries* (1960), and John N. Schumacher in *Father Jose Burgos, A Documentary History with Spanish documents and their translation* (1999) and *Revolutionary Clergy* (1981) mention the existence of the 10 March 1862 letter in passing. Apparently they were not cognizant of the 18 December 1861 letter. Our revered historians did not analyze the two letters. Hence they could not give much import to Peláez's excellent masterpieces at hand.

The contents of Peláez's two writings provide a useful historical background of the problem. You cannot but admire Peláez's expert knowledge of the provisions of Canon Law and the Laws of the Indies. You cannot but appreciate his logical and levelheaded defense of the native secular clergy against the virulent attacks by colonial civil officials and friar writers in the face of the imminent takeover of the parishes in Cavite and in the Manila Archdiocese by the regular clergy.

The ingenious ideas contained in Peláez's letters would soon find proponents and continuing champions among subsequent defenders of the embattled Creole and native secular clergy like José P. Burgos and Mariano Sevilla,

and much later in the minds and hearts of the writers and leaders in the Propaganda Movement and in the Philippine Revolution which would highlight all the more the anti-friar sentiments of the period.

The contents of the letters are mostly unknown to a great number of our teachers of Filipino-Hispanic Literature, historians, history teachers, biographers, and students. I will analyze the letters—with some lengthy annotations—and bring to light the great ideas of this brilliant thinker whose life was unfortunately cut short by the earthquake of 1863 on the eve of Corpus Christi, which pulled down the Manila cathedral. The middle-aged minister perished in that June earthquake. Yet the ideas of Father Pedro Peláez lived on.

A Full-blooded Spanish Priest

The year was 1812. Pagsanjan was the capital of La Laguna in Spanish times. There lived Doña Josefa Sebastiana Lozada, a Manila-born Spaniard, married to Don José Peláez Rubio, a native of Asturias in northwestern Spain.¹ At one time, Don José was *alcalde mayor* of La Laguna. Doña Josefa Sebastiana gave birth to a baby boy on a Monday, the 29th day of June at Pagsanjan.² Credential letters found in the register of documents kept at the Archdiocesan Archives of Manila categorically debunk many historians' prevailing conjecture that the boy's mother was a Filipina or that Father Pedro was a Filipino, in the modern sense of the word.³

¹ARCHDIOCESAN ARCHIVES OF MANILA [AAM], *Letras credenciales del P. Peláez*, in *Libro de Gobierno Eclesiástico (1852-1862)*, documento núm.1840, 39r-41r.

² Luciano P. R. SANTIAGO, *The Filipino Priest-Doctors in the 19th century (1801-1871)*, in *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society* 13 (1985) 44; Antonio M. MOLINA, *The Philippines Through the Centuries II* (Manila 1960) 297. National Artist Carlos Quirino erroneously refers to June 12, 1812 as the date of Peláez birth. See *Who's Who in Philippine History* (Manila 1995) 162.

³ John N. Schumacher of the Society of Jesus likewise writes that documentary evidence proves that both mother and father were Spanish:

In the Church liturgy and calendar of saints, Roman Catholics the world over commemorate the joint feast of Saint Peter, the first Pope, and Saint Paul the Apostle to the Gentiles. Hence, in honor of the two pillars of their Christian faith, the Spanish parents decided to have their healthy baby boy christened as Pedro Pablo. The young boy had an only sibling María Francisca who outlived her brother.⁴

The adolescent Pedro Pablo soon lost his parents and moved to Manila. At age 11, the young orphan was admitted to the University of Santo Tomás as *alumno de beca*. From this pontifical university owned and managed by the Order

“Available evidence points to Peláez having been of Spanish blood on the part of both father and mother.” See *Father Jose Burgos. A Documentary History with Spanish documents and their translation* (Quezon City 1999) 12. Don José was indeed a Peninsular Spaniard and Doña Josefa [erroneously called *Joséfina*, in A. M. MOLINA, 297] was a Spaniard born in Manila, hence an *española insular*. But, twenty-one years before, Schumacher told a different story. See his article *The Man Who Refused to Live a Lie*, in *Filipino Heritage. The Making of a Nation VI: The Spanish Colonial Period (18th–19th centuries). Roots of National Identity* (Manila 1978) 1574. “He was the only Filipino priest to have acted as temporary Archbishop of Manila,” writes Schumacher. Canon Law and Church History, however, do not record an ecclesiastical dignitary termed *temporary* or *acting archbishop*. The prolific author and historian Gregorio F. ZAIDE, *The Pageant of Philippine History II* (Manila 1979) 182, footnote 7, says: “He became ecclesiastical governor of the Philippines—the first Filipino to rise to such position—in 1862 [*sic*], following the death of Manila Archbishop, Msgr. José Aranguren.” While Quirino opts to keep mum on Peláez’s Spanish ancestry, Molina categorically calls him a Filipino, in *The Philippines Through the Centuries I*, 297. Definitely Peláez was not a Filipino of the Malay race. But as early as 1933, even Austin Craig erroneously calls him a Filipino when he writes: “The *Filipino* [*italics mine*] Doctor Peláez, the Islands’ most popular preacher, who till his death in the 1863 earthquake was in temporary charge of the archdiocese [*sic*], was a big improvement over Friar José Seguí and Friar José Aranguren who had been the archbishop immediately preceding. The government would not appoint even this brilliant *Filipino* [*italics mine*] whom these two prelates had had to recognize.” See Austin CRAIG, *The Filipinos’ Fight for Freedom* (San Juan 1933) 247.

⁴ THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL ARCHIVES, “Doña María Peláez sobre abintestado y declaración de heredera de Don Pedro Peláez” (1868), *Bienes de Difuntos*, Legajo 63; as cited in Luciano P. R. SANTIAGO, *The Filipino Priest-Doctors*, 44.

of Preachers—whose members are commonly known as Dominicans—he received his *Bachiller en Artes* in 1829.⁵ From the same university he subsequently obtained Bachelor of Sacred Theology (1833), Licentiate in Sacred Theology (1836) and Doctor of Sacred Theology (1844).⁶

After his ordination to the priesthood in 1838,⁷ he was given a post in the Manila Cathedral. In the course of time Father Peláez would be appointed to various positions in the Archdiocese of Manila such as those of apostolic judge, synodal examiner, subdelegate of the Holy Crusade, member of the cathedral chapter and treasurer.⁸ In 1843, according to the *Guía de Forasteros* of that year, he was listed as Licenciado Don Pedro Peláez with the title and position of *canónigo magistral*. In that same year he was one of the six *consiliarios* of the *Congregación de San Pedro Apóstol*, founded in 1698 at the cathedral church of Manila by the capitulars “for the honor and glory of God and its titular Saint, Saint Peter the Apostle” and in 1850

⁵ Gregorio Zaide errs in informing us that Peláez finished his AB degree at the Colegio de San Juan de Letrán. Archival sources clearly manifest that Peláez obtained the AB degree from the University of Santo Tomás, not from Colegio de San Juan de Letrán. See AAM, *Letras credenciales del P. Peláez*, in *Libro de Gobierno Eclesiástico (1852-1862)*, documento núm. 1840, 39r-41r. The author of Peláez’s biographical sketch in *Great Filipinos in History* (Manila 1970) 294-297, follows our accurate archival source.

⁶ We cull this information from the Archdiocesan Archives of Manila. Schumacher is wrong to say that Peláez obtained his Doctorate in Sacred Theology in 1841, instead of the correct year 1844. See SCHUMACHER, *The Man Who Refused to Live a Lie*, 1574. The date in the accounts of the NATIONAL HISTORICAL INSTITUTE, *Filipinos in History II* (Manila 1990) 91, and MOLINA, 297, is accurate.

⁷ Schumacher commits another blunder when he refers to the year of Peláez’s ordination as 1833, instead of 1838. See *The Man Who Refused to Live a Lie*, 1574.

⁸ *Filipinos in History II*, 91. In Lucino M. Rebamenton’s account, Peláez was “diácono, canónigo magistral, secretario del Arzobispo, racionario auxiliar, examinador sinodal, canónigo plenipotenciario [*sic*], subdelegado de la Santa Cruzada, tesorero y juez apostólico del arzobispado.” See Lucino M. REBAMENTON, *Rev. P. Pedro Peláez*, in *Hablen español. Libro IV* (Ciudad Quezon 1968) 44-47.

he became its *abad*. In 1848, Doctor Don Pedro Peláez was listed as *discreto* of the *Orden Tercera de San Francisco* and *consiliario* of the *Venerable Orden Tercera de Penitencia de Santo Domingo*. The Augustinian Recollect Archbishop of Manila Fray José Aranguren assigned the thirty-three-year-old priest as his *secretario de cámara* in 1845–1850.⁹ Peláez was *canónigo penitenciario* when his life was snuffed out in 1863.¹⁰ He was likewise *canónigo magistral* of the cathedral chapter for several years.

The young Peláez performed his priestly ministry at the Manila Cathedral. At the same time, the brilliant presbyter taught philosophy at the “Jesuit-owned” Colegio de San José¹¹ for six years.¹² And much later, he taught at his alma mater—University of Santo Tomás—in 1843–1861. His years as university professor should be deemed of utmost importance in his life and in our history. During these decades he molded the minds of young seminary students who would bear in the coming years the flaming torch of nationalistic ideals, of the fight for equal rights, of justice and education. Foremost of them was Father José Apolonio Burgos.

Peláez was endowed with sonorous eloquence as well as with beauty of language and style, as some biographers of today surmise. They might have deduced this talent from one talk Peláez delivered on Saint Andrew’s feast on

⁹ Antolin Ux, *The State of the Church in the Philippines, 1850-1875*, (Washington DC 1984) 231, footnote 134.

¹⁰ L. P.R. SANTIAGO, *The Filipino Priest-Doctors*, 44.

¹¹ Schumacher and Rebamenton affirm that the Jesuits owned the Colegio de San José where Peláez taught at that time—for six years. The two writers have to explain their ambiguous statement. At that time, there were no members of the Society of Jesus on Philippine soil, having been all expelled from the Spanish colony in 1768 and permitted to return only in April 1859. As a result of their expulsion from the Philippines, the Jesuits were dispossessed of all the parishes and schools.

¹² The NHI writer of Peláez’s brief biography mentions only three years: 1836-1839. See *Filipinos in History* II, 91.

30 November 1855 and from his assignment as *canónigo magistral* of the Manila cathedral.¹³ A brilliant and prolific writer, Peláez founded—and diligently wrote for—the first Catholic newspaper *El Católico Filipino* (1861–1862) together with the Dominican friar Francisco Gainza, canon lawyer, university professor and colleague, who was later appointed bishop of Nueva Cáceres.¹⁴

Vicar capitular of the Archdiocese of Manila

In due time Father Peláez was designated as dean of the cathedral chapter of Manila and vicar general of the archdiocese. He rose to become apostolic administrator of the Archbishopric of Manila—on 23 April 1861, following the death of Archbishop José Aranguren.¹⁵ The members

¹³ Carlos QUIRINO, *Who's Who in Philippine History*, 162. We have read Peláez's brief speech for the occasion, but we could not find the part where, according to Quirino, the priest "assailed the Spanish abuses and the Limahong invasion." An excerpt of that talk is in REBAMENTON, 46. SVD historian Antolin Uy does not follow the National Artist's assertion: "Two talks that Peláez gave in 1855 on the occasion of the annual celebration of the victory of the Spaniards over the Chinese invader Limahong and in 1860 on the occasion of the Feast of Saint Thomas Aquinas do not only not betray any trace of animosity towards Spain and the regulars [read *friars*] but reveal a distinct pro-Spanish sympathy and a pronounced stand of fidelity to the teachings of the Church. Both talks, or speeches, were eventually printed. We found a copy of each at the Archivo Franciscano Ibero-Oriental (AFIO) in Madrid, documents number 272/11 and 108/8)." See Antolin Uy, *The State of the Church in the Philippines, 1850-1875*, 240-241, footnote 174.

¹⁴ SCHUMACHER, *The Man Who Refused to Live a Lie*, 1574.

¹⁵ From a colored triptych I authored in 1994 for the inauguration of the *Monument to Six Outstanding Recollects in the Philippines* and which was published and disseminated in the same year, the biographical sketch reads: "Archbishop José Aranguren was born on 16 February 1801 at Barasoain, Navarra, Spain. A young professor of Sacred Theology, he taught future missionaries in Alfaro, Rioja, Spain, and at San Nicolas convent in Intramuros. In 1831, he administered the parish of Capas, Tarlac, and that of Masinloc (Zambales) shortly after. As Archbishop of Manila in 1846-1861, out of zeal for souls he visited all the parishes and far-flung mission stations of his vast archdiocese.

of the cathedral chapter readily elected him vicar-capitular whose task was to administer the huge archdiocese of Manila *sede vacante*. Hence, Msgr. Peláez was the ecclesiastical governor, or its actual name—apostolic administrator—of the Archdiocese of Manila.¹⁶ This huge archdiocesan territory at that time comprised all the existing dioceses in colonial Philippines [Nueva Segovia, Nueva Cáceres and Cebu] at that time.

The dearth of serious research on the accurate date of Aranguren's death—hence the crass ignorance thereof, albeit not totally invincible—greatly affected the accounts and, alas, blatant conjectures of historians, like Antonio Molina, Gregorio Zaide, the NHI writer who authored Peláez's brief biography, and even John N. Schumacher. The American Jesuit commits the blunder in his book *Father Jose Burgos. A Documentary History* (1999): "He would become, for a brief but crucial period, vicar capitular, or ecclesiastical governor of the archdiocese of Manila after the death of Archbishop José Aranguren in **1862** [*sic*]."¹⁷ This is strange

With tact and prudence, he resolved difficult moral cases and various conflicts. He supported the foundation of Banco Español-Filipino, known today as Bank of the Philippine Islands, [to assist the poor and the needy.] His concern for ill persons and for the education of the youth compelled him to invite the Sisters of Charity to the Philippines. Most of all, he defended the rights of the secular clergy. Death came for him on 18 April **1861** [highlight mine]." For more details on the life and works of Archbishop Aranguren, read Francisco SÁDABA, *Catálogo de los religiosos agustinos recoletos de la Provincia de San Nicolás de Tolentino de Filipinas desde el año 1606, en que llegó la primera misión a Manila, hasta nuestros días* (Madrid 1906) 403-406, and Manuel CARCELLER, *Historia general de la Orden de Agustinos Recoletos* XI: 1837-1866 (Madrid 1967) 131-150.

¹⁶ Historian Antonio M. Molina inaccurately writes: "He became ecclesiastical governor of the Philippines—the first Filipino to rise to such position—in 1862 [*sic*], following the death of Manila Archbishop, Msgr. José Aranguren." While Zaide and Quirino choose to keep mum about his Spanish ancestry, Molina categorically calls Peláez a Filipino. See A. M. MOLINA I, 297.

¹⁷ John N. SCHUMACHER, *Father Jose P. Burgos. A Documentary*

for Schumacher to state that Peláez had a short stint as vicar capitular, although he does not specify the time period. The fact was that Peláez capitular vicariate lasted over a year. In the footnote 2 of page 216 of that reprinted book, Schumacher mentions the accurate date of Aranguren's death. In his earlier books *The Revolutionary Clergy* (1989) and *The Propaganda Movement (1880–1895)* (1973, 1997), the Jesuit correctly affirmed that Aranguren had passed away in 1861.¹⁸

Apparently, most historians had not seen or read at all Peláez's famous 10 March 1862 letter or memorial to the Spanish Governor-General José Lémery. Granted that they had read it, it is very probable that they had not understood its content, or missed the meaning of that important passage related to the exact term of office as vicar capitular. Let us listen to what Peláez categorically affirms in that part of the 1862 memorial, which in our English translation, says:

That cause [*i.e.*, acute shortage of priests] further gives rise to the dearth or scarcity of means to remedy scandals and to chastise the guilty. Your Excellency, in order to confirm the fact, it shall be enough for me to recall what took place during the **ten months** that I have been administering this Vicariate. During this time I had to remove a religious (naturally, quite young) from his curacy when several admonitions had no effect upon him who on account of his conduct should not continue in that parish. I had to order him to hold spiritual exercises.¹⁹

History, 12, and *The Propaganda Movement (1880–1895)* (Quezon City 1997) 6.

¹⁸ John N. SCHUMACHER, *The Revolutionary Clergy* (Quezon City 1981) 8.

¹⁹ Here is the original text: “De esa causa [*i.e.*, *escasez de sacerdotes*] se originará también que no habrá o escasearán los medios de remediar los escándalos y castigar a los culpables. Para confirmar esto, Sñr. Exmo, me bastará recordar lo que ha ocurrido en **los diez meses que desempeño esta Vicaría** [*highlight mine*]. Durante este tiempo he tenido que separar de su curato después de varias advertencias sin efecto a un

Peláez handed over the reins of the archdiocese to the new Spanish Archbishop Gregorio Melitón Martínez y Santa Cruz.²⁰ His term as vicar capitular lasted 13 months and 10 days. The archbishop took possession of the Metropolitan See of Manila on 27 May 1862. The Castilian prelate had been earlier designated as archbishop on 31 July 1861 by Queen Isabel II. Pope Pius IX preconized him on 23 December 1862. The Burgos (Spain)-born cleric traveled to Madrid and was consecrated as bishop on 21 March 1862 by the papal nuncio to Spain Msgr. Lorenzo Barili. Archbishop Martínez would resign in 1875 from his episcopal duties in Manila due to failing health, following a bout with dysentery in 1872; he passed away in Madrid in 1885.²¹

Writings

A man of relentless intellectual and intense pedagogical activity, Pedro Peláez had redacted countless works, including unnumbered letters and sermons, during his lifetime. Only a handful of his works have reached our generation. Peláez exchanged correspondence with Msgr. Lorenzo Barili in Madrid in 1857–1868. Barili was hungry for news from colonial Philippines, and Vicar Capitular Peláez was only too happy to dispatch to him regular communication, related chiefly to the strained Church-State relations.

religioso (algo joven, por cierto) que por su conducta no debía continuar en él, y traer a hacer ejercicios...”

²⁰ Melitón Martínez was born in 1815 at Prodluengo in the Castilian province of Burgos. He spent several years in dioceses of Palencia and Pamplona before he was designated to succeed Archbishop Aranguren. Melitón Martínez was *provisor* of Palencia and later dean of the cathedral church of Pamplona when the Queen named him to succeed Aranguren. See Antolin Uy, *The State of the Church in the Philippines, 1850-1875*, 94, and *List of Archbishops*, in Emma Helen BLAIR, James Alexander ROBERTSON, *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898* [BR] LI (Cleveland 1903-1909) 316.

²¹ A. Uy, 112.

Below are Father Peláez's some existent writings or their excerpts:

- *Breves apuntes sobre la cuestión de curatos de Filipinas*, Manila 1863. Addressed to the Spanish Overseas Ministry, a copy was furnished to the Papal Nuncio Barili in Madrid with an accompanying letter dated 22 May 1863.²²
- Pedro PELÁEZ-Mariano GOMÉZ DE LOS ANGELES, *Al Clero de Filipinas*, mayo 1851.²³
- *Carta del P. Pedro Peláez al Superior Gobierno de Filipinas*, Manila, 18 diciembre 1861. Peláez sent the letter in reply to the governor general's communication date 23 November 1861. He asked the latter to hold the implementation of the 10 September 1861 royal decree in abeyance until the arrival of the new archbishop of Manila.²⁴
- *Carta del P. Pedro Peláez al R. P. Juan Félix de la Encarnación, prior provincial de los Agustinos Recoletos*, Manila, 2 marzo 1862. The letter was sent to the Augustinian Recollect prior provincial in Manila requesting him to refrain from availing himself of the 10 September 1861 royal decree before the new archbishop takes possession of the metropolitan see.²⁵
- *Carta del P. Pedro Peláez al Superior Gobierno de Filipinas*, Manila, 10 marzo 1862. This is the celebrated memorial to the governor general of the Philippines who in May 1862 forwarded it, together with

²² ARCHIVIO SEGRETO VATICANO, *Peláez to Nuncio Barili*, 22 May 1863, no. 1623, Arch. Nunziatura-Madrid, 447.

²³ SCHUMACHER, *Father Jose P. Burgos. A Documentary History*, 46-49.

²⁴ See the original text in Spanish Appendix A.

²⁵ *Carta del P. Pedro Peláez al R. P. Juan Félix de la Encarnación, prior provincial de los Agustinos Recoletos*, Manila, 2 marzo 1862, in M. CARCELLER *Historia general* XI, 571-572.

pertinent documents, to Queen Isabel II. Peláez requested the Spanish queen through the Spanish governor general to revoke the 10 September 1861 royal order. His work was oft-mentioned but rarely—or never—seen and read and least understood, due to lack of published copies.²⁶

- *Muy poderoso Señor*, Manila, 30 November 1855. A sermon delivered on the feast of Saint Andrew commemorating the fage-old Spanish victory against the invading Chinese corsair Limahong.²⁷
- *Colección de sermones predicados por el doctor Don Pedro Pablo Peláez*. Madrid 1869. 327 pp.²⁸

Mindanao Missions Circa 1769

The secularization controversy was the perennial dispute on the control and division of parishes in colonial Philippines. The conflict boiled down to the animosities between the Spanish friars and the Filipino secular clergy. In 1768 Archbishop Basilio Sancho de Santas Justa y Rufina implemented the decree of expulsion of the members of the Society of Jesus from the Spanish colony. The secular clergy and the Augustinian Recollect friars who supervised the eastern Mindanao missions and parishes took over the doctrinas that the Jesuits abandoned in the Visayas, Mindanao and Cavite. Not enough secular priests could occupy the vacant curacies. A seminary was established for the crash formation of the secular clergy that turned out to be incompetent men of the cloth, of deficient moral character who conducted scandalous lives. The archbishop himself had to denounce these secular priests.

In January 1769 the last two Jesuits in Mindanao

²⁶ See the original Spanish text in *Appendix F*.

²⁷ See the excerpt of this oft-quoted sermon in its original Spanish text in *Appendix J*.

²⁸ The Augustinian Recollect library of the Province of Saint Nicholas de Tolentino in Marcilla, Navarra, Spain is fortunate to have a copy of this posthumous book which was published by T. Fortanet. Its dimensions are 211 mm. by 140 mm.

packed up their things upon receipt of the royal decree of expulsion issued by Charles III. They soon left Zamboanga and were put on board a ship that conveyed them out of the Philippines. Three months earlier, on 5 October 1768, the six members of the Society of Jesus in Iligan received notice of the expulsion decree. Eight Mindanao Jesuits supervised the spiritual administration of about 10,000 Christians in Zamboanga, Dapitan [with Ylaya and Dipolog], Iligan [with Initao] and Misamis and the two mission stations of Bayug and Lubungan.²⁹ These Jesuit missions were then handed over to eight Augustinian Recollect priests.

The first Jesuits had arrived in Mindanao in November 1596. Two priests, Valerio de Ledesma and Manuel Martinez, and a brother reached Butuan in the northern coast. The first European to have set foot on Mindanao, according to a tradition of the place, was the Portuguese Francisco de Castro in 1538. According to the Jesuit Francisco Combés, however, the Portuguese Augustinian missionary was Diego del Rosario who evangelized the region of La Caldera near Zamboanga for nine years.³⁰

In 1768 the Augustinian Recollect province of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino had eight missionaries assigned to extensively far-flung northern and northeastern *doctrinas*: Camiguin, Cagayan, Butuan, Surigao, Tandag and Bislig, on top of their several mission stations. In all, they had spiritual jurisdiction of over 14,000 souls.

The Augustinian Recollects had gone to Mindanao in 1622 when Bishop Pedro de Arce of Cebu had handed over to them on 1 March 1621 all the mission lands of northeastern Mindanao from Butuan [in Agusan] to Cateel and Caraga [Surigao], including the islands of Dinagat and Siargao. A decree in 1625 assigned the whole island of Mindanao to

²⁹ Angel MARTÍNEZ CUESTA, *Historia de los Agustinos Recoletos* 1, 610.

³⁰ Francisco COMBÉS, *Historia de Mindanao y Joló* (Madrid 1667) 59.

the Augustinian Recollect Order. In 1637 that decree was declared null and void. Later it was decided that parishes and mission stations located east of an imaginary line drawn from Punta Sulauan located in present-day Laguindingan of northern Misamis to Cape San Agustín in Davao in the south belonged to the area of responsibility of the Augustinian Recollect evangelization. The Society of Jesus was in charge of Western Mindanao.³¹

The 30 July 1859 Royal Decree

The Society of Jesus was restored in the Spanish dominions through the royal decree of 19 October 1852. Five years later, on 26 November 1857 the Dominican Bishop Romualdo Jimeno of the Diocese of Cebu, whose extensive episcopal jurisdiction at that time comprised the entire Visayas, Mindanao, Sulu and Marianas Islands, sent a memorial to the Queen of Spain Isabel II asking for members of the society of Jesus. He wanted the Jesuits in the southern and southeastern territories of Mindanao.³² The extremely vast territory consisted of Bislig, Davao, Pollok, Zamboanga province, Basilan and other islands. Mindanao had over one and half million souls that included Christians, Muslims and hinterland pagans.

On 30 July 1859, eve of the feast of the Jesuit founder Saint Ignatius of Loyola, the Spanish monarch issued the royal decree order.³³ The reigning Queen Isabel II ordered that the spiritual administration of the whole Mindanao and its component islands be ceded to the Society of Jesus. The

³¹ Á. MARTÍNEZ CUESTA, 379.

³² Licinio RUIZ, *Sinopsis histórica de la Provincia de San Nicolás de Tolentino de las Islas Filipinas* I (Manila 1925) 255; M. CARCELLER, *Historia general* xi, 439.

³³ Here is Schumacher's flawed assertion that the royal decree expelling the Recollects from Mindanao was issued in **1861**. See Milagros C. GUERRERO, John N. SCHUMACHER, *Kasaysayan. The Story of the Filipino People V: Reform and Revolution* (Manila 1998) 12.

objective was to set up bases from which the Jesuits were to evangelize the non-Christian peoples in the interior. Parish-grabbing in colonial Philippines was not exactly new and uncommon. In the process, old controversies were rekindled time and again. New wounds were reopened in the process. In the light of the very delicate situation of the country, the royal order was evident.

Article XIII of the pro-Jesuit royal order provided that “when the mission of the Society of Jesus shall have been sent to Mindanao, it shall take charge of the spiritual administration, [and] the existing curacies shall be taken over by its personnel when available and in the manner most convenient to them.”³⁴ The 30 July 1859 decree dispossessed the Congregation of Augustinian Recollects of its parishes and *visitas* in Mindanao: “...not only the new missions [founded by Recollects after the 1768 expulsion] would be under their [Jesuits’] supervision, but also the older towns along the coast held by the Recoletos, which would serve as bases from which the missions into the interior of the island would work.”³⁵

Procurator General Agudo’s Letters to Queen Isabel II

When the Spanish Queen’s royal order to drive the Recollects out of Mindanao was released, the Augustinian Recollect procurator general in Madrid Father Guillermo Agudo chose not to remain idle. At once he informed his superiors in Manila about the Cebu prelate’s petition, which according to him had the full support of the governor general. Obviously the Recollects in the Philippines were unaware of the serious developments and their implications in the

³⁴ L. RUIZ, *Sinopsis* I, 255. M. CARCELLER, *Historia general* XI, 439.

³⁵ SCHUMACHER, *Father Jose Burgos, a Documentary History*, 14. See also Pablo PASTELLS, *Misión de la Compañía de Jesús de Filipinas en el siglo XIX* I, (Barcelona 1916), 22-23.

Spanish capital. Furthermore, he redacted a memorial to Queen Isabel II on 8 July 1860. In the name of the Recollects, Agudo challenged the form, the spirit and the manner in which Bishop Romualdo Jimeno's petition was made. He said the monarchy respected at all times the possession of curacies, and when transfer or exchange was made, legal formalities were followed, i.e., both parties concerned were consulted beforehand. Agudo maintained that Bishop Jimeno did not exercise any due process at all. The prelate plainly committed a breach of courtesy in his failure to communicate his plan to the Recollects and hear their side. No consultation was made. The Cebu prelate did not even bring out the idea of exchange, transfer or indemnification at all. Such a move was without any precedent.³⁶

The Recollect procurator in Madrid believed the move was simply to dispossess the Order of all its parishes and missions in Mindanao. Agudo contended that the episcopal ruling embraced as well the whole ecclesiastical territory they had peacefully administered since 1621 as well as those they founded in the years following the expulsion and extinction of the Jesuits in 1768. Augustinian Recollect historians keep on harping on Agudo's all-too-familiar protest in his memorial to Isabel II: *Bishop Jimeno's decision plainly lacked the rudimentary principle of equity and constituted a clear violation of the Laws of the Indies that clearly provided for consultation.* The respective views of parties concerned should have been consulted before any measure would be taken.

Dearth of personnel? Agudo pointed out that Saint Nicholas Province had forty Augustinian Recollect priests with no assignment at that time, thanks to the Order's newly opened college seminary of Monteagudo, Navarre, in northern Spain. To that figure should be added sixteen theology students who were about to be raised to the holy

³⁶ L. RUIZ, *Sinopsis* I, 256.

order of presbyterate.³⁷

On 5 November 1860, Guillermo Agudo sent another letter to Queen Isabel II exposing the sentiments of his Order on the unwarranted episcopal move. Agudo reasoned out that the Order had shed the blood of martyrs and untold sacrifices in Mindanao and increased the original five Jesuit doctrinas of 1769 to 27 towns after 90 years. With the royal order there would be no room for respect of Canon Law provisions on canonical conferment of parish curates, even as there was no mention whatsoever of exchange or indemnification. Expelling the Recollects from Mindanao for no fault of their own was enough to dishearten them in the evangelization task. Such unjustifiable precedent—which is not doing any favor to the Augustinian Recollects at all—would be a bitter pill to swallow for other religious orders.

The procurator general ended by seeking compensation or indemnification for parishes *founded by them* and for assignment of twenty-seven Recollects who would be bereft of parochial administration upon execution of the pro-Jesuit decree. He stressed that such compensation would be “in consideration of the services of these religious [and] to alleviate their departure from Mindanao.”³⁸

Agudo's vaunted and highly exaggerated “political clout”³⁹ in the royal court of Madrid was utterly non-existent, nowhere to be found when it was needed most. Both the Overseas Ministry and the Queen paid no heed to his arguments. To say it bluntly, they simply ignored the Madrid Recollect friar's letter. The ball was now in the hands of the Recollect prior provincial in Manila.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 255.

³⁸ Agudo's letter is in M. CARCELLER, *Historia general* XI, 440-441.

³⁹ We quote literally Schumacher's description of Guillermo Agudo's so-called political clout in Madrid.

Provincial Antonio Ubeda's long Memorial to Lémery

On 4 March 1861 Antonio Úbeda, the prior provincial of the Augustinian Recollects in the Philippines, redacted a memorial to Don José Lémery, governor general and vice royal patron in Manila.⁴⁰ He first enumerated the steps his Order had done to soften the impact of the 30 July 1859 royal decree on his confreres. In November 1860, through his procurator in Madrid he had sought from the Overseas Ministry a royal order suspending the implementation of that devastating decree, but it was to no avail.

The provincial then recounted the apostolic endeavors and travails that the Order had undergone for two centuries and a half. In 1622, he said, eight Recollect missionaries started their zealous evangelization of northern and northeaster portions of Mindanao including the islands of Camiguin, Siargao and Dinagat upon the request of Bishop Pedro de Arce in March 1621. Subsequently they founded the towns of Cagayan, Catarman, Butuan, Surigao, Cantilan, Tandag, Lanao and Bislig. They surmounted countless obstacles such as the Caraga revolt in 1631, numerous raids led by Sultan Kudarat and the martyrdom of five Recollects. Úbeda cited the dedicated efforts of Jacinto de San Fulgencio, Pascual Ibáñez, and Agustín de San Pedro, who is better known in history books as *El Padre Capitán*, in order to protect their Christian communities which were exposed to Moro raids.

King Carlos III ceded to the Recollects the doctrinas and active missions in the wake of the Jesuits' expulsion in 1768. The missionaries then founded the towns Jasaan, Iligan, Sagay, Davao, Balingasag, Higaquit, Iponan, Mambajao, Jimenez, Mainit, Dinagat, Talacogon, Linao, Polloc and Isabela. Since 1622, there had been 250 Recollects who had taken part in the evangelization of Mindanao. Father Ubeda rebuffed the baseless accusation of dearth of personnel

⁴⁰ The full text of Ubeda's letter is in L. RUIZ, *Sinopsis* I, 257-264 and in M. CARCELLER, *Historia general* XI, 442-447.

because the superiors of their monastery and college-seminary of Monteagudo, Navarre, had been very efficient well in their formation tasks. Monteagudo had in fact sent 130 missionaries to Manila in the 1848–1861 period. The provincial superior hoped that the Recollect Order would not be adversely affected by the 1859 pro-Jesuit decree. He ended his memorial without making any request for compensation, adding however that negotiations had been initiated by the vicar provincial in Madrid Guillermo Agudo with the office of the Overseas director general which was then under the supervision of the War and Overseas Ministry.

The 10 September 1861 Royal Decree

On 10 September 1861, feast of the Augustinian Saint Nicholas of Tolentino who had been patron of Philippine Recollects since 1606 and after whom the missionary Philippine province was named, the Queen of Spain issued the highly controversial pro-Recollect royal decree from the royal palace at San Ildefonso. Queen Isabel II's order and the War and Overseas Ministry's subsequent directive no. 324 [dated 1 November 1861] were relayed by Governor General Lémery to the Recollect prior provincial on 6 February 1862. The contentious royal decree is as follows:

In order to resolve any doubt which might occur with respect to the compliance of article 13 of the 30 July 1859 decree relative to the reestablishment of the government in the island of Mindanao, in which it prescribed that the actual parish priests be replaced by the missionaries of the Society of Jesus, the queen has thought it proper to state that the foundation and subsequent development of the active missions in said island correspond exclusively to these missionaries and the same [missionaries] must take charge of the administration of the curacies and doctrinas

already reduced by the Augustinian Recollect religious as these parishes become vacant through the death or transferal of those who are in charge of them with canonical collation or under the title of *ecónomo*. And Her Majesty, wishing to grant some indemnification at the same time and to give a proof of the appreciation with which she looks at the distinguished services rendered by the above-mentioned Augustinians, has seen fit to grant to the province of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino the administration of parishes of the province of Cavite, and others served by the native clergy, according as they become vacant in the manner cited with respect to those in Mindanao which are under the charge of the above-mentioned Recollect missionaries. San Ildefonso, 10 September 1861.⁴¹

Peláez's Adroit Moves

Peláez addressed a letter to Governor General José Lémery on 18 December 1861 in reply to his earlier communication. Peláez made that move by earnestly seeking the suspension of the controversial royal measure of September 1861.⁴² Peláez contended that there should be no radical changes in the Manila archdiocese *sede vacante* following Msgr. Aranguren's death. It would not take long for the archbishop-elect Gregorio Melitón Martínez de Santa Cruz, the vicar capitular argued, to come to Manila. Canon law of the Catholic Church banned radical changes,

⁴¹ L. RUIZ, *Sinopsis* 1, 257-264; M. CARCELLER, *Historia general* XI, 568; SCHUMACHER, *Father Jose P. Burgos. A Documentary History*, 214-217.

⁴² ARCHIVO HISTÓRICO NACIONAL, Madrid, España, Serie *Ultramar*, Legajo 2211/1.

parish dismemberment or new canonical collations in the archdiocese *sede vacante*. Peláez pointed out to Lémery that it was more prudent to await the new archbishop's decision on this very important matter that adversely affected the very own interests of the Filipino secular clergy as well as the legitimate prerogatives of the prelate of the Metropolitan See.

When Peláez's December 1861 letter urging the suspension of the monarch's order was ignored and Lémery was bent on implementing the pro-Recollect royal cédula, Peláez wrote him a lengthy memorial on 10 March 1862. This is the famed memorial whose contents have been unheard of up to now. In this 10 March 1862 letter Peláez sought the outright revocation of the September 1861 royal order. If this could not be done, Peláez said, then major amendments on the royal decree should be made.

The secular clergy's loyalty to Spain had been put under scrutiny. But Peláez enumerated the achievements in their pastorate and meritorious service in their parishes to prove the secular clergy's critics wrong. Peláez quoted Archbishop Aranguren's letters, which lauded the diocesan priests' efforts in education, among others, and attached them to his 10 March 1862 memorial. Aranguren's first letter was written on 15 November 1848 and was addressed to Governor General Narciso Clavería, also known as *Conde de Manila* [Count of Manila]. The second was the Recollect archbishop's reply to Clavería's confidential letter of 3 October 1849. It was likewise dispatched on 8 October to the governor general.

Another letter addressed to Peláez by the Manila Cathedral chapter dated 14 February 1862 was the third document attached to the lengthy memorial sent by the vicar capitular to the governor general. The document was signed by the three canons of the cathedral chapter, namely, Juan Rojas, Juan José Zulueta and Clemente Lizola. The dossier

was sent to the queen in May 1862.

On this matter, historian Antonio Molina elucidates us:

Naturally, this measure [*i.e.*, royal decree was issued on 10 September 1861 by virtue of which the Recollect religious who had been compelled to turn over to the Jesuits all parishes in the island of Mindanao were compensated with an equivalent number of parishes in the Archdiocese of Manila] proved unpopular with the members of the Secular Clergy, who either had thus to give up parishes under their charge or see their opportunities to hold one utterly blocked. Steps were taken to fight this royal measure in defense of the just interests of the secular priests, most of whom were Filipinos. Father Pedro Peláez spearheaded the protest by writing to the Governor-General on 10 March 1862 beseeching his intercession to secure revocation of the decree.

Vigorously, both in the public press and through private negotiations, Father Peláez consistently fought the unfair treatment afforded the members of the Secular Clergy. In years to come one of his best students, Father José Burgos would take up the case in a brilliant and heroic manner.⁴³

Peláez's letter to the Governor General, 18 December 1861

Here now is the full text of Peláez's December 10, 1861 that I translated into English:

In my reply to Your Excellency's kind letter of 23 November, wherein you relay to

⁴³ A. M. MOLINA, 296-298.

this capitular vicariate the Royal Order of 10 September 1861 concerning the substitution by the fathers of the Society of Jesus of all the missions, curacies and ministries of Mindanao that are presently under the charge of the Discalced Augustinian fathers, and authorizing the latter to administer the curacies served by the indigenous clergy in the province of Cavite and other curacies, it would believe to be at fault against loyalty with which Your Excellency requests this capitular vicariate to inform what it would offer and seem to the vicar as regards the enforcement of this measure, but that it would indicate to him the great convenience—for not saying the need—to suspend the definitive implementation of such a radical change, not even during the widowhood of this Metropolitan See whose prelate would not take long in coming according to official word received from the Court [Madrid]. Your Excellency is cognizant of that principle of Canon Law which provides that churches *sede vacante, como un menor sin curador*, that is, like a minor without guardian or proper representation, and directly interested and the wish to avoid irreparable damage, it is categorically and explicitly ordained that during vacancy the cathedral chapters and their vicars shall abstain from making any changes whose consequences can harm the interests, rights, prerogatives and pre-eminences of the Miter, and as we focus on the question of benefices, the general doctrine on this matter, which not only does not give cathedral chapters and vicars the authority to suppress or even to divide—and much more

to alienate the benefices—but it even goes to the extent of forbidding the adjudication and even conferment of a simple collation of a benefice that is without patron and disposing of the right (Chapter II, *Ne sede vacante*; one sole chapter, *ibid.*, in 6° and Chapter I, *De institutionibus*, in 6°) that as end result of the episcopal dignity may be reserved only for the future bishop. The Church would prefer the vacancy of these benefices with all its consequences than to cause detriment to the rights of the Miter, without [prior] knowledge and the intervention of her true Spouse—the legitimate Prelate.

These wise prescriptions of ecclesiastical jurisprudence are not only corroborated by the Spaniard who holds sway over this realm, but also the faculties of the cathedral chapters and vicars of the Indies have been so extremely restricted that the Royal Cédula of 29 December 1796 even went to the point of prohibiting the issuance of dimissory letters for ordination to the priesthood, as well as the admission of any petitions on the matter during *sede vacante* by right of patrimony to dispense with irregularities, except in cases of a qualified urgency of ministers, if finally, the interstices for holy orders, providing that in cases of contravention, he may be “subject to the judicial process of *residencia* of his operations which measure must be taken by the immediate prelate successor who shall succeed him in the archiepiscopal dignity within four months from the day of his arrival at the capital... and under the same responsibility the *residencia* of the vicar capitular shall be

taken.” In view of these indications, Your Excellency shall understand that there is no more legal measure for this capitular vicariate to take but seek the temporary suspension of the royal order in question, since it concerns no less than the spoliation of a great portion of the benefices of curacies, setting them aside for the religious corporation and exempt by this same right, a change that deeply violates the rights of the Metropolitan See, since it separates the variation that would result in the provision, presentation of those benefices with a simple transfer of such from one clergy to another, in accordance with the legislation of this country. Such [move] would deprive the new prelate and his successors of such a potent means of awarding virtue, dedication and services of their clergy, as well as of giving them due recognition.

And things being that way, the undersigned shall be held responsible to the coming prelate, if with prejudicial—and aside from being unnecessary—haste, he would not strive hard to obtain from Your Excellency the suspension of such transfer that would entail a change of so grave transcendence and would be very directly damaging to the rights of the Miter. On the other hand, the same royal order would come as support of the abovementioned measure, which I repeat is purely temporary. The Fathers of the Society [of Jesus] can not take charge of the ministries actually served by the Recollect Fathers, and only when these ministries become vacant through death, promotion or cession, the Recollects can not be compensated with the curacies of Cavite

until they had been dispossessed of those in Mindanao, nor can compensation take place while the curacies of Cavite are not vacant.

However, Your Excellency very well knows that the Jesuits have absolutely no personnel to take charge of the ministries of the Recollect Fathers, nor is it possible that they would have personnel in a long time, since they have to come from Spain. Furthermore, in order to start the mission in Río Grande de Mindanao, they have to make the supreme effort of giving up two priests who render very useful service in this capital with their indefatigable diligence in the pulpit and the confessional, and even if in the eventuality they have the needed personnel perhaps it would inconvenience them to take the ministries with the conditions that they are in are so different from that time they administered them prior to their expulsion from the Islands. If the sovereign will can not carry out an immediate implementation, the undersigned believed more that it could be obtained on the day deemed necessary without the inconveniences today due to the exceptional circumstance of this see. But this does not hinder the eventual preparation of the field in order to take some day a definite arrangement, for which plan the opinion of the prelates of the Society and the Recollects, who are directly concerned in the change, must be considered, as well as that of His Excellency the Bishop of Cebu, to whose diocese Mindanao Island belongs, and who must—in accordance with the Laws of the Indies—must get involved in that transfer, and in that manner time will not be wasted, and

enough time so the new archbishop can render
his judgment and concur with the compliance
of the royal order.

Such is, Most Excellent Lord, what this vicariate thinks it must inform Your Excellency whose life God keep for many years.

Manila, 18 December 1861.

[Signed] Pedro Peláez.

Reactions of the Colonial Government

On 14 January 1862 Governor General and Vice Royal Patron José Lémery forwarded Peláez's observations to the colonial assessor Señor Parejo y Alba for comment and sought his advice on the matter. Four days later, the assessor informed Lémery he could not accept the reasons cited by Peláez, stating, among others, that the September 1861 royal order was issued with the full knowledge that the Metropolitan See of Manila was vacant. Parejo y Alba recommended the execution of the royal decree as soon as vacancies would arise, as ordered by Spanish monarch. Such vacant parishes should be filled without delay whether in Mindanao by the Jesuits or in Manila by the Recollects. Copies of the Queen's royal order were to be furnished at once to the respective religious superiors for appropriate action on vacancies and transfers.

It was on 6 February when Governor Lémery ordered the urgent availability of copies of the royal decree for Bishop Jimeno of Cebu. The vicar capitular of Manila was to be duly informed of the actions taken by the colonial administration. Any presentation of titles, *i.e.*, presentation of priest-candidates for vacant curacies, should be acted upon.

Salient Points in Peláez's 10 March 1862 Letter to Lémery

When Lémery and his advisers rejected all the points brought up by Peláez's December letter, the vicar capitular wrote the oft-mentioned memorial to the governor general who would forward it later to the Spanish Queen. Peláez wrote that he could not simply acknowledge receipt of Lémery's 6 February 1862 letter; he had to redact for the governor's awareness the long memorial. The vicar had to specify the grave inconveniences that from the magnanimous and generous intention of the transfer of parishes might adversely affect the secular clergy, the Order of the Augustinian Recollect Fathers, the Church and the State and the rights of the Metropolitan See. Peláez had wished that December letter had been written by the new archbishop who he said would not take long in coming.

Peláez pointed out: "I was afraid that an opportune occasion would be lost by my neglect and that my silence would be interpreted as lack of concern and as negligence and that the new archbishop would hold me responsible for it." The members of the cathedral chapter had moreover urged him—in accord with what was provided for by Canon Law with respect to difficult and risky but indispensable matters—to make representation before civil authorities.

The following points were raised, explained and brilliantly defended by the vicar capitular of Manila:

- The members of the cathedral chapter and the vicar capitular who knew the real situation of the clergy viewed the harm—both material and moral on the clergy—with the eventual loss of curacies. Depriving members of an order of their assignments, career, goals and incentives was forcefully thrusting them into a state of misery and degradation, besides making their training impossible and bereft of direction. Peláez said this would be the last thing the Govern-

ment would do to the least of its subjects, much less to those decorated with the Catholic priesthood—albeit economically depressed might be their position before the world—the secular clerics exercised the very valuable functions on the altar and in the confessional.

- The 10 September 1961 royal decree did not mention the taking away of all the parishes from the secular clergy, but only Cavite curacies needed to compensate the Recollect Fathers' alleged loss in Mindanao. The fact was that the number of secular clergy in the archdiocese itself comprised two or three religious orders combined in the entire archipelago. The diocesan priests managed very few and the poorest parishes and taking away some of them would leave them without resources, without hope. Over 300 priests were needed to solve the dearth of assistant priests in overpopulated towns of the archdiocese. Thanks to the recent partitions, there were 34 new parishes, excluding some missions or chaplaincies in haciendas which in fact constituted burden and encumbrance rather than benefices.
- The planned cession of parishes would offset the plans of the colonial government and the archbishop to improve the training of secular clergymen as they would be left without any means of encouraging and rewarding the clergy.
- Such transfer of curacies would be added to the causes of discouragement and frustration previously experienced by Archbishop Aranguren. Why was there an apparent lack of concern for seminaries and for the clergy's formation? Prelates felt ashamed of demanding so much from those who could only give so

little. There lay the vicious circle that best described the secular clergy's plight. The secular priest was not given excellent education because he would usually end up as *coadjutor*, assistant priest. And he could not be given better assignments since he lacked a thorough and genuine formation.

- The fact that the clergy was native should not weaken the force of the reasons Peláez listed herein. Furthermore, being a member of native clergy had not hindered them from rendering services that were given due recognition by Church prelates. To prove his point, Peláez attached a letter written by Archbishop Aranguren to the governor general. Being a native cleric never impeded the Spanish monarchs' sense of justice and magnanimity to grant them sovereign protection and the right over curacies, the same right enjoyed by the regular clergy, as shown in several royal orders. Belonging to the native clergy did not deny them incentive and proper training, on top of their admission to the sacred priesthood.
- Inaccurate it was to call the clergy *native* since there were priests born of Spanish parents in this country and those born in the Peninsula. A big number of clerics decided to set up residence in the colony because assignments were made available to them. Peláez hoped that the new archbishop would bring *peninsular* clergy with him and would shoulder the costs of training of more clerics in Spain. This bold proposal was culled from a legal provision of the *Novíssima Recopilación de Castilla*.
- The measure [*i.e.*, cession of parishes] that apparently favored the Recollect Order might in actual fact turn out to be detrimental to them. The Order had

no personnel to manage the parishes they were to take charge of in the archdiocese. They had accepted four parishes in Cavite and the whole territory of Negros Island.⁴⁴ At present, they have vacant parishes in Cebu diocese and two in the Manila archdiocese: Cardona [*Carmona*] in Cavite and Mariveles in Bataan.

- Majority of the Recollect curacies [in Mindanao] to be surrendered to the Jesuits once belonged to the Society before its abolition [in 1760s]. The Recollects would have not suffered—or would suffer in the future—any loss of parishes at all.
- For the Recollect Order's honor and its members' spiritual and temporal well-being, the following measures should be adopted:
 - No young religious should be assigned to any parish at all.
 - Every priest should undertake a prior hands-on training in a parish under a knowledgeable confrere's tutelage before being given a parochial ministry.
 - No religious priest should be left isolated in an isolated or far-flung town.
 - A sufficient number of priests should stay in their Manila convent⁴⁵ for the celebration of the sacred liturgical rites, for the pulpit and

⁴⁴ The island of Negros was entrusted to the Augustinian Recollects who accepted the colonial government's offer. Governor General Narciso Clavería had earlier voiced out to the four religious orders the sad plight of Negros which was under the secular clergy. Five vacant parishes were handed to the Recollects in 1848. Robustiano ECHAÚZ, *Apuntes de la Isla de Negros* (Manila 1894) 12; Angel MARTÍNEZ CUESTA, *History of Negros* (Manila 1980) 171-173.

⁴⁵ Popularly known as Recoletos or San Nicolás Convent in the Walled City of Manila.

confessional as well as for eventual replacement of a minister—ailing or who might have committed any fault or might be at odds with provincial authorities.

- Religious orders that were aware of their true objectives should not renounce those spiritual goods, in exchange for any income-producing parish ministry. A religious order not under those conditions might find its reputation in a shambles or their honor might not shine, as it should. How could they manage so many ministries and missions as expected? They might be constrained to be lax in the admission of novices. The situation could even be worse, given the little attraction that the young people of the present generation felt for religious life. It would be impossible for Recollects to come up with 50 religious within the period of one year to augment their number. Nor could they meet other [liturgical] needs indicated earlier.
- Both Church and State in the Philippines would suffer much from the proliferation of curacies managed by religious orders that would lead to the reduction of the secular clergy's parishes. Many observers—including prelates—noted that the progress of *misiones vivas* [active] had come to a close—or at least had greatly weakened since parishes were entrusted to the regular clergy. This was the expected outcome: with the assignment of competent and exemplary personnel to parishes, less capable and inexperienced religious priests were consequently dispatched to missions that precisely

demanded the most sterling qualities and virtues.

- The waning number of natives who aspired for priesthood was another damaging factor. Added to this grave shortage of priestly vocations was the compulsory parish assignment of regular priests who hardly knew the language of the faithful. Hence, it was not convenient to break up large parishes into smaller, more manageable ones. Furthermore, there would be inadequate means—or none at all—to remedy scandals or to chastise the guilty. In the ten months of his capitular vicariate, Peláez had to remove a young religious priest from his curacy after several futile reprimands of his reproachable conduct. He had to send two other religious to hold spiritual retreat for some scandals. Thus the two parishes were priestless for some time. The chief reason: a serious dearth of both regular and secular ministers.

To provide number of parishes for everyone, without depriving the secular clergy of the parishes under their administration, Peláez proposed to the governor general the following drastic measures:

- The partition of known large parishes. The ensuing new curacies would be distributed among the secular and regular clergy alike, as many as available.
- The setting up of a seminary or college [formation house] in Spain for Spanish clerics who would be sent to the Philippines.

The ecclesiastical governor of the archdiocese continued his lament over the shortage of priests under his spiritual jurisdiction. Peláez cited the miserable conditions of towns with 20,000 to 30,000 people under a single parish

priest. He likewise mentioned the unique case of some 40,000 parishioners administered single-handedly by a priest. In Spain, he remarked, eight or more priests would take care of any town with such a large population. Peláez then favored the partition and classification of parishes in the archbishop. The creation of more towns would benefit the people and the move would redound to their spiritual welfare. But unfortunately no priests were available to administer them.

Fully cognizant of the significant events of Catholic Church history in the Philippines and of canon law provisions, Peláez narrated past occurrences as well as contemporaneous practices that triggered the dreadful outcome on the 19th-century Church:

- Peláez started off by calling to mind the visitation controversy that continued well into the third part of the 18th century. The regular clergy had rebuffed the bishop's right to conduct diocesan visitation and even refused to be subjected to episcopal jurisdiction over some cases. In the end the Roman Pontiff and the Spanish monarchs ordered the regular parish priests to subject themselves to episcopal visitation and, additionally, to evaluation and examination by the local ordinary about their aptitude as ministers. Moreover, exclusively bishops could censure them for offenses related to ministerial duties. The bishop's verdict took precedence over matters anent to moral lapses and even to the compliance with the Order's Constitutions.
- The pontifical and royal interventions notwithstanding, Peláez sadly observed that bishops exercised less rights over curacies of regulars than those of seculars. Bishops could not give them proprietary rights nor could they present a list of three candidates to the

vice-royal patron.

- Peláez chided the widespread practice of religious superiors to transfer a subject who caused scandals in one diocese to another. The bishops were never pleased with that system because offenders went scot-free or were imperfectly chastised.
- The vicar capitular likewise bewailed the malpractice of assigning parish priests on an interim capacity. Under this procedure, the religious superior might present the subject with proprietorship or he might not do so, as a result the interim parish priest functioned solely according to the religious superior's whim. It happened a lot of times that a priest had journeyed many miles to a far-off parish and worked there in an acting capacity only to be recalled after a few days because another priest with canonical collation had been appointed from the *terna* presented to the civil and ecclesiastical authorities. Such curacies were the most mismanaged.
- The post of coadjutor priest could never be deemed rewarding and meritorious. The bishop was constrained to award a coadjutorship to somebody, even to some religious who arrived recently from Spain. Without the necessary parishes, how could the new archbishop reward curacies to over 300 hopeless clerics were they to remain coadjutors for the rest of their lives.
- According to Canon Law, the secular clergy was supposed to be exclusively given priority in parish assignments over the regular clergy. If bishops abroad handed parishes over to regulars it was on account of the insufficient number of diocesan priests. An archbishop of the last century expressed the following

observation on the Philippine Church to the pope and to the monarchs: “Things are the other way around. Those who should be parish priests are coadjutors; those who were to be coadjutors managed parishes.” In other words, regulars should not get parishes; they ought to stay in the priories [*conventos*] and help the diocesan clergy only during Lent and in the missions.

- The native secular clerics were aware that some fellowmen looked down at them for their lack of instruction or social graces.
- There was peace and quiet in church affairs since the close of the 18th century until in 1826 when the Augustinians sought a royal order on the controversy over parish of Malate in Manila. This was followed by another 20 years of calm until the year 1848 when the Augustinian Recollects revived the dormant issues.
- Such ills besetting the Philippine Church deserved Peláez’s total concern and interest for he wished to extirpate them by destroying their causes.

As part of his very tactful defense of the native secular clergy, Peláez describes to us the three functions of a typical parish priest in colonial Philippines. The first type comprised the essential functions which were to “celebrate the divine rites, administer the sacraments, preach, teach morality to the people, see to it that [children] attended schools, eradicate hatreds, rifts, enmities, gambling and scandals of whatever kind, as well as to attend and take care of the spiritual needs of the faithful.”

The second set of duties was deemed secondary and accessory: to show some degree of cleanliness and beauty in the church, make intercession before the head of the political province in behalf of the people, coordinate in putting the best police force, foster among the people the ideas of arts

and crafts and encourage the people to learn them.

The third set of duties were accidentals: to pay a visit the provincial governor often; to welcome him and accommodate other civil officials at the parochial rectory with certain decorum and engage them in a more or less educated and pleasant conversation.

Peláez strongly vouched—so could have the deceased archbishop and would have the future archbishop—for the secular priests' strict and general compliance of their essential duties. Admittedly, regular priests to an advantage carried out the second set of duties but there were secular priests who were just as fine. With respect to the third set of duties the native secular clerics were clearly inferior. This inferiority was definitely not so important if observed from the viewpoint of reason and justice. This could be easily remedied if the bishop so desired. Nevertheless, such perceived inferiority harmed the native clergy more than anything else. Too much importance had been given to accidentals. And worse, because of that inferiority in his third set of duties the native clergy was consequently though unjustly faulted for his other functions.

Hence, in their canonical visitations bishops found no cause for reprimanding secular priests who performed their sacred duties. When provincial authorities visited a curacy, however, they did not bother to check if sacraments were duly administered, if scandals were successfully eradicated, if the curate had been absent from his workplace more than the usual time. What attracted the provincial visitors most often: if the rectory or a table was constructed in a European style or not, if an enjoyable conversation could be held or not, which boiled down more or less to pleasant recollections of Spain. These the native clergy could not obviously do. Later on, provincial visitors would inform high about them and made conclusions they deemed accurate and just, but in reality erroneous in so far as their parish ministry was concerned.

Simplicity of customs did not deserve merit or attention. The so-called culture and refinement made people give excessive importance to accidentals rather than to essentials. That was why even the most exemplary ones among religious orders, who spent their lives in the confessional and at a native's sickbed did not deserve any praise, and authorities often overlooked their names. Clerics so unworthy of any commendation at all were often remembered. To prove these facts, Peláez referred to Archbishop Aranguren's two confidential letters and the memorial redacted by the cathedral chapter of Manila that he had attached to his memorial.

To end his memorial, Peláez appealed to Lémery's enlightened and impartial judgment. The vicar capitular's only wish was to shed light on the complex issue of parish transfer and to contribute to the spiritual and material advancement of the Philippines. He had earnestly hoped that his memorial would be dispatched to the monarch so she could either revoke or modify—in those provisions she might consider just and opportune—the 10 September 1861 royal order.

To prove and strengthen such salient points he discussed, Father Peláez attached two letters of his archbishop in his long memorial to the governor general and vice royal patron of the Islands. Written on 15 November 1848, the letter Archbishop José Aranguren had warned the Governor General of the Philippines Narciso Clavería, dubbed as "Count of Manila," whose colonial government was about to dispossess the secular clergy of some parishes in Cavite province. Your Excellency:

I have been informed about the attached letter to Her Majesty by the Commissary Procurator of the Augustinian Recollect mission, which you forwarded to me as a result of the Royal Order of last 3 April⁴⁶ for me to express what it can offer me and

⁴⁶ 1848.

what I think of it. I cannot but agree that the Discalced Augustinian Fathers would render good service to the State if they would be put in charge of the spiritual administration of the province of Cavite whose importance in all concepts is much too known to cease to attract the attention of the government in a very special way. (...) However, at the same time I must remind you of the grave harm inflicted upon the secular clergy if they would be dispossessed of some parishes they have been in possession of for eighty years and in whose administration they have corresponded the trust in a faithful and precise manner given to them when they were put in charge of them. The towns of Cavite have considerably improved in material as well as in moral aspects since the time the secular priests administered them. Thus the change cannot be implemented without harming and offending this group that is worthy of respect and deserving of consideration.

It is all I can say on the matter. With your superior learning and prudence, Your Excellency shall inform the government of Her Majesty what may be just, appropriate and convenient.

God keep Your Excellency many years.

Manila, 15 November 1848.

Fray José, Archbishop

The second letter, written on 15 November 1848 to the governor general, is as follows:

Having been informed of the appended exposition of the Commissary-Procurator of the Discalced Augustinian mission, which on account of the Royal Order of last April [1848] you have deigned to address me in order for me express my opinion, I cannot but agree that Discalced Augustinian fathers render good service to the State if they were charged with the spiritual administration of Cavite province whose importance in all concepts is too well known so that it would cease to call the attention of the Government in a very particular manner.

*Incalculable are the benefits which the towns of said province receive from these four haciendas, whose productive development and condition where they are found is due to the industry and enormous resources that both corporations (Recollect and Dominican) have infused into them, nothing more appropriate and reasonable than for those who exerted so much effort and concern for the bodily sustenance should likewise administer spiritual care to them.*⁴⁷

However, I must at the same time make known the serious damage it would inflict upon the secular clergy were they to be dispossessed of some curacies they have held for eighty years and in whose administration

⁴⁷ The italicized paragraph was omitted by Peláez in his letter, hence the Assessor Pareja y Alba quoted Archbishop Aranguren's original letter and inserted the missing portion in his report. See *Copia del informe del Sr. Asesor Pareja y Alba, sobre oposición del Cabildo, a que se indemnice a los PP. Recoletos por los curatos que dejan en Mindanao*, in Guillermo AGUDO, Celestino MAYORDOMO, *Importantísima cuestión que puede afectar gravemente a la existencia de las Islas Filipinas* (Madrid 1863) 32.

they have faithfully and exactly reciprocated the confidence given them when they were put in charge of it, with the people of Cavite having considerably improved in the material aspect and in the morale since they were under the charge of the secular clergy. *Therefore the change would not be effected without harming and hurting this class so respectable and so deserving of consideration.*⁴⁸

This is all I can say on the subject at hand. With your superior illustration and prudence, Your Excellency shall inform the government of Her Majesty of what may be most just, appropriate and convenient.

God keep Your Excellency many years.

[*Signed*] Excellency Fr. José, Archbishop.

Here is Peláez's edited version of the same letter written by Archbishop José Aranguren OAR to the overnor general of the Philippines on 8 October 1849, which was attached to his 10 March 1862 letter:

In reply to your confidential note of the 3rd of the present month [October 1849] which Your Excellency has dispatched to me, I must tell Your Excellency that I have not received any news about the discontent, meetings and conspiracies hatched by the parish priests of Cavite province stemming from the Royal Order that authorizes Your Excellency to put Dominican and Recollect religious in charge

⁴⁸ The sentence in italics was quoted *verbatim* by Aranguren's successor in the See of Manila. See SCHUMACHER, *Studies in Philippine Church History*, 218. This archival source is letter of *Archbishop Melitón Martínez to the Regent of Spain*, 31 December 1870, AHNM, *Ultramar*, Legajo 2255.

of some parishes of said province as they become vacant. Likewise I have no knowledge of the subversive declarations reported to have been pronounced from the pulpit by the parish priest of Sta. Cruz de Malabon⁴⁹ on the day of the town fiesta.⁵⁰

It would not be strange if those parish priests and any other person belonging to the secular clergy would have expressed discontent and sentiment which must have been caused by a ruling that might be just as Her Majesty has all the right to bestow and take away the parishes according to her convenience, could be implemented as I had earlier informed Your Excellency in a dossier that I had the privilege of submitting to you on the subject, without harming and offending the whole when they had not shown any motive all.

This sentiment is so much more natural and within the bounds of reason as on the side of prejudice they see no compensation dictated by fairness which might be able to temper the bitterness and dejection of the whole group that for their condition and good services deserves some consideration. As they are not aware of the rationale of the royal order, it was possibly suspected that the conduct and comport of the parish priests of Cavite gave leeway to its provisions and there was nothing censurable had they assembled for the purpose of addressing some humble exposition by means of which they may successfully defend their honor and good name and request at the same time the reparation of the damages that may have caused on the secular clergy when they were deprived of the seven best curacies they possess in the Archbishopric.

But subversive expressions, tantamount to lack of respect or obedience to the orders of Her Majesty's government, I cannot presume there are such. Nevertheless,

⁴⁹ The town is now known as Tanza.

⁵⁰ The 3rd of May commemorates the Finding of the Cross.

I will keep myself informed and I shall be on the lookout on this particular matter.

God keep Your Excellency many years.

To advise their vicar capitular on such and To provide him full support, a long letter was addressed to Peláez by the cathedral chapter of Manila and was signed by three distinguished members Fathers Juan Rojas, Juan José Zulueta and Clemente Lizola. It was written on 14 February 1862. We quote an excerpt:

There were and there shall always be exceptions: although these exceptions do not demolish the truth, in whose verification with several testimonies which could be cited; and without the need to go back to remote times in the past, let us focus our attention today on this institute of first learning which the venerable parish priest of Lubao has just set up in the province of Pampanga, Father Juan Zita, pouring on such a pious goal the amount of 18,000 pesos, the fruit of forty years of labors in the parochial ministry: let us not forget the generous spoliation of the recently departed Father Hermenegildo Narciso who invested all his money in beautifying the parish church of Antipolo in a manner *de una mañana* they have admired from the first one in the Islands until the last of all those who visited that famous shrine, and among the many parish priests who offered themselves for our consideration, parish priests of this diocese of those of the suffragan that must be mentioned. Father Modesto de Castro who maintains two schools for young children in his curacy Naic in the province of Cavite, whose earnings

could hardly pay for its needs. It would be [a] waste of time to enumerate the individuals of the secular clergy who well deserve mention for their good and distinguishing qualities.⁵¹

The foregoing quotation appears in José A. BURGOS, *Manifiesto to the Noble Spanish People which the Filipinos Address in Defense of their Honor and Loyalty that have been Grievously Offended by the Newspaper "La Verdad" of Madrid*, in Gregorio ZAIDE, Sonia ZAIDE [editors], *Documentary Sources of Philippine History* VII, Manila 1990, 207-209. The Spanish original of that pertinent passage appears in John N. Schumacher, *Father Jose Burgos, A Documentary History* (1999) 74 [English translation, p 75].

And what shall we say of the parish priest of Lubao, Pampanga [Burgos does not mention Father Juan Zita by name]? The abnegation of that respectable old man is still fresh in our minds, since for the foundation of a school of primary education and of Latinity he applied the sum of 18,000 pesos, the fruit of forty years in the labor of the parochial ministry. We will not delay now in praising the generous detachment of the second-last parish priest of Antipolo, the deceased Don Hermenegildo Narciso, who invested all of his savings, a respectable amount, in adorning his church in a fashion which everyone from the first authority of the islands to the last who visited that celebrated sanctuary before the memorable earthquake we recall with horror, has admired. [The mention of 1863 earthquake was inserted.] But we cannot

51 *Carta del Cabildo Catedralicio de Manila al P. Pedro Peláez, 14 febrero 1862*, AHNM, Serie de Ultramar, Legajo 2211/1.

omit to make a special mention of the above-mentioned parish priests of Naic and Salinas. The first deserves mention for supporting at his own expense two primary schools in his poor parish, whose resources were scarce sufficient to cover his needs, and for having built and finished a beautiful church in spite of the lack of funds. The second deserves mention for having likewise built the convento at his own expense and contributed with his diligence and with his own private funds to the construction of church of brick.⁵²

Pedro Peláez was not ignored by the governor general. In fact the governor general forwarded the capitular vicar's memorial to Spain and got Madrid's reply dated 20 June 1862. However, Madrid confirmed the 10 September 1962 royal decree in no uncertain terms. The significant excerpt of the Overseas Ministry's response goes thus:

His Majesty has declared that upon the vacancy of the curacies as the royal order itself provides, if no Jesuits were available to take charge of them, let it continue to be provided until now with the Augustinian Recollect religious; that only in case of a vacancy and its cession to the Society to Jesus, when the province of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino may be compensated with another curacy of Cavite province or of the diocese of Manila, that might be served by indigenous clergy and vacated in the manner provided for by the aforesaid royal order.⁵³

⁵² The cathedral chapter's original letter makes no mention of the Salinas priest.

⁵³ An excerpt of the Spanish original is the ff.: "...Ha tenido a bien declarar S.M. que si al vacar los referidos curatos en términos que la misma Real orden previene, no existieren Jesuitas que se encargasen de ellos, continúe proveyéndose como hasta aquí en Religiosos Agustinos

Peláez and the Augustinian Recollects

During the archbishopric *sede vacante*, there was an exchange of letters between the vicar capitular and the prior provincial of all the Augustinian Recollect friars in the Philippines—Juan Félix de la Encarnación—who held office at Recoletos priory that was located at the opposite end of Intramuros in old Manila. Peláez told the Recollect superior on 2 March 1862:

The report you sent me makes me see that the Government is intent in going ahead with its idea, although it may have no means for it, and notifies me about the just representation that you have made about the services of the Order and the unemployment of twenty-seven religious caused with the pronouncement of another dispossession of curacies of the [secular] clergy, without you having asked for it. I myself did not believe it, but I had no proof to offer unlike now. That the clergy feels unhappy about it—and very unhappy—I believe you will agree it is but a natural thing. I am likewise unhappy about it, since bereft of assignments, they will not have incentives or rewards, and consequently, it would be better not to hold [priestly] ordinations here.... As it depended on me, I have tried to appease everybody, as I assure you that the new Archbishop shall know and represent that he could not lack clergy and that you might await his arrival and everything would be put

Recoletos; que solamente llegado el caso de la vacante y de la entrega a la Compañía de Jesús, sea cuando se indemnice a la provincia de San Nicolás de Tolentino con otro de los curatos de la de Cavite o de la diócesis de Manila, que estuviese servido por el clero indígena y vacase de la manera dispuesta en la mencionada Real orden.” See Antolin Uy, 238, footnote 163.

in order....

At any rate, I can assure you, as before I had not tolerated it, more so shall I disallow from now on that rumors be spread about you. If upon answering the recent official letter by the Government, I say something in favor of the clergy, it shall be without missing you or any Order in the least. In return I wish you would to avail of said royal order in this period of *sede vacante*, nor sanction any changes, in order to give time for animosities to subside. I was confident that you are of the same opinion, that is why and it is only for this reason I am writing you this letter, I am asking you that favor. Furthermore I request you if some other means or stance would come to your mind, which would be convenient for you to take on the matter, you would point out to me straight from the shoulder, for that purpose I shall pay you a visit one of these afternoons.⁵⁴

Three weeks before, the Recollect major superior in the Philippines had confided earlier to Father Guillermo Agudo, vicar provincial of the Province of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino in Spain in a letter written on 12 February 1862 that “there are many vacant doctrinas in all the dioceses and in the archdiocese of Manila, but up to now I have [not] made any move, nor do I plan to make a move at all.”⁵⁵ At that time, the Recollect prior provincial and his provincial council acted with caution and diplomacy, fully cognizant of the delicate question of vacancies in the parishes of the Archdiocese of Manila. Here now is an excerpt of that

⁵⁴ M. CARCELLER, *Historia general* xi, 571-572.

⁵⁵ See *Carta del P. Prior Provincial Juan Félix de la Encarnación al P. Guillermo Agudo, Comisario y Vicario Provincial de la Provincia de Nicolás de Tolentino en España*, 12 febrero 1862, quoted in L. RUIZ, *Sinopsis* 1, 279-280.

exceedingly revealing and interesting letter written by prior provincial Juan Félix to his vicar provincial and procurator in Madrid:

The royal order of 10 September of last year has started giving results: the [cathedral] chapter has raised their cry to heaven and has resolved to assign a commission of two canons in order to a memorial to the Throne and at the same to name a representative at the Court [in Madrid] that would represent and defend the rights of the Chapter, etc. I have ceaselessly given example of submissive obedience to the royal decree. A parish in Mindanao (Mainit) has just been declared vacant and naturally I have prescinded myself so that the Jesuit fathers may avail themselves of the right and privilege stemming from said royal order. There are many vacant doctrinas in all the dioceses and in the archdiocese of Manila, but up to now I have not made any move, nor do I plan to make a move at all.⁵⁶

A month later, the vicar capitular wrote the Recollect prior provincial Juan Félix:

At any rate, I can assure you, as before I had not tolerated it, more so shall I disallow from now on that rumors be spread about you. If upon answering the recent official letter by the Government, I say something in favor of the clergy, it shall be without missing you or

⁵⁶ “*Principia ya la Real Orden de 10 Septiembre del año pasado a dar sus resultados: el Cabildo puso el grito en el cielo y ha determinado nombrar una comisión de dos Canónigos para redactar una exposición al Trono, y al mismo tiempo nombrar un apoderado en la Corte que represente y defienda los derechos del Cabildo etc. etc. Yo he dado continuamente ejemplo de sumisa obediencia al Regio Decreto. Ha vacado una Parroquia (la de Mainit) en Mindanao y desde luego me he desentendido de ella para que usen del derecho y privilegio que emana de la citada Real Orden los PP. Jesuitas. Hay doctrinas vacantes en todos los Obisposados y en el Arzobispado de Manila, pero no he hecho hasta ahora gestión alguna, ni pienso hacerla tampoco.*” See Carta del P. Prior Provincial Juan Félix de la Encarnación al P. Guillermo Agudo, Comisario y Vicario Provincial de la Provincia de Nicolás de Tolentino en España, 12 febrero 1862, quoted in L. RUIZ, *Sinopsis* 1, 279-280.

any Order in the least. In return I wish you would to avail of said royal order in this period of *sede vacante*, nor sanction any changes, in order to give time for animosities to subside. I was confident that you are of the same opinion, and it is only for this reason I am writing you this letter. I am asking that favor from you.⁵⁷

To wind up his letter, Peláez promised to pay Juan Félix a visit one afternoon at his provincial office and residence at the Recoletos friary in Intramuros. He personally wanted to know more of the Recollect plans and moves, to thresh out common problems and to find immediate solutions that would please all sectors enmeshed in the controversy.

This thorny conflict is further reflected in a letter by Father Juan Félix to Msgr. Romualdo Jimeno, the Dominican bishop of Cebu, on 18 May 1863. In part, here now is an excerpt:

These towns of Cavite, most especially Antipolo, have to be fatal and its grave outcome shall embroil of immeasurable transcendence. Antipolo is the start of a series of animosities, and in it there exists a link that Your Excellency know very well, that shall precipitate the events that shall by themselves take place, driven once more by revolutionary spirit.⁵⁸

This early [1863] the Augustinian Recollect prior provincial had foreseen the catastrophic effects of the transfer

⁵⁷ M. CARCELLER, *Historia general* xi, 571-572.

⁵⁸ "Estos pueblos de Cavite, sobre todo Antipolo, han de ser fatales y su fatalidad envolverá trastornos de una transcendencia incalculable. Antipolo es el principio de la cadena de disgustos, y en ella existe un eslabón que V.E. conoce muy bien, que precipitarán los sucesos, que por sí propios se dejarán caer, reempujados por el espíritu revolucionario." See *Carta del P. Juan Félix de la Encarnacion a Ilmo. Sr. Dn. Romualdo Jimeno, Obispo de Cebu, 18 mayo 1863*, quoted in L. RUIZ, *Sinopsis* I, 278.

of Cavite parishes, with special mention of the curacy of Antipolo, on the Philippine Church.

Short of condemning both Bishop Romualdo Jimeno's 1857 request, the 1859 pro-Jesuit royal decree and the September 1861 pro-Recollect royal decree, some Augustinian Recollects historians in the recent past would reflect on this tragic event that was not of their own doing. They conceded that it was one of the grave political blunders on the part of the Spanish colonial administration. Recollect historian Licinio Ruiz, for one, has this to say:

It was one of the greatest mistakes of the Spanish government, and the one that had the most disastrous consequences. We should only make it evident and leave it very clear that the Corporation of the Recollects with the Provincial at the helm, even if it is the most interested, was the one that intervened the least in that turmoil and the one that observed the highest degree of prudence in all those controversies.

The Recollects calmly were working in their curacies and missions of Mindanao when the scruples of Msgr. Jimeno made him ask Her Majesty for the replacement of the Recollects with missionaries of the Society. This cause are rooted all those tumultuous events. The Recollects did not take into account nor did they bear in mind the curacies of Cavite, but when a Royal Order put them in possession of them as just compensation for those that were taken away from them in Mindanao. Now if the Recollects displayed their compliance with the government decree which dispossessed them of what was theirs and cast their heads down and obeyed with the Royal Decree, why would they not want and strive that the second part of the Decree be complied with, which ceded to us the towns of Cavite?⁵⁹

Archbishop Melitón Martínez on the Controversy

Archbishop Martínez wrote on 31 December 1870 to

⁵⁹ L. Ruiz, *Sinopsis* 1, 278-279.

General Francisco Serrano, the Regent of Spain:

The Supreme Government was within its right in entrusting to the well-known zeal of the Fathers of the Society of Jesus the administration of the curacies and missions of Mindanao. In this respect is authorized by the laws governing the Royal patronage as found in the Laws of the Indies. It is also worthy of praise the effort to reward the services of the Recollect Fathers and to grant them some compensation for the loss of their religious establishments in Mindanao, for, although many of these were created by the early Jesuits, the former have long been administering and have become sole possessors by right of prescription. But, if the fact had also been considered that the native priests who, in all vicissitudes, have always remained faithful subjects of Spain, deserved so much recognition, and that as coadjutors in the parochial ministry they shoulder the hardest part of the work—no action would have been taken to aggrieve a class so meritorious, just to compensate another class, and that a more gentle and equitable means could have been used to satisfy the needs of the Government.⁶⁰

Nor that the spirit which inspired the Royal Order of 10 September 1861, appear to be in conformity with justice and equity.⁶¹

Death at Vespers amid the Rubble

Peláez perished during the destructive earthquake of 3 June 1863 at the Manila Cathedral. He was 50, twenty-

⁶⁰ Gregorio ZAIDE, Sonia ZAIDE, DSPH VII, 242.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 244.

six days short of the age of 51. He had spent thirty-three of those years in the ministerial priesthood of Christ at the metropolitan see. The cathedral chapter and choir singers were chanting the first vespers on the eve of the feast of Corpus Christi. The first tremors struck at about seven in the evening. More violent movements followed. A terrific din enveloped old Manila. Houses and buildings were falling. A young eyewitness Higinio Benitez (1851-1928) could still picture the horrendous spectacle in the aftermath of the tremors. The twelve-year-old boy wrote in his diary:

There was ruin everywhere. The brick roofs had crashed down, occasional tiles still falling. The Palace was a complete ruin. The roof of the Cathedral had caved in. At the time of the shock there was going on some sort of service in the Cathedral. Luckily there were not many people, only a few priests and the choir. The dome over the altar had fallen and crushed two [*sic*] priests, one of them our famous Father Peláez.⁶² When the two were found later, they were clasped in each other's arms, mangled almost beyond recognition. The choir singers, strange enough, were found alive. The gallery under which they were standing had withstood the shock and protected them. Of course, the debris and the huge stones of the dome fell about them burying them so completely that they were not found until many hours later. When rescued, several of them were found to have completely lost all the power of speech.⁶³

⁶² Zaide writes that "the second priest was Father Ignacio Ponce de León, bosom friend of Peláez." See Gregorio ZAIDE, Sonia ZAIDE, DSPH VII, 177.

⁶³ E. Arsenio MANUEL, *Dictionary of Philippine Biography* 1, 99.

Father Peláez was buried alive with seven other members of the Cathedral Chapter. Five of the human casualties were native secular clerics who doubtless constituted a great loss of the Filipino clergy's cause.⁶⁴

Fitting Tribute to Peláez

Two fitting tributes to enduring legacy of Father Pedro Peláez come from the pen of Mariano Ponce (1863–1918) and Father José Apolonio.

Burgos (1837-1872), his Contemporaries. Mariano Ponce tells us about what Peláez as well as Burgos should be remembered for:

Father Pedro Peláez and Father Jose Burgos had many heated discussions with the friars over the question [of parishes]. The first was capitular vicar of the Manila Diocese, which became vacant by the death of Archbishop Aranguren, and as such he wrote some well reasoned reports on March 1st [*sic*] 1862, and drew up a memorial to the Queen, in the name of the Manila chapter, showing the great injustice and violation of the laws committed by depriving the Filipino clergy of the parishes to be turned over to friars who, on account of their monastic condition, could not take charge of such mission. Father Burgos was engaged in a discussion with the Recollect Guillermo Agudo in *El Clamor* of Madrid. The two champions, Peláez and Burgos, were supported by all the Filipino clergy, many of whom were respected by Filipinos and strangers for their wisdom and virtues.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ SCHUMACHER, *Readings in Philippine Church History*, 221.

⁶⁵ Mariano PONCE, *Historical Study of Philippines*, in Morilla

It was the fearless—Father José Apolonio Burgos, Peláez's former student at the Pontifical University of Santo Tomás, who deservedly bore the flaming torch of nationalism in the bitter struggle for secularization of parishes and in defense of the Filipino secular clergy. When a series of articles appeared in a Madrid newspaper *El Verdad*, slandering the memory of his beloved mentor, the Vigan-born mestizo priest defended Father Peláez in his *Manifesto to the Noble Spanish People which the Loyal Filipinos Address in Defense of their Honor and Loyalty that Have Been Grievously Offended by the Newspaper La Verdad of Madrid*. The splendid defense was published anonymously in Manila on 27 June 1864:

That man was the ill-starred but learned and virtuous priest Pedro Peláez, an object of pride and glory of the Filipino people.... Yes, it was to this man priest—a man of learning who lived and labored in fear of God, a friend of piece and an enemy of all disorder—it was to him that the cognomen of *insurgent* had been attached....

[Father Pedro Peláez] could have no grievance against the Government because he occupied a high position in the Cathedral as Treasurer. The Government had showered on him distinctions in the form of important commissions, which served as recognition of his worth and of his learning and his virtues; and the recognition satisfied him. He could entertain no ambition for personal aggrandizement because he was as modest in his aspirations as he was virtuous in his mode of living. He lived so contentedly that all his energy was bent, in the closing years of his life, toward the supreme task of making himself worthier of the holy life. So pure was his life that his confessor, the austere Jesuit

Father Bertran—to whom confession was made on the same day that it pleased the Most High to take away from us that paragon of Christian virtue—did not hesitate in assuring his friends that Father Peláez had died the death of the just. On such premises as the foregoing, the charge of rebellion could not be securely founded; and the accusation could be no less than the wool gathering of the persons who had invented the scarecrow—the friars of certain definite order who could not view with a kindly eye the exemplary conduct of that priest! We in our part will do our best to make the affair a matter of public knowledge so that the Nation may be convinced of the perversity of certain persons.

Father Peláez was a good patrician [*citizen*—Schumacher], and he loved fervently the Clergy whereof he was a member. On those occasions when the Secular Clergy were being deprived of their curacies because of the cupidity of the friars, it was he who defended the secular priests; and although he did not live to see the recognition of the inalienable rights of the Secular Clergy on account of the numerical superiority and influence of their foes, yet his opponents themselves could not help but feel surprised at *the faith and his love of country*⁶⁶—and it was for that reason that they kept on hounding him. It may be added also that, while he was Capitulary Vicar in the Archbishopric during a vacancy, he had to adopt certain measures in keeping with the duties of the office; but these measures were

⁶⁶ The phrase *leal y patriótico proceder* in the original, is best rendered into *loyal and patriotic action*.

so very lenient to three friar curates who were charged with moral excesses in the province of Cavite and of Pampanga.⁶⁷

Burgos likewise thus found the “Peláez dossier” of vital importance to the cause of the Filipino clergy. In that same 1864 *Manifesto* he enumerated the numberless unheralded but meritorious achievements of the native secular clergy, especially those of Juan Zita, Modesto de Castro and Hermenegildo Narciso. The feats were all culled from the letter written and signed by the Manila cathedral chapter members—Juan Rojas, Juan José Zulueta Clemente Lizola—to the vicar capitular Pedro Peláez on 14 February 1862. Thus Burgos reiterated the content without mentioning the source.

Conclusion

The hitherto unpublished letters revealed Father Pedro Peláez’s extensive knowledge of Canon Law, the Laws of Castile, and the Laws of the Indies, all of which he quoted extensively and upon which he meticulously based his protests, suggestions, and proposals, addressed both to the Spanish monarch and to the governor-general. All of his interventions were within the bounds of colonial jurisprudence and had followed legal precedents.

Pedro Peláez is definitely far from being a rabid anti-friar Creole priest, firebrand and rabble-rouser, as some historians and biographers would love to picture him. His character as a churchman endowed with great tact and diplomacy is, finally, disclosed in the voluminous dossier that contained the two vital letters and in his other equally important letters to religious prelates which have not been given heretofore any importance either on account of the some historians’ predictable bias, vested interest or, even

⁶⁷ Vicente HILARIO, Eliseo QUIRINO [eds.], *Thinking for Ourselves* (Manila 1985) 61-63.

much worse, hidden agenda.

In the light of the present disclosures and findings, there is doubtless sufficient room for modifications and revisions in Chapter 11 *Fighting for the Parishes, the Filipino Clergy* on “the contest between the Spanish friars and the Filipino priests for the curacy of Antipolo” of O.D. Corpuz’s first volume of *The Story of the Filipino People*. Corpuz writes therein: “The curacy has become very rich since 1740s. Antipolo was a worthy prize; it was known as ‘the pearl of the curacies.’⁶⁸ The archdiocesan authority nominated Francisco Campinas, a native priest, for the curacy. The Recollects predictably contested the vacancy under the new decree. The prize was one they could not ill afford to lose by default: the pearl of the curacies in return for the small, god-forsaken doctrina of Isabela on the island of Basilan off Mindanao that they now had to turn over to the Jesuits.” Historical records, however, clearly show that the Augustinian Recollects—aware of the all too delicate plight of parish vacancies—did not initiate any move to take over Antipolo from the secular clergy. The Recollect prior provincial dilly-dallied in presenting a *terna* to the governor general.

It is interesting to know that Archbishop Gregorio Melitón Martínez in a private conversation in 1862 with Bishop Francisco Gainza of Nueva Cáceres had voiced out his plan to kick Peláez upstairs. He intended to nominate him as bishop in Santo Domingo or Puerto Rico in far-off America because of his being an *insurgente* (insurgent). The Manila archbishop was won over to Peláez’s side and joined the defense of the Filipino secular clergy. Archbishop Martínez would speak nicely about Peláez seven years after his ill-timed death amid the ruins of the Manila cathedral [*De mortuis nil nisi bonum!*], praising him to high heaven in a confidential letter to Regent Francisco Serrano in Madrid.

⁶⁸ O.D. CORPUZ, *The Roots of the Filipino Nation* I (Quezon City 1989) 467.

The Spanish prelate hastened to add that the canons of the cathedral chapter all “looked up to Peláez for his ability, integrity and energy.” Of Peláez, Archbishop Martínez wrote more in that letter of 31 December 1870:

Dr. Pedro Peláez, a priest of austere life and of solid learning... attracted to himself the respect of friends and enemies. For the native clergy, he was an oracle without whose advice they did nothing, and a solicitous agent who with efficient zeal took on himself and directed their affairs both in the ecclesiastical and the civil sphere, both in Manila and in the Overseas Ministry. Since he did not hesitate to admit that he desired the independence of the Archipelago, it is not incredible that, as some say, he was no stranger to the revolutionary uprising which took place.⁶⁹ If this event had occurred in 1861, when, as a result of the death of my predecessor, he held the office of the Vicar-Capitular, and thus to the prestige which he enjoined, joined the means of action at the disposal of the supreme ecclesiastical authority in the country; if, moreover, one takes into account the fact that for a population of some 5,000,000 inhabitants and 8,000 or more native soldiers, there are scarcely 4,000 Spaniards in these islands, one may understand how injurious to the interests of Spain the situation could have been.⁷⁰

The same Archbishop Gregorio Melitón Martínez ended his confidential letter to Regent Francisco Serrano

⁶⁹ Apolinario de la Cruz, popularly known as *Hermano Pulé*, and followers of the *Cofradía de San José* in Tayabas, now Quezon province.

⁷⁰ J. N. SCHUMACHER, *Readings in Philippine Church History*, 221.

in Madrid with the now-famous prophetic words: "The conflict between the Filipino priests and Spanish friars would develop an anti-Spanish character because the former saw the government as an ally of the friars." He depicted this secularization conflict as a "little fire" that, "should an accident happen, could turn into a great conflagration in which the very same people who occupy themselves with spreading baseless fears would be the first to be consumed."⁷¹

That "little fire" was the execution by the *garrote vil* [strangulation] of the three martyr-priests Father Mariano Gómez, Father José Burgos and Father Jacinto Zamora on 17 February 1872 at Bagumbayan, Manila. The death sentence stemmed from a mysteriously hasty trial, now deemed by every historian as absolutely unjust and unwarranted. Thus, Archbishop Melitón Martínez adamantly refused to unfrock the three ill-fated secular priests, against the wishes of the governor general. To the Manila archbishop, the military court had rashly condemned Gómez, Burgos and Zamora who were unreasonably implicated in the failed mutiny of 20 January 1872 at the Cavite Arsenal.

True enough, that "little fire" soon turned into a great conflagration, the Philippine Revolution of 1896 that wrought havoc on the outpost of the waning Spanish power in the Far East. As an Augustinian Recollect historian would look back in retrospect: "Doubtless it was one of the greatest miscalculations of the Spanish government, and it was one that had the most disastrous consequences." Without a trace of a doubt, "the seed of nationalism Father Pedro Pablo Peláez had planted was meant to grow steadily to become the full-blown nationalism of the Revolution."⁷²

And the nationalist ideas of Father Pedro Peláez have lived on in every Filipino's bitter struggle for fairness, for equal opportunity, for good governance, in every Filipino's endless fight for freedom from racial discrimination and for

⁷¹ O.D. CORPUZ, *The Roots of the Filipino Nation* I, 514.

⁷² SCHUMACHER, *The Man Who Refused to Live a Lie*, 1575.

independence from foreign subjugation waged by Burgos, Rizal, Bonifacio, Tandang Sora, Aguinaldo, Quezon, Osmeña, José Abad Santos, Ninoy Aquino, Recto, Tañada, Salonga and by the faceless millions who trooped to EDSA in 1986 and 2001 and in every period of our great history.

Life and Times of Fr. Pedro Peláez

1812 June 29	Pedro Pablo Peláez is born in Pagsanjan, La Laguna
1829	<i>Bachiller en Artes</i> from UST
1833	Bachelor of Sacred Theology from UST
1836	Licentiate in Sacred Theology from UST
1838	Peláez is ordained to the priesthood
1843	Named <i>canónigo magistral</i> , a position he held for years.
1844	Doctorate in Sacred Theology from UST
1845 Aug- 1850 May	Appointed <i>secretario capitular de cámara y de gobierno</i> of Archbishop José Aranguren
1848	<i>Guía de Forasteros</i> lists him as <i>examinador sinodal</i>
1852 Oct 19	The Society of Jesus is restored in the Spanish dominions
1855 Jan 24	Canonically installed as <i>canónigo penitenciario</i> of the cathedral chapter, a post he held until his death.
1855 Nov 30	Peláez delivers a talk commemorating the age-old Spanish victory against the invading forces of Chinese corsair Limahong

1857 Nov 26	Dominican Bishop Romualdo Jimeno, supported by the governor general, wants Jesuits in Mindanao
1859 April 14	Jesuits—six priests and four lay brothers—return to Manila
1859 July 30	Eve of Saint Ignatius' feast day. Article XIII of royal decree expels 27 Recollects from Mindanao in favor of the Jesuits
1860 July 8	Recollect Vicar Provincial and Procurator in Madrid Guillermo Agudo seeks from Overseas Ministry suspension of pro-Jesuit decree, while expressing the Recollect sentiments and seeking a graceful exit from Mindanao
1860 Nov 5	Agudo requests from the Overseas Ministry indemnification for loss and assignment for 27 Recollects from Mindanao on account of the July 1859 order which they would obey as always
1861 Feb 23	Governor-General José Lémery informs Jesuit superior about steamer <i>Malespina</i> leaving for Mindanao
1861 March 4	Recollect Provincial Antonio Ubeda sends a long memorial to the governor general citing their pains and glories in Mindanao since 1622
1861 April 18	Archbishop José Aranguren dies
	At the time of prelate's death, Peláez is dean of the cathedral chapter
1861 April 23	Elected vicar capitular of archdiocese <i>sede vacante</i> , a post he held until May 1862

1861 July 31	Gregorio Melitón Martínez is designated archbishop of Manila
	Lémery earlier sought an archbishop from the secular clergy
1861 Sep 10	Feast of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino. Royal Decree compensates Recollects with Cavite parishes or any parish in the archdiocese held by secular clergy as they become vacant. Compensation takes place only after a Recollect dies or is transferred and a Jesuit is installed in that vacant Mindanao parish
1861 Oct 10	Peláez seeks advice from cathedral chapter on Sept 1861 royal order
1861 Nov 23	Lémery implements Sept 1861 royal order
1861 Dec 18	Peláez writes a letter to Lémery, seeking the suspension of Sept 1861 order, citing canonical prohibitions during <i>sede vacante</i>
1861 Dec 21	Melitón Martínez is preconized archbishop by Pius IX
1862	Jesuits—one priest and two lay brothers—arrive in Mindanao
1862 Jan 18	Assessor Pareja y Alva rejects Peláez's contentions and recommends implementation of Sept 1861 decree
1862 Feb 6	Lémery writes Minister of War and Overseas about two doubts raised by Peláez in his letter
	Lémery conveys to Ñbeda the War and Overseas Ministry directive [dated 1 November 1861] on the royal order of Sept 1861

1862 Feb 14	The Cathedral Chapter replies to Vicar Capitular Peláez with a long memorial on the ill effects of Sept 1861 decree on the native secular clergy
1862 Feb 19	Recollect Provincial Juan Félix informs Agudo in Madrid of vicar capitular's reactions: "There are many vacant parishes around, but I don't make any move up to now. The case is very compromising... It could be the bottomless fount of disgusts, hatreds..."
1862 March 2	Peláez asks Juan Félix to refrain from presenting a <i>terna</i> for Antipolo, a request readily granted by the provincial
1862 March 10	Peláez dispatches a long memorial to Lémery asking for the revocation or modification of 10 September 1861 royal decree with three attached communications
1862 March 21	Melitón Martínez is consecrated archbishop by Nuncio Barili in Madrid
1862 May 21	Lémery dispatches all letters, consultations and other documents to Madrid
1862 May 27	Archbishop Melitón Martinez takes possession of Manila
	Peláez ends his vicariate capitular of 13 months and 10 days
1862 June 20	War and Overseas Minister replies that the decree and clarificatory notes remain in effect and must be enforced to the letter
1862 July 31	Feast of St. Ignatius. Lemery informs all concerned about the implementation of the Sept 1861 decree, as ordered

1862 August 5	Dominican Francisco Gainza, appointed Nueva Cáceres bishop in March 1862, writes Nuncio Barili about Archbishop Martínez's idea of naming Peláez bishop of Cuba, Puerto Rico, Santo Domingo, etc. to remove him from Manila. A Peláez "se le llama <i>insurgente</i> a boca llena"
1862 Dec 22	Royal Audiencia orders Governor General Rafael de Echagüe to request Juan Félix to submit a <i>terna</i> for vacant Antipolo curacy
1863 Jan 26	Rafael de Echagüe signs the appointment of Recollect Francisco Villas as parish priest of Antipolo
1863 Jan 30	Archbishop Martínez signs the appointment of Villas "under protest"
1863 Feb 12	Villas takes possession of Antipolo
1863 May 22	Peláez furnishes Nuncio Barili with a copy of his <i>Breves apuntes</i> he has earlier sent to the new Overseas Minister in Madrid
1863 June 3	Eve of Corpus Christi. Peláez perishes in the Manila cathedral which collapsed during a strong earthquake at 7:00 pm. He is 26 days short of 51-year-old

The Augustinian's Response to the Anti-Friar Literary Campaign and Other Issues against the Friars

Richard Bryan O. Mijares, OSA

The Religious, Social and Political Conditions of the Philippines in the 1900th Century

The Catholic Church in Europe struggled against liberalism. Spain underwent significant political, social and economic changes that consequently had impact in the Philippines. After the defeat of Napoleon Bonaparte who had placed his brother, Joseph, to the Spanish throne, Fernando VII followed the policy of reactionary absolutism whose very foundation is the union of the Throne and Altar.¹ During the reign of Napoleon, the Spanish Church, who suffered from great persecution, patronized this policy. However, in 1820–23 and after the death of Fernando VII in 1833, the

¹ John Schumacher, SJ, *Readings in Philippine Church History* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1987), 231.

liberals came into power and held anticlerical measures.² In effect, the Church responded with conservatism and with anti-liberalism. Finally, in 1834 and 1835, the rift between the Church and the liberals was heightened by the burning of many religious houses and by the murdering of numerous religious. In effect, all religious houses were closed down and properties were confiscated and put up for sale. The liberal government of Mendizábal in 1836–1837 carried out the secularization of the religious eventually dissolving the religious orders in Spain. The only religious houses that were permitted to continue their existence were the colleges that trained missionaries for the Philippines because even the liberal government acknowledged that the friars were an efficient means in keeping the Filipinos loyal to Spain. This reliance of the Spanish liberals on the friars in administering the affairs of the colony proved not just how they were politically useful to their government but also compelled

² The *Trienio Liberal* (1820–1823) promulgated various legislations that introduced serious changes in the religious communities. However, the Augustinians were exempted from some of these because of the efforts of Fr. Francisco Villacorta, the Augustinians' *comisario procurador* in Madrid who defended the interests of the Order. He defended the works of the monastic orders in the Philippines and their importance in maintaining the Spanish domain. The liberal legislations suppressed monasteries and convents and prohibited religious professions. But the seminary in Valladolid continued to receive vocations. Through Fr. Villacorta, the Augustinians were also exempted from military service. However, the *cedula* of October 20, 1820 prohibited the holding of provincial chapters and the election of prior provincials. It declared that there would only be a superior elected by the local community. As the powers of the new position was never truly defined, Hilarión Díez, the then provincial, tried to clandestinely performed his functions.

The restoration of Fernando VII on the Spanish throne and the arrival of Governors Juan Antonio Martínez and Mariano Ricafort in Manila, restored all things into their old order. See Roberto Blanco Andrés, "Los agustinos y la lucha por la exención en Filipinas en el siglo XIX," *Academia* (blog), https://www.academia.edu/19009792/Los_agustinos_y_la_lucha_por_la_exenci%C3%B3n_en_Filipinas_en_el_siglo_XIX.

them to act as the representatives of Spain whom their existence greatly depended.³

Furthermore, the increasing political interference in the governance of the religious orders also brought a decline in their fervor.⁴ The constant changes in the governance in the peninsula especially between the liberals and the regalists also did not bring any positive effect to the religious orders. In many cases they would often become the victims of anticlerical legislations that effected the confiscations and suppressions of religious houses. The decline in the life of the religious orders in the Philippines became easily noticeable that even during the term of Governor General Rafael de Izquierdo, he wrote the superiors of the religious orders about their waning influence in the Philippines. He said in his confidential letter,

At present the religious orders do not have the influence in Filipinas that they had for a long time, and which they must now recover for the honor of religion and the Motherland. It is sad to have to confess this, but not to do so would be sadder and a crime against the nation. The religious orders in Filipinas do not exercise the influence that they honestly believe they have and should have, because they have allowed it to be taken away from them.⁵

He further admitted that there were Spanish curates

³ Schumacher, *Readings*, 231.

⁴ Schumacher, *Readings*, 233-234. Here Schumacher, SJ argues that though the various accusations against the friars were generally baseless, he notes that the eventual subjection of the religious orders in the Patronato also caused the decline in the friars' morale.

⁵ Rafael de Izquierdo to the Provincials of the Augustinians, Franciscans, Dominicans and Recollects, 27 March, 1872, in Manuel Artigas y Cuerva, *Los Sucesos de 1872: Reseña Historica Bio-Bibliográfica* trans. O.D. Corpuz (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1996), 117-130.

who were “stagnating and performed their duties so poorly that the influence of the secular priests over the consciences of the people constantly grows.”⁶ Putting to mind the rift between the secular clergy and the religious orders, which is also a significant feature of this period, he suggested urgent reforms to the provincials of the Augustinians, Franciscans, Dominicans and Recollects. Nevertheless, he believed that the only permanent and truly Spanish element that Spain has in the colony was the religious orders. He had put it into himself to:

Rouse the religious orders and get them to exercise the legitimate and indispensable influence that they have lost and have to recover. They must awake from their lethargy, assess the condition of the country accurately, work with the weapons of evangelical faith, hope and charity, and play an active role in the spiritual life of the parishes. They must win back what was lost and continue being the strongest element in Filipinas and the stoutest bulwark for maintaining in these remote regions the glorious flag of Spain.”⁷

When Mexico gained its independence from Spain in 1821, the Manila-Acapulco trade ended and paved the way for the Philippines to be directly opened to international trade. The economic prosperity experienced in the colony brought significant changes in the Philippine society. Among these changes was the emergence of the middle class who hugely benefited from the various businesses and new industries in the islands. The middle class, composed of Spanish and Chinese *mestizos*, did not just become influential and powerful but also became leaders in finance and education.⁸

⁶ *Ibid.*, 124-125.

⁷ Izquierdo to the Provincials, 27 March, 1872, *Los Sucesos*, 128.

⁸ Teodoro A. Agoncillo, *History of the Filipino People* (Quezon

At this time also, the learned Filipino elite or the *ilustrados* came into existence. The opening of the colony also increased the people's contact with the foreigners and peninsulars who introduced new ideologies and ideals that would affect the Filipinos in the years to come.

There were several causes that contributed to the rise of anti-friar attitudes in the nineteenth century among the Spaniards which would subsequently influence the Filipinos. First, the Spanish system used the Philippine colonial bureaucracy as the source of spoils to reward the bureaucrats that were from the most disreputable class of Spaniards.⁹ Second, the Spanish liberals continued to make efforts to lower the prestige of the friars. The friars enjoyed a vast moral influence among the people and were practically the ones who kept order in the communities.¹⁰ Third, some Spanish officials deplored the role of the friars who defended the natives against their abuses and exploitation. In fact, Jean Mallat, a French traveler observed: "it is the parish priest alone who governs and maintains order and the *padre* is the only resort against the brutality of some officials and serves them as defender and interpreter."¹¹

On March 1, 1888, a large crowd composed of merchants, industrialists, professionals, landlords, and laborers held a demonstration in Manila to protest against Archbishop Pedro Payo and the religious orders.¹² The

City: GAROTECH Publishing, 1990), 129.

⁹ Schumacher, *Readings*, 232.

¹⁰ Jean Mallat, *Les Philippines: Histoire, Geographie, Moeurs, Agriculture, Industrie and Commerce des Colonies Espagnoles dans L'Oceanie*, trans. by Pura Santillan-Castrence (Manila: National Historical Institute, 1998), 249.

¹¹ Mallat, *Les Philippines*, 249.

¹² Doroteo Cortez, a lawyer, led the demonstration. They marched toward the office of Don Jose Centeno, a liberal Spanish geologist and the acting Civil Governor of Manila. The demonstrators submitted the manifesto signed by 800 Filipinos. The Manifesto was addressed to Queen Regent Maria Cristina who was ruling Spain because of the minority of King Alfonso XIII. Its authorship is attributed either

demonstrators submitted their manifesto, *Viva España! Viva el Rey! Viva el Ejercito! Fuera los Frailes! (Long Live Spain! Long Live the King! Long Live the Army! Down with the Friars!)*, asking the Spanish crown for the expulsion of the friars who “obstruct every stream of fraternity between Spain and the Philippines.”¹³ In this manifesto, the petitioners included instances of the religious orders’ interference to political matters. They cited the cases of Diego Salcedo, a former Governor of the islands who proposed to systematize the financial resources of the Philippine administration but earned the ire of the friars; the assassination of Fernando de Bustamante; Archbishop Basilio Sancho de Santa Justa y Rufina; and that of Simon Anda y Salazar. They also criticized the friars’ objection against the teaching of Spanish language to the natives, the friars’ prejudices against the native clergy and their violations of their vows especially their vow of poverty. In the end, they concluded that,

... if the friar is unnecessary to religious society, if he is an impediment to the cause of civilization, he is a perturbing element in political society...The good name of Spain and the tranquility of the Filipinos demand the eradication of a *social cancer* which hinders the promotion of the national interests of the country.¹⁴

The nineteenth century was truly a critical period in the history of the friars and the religious orders in the Philippines. The Filipinos were clamoring for changes and progress in the colony. However, because of Spain’s own domestic problems, these reforms were at times not implemented. The growing frustrations of many people in

to Marcelo H. del Pilar or Jose A. Ramos. See Gregorio F. Zaide ed., *Documentary Sources of Philippine History* (Manila: National Book Store, 1990), 7: 361. Hereafter cited as DSPH.

¹³ *The Anti-Friar Manifesto of 1888* in DSPH, 7: 362.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 372-373.

the islands motivated them to tirelessly campaign for their desired reforms. The near to impossible implementation would later be identified to the friars' meddling in the political affairs. As shown earlier, the later years of the period, many would be advocating for the reduction of their powers and influence and even their expulsion from the colony.

The Anti-Friar Literature in the Nineteenth Century

Far from the highly religious form of writings in the previous centuries of Spanish colonial period, the nineteenth century literary works were characterized by the emergence of a nationalist consciousness. During the earlier years of Spain in the islands, writings were primarily used for the propagation of the Christian faith. The literature of this period was almost written and produced under the supervision of the friars and the influence of Christianity. Almario, one of the contemporary scholars in Filipino literature, argues that the emergence of private printing presses ended the monopoly of the religious orders and the civil authorities.¹⁵ But even during the advent of a nationalist awakening, the Spaniards

¹⁵ Virgilio Almario is a Filipino writer, poet, critic, and editor in the Filipino language. In 2003, he was ranked among the Order of National Artists of the Philippines. At present, he heads the Commission on the Filipino language. In his book, he discusses that the nineteenth century was truly a turning point not just in the history of the archipelago but also in the development of a nationalist literature marked by the publication of various pamphlets, newspapers and other writings. He suggests that the "awakening" happened when Filipinos began to read non-religious writings. He points out that "folk consciousness" [*katutubong haraya*] among the natives was suppressed during the Spanish colonial times. But this consciousness, though suppressed and unable to express itself, desires to gain freedom and independence from any oppressive power. The birth of a distinctly nationalist literature was inevitable. He then traces this to Francisco Baltazar or Balagtas' *Florante at Laura* which gave birth to the succeeding campaigns beginning in the Propaganda Movement until the Philippine Revolution in 1896. See Virgilio Almario, *Si Balagtas at ang Panitikan para sa Kalayaan* (Manila: Komisyon ng Wikang Filipino, 2014), 7-31.

continued to introduce culture tools in their attempt to fully hold on to the Philippines as a Christian colony such as the *carillo* and the *zarzuela*.¹⁶

It is important to note that early reform literature did not identify the friars as abominable.¹⁷ Early reform movements specifically within the Philippine Catholic Church focused on the arguments between the friars and the secular clergy regarding the administration of the parishes. However, the question on the administration of parishes and their eventual transfer to the secular clergy in the nineteenth century had undoubtedly paved the way for the nationalist movement among the Filipinos in the succeeding years. The call for reforms would not be isolated within the Church itself but also in the governance of the colony. The last decades of the nineteenth century saw the crystallization of the reform movement with the identification of the figure against whom it was directed—the friar.¹⁸ Nationalist activities would later denounce the friars through various means. Among these were the widespread anti-friar writings that did not only attack their political stance but also condemned their presence in the country.

The Filipino Clergy and the 1872 Mutiny

The execution of the three secular priests who were implicated in the Cavite Mutiny in 1872 played a very important role in the proliferation of anti-friar writings in the last decades of Spain's rule. Mariano Gomez, Jose Burgos and Jacinto Zamora or the GOMBURZA were executed by

¹⁶ *Carillo* was a shadow play which is similar to puppet shows depicting the stories that were popular as metrical romances. It first appeared in 1879 and was popularized by Navarro de Peralta. The *zarzuela* was introduced in 1892 as a one-act musical play – *Quien vive!* and in 1893 as a three-act musical melodrama – *El diablo mundo*. See B.S. Medina Jr, *Confrontations: Past and Present in Philippine Literature* (Manila: National Bookstore, Inc., 1974), 89-90.

¹⁷ Medina, *Confrontations*, 93.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

garrote in Bagumbayan on February 17, 1872. These three priests campaigned for the secularization of parishes held by the religious orders.¹⁹

The conflict between the religious and the secular clergy goes back to the issues of the secularization of parishes held by the religious orders. Philip II proclaimed that parish administration should belong to the seculars as early as 1583. However, actual secularization of parishes took place only at the time of Archbishop Basilio Sancho de San Justa y Rufina (1767–87). But in 1826, the *Real Cedula* of 1774 which preferred the secularization of parishes in the Philippines, was repealed. Through this royal decree in 1826, all parishes which had been turned over to the secular clergy were ordered to be restored to the regular clergy should they become vacant through death or removal of the incumbents.²⁰ This was because the Spanish government began to suspect the loyalty of the secular clergy. The events in their former Latin American colonies contributed to the growing doubt and suspicions on the part of the Spanish authorities. In the Philippines, many Spanish colonists have already expressed their fears about the growing influence of the secular clergy since most of the parishes especially in Manila were already under their administration. Thus, to reduce their influence the colonial government began the de-secularization of parishes. This action was, of course, met with resentment on the part of the secular clergy.²¹

¹⁹ Pablo Fernández, OP, *History of the Church in the Philippines (1521-1898)* (Manila: National Bookstore Inc., 1979), 116-124. Fr. Fernandez, OP cites the two periods of the secularization of parishes in the Philippines namely, 1753 to 1849 and 1849 to 1898. He affirms the religious' role in founding missions and developing them into established parishes for eventual transfer to the secular clergy. However, he says, certain circumstances prevented this from realization especially with regard to the defective formation and shortage of secular priests in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

²⁰ Schumacher, *Revolutionary Clergy*, 3.

²¹ *Ibid.*

Fr. Pedro Peláez²² and Fr. Mariano Gomez²³ organized a protest against the eventual transfer of parishes to the religious orders. The two priests wrote an exposition of their situation to the queen asking either for the revocation of the March 9, 1849 order which gave four parishes to the Dominicans who did not even request for it or that the secular clergy should receive compensation for the parishes they lost. Unfortunately, the exposition was never presented to the government. However, its content was published anonymously in the Madrid newspaper, *El Clamor Publico* on March 8, 1850. The secular clergy campaigned for the restoration of the ordinary law of the Church that religious who acted as parish priests should be removed either by the bishop or their superiors. They believed that the abolition of this law by the Royal Decree of 1795 contributed to the weakening of the friars' religious discipline. Along with this proposal was the suggestion to restore the law of the cloister which had been put into disuse by some religious orders.²⁴ These suggestions were met with both positive and negative remarks especially among the friars who deemed it to be an attack against them. Additionally, it was also at this time when Peláez published his pamphlet, *Documentos importantes para la cuestion pendiente sobre la provision de curatos de Filipinas* where he reproduced several documents that were favorable to their cause namely, the *Exposición* by Archbishop Santos Justa y Rufina to the Pope, the *Representación*, a document of the religious authority to the

²² *Ibid.*, 7. Fr. Pedro Peláez was born on June 29, 1812 in Pagsanjan, Laguna. He studied at the University of Santo Tomas and became a professor of Philosophy at the Colegio de San Jose after his studies. He was also the secretary to the archbishop until his resignation in 1850. He held important prebends in the cathedral chapter. He died during the earthquake of June 1863.

²³ *Ibid.*, 6. Fr. Mariano Gomez was born on August 2, 1799 in Sta. Cruz, Manila. He was the parish priest of Bacoar and vicar forane of Cavite.

²⁴ Schumacher, *Revolutionary Clergy*, 10.

King and a *Memorial* addressed to the King and a collection of articles from *El Clamor Publico*. Through this pamphlet, Pelaez argued about the removability of the friars as parish priests. He tried to prove through the collection of these documents that the religious could not any longer hold the parishes as legal proprietors.²⁵

After Fr. Peláez's untimely death in 1863, Fr. José Burgos assumed the leadership for the cause of the Filipino clergy.²⁶ In his defense, he wrote in his *Manifiesto*:²⁷

For we know that the friars are the ones who from times long past hold the unchanged principle and make use of the infamous stratagem of belittling the capacity and aptitude of the Filipino secular clergy in order to make themselves necessary in the country and to perpetuate themselves in the parishes.²⁸

The protests from the Filipino clergy moved to a different perspective. Previously, it was only about their right in administering parishes, but with the emergence of the *Manifiesto*, the question on racial equality surfaced. Fr. Burgos argued that denial of their rights by the regular clergy points to a much deeper issue, that is, their alleged racial inferiority which the friars long held against them.

²⁵ W.E. Retana, *Aparato bibliografico de la Historia general de Filipinas*, Vol. 2 (Madrid: 1906), no. 1.030 quoted in Rodriguez, *Augustinian Monastery of Intramuros*, 242.

²⁶ Fr. Jose Burgos was born in Vigan, Ilocos to a Spanish army officer and a mother of mixed Spanish and Filipino blood. He was educated in Manila where he obtained his bachelor and licentiate degrees in philosophy and theology. See Schumacher, *Revolutionary Clergy*, 13.

²⁷ Jose Burgos, "Manifiesto que a la noble Nación Espanola Dirigen Los Leales Filipinos en Defensa de Su Honra y Fidelidad Gravemente Vulneradas por el Periodico "La Verdad" de Madrid," in Schumacher, *Father Jose Burgos: A Documentary History* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1999), 20-21. This was published anonymously on June 27, 1864. However, historians refer to some evidences that support its authorship to Fr. Burgos.

²⁸ Burgos, "Manifiesto," 67.

He refuted this with arguments using anthropology and a long list of Filipinos who have been outstanding in their achievements. He remarked,

If in our days we do not see more Filipinos outstanding in learning, let this not be attributed to their character not to their nature nor to the influence of the climate nor much less that of the race, but rather to the discouragement which for some years now has taken possession of the youth, because of the almost complete lack of any incentive.²⁹

It was also in the same work, that he accused the friars of their possession of great wealth “which they have great care to conceal from the government out of prudence” and of rich haciendas “though of doubtful ownership and whose tenants or inhabitants become criminals because of the hostility with which they are treated and oppression which the poor tenants suffer.”³⁰ Concerning the question about the Filipino clergy’s loyalty to the Spanish crown, Fr. Burgos dismissed it as only a “trick to frighten the government and to preserve friars’ importance to the colony.”³¹ The friars, he said, had deceived the Spanish authorities in asserting their indispensability in preserving the colony for the crown. He would later on appeal through his defense of the Filipinos’ ability against racism that had prevented them to be considered equal before the law.³²

In the long run, the issues raised by Fr. Burgos against the friars and the religious orders would be reflected in the writings of the propagandists especially in their campaign for reforms within the colony. This is shown in the succeeding discussions on the Propaganda Movement.

²⁹ Burgos, “Manifiesto,” 73.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 87.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 78.

³² *Ibid.*

Meanwhile, the Cavite Mutiny³³ that broke out during the time of Governor General Rafael de Izquierdo cut short the advocacies of Fr. Burgos and the Filipino clergy. Although the revolt was localized, Spanish authorities considered it as a conspiracy to overthrow the colonial powers in the archipelago.³⁴ Fr. Mariano Gomez, Fr. Jose Burgos, and Fr. Jacinto Zamora were implicated as agitators of the mutiny. They were eventually publicly executed on February 17, 1872 after failed attempts to save them by Archbishop Gregorio Melitón and Bishop Francisco Gaínza, OP of Nueva Caceres.

The execution of the three priests was a great scandal for the Filipinos. They would be regarded as heroes and victims of a truly oppressive regime. During this tumultuous time, many priests and prominent people were deported because of the increasing suspicion of the Spanish government. In the years to follow, reformers and revolutionaries alike would be referring to this event as an awakening of their nationalist spirit.

The Propaganda Movement (1880–1895)

The execution of the GOMBURZA had an

³³ There were several accounts written to illustrate the events in 1872. See Edmund Plauchut, "The Cavite Mutiny of 1872 and the Martyrdom of GOMBURZA," in DSPH 7: 251-268; Jose Montero y Vidal, "Spanish Version of the Cavite Mutiny of 1872," in DSPH 7: 269-273; Trinidad H. Pardo de Tavera, "Filipino Version of the Cavite Mutiny of 1872," in DSPH 7:274-280.

³⁴ On January 20, 1872, Sgt. Lamadrid of the arsenal of Fort San Felipe in Cavite Puerto led the mutiny along with two peninsular lieutenants, named Morquecho and Montesinos. The marine battalion guarding the arsenal together with a group of artillerymen killed their commander and took possession of the fort. It was immediately stopped after a day of siege by the troops led by General Ginoves. See Schumacher, *Revolutionary Clergy*, 23. Artigas y Cuerva aimed to present a full and objective account of the event by publishing some documents related to the mutiny of 1872. Cf. also Manuel Artigas y Cuerva, *Los Sucesos de 1872*.

enduring impact in the minds of the Filipinos which would subsequently contribute to the rise of another movement that campaigned for reforms in the Philippines. Though their death had effectively silenced the secular clergy for their clamor for reforms in the Church, their struggle was continued by the Filipinos studying in Europe. Some of the leading propagandists have had connections with these three priests or, if not, with some of the clergy involved in the campaign. For example, Jose Rizal's brother, Paciano, was present during their execution and was a follower of Burgos. Marcelo H. del Pilar once lived with Fr. Mariano Sevilla, one of the priests deported to Guam along with del Pilar's brother Toribio.³⁵ In fact, Jose Rizal in one of his letters lamented, "Had it not been for 1872 there would not be either a Plaridel or Jaena, or there would exist brave and generous Filipino communities in Europe; had it not for 1872 Rizal would now be a Jesuit, and instead writing the *Noli me Tangere*, I would have written the opposite."³⁶ Because of the seeming complexities in the case of the three priests and their execution, many Filipinos suspected that the entire event was conspired by the friars who had been at odds with the secular clergy.

From that moment, they would not only campaign for the needed reforms in the Philippine Church but also for a determined change in the colonial government. Most writings during this time would take an anti-friar stance.

³⁵ Agoncillo, *History of the Filipino People*, 135-136. Marcelo H. del Pilar was born in Bulacan on August 30, 1850 to Julian del Pilar and Blasa Gatmaitan. He studied at the College of San Jose and later at the University of Santo Tomas where he finished law. In 1878, he married his first cousin, Marciana. He was the political analyst of the Filipino colony in Spain. He began his career when he campaigned against the forces that stifled freedom and progress in the Philippines. In 1882, he founded the nationalistic newspaper, *Diariong Tagalog*. In his campaign against the friars, del Pilar often used satire and exaggeration to point out his views and to solicit greater following.

³⁶ Rizal to Mariano Ponce and compatriots, 18 April, 1889 in DSPH.

The friars whom they considered as the only factor that was keeping the islands from progress, were continuously attacked by various propagandists. Indeed, the friars' position not just in the Church but also in the political arena made them susceptible to attacks and accusations. They were after all the only enduring presence of Spanish colonialism. Throughout their presence for more than three hundred years, they were able to consolidate themselves within the different aspects of the Filipino community.³⁷

The Propaganda Movement as an offspring of the secular clergy's cause fought against Spanish dominance and racism which was embodied in their considered enemies—the friars. Among the earliest writers to evaluate the economic and political conditions of the archipelago was Gregorio Sancianco in his book, *El Progreso de Filipinas*. It was published in 1881. In this book, he posited that Spain's failure to implement the needed reforms in the Philippines was due mainly to friar dominance and corruption in the government.³⁸ He assessed that,

...if then, the Philippines is considered part of the Spanish nation and is therefore a Spanish province and not a tributary colony; if her sons are born Spanish just as are those of the Peninsula; if, finally, recognizing in the peninsulars the rights of citizenship, one must equally recognize it in the Filipinos; no tribute in the proper sense of that word can be imposed on them, but a tax proportioned to their resources, larger or smaller in amount, according to the larger or smaller services which the State renders them for the security of their persons and interests.³⁹

³⁷ Schumacher, *Readings*, 231.

³⁸ Quilatan, "Friar Hacienda," 74.

³⁹ Gregorio Sancianco y Goson, *El progreso de Filipinas. Estudios economicos, administrativos y politicos* (Madrid: J.M. Perez,

The Propaganda Movement was directed primarily to influence their readers and challenge a seemingly unperturbed foundation of the religious orders. Its earliest stages were chiefly concerned on bringing liberal and progressive reforms to the Philippines by means of newspapers and political influence in Madrid.⁴⁰ From 1880 until 1895 the Propaganda Movement produced countless anti-friar writings such as essays, editorials, articles, short stories, commentaries and even novels especially the *Noli me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo* of José Rizal. The writers of this period would often use exaggerations, satires and parodies in order to capture the attention of the reading public.⁴¹

The propagandists envisioned that their plan of representation in the Spanish court and the assimilation of the Philippines to the peninsula would only be given attention if their sentiments would be directly made known to Spain. In doing so, they demonstrated the various reasons as to why the needed reforms in the Philippines would be impossible to be implemented. The primary reason, as they would identify, were the friars. Through this, the movement was able to play a certain extent on the anticlericalism in Spanish politics and was able to obtain Masonic support.⁴²

The Anti-Friar Nature of the La Solidaridad

The first organ of the Propaganda Movement, *España en Filipinas* was a failure. In the same year of its foundation, the staff broke into factions: the Spanish mestizos and Philippine-born Spaniards on one side and the full-blooded Filipinos and Chinese mestizos on the other.⁴³ Though the

1881), 101-102, in Schumacher, *The Propaganda Movement (1880-1895): The Creation of a Filipino Consciousness, The Making of the Revolution* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1997), 26.

⁴⁰ Schumacher, *Revolutionary Clergy*, 36.

⁴¹ Medina, *Confrontations*, 104.

⁴² Schumacher, *Revolutionary Clergy*, 36.

⁴³ The newspaper was founded by Graciano Lopez Jaena and

first newspaper of the Propaganda was a disappointment for the propagandists, many still proposed the foundation of a new organ that would represent their objectives. Finally, on February 15, 1889, the *La Solidaridad* was first published with the following aims:

Our program aside from being harmless is very simple; to fight all reaction, to hinder all steps backward, to applaud and to accept all liberal ideas, and to defend progress; in brief, to a propagandist above all of ideals of democracy so that these might reign over all nations here and beyond the seas.

The aims therefore of *La Solidaridad* are defined: to gather, to collect liberal ideas which are daily exposed in the camp of politics, in fields of science, arts, letters, commerce, agriculture, and industry.⁴⁴

The *La Solidaridad*, from this point until its subsequent death in 1895, became the voice of the propagandists.⁴⁵ To continue its existence, the *Comité de Propaganda* in Manila, whose delegate and plenipotentiary was Marcelo H. del Pilar, funded the project. The newspaper associated itself with the generally anticlerical republicans its editor-in-chief was Eduardo de Lete. On its first issue, which came off the press on March 7, 1887, it emphasized its support to the Philippine's assimilation to Spain. The dissolution of the staff was due mainly to the Spaniards' criticisms against the Filipinos' radical separatist tendencies. See Nicholas P. Cusher, SJ, *Spain in the Philippines From Conquest to Revolution* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University, 1971), 222. Cf. also Schumacher, *Propaganda Movement*, 59-82.

⁴⁴ "Our Aims," *La Solidaridad*, February 15, 1889, 1:3.

⁴⁵ The *La Solidaridad* came out in Barcelona on February 15, 1889. It was a fortnightly dedicated to the exposition of the conditions in the Philippines. The first editor was Graciano Lopez Jaena but was succeeded by Marcelo H. del Pilar in December, 1889. See Agoncillo, *History of the Filipino People*, 143; Schumacher, *Propaganda Movement*, 134-146.

in Spain and to some left wing liberals.⁴⁶ Through it, the propagandists announced their campaign for the assimilation of the colony to the Spanish peninsula. The Propaganda Movement also worked for the representation of the Philippines in the Spanish *Cortes*. The assimilation would mean that the Filipinos would be citizens of Spain enjoying equal rights and privileges as those with the peninsulars. In effect, the newspaper took an anti-friar stance which was a clear challenge even to some of the liberals who considered the friars as an essential support for the continued rule in the Philippines. The friars' political power inevitably made them a target of opposition and criticisms. As long as the friars enjoyed their influence on the Filipinos, their vision would be impossible. As a consequence, the presence of the religious orders in the Philippines was considered as the only hindrance for full implementation of development and progress. The reformers, most especially del Pilar, considered it their task to extinguish the position of the friars in the Philippine society. The friars were continuously attacked in order to destroy their influence in civil and political matters in the islands.

Although in the study of the *La Solidaridad*, Schumacher points out that it should not be read as objective evaluation of friars in the Philippines but as an account of grievances and complaints which the educated and nationalist Filipinos held against them.⁴⁷ Surely, the *La Solidaridad* reflected the desires of the reformers to gain wider attention for their cause. However, the anti-friar nature of the newspaper was part of their political program to win the sympathies of many Spanish politicians.

In the end, the campaigns of the propagandists did not yield concrete results for the benefit of the Philippines.

⁴⁶ John N. Schumacher, SJ, "Historical Introduction," in *La Solidaridad*, trans. Guadalupe Fores-Ganzon (Philippine: Fundación Santiago), v.

⁴⁷ Schumacher, "Historical Introduction," vi.

It did not achieve its desired assimilation nor did it achieve the representation of the Philippines to the Spanish *Cortes*. But it certainly shook the religious orders. It effectively attacked the friars through the countless political essays by its contributors and through the news and short stories it contained in many of its issues.

Graciano Lopez Jaena's Portrait of a Friar: Fray Botod

One of the most graphic images that the propagandists drew of the friars was that of Graciano Lopez Jaena's *Fray Botod*.⁴⁸ *Fray Botod*, literally a pot-bellied friar, showcases the image of a friar who is vicious and evil. In its evaluation, the *Fray Botod* is a literary exercise in the form of a satire and narrative in approach. For Medina, the work fails to be considered as a fiction because of its pure description.⁴⁹ Similarly, the description by Lopez Jaena effectively delineated the image of a friar in the Philippines as *Fray Botod*. The work includes a long list of the friar's misdeeds and immoralities. Here he described *Fray Botod* as a "well-fed pig who eats, drinks, sleeps and thinks of nothing else but to satisfy his carnal appetite in their various manifestations."⁵⁰ *Fray Botod* scandalously displayed his concubines or his *canding-canding*. These were young daughters of poor families whom he took by force under the

⁴⁸ Graciano Lopez Jaena was born to Placido Lopez and Maria Jacobo Jaena on December 17, 1856 in Jaro, Iloilo. He studied at the Seminary of Jaro. In 1880, he left for Spain and enrolled in medicine at the University of Valencia. He later transferred to Madrid where he distinguished himself as a great orator. He died in Barcelona on January 20, 1896. See Agoncillo, *History of the Filipino People*, 132.

⁴⁹ Medina, *Confrontations*, 94.

⁵⁰ Graciano Lopez Jaena, "Fray Botod" in Graciano Lopez Jaena, *Speeches, Articles and Letters* trans. and annotated by Encarnacion Alzona (Manila: National Historical Institute, 1994), 198. In the story, Fray Botod is also known as Fray Ano who is from Aragon. He joined the Augustinian Friars in Valladolid at the age of fourteen. And at twenty-one years of age, his superiors sent him to the Philippines.

pretext of teaching them Catechism, reading and writing.⁵¹ He also wasted his time to gambling, neglected his pastoral duties and ate gluttonously.

Aside from the various misdeeds shown in the story, other significant features include the injustices against and the struggle of the Filipino clergy, racism, opposition to the teaching of the Spanish language, violence and cruelty of the friars, and his political interference.⁵²

Finally, Lopez Jaena would later on denounce the friar in *La Solidaridad* as “an egoist, mean, a tyrant and oppressor, an enemy of all progress, and a lover of everything feudal, absolute; and to personify religion and the mother country in the friar is to personify the vicious, the absurd, the fanatical.”⁵³

Marcelo H. del Pilar's Anti-Friar Writings

If there was someone among the propagandists who greatly envisioned to eliminate the friars' influence in the Philippines, it would be Marcelo H. del Pilar. Del Pilar made it his project through his writings and political lobbying to attack the friars and eventually remove them from their exalted positions in the Philippines. Like Graciano Lopez Jaena, he considered the friar as villainous, always conniving with one another to crush all who stand against them. Before he assumed the position as the editor of *La Solidaridad*, he was well-versed in the art of poetic jousting called *duplo*.⁵⁴ He started as a poet whose art was propaganda determined to stir his readers to action.⁵⁵ Later on, he would use parodies⁵⁶ which is very much evident in

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 198-199.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 203-219.

⁵³ Graciano Lopez Jaena, “How to Deceive the Motherland,” *La Solidaridad*, May 15, 1889, in Lopez Jaena, *Speeches*, 256.

⁵⁴ Lumbera and Lumbera, *Philippine Literature*, 44.

⁵⁵ Medina, *Confrontations*, 104.

⁵⁶ Parody is a literary work in which the style of an author imitates someone for comic effect or for ridicule.

his writings such as his *Ang Pasyong Dapat Ipag-alab ng Taong Baba sa Kalupitan ng Fraile* which illustrated his use of the *pasyon* for his anti-friar attacks.⁵⁷ He also employed the same style in his *Dasalan at Toksohan*,⁵⁸ where he parodied the common Catholic prayers such as the Lord's Prayer, Hail Mary, Doxology, the Decalogue and some basic catechisms. In this work, he taunted the friars' abuses such as in his parody of the Decalogue:

Ang manga utos nang Fraile ay sampo:
 Ang nauna: Sambahin mo ang Fraile na lalo sa lahat.
 Ang ikalaua: Huag kang mag papahamak manuba nang ngalang deretsos.
 Ang ikatlo: Mangilin ka sa Fraile lingo man at fiesta.
 Ang ikapat: Isangla moa ng catauan mo sa pagpapalibangsa ama't ina.
 Ang ikalima: Huag kang mamamatay kung uala pang salaping pang palibing.
 Ang ikanim: Huag kang makiapid sa kaniyang asaua.
 Ang ikapito: Huag kang makinakaw.
 Ang ikaualo: Huag mo silang pagbibintangan kahit ka masinungalingan.
 Ang ikasiyam: Huag mong ipagkait ang iyong asaua.
 Ang ikapulo: Huag mong itangui ang iyong ari.
 Itong sampong utos nang Fraile 'i dalaua ang kinaoouian. Ang isa: Sambahin mo ang Fraileng lalo sa lahat. Ang ikalawa: Ihayin mo naman sa kaniya ang puri mo't kayamanan. Siya naua.⁵⁹

His other anti-friar writings include some pamphlets entitled, *Sagot nang España sa hibik nang Filipinas*⁶⁰ and

⁵⁷ Lumbera and Lumbera, *Philippine Literature*, 44.

⁵⁸ Del Pilar's *Dasalan at Toksohan* is representative of a folk humor. It aimed to show the friars' avariciousness and greed. See Medina, *Confrontations*, 105.

⁵⁹ [Marcelo H. del Pilar], *Dasalan at Toksohan*, (n.p: n.d.), pp.5-6, Mic. 85:2, in *Philippine Insurgent Records*, Philippine National Library. Hereafter cited as PIR.

⁶⁰ This pamphlet, written in the Tagalog language, illustrates

the *Arancel de los Derechos Parroquiales en las Islas Filipinas publicado con su traducción tagala*.⁶¹ In February 1889, he published the pamphlet, *La soberania monacal en Filipinas* attacking the friar domination in the Philippines. The work which was intended for distribution in Spain and in the Philippines reflected a serious and measured tone, and presented the condemnation on the friars' power in the different aspects of Philippine governance.⁶² He criticized Spain for abdicating its sovereignty and yielding to friar control in the Philippines. The friars, he asserted, controlled local elections, dominated the administration of the local government, opposed the teaching of Spanish language and used their power to deport anyone who opposed them.⁶³ The wealth of the friars and their refusal to submit to episcopal jurisdiction also surfaced in his disputations. His other pamphlet, *La frailocracia Filipina* likewise presented the same anti-friar polemics. In this pamphlet, he openly denied the existence of filibusterism and the contributions of the friars to the Philippines. He wrote, "the performance of the friars during the period of annexation of these islands to Spain is null...the friars welcomed the chance of playing the role of Providence to the natives."⁶⁴ He also proposed that there is no longer any good reason for the friars to exist in the Philippines, either from a religious or political point

Spain as a Mother answering to the laments of her child *Filipinas*. It suggests to expel all the friars as the source of all miseries. Del Pilar wrote this as a reply to another anti-friar writing by Hermenegildo Flores, entitled, *Hibik ng Filipinas sa Inang Espana*. See Schumacher, *Propaganda Movement*, 154.

⁶¹ del Pilar printed the official church stole fees for baptisms, weddings, funerals, etc. By printing the stoles fees with its Tagalog translation, he hoped that it would lessen the income of the friars whom he attacked to have charged excessive fees to their parishioners. See Schumacher, *Propaganda Movement*, 154-155.

⁶² Schumacher, *Propaganda Movement*, 149-150.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 151-152.

⁶⁴ Marcelo H. del Pilar, *Frailocracy in the Philippines* trans. Leonor Agrava (Manila: National Historical Institute, 1996), 26.

of view.⁶⁵ In his time as an editor of the *La Solidaridad*, he continued to write numerous letters, articles and editorials to convey his convictions against the friars.

Jose Rizal's Novels

Jose Rizal's novels, *Noli me tangere* and *El filibusterismo* also employed the same stance as that of Graciano Lopez Jaena's portrayal of the friar as a villain. Rizal's first novel, *Noli me tangere*, was published in Berlin in 1887.⁶⁶ It talks about the story of Juan Crisostomo Ibarra, son of a wealthy creole father and a Filipina mother. After his studies in Europe, he returned to the Philippines with the intention to bring with him all the learnings he had acquired. But this would be hindered by his adversaries: the friars Damaso and Salvi. Fray Damaso was the parish priest of San Diego who ordered to dig up the corpse of Ibarra's father who had previously incurred his indignation. Rizal intently pictured him as the archenemy who tried to control everything with his power. Fray Salvi, on the other hand, was the new parish priest who desired the love of Maria Clara. He is described as a greedy and covetous person. Through these two friars, Ibarra's intention to establish a school to educate the youth would be stalled. Because of the friars' agitations and scheming plot to put him into conflict with the Spanish authorities, Ibarra eventually fled with the help of Elias. Finally, at the end of the novel, Fray Damaso explained himself to Maria Clara as to why he had done all his oppositions against Ibarra:

My child, he cried with a broken voice,
forgive me for having unwittingly made you so
unhappy. I was only thinking of your future,
I wanted you to be happy. Could I allow you
to marry a Filipino, and see you unhappy as a
wife and wretched mother?... I opposed it with

⁶⁵ del Pilar, *Frailocracy*, 36.

⁶⁶ Jose Rizal, *Noli me Tangere*, trans. Leon Ma. Guerrero (Manila: Guerrero Publishing, 1995), xiv.

all my strength, I abused all my powers, for your sake, only for yours. If you had been his wife, you would have wept afterwards to your husband's condition, exposed to all manner of persecution without means of defense... you would have wept over the fate of your children, for if you had given them education, you would have only prepared a tragic future for them; they would have become enemies of the Church, and you would have seen them on the gallows or exile....⁶⁷

The second novel, *El filibusterismo*, published in Ghent in 1891, was a sequel to the *Noli me tangere*. Here Ibarra returned as Simoun to avenge all the adversities he had experienced from the hands of the friars. Unlike, the *Noli*, this would be reflecting a more different tone, anti-friar but also inciting disdain against the Spanish authorities in general. It also shows the frustrations of the reformers for their cause for assimilation and recognition by Spain. Characters such as Basilio, Cabelo, Placido Penitente, the young students who advocated assimilation, and the friars who gained unimaginable influence were drawn by Rizal to characterize that society he lived in. For instance, in one of the dialogues between the characters of Isagani and Fr. Fernández, the dissatisfactions against the friars were clearly manifested:

The friars... the friars of all the Orders have become our intellectual caterers and yet they say openly, loudly, and without shame that our education does not suit them because some day we shall proclaim our independence! This is to desire the malnutrition of the prisoner so that he may not improve and leave prison. Freedom is to man what education is to the mind, and the opposition of the friars to our

⁶⁷ Rizal, *Noli me Tangere*, 362-363.

education is the source of our discontent.⁶⁸

Here, Simoun incited a revolution to topple down the vicious system that had destroyed countless innocent lives. He took it to himself to be the “judge who came to punish a social system through its own crimes, to make war upon it by indulging it.”⁶⁹ The story, however, ends with his failed conspiracy.

Both *Noli me tangere* and *El filibusterismo* tell the tragic and heartbreaking state of a country dominated and abused by a foreign power. The first novel implies the Filipinos' reasoning with Spain, imploring the latter for reforms and changes long denied because of friar dominance. The second hints the desperation among the Filipinos after their arduous supplications from Spain. Both the novels set new tracks for the following years and would be influential in the rise of a more radical and separatist group: the revolutionaries. Rizal in his novels showed the struggle of many Filipinos and like many of the propagandists, this struggle was mainly blamed on the friars. In his characterizations, the friars are the source of many evils in the Philippine society. For genuine reforms to be implemented, like all the propagandists, Rizal felt the need to take the roots of evils off from the Philippines.

The Anti-Friar Literature in the Philippine Revolutionary Period

When the Spaniard first came to the archipelago, it was not a single political entity. Rather, it was composed of different tribes and groups of people. Under the administration of the Spanish colonial government the archipelago was referred to as *Filipinas*. It was only during this time that the native inhabitants or the *indios* were regarded as one people. For more than three hundred years, the colonial government

⁶⁸ Jose Rizal, *El Filibusterismo*, trans. Leon Maria Guerrero (Manila: Guerrero Publishing, 1996), 185.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* 40.

was plagued by various revolts and uprisings, but it was not until the last years of the nineteenth century that the Filipinos would be calling for complete independence. The Propaganda Movement did not succeed in its visions to acquire reforms for the islands. Previously, the *ilustrados* deemed it to be of utmost importance to rally their cause in Spain in order to immediately gain greater audience and support from the Spanish people. But this was not the case. The propagandists disbanded and the movement reached the moment when it could no longer continue to fight. However, the writings of the *intelligentsia* involved in the Propaganda Movement, and, later, of the leaders of the Revolution of 1896 trace the emergence of the Filipino people.⁷⁰ Though it certainly failed in attaining its objectives, it had otherwise set a motivation to fight not in Spain but in the Philippines. This time, it would not be about reforms alone, but a fight for freedom and independence from any foreign rule.

The *Katipunan* of Andres Bonifacio as an offspring of the Propaganda Movement shared the anti-friar and antireligious ideas of the propagandists. At this time, fighting the foreign powers in the Philippines meant not with the friars alone but also with the whole Spanish authority. Nevertheless, the writings of this period shifted from the use of the Spanish language to the use of Tagalog. The Propagandists aimed to cater their writings to the Spanish public but the writers of the Revolutionary Period intended to capture the attention of the Filipino masses. The *Katipunan* used the Tagalog language which consequently became associated with nationalism. Later on, the writings during the Philippine Revolutionary Period would play up the nationalist cause.⁷¹

Among the noted writers during this period were Andres Bonifacio and Emilio Jacinto who used the Tagalog

⁷⁰ Lumbera and Lumbera, *Philippine Literature*, 47.

⁷¹ Lumbera and Lumbera, 45.

language as a tool for organizing the masses.⁷² Virgilio Almario in his analysis on the literature during the Philippine Revolution, assesses that the writings during this period mobilized the decolonization of the Philippines. The poems of Bonifacio, as well as the essays of Jacinto, moved the natives to reclaim their lost freedom.⁷³ Moreover, writers at this phase of Philippine history greatly dealt on the freedom of one's native land. They claimed that the Spanish rule suppressed the inherent freedom and humanity of the natives. Thus, they called for unity among the people to recover this suppressed freedom.⁷⁴

Bonifacio, in his *Ang Dapat Mabatid ng mga Tagalog*, claimed that before the Spaniards came, the native population was already prosperous and flourishing. But under the guise of friendship and brotherhood, the Spanish colonists for more than three centuries, only enslaved the natives under their despotic rule.⁷⁵

Itong Katagalugan na pinamamahalaan
noong unang panahon ng ating tunay na mga
kababayan, noong hindi pa tumutuntong
sa mga lupaing ito and mga Kastila, ay
nabubuhay sa lubos na kasaganaan at
kaginhawaan.... Dumating ang mga Kastila
at dumulog na nakipagkaibigan.... [Ngayon]
ano ang nakikita nating pagtupad sa kanilang
kapangakuan? Wala kundi pawang kataksilan
ang ganti... tayo'y binulag, inihawa tayo sa
kanilang hamak na asal...⁷⁶

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ Virgilio S. Almario, *Panitikan ng Rebolusyon (g 1896)* (Manila: Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino, 2013), 51.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 52.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Andres Bonifacio, "Ang Dapat Mabatid ng mga Tagalog," in Almario, *Panitikan*, 136. The "*Ang Dapat Mabatid ng mga Tagalog*" is a Katipunan manifesto which is a simple essay calling the Filipinos to fight against Spain. Bonifacio also wrote the *Katapusang Hibik ng Pilipinas*

Apolinario Mabini also shared the same feelings against the Spaniards especially the religious orders whom he blamed for betraying the natives' trust and confidence. He denounced the friars' selfish intentions and on how they forcefully took many possessions to enrich themselves. Thus, in his *Ordenanzas de la Revolución*, he called for the outright expulsion of the friars from the Philippines.⁷⁷

Furthermore, other forms of literature also contributed to the nationalist cause. Almario holds that the *pasyon* or the narrative on the suffering and death of Jesus Christ, though essentially introduced by the Spaniards, took a subversive form because of its ability to tell the truth that the rule of the friars and the colonial government is contrary to the teachings of Christianity. He contends that the *pasyon* taught the people of the evils in a colonized society whose rulers resembled Cain, Herod, Judas, and the Pharisees.⁷⁸

Additionally, aside from the call for their expulsion from the Philippines, the revolutionaries also blamed the religious orders as the cause of the insurrection. In 1897, a letter was sent to General Primo de Rivera stating that the friars were to be held responsible for the revolution.⁷⁹ Lastly, when the Philippines was ceded to the United States which doomed the Philippine Republic, the campaign against the friars did not end. More so, a letter, which was recovered from the camp of General Francisco Makabulos in Tarlac province, included a petition to the president of the United

which referred back to Hermenegildo Flores' *Hibik* and Marcelo H. del Pilar's *Sagot*. In this poem, the daughter renounced the negligent mother. Cf. also Lumbera and Lumbera, *Philippine Literature*, 45.

⁷⁷ Apolinario Mabini, "Ordenanzas de la Revolución," in Virgilio Almario ed., *Ang Republika ni Mabini: Apat na Akdang Pampolitika ni Apolinario Mabini* (Manila: Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino, 2015), 35-37.

⁷⁸ Almario, *Panitikan*, 53.

⁷⁹ Letter to General Primo de Rivera, 29 June, 1897 in PIR Mic. 467.2.

States to expel the friars.⁸⁰ Several anti-friar pamphlets and circulars were circulated calling for the friars' expulsion. For example, a pamphlet entitled, *¡A fuera los frailes!* was found posted on a certain house in 1901.⁸¹ Also, the pamphlet, written by a certain I.M., *Motivos de la Aversion del Filipino al Fraile* gave the reason as to why the Filipinos hated the friars. The author argued that this hatred for the friars may be justified through the innumerable injuries which the Filipinos suffered from the friars. It is also claimed that the friars used the government as their instrument to impose their wills on the people.⁸²

The Issues Against the Friars

Several documents and writings were consulted in order to illustrate the subject matter. In many cases, the charges against the religious orders were groundless, but because of their institutional cohesiveness, these charges were generally leveled at the friars as a whole.⁸³ The propagandists and the revolutionists both recognized the positions of the friars in the Philippine society and the influence they had on the natives. The propagandists united in their call for the expulsion of the friars through demonstrating the various abuses they may have committed. They attacked the friars' positions as parish priests, their oppositions against the teaching of Spanish language, their possessions and wealth, their interference in political matters and civil administrations and even their morality and faithfulness to their vows.

⁸⁰ Matibay to the President of the Philippine Republic, 16 September, 1899 in PIR Mic. 102.2.

⁸¹ *¡A fuera los frailes!*, Vigan, January, 1901 in PIR Mic. 467.3.

⁸² I.M., *Motivos de la aversion del Filipino al fraile* (n.p.: Imprenta de Sta. Barbara, 1900), 1-2 in PIR Mic. 467.10.

⁸³ Schumacher, *Propaganda Movement*, 16.

The Friars and their Political Influence

Among the accusations leveled against the friars was their political influence. Through their immense influence, the friars, according to their enemies, were able to maintain control of the parishes they held at the expense of the secular clergy. Allegedly, they also used their positions in Philippine political system to prevent the teaching of the Spanish language in order to keep the Filipinos ignorant and submissive to their wills. The reformists of the period also openly criticized the religious orders in interfering with the affairs of the government. Lopez Jaena in his article in *El Deluvio* said that the Filipinos live in their country worse than the Negroes in Congo for they were vexed by the friars and exploited by the government employees.⁸⁴ He further wrote in *La Solidaridad*:

Those who someday could be the factor, producer, effective cause of an anti-Spanish movement in the Philippines are the monastic orders, which in their eagerness to remain eternally omnipotent in the islands are provoking the peaceful Islanders with their imprudence and vexations to rise not against the mother country, but against the oppressive yoke of the friars.⁸⁵

Also, in *La Solidaridad*, Lopez Jaena strongly condemned the friars' insatiable desire to control every aspect of the Philippine society:

The friars are not satisfied with the authority they already have, which is almost absolute; they are not satisfied with controlling the conscience of man; they want

⁸⁴ Lopez Jaena, "Tricks of the Friars and the Government Employees in the Philippines," *El Diluvio*, Barcelona, 1888, in Lopez Jaena, *Speeches*, 186.

⁸⁵ Lopez Jaena, "Imprisonments in the Philippines," *La Solidaridad*, April 30, 1889 in Lopez Jaena, *Speeches*, 233.

something more: to control, to rule spiritually, morally civilly, and materially, that is, to be absolute master of the Islands, without any strings attached, subjugating legally, not extra legally like now, the Governor General of the Philippines.⁸⁶

In the long run, he would conclude that “the friar is himself an egoist, mean, a tyrant and oppressor, an enemy of all progress, and a lover of everything feudal, absolute; and to personify religion and the mother country in the friar is to personify the vicious, the absurd, the fanatical.”⁸⁷ He further called for the people to “shout very loudly that the friars at this historic moment are a detriment to the national interest in the Philippines, because they are the obstacles to the introduction there of any kind of liberal reforms that are so urgently needed.”⁸⁸

Apolinario Mabini also maintained in his *La Revolución Filipina* the active political role of the religious orders in the colonization of the archipelago. He claimed that the friars were very much influential in the pacification of the natives especially in the spread of Christianity which would eventually eliminate the natives' culture and traditional beliefs. In addition, he also argued that the friars kept the *indios* ignorant in order to maintain Spain's control in the islands.⁸⁹

Marcelo H. del Pilar also commented on the influence

⁸⁶ Lopez Jaena, “In Quest of a Cardinal's Hat,” *La Solidaridad*, July 15, 1889 in Lopez Jaena, *Speeches*, 253.

⁸⁷ Lopez Jaena, “How to Deceive the Motherland,” *La Solidaridad*, May 15, 1889 in Lopez Jaena, *Speeches*, 257.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ Apolinario Mabini, *Ang Rebolusyong Filipino*, trans. Michael M. Coroza (Manila: Commission on the Filipino Language, 2015), 22-28. Mabini wrote the *La Revolucion Filipina* during his exile in Guam. Though written after the revolution in 1896, this work contains Mabini's examination and reflection on the events of the revolution at the end of the nineteenth century.

of the friars in the Philippines:

The friars in the Philippines have now come to be a symbol of obstruction to progress. The friars control all the fundamental forces of society in the Philippines. They control the educational system ... and are the local inspectors of every primary school. They control the minds of the people because in a dominantly Catholic country, the parish rectors can utilize pulpits and confessionals to publicly or secretly influence the people; they control all the municipal and local authorities and the medium of communications; and they execute all the orders of the central government.⁹⁰

Thus, in his account on the events of the Philippine Revolution in 1896, Emilio Aguinaldo expressed the reason as to why the Filipino people took arms to fully emancipate themselves from the power of Spanish dominance. He wrote:

Spain maintained control of the Philippine Islands for more than three centuries and a half, during which period the tyranny, misconduct and abuses of the Friars and the Civil and Military Administration exhausted the patience of the natives and caused them to make a desperate effort to shake off the unbearable galling yoke on the 26th and 31st August 1896, then commencing the revolution in the provinces of Manila and Cavite.⁹¹

⁹⁰ del Pilar, *Frailocracy*, 35.

⁹¹ Emilio Aguinaldo, *Reseña Verídica de la Revolución Filipina*, (Manila: National Historical Institute, 2002), 91.

The Morality of the Friars

One of the major accusations against the friars was their alleged immoralities and violations of their vows. Schumacher points out that the subjection of the regular clergy to episcopal visitation under Archbishop Sancho de Sta. Justa after 1768 and the religious orders' incorporation into the full control of the *Patronato Real* had disastrous effects on the recruitment of the friar for the Philippines in the Peninsula.⁹²

More so, it has been asserted that the internal decadence in the Church contributed to the rise of nationalism. The issue with the secular clergy and the religious orders did not also bring any positive effect for both parties. Lopez Jaena in his *Fray Botod* wrote how the friars' moral decadence influenced even the native clergy.

The coadjutors of the Filipino secular clergy wallowed in vice in the same degree as the friars themselves. The bad example spreads. The Indio priests follow the example of their superiors, the friars; they have bad habits like those of the friars, if not worse.⁹³

In the same work, he tried to show how vicious the friars were. *Fray Botod* was not just illustrated as gluttonous and lustful but also described as one who wasted his time on gambling and making people's lives miserable. Jose Rizal's *Fray Damaso* in his *Noli me Tangere* also embodies the strong accusations on friar immorality. Fray Damaso fathered Maria Clara whose love was deeply coveted by another pretentious friar, Fray Salvi.

The anti-friar literature never failed to mention how immoral the friars were. Several short stories in the *La Solidaridad* also showed how coveting they were. Jose Ma. Panganiban in his essay, *Kandeng or Memories of My Town*

⁹² Schumacher, *Revolutionary Clergy*, 1-3.

⁹³ Lopez Jaena, "Fray Botod," in Lopez Jaena, *Speeches*, 206.

is another example of illustrating friar immorality. In the story, Kandeng, who was the main character, was dissuaded by her friar-parish priest to reject her suitor's love only to be raped by the latter at the end.⁹⁴

The Wealth of the Friars

Lastly, one of the enduring prejudices against the friars even in modern popular culture is their possession of great wealth. When one refers to the friars, one immediately thinks about how wealthy they were. Some historians and modern-day portrayals often depict them as having loads of fortune manifested in their ownership of haciendas and their affluent lifestyles. However, Mallat, in his accounts during his travel to the Philippines, saw a different side in the friars' possessions:

The clergy of the Philippines owns great wealth, a consequence of former donations retained and augmented by a well-arranged economy, and it must be admitted that this fund is made use of in the most honorable way. It distributes incalculable alms and is always disposed to lend money to industrious persons asking for help. Its conduct in this respect is above all praise and would alone suffice to cover some wrongs imputed to ecclesiastics.⁹⁵

The propagandists accused the friars of amassing a great amount of fortune. Del Pilar remarked that "the convents of Manila and the provinces were known to be overflowing with cash... the friars have become multimillionaires while religion has been maintained, and still is, in the diaper stage."⁹⁶ In his *Dasalan at Toksohan* he parodied the friars' purported desire for material possessions

⁹⁴ JOMAPA [Jose Maria Panganiban], "Kandeng or Memories of My Town" 15 May, 1892 in *La Solidaridad*, 4: 239-243.

⁹⁵ Mallat, *Les Philippines*, 242.

⁹⁶ del Pilar, *Frailocracy in the Philippines*, 16.

using the Hail Mary:

Aba guinoong Baria nakapupuno ka ng alcansia ang Fraile 'i sumasaiyo bukod ka niyang pinagpala at higit sa lahat, pinagpala naman ang kaban mong mapasok. Santa Baria Ina nang Deretsos, ipanalangin mo kaming huag anitan ngayon at cami-papatay. Siyaa naua.⁹⁷

Also from the same work, del Pilar accused the friars of embezzling money from many Filipinos. It was claimed that the friars amassed their great wealth through various abusive means.

T: Iba бага ang pagka Fraile nang isa sa pagka Fraile ng iba?

S: Dili kung di iisa rin ang pagka Fraile nila, ang pagdadaya lamang ang iba't iba.

T: Alin kaya ang punong dahilan nang ayaw pa tayong iuag nang Fraile?

S: Kaya ayaw nila tayong iuan ay dahil sa kayamanna't sa dati nila tayong alipin.

T: At ano pa kaya ang titiguisin nila sa atin?

S: Kung hindi na tayo makukual-tahan ay ating manga dugo hangang sa mamatay.⁹⁸

The Augustinian Response to the Secular Clergy

Before the outbreak of the Anti-Friar Literary Campaign after the execution of the three Filipino priests in 1872, the friars were already answering the various complaints against them by the secular clergy. Among the proposals made at this time was that all parish priests should be *amovibles ad nutum* or that either a bishop or religious superior should have the right to remove them from their

⁹⁷ del Pilar, *Toksohan at Dasalan*, 4.

⁹⁸ del Pilar, *Toksohan at Dasalan*, 6.

parishes without having to give any reason or conduct a formal ecclesiastical trial.⁹⁹ This proposal aimed to restore discipline within the religious orders where superiors should fulfill the role provided for them in general law of the Church. This practice was generally not observed in the Philippines. In effect, the proposal was not welcomed by the religious orders and was considered as an attack against them.

In response to Fr. Pedro Peláez's *Documentos importantes para la cuestion pendiente sobre la provision de curatos en Filipinas*, Celestino Mayordomo, OSA and Guillermo Agudo, OAR, published the *Importantísima cuestión que puede afectar gravamente a la existencia de las Islas Filipinas*.¹⁰⁰ The pamphlet was published in Madrid on November 14, 1863. The two friars published another pamphlet on the same year to complement the *Importantísima cuestión*. This pamphlet was entitled, *Complemento de los documentos del folleto de 14 noviembre de este año 1863, sobre cuestiones de curatos*. It included a refutation to an anonymous manuscript regarding the question on the immovability of the priests by divine and ecclesiastical right and the application of the divine laws to the immovability of the religious priests in the Philippines.¹⁰¹ The *Complemento* also contained Fr. Franciso Cuadrado, OSA's *refutación al manuscrito de un Sacerdote indigena de las Islas Filipinas*

⁹⁹ Guillermo Agudo, OAR and Celestino Mayordomo, OSA, *Importantísima cuestión que puede afectar gravamente a la existencia de las Islas Filipinas* (Madrid: Imp. de El Clamor Publico, 1863), 11-12 quoted in Schumacher, *Father Jose Burgos: A Documentary History* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1999), 16.

¹⁰⁰ Isacio Rodríguez, OSA, *Augustinian Monastery of Intramuros*, trans. Pedro G. Galende, OSA (Makati: Colegio de San Agustin, 1976), 242. The book carries a long introduction and was signed by the two friars. Fr. Rodriguez, OSA suggests that the contribution of the two friars was rather meagre since the document profusely availed the pamphlets previously published by Fr. Franciso Villacorta, OSA in his *Papeles interesantes a los regulares que en las Islas Filipinas administran la cura de almas*. This was published in 1826 in Madrid.

¹⁰¹ Rodríguez, *Augustinian Monastery*, 242.

acerca de la amovilidad de los Curas Regulares and the *Inamovilidad de los Religiosos Curas en Filipinas*.¹⁰² Additionally, the documents included in these two pamphlets were later on reproduced by Fr. Tomas Fito, the Commissary of the Augustinians. He published his *Documentos acerca de la secularización y amovilidad de los Curatos Regulares de Filipinas* in Madrid. Fr. Cuadrado also mentioned that an *Exposición* regarding the immovability of the regular clergy was also written by the Vicar Provincial of the Augustinians in Iloilo, Fr. Diego de Hoz.¹⁰³

Instead of settling the issues, the response of the Augustinians actually heightened the disdain of the secular clergy against the friars since they tended to downgrade the abilities and loyalty of the Filipino secular clergy. The friars' open criticisms against the secular clergy did not bring any fruitful results to either sides. In the *Importantísima cuestión*, the authors warned about the consequences of secularizing the parishes.

In the Mexican colony it was first asked, as the bishops of the Philippines now ask,...that the regular parish priests should be removable at the will of the diocesan prelates.... Once this was obtained... they asked and obtained the secularization of the parishes.... Not long after, the Morelos and the Hídalgo who were native priests gave the cry of independence...¹⁰⁴

The Friars' Polemics against the Propagandists

The Propaganda Movement (1880–1895) continued

¹⁰² Ibid., 243.

¹⁰³ G. de Santiago Vela, OSA, *Ensayo de una biblioteca ibero-americana de la Órden de San Agustín* Vol. 3 (Madrid-El Escorial, 1912-1931), 651 quoted in Rodríguez, *Augustinian Monastery*, 243.

¹⁰⁴ Agudo, OAR and Mayordomo, OSA, *Importantísima cuestión*, 15 quoted in Schumacher, *Jose Burgos*, 17.

to rally against the religious orders in the Philippines whom they considered as the sole culprit in the execution of Frs. Mariano Gomez, Jos Burgos, and Jacinto Zamora. At this time, they asserted that the only reason as to why the Philippines was wallowing in decadence was the religious orders who tirelessly kept many Filipinos under their influence. Needed reforms in the islands would only be implemented if the friars' powers were eliminated.

Additionally, many Filipinos, especially from the *ilustrados* called for the implementation of liberal reforms. Several pamphlets and books were also written by the friars to express their oppositions against liberalism in the Philippines. In 1872 just after the execution of the GOMBURZA, Fr. Casimiro Herrero¹⁰⁵ published his *Reseña que demuestra el fundamento y causas de la insurreccion del 20 de enero en Filipinas, con los medios de evitarla en lo sucesivo*.¹⁰⁶ Through this, Fr. Herrero aimed to assess the reasons and causes of the insurrection that happened on January 20, 1872. The reason for writing his book, aside from his analysis of the events of 1872, was to prevent any similar revolts that would compromise the Spanish powers in the islands. At the beginning of his book which he entitled, *Advertencia* (Warning), he wrote, "I dare to give to the public a work that, although lacking in erudition, abounds

¹⁰⁵ Casimiro Herrero, OSA was born in 1824 in Villameriel de Campos (Palencia, Spain). He studied humanities and philosophy in Valladolid and took his solemn vows on May 22, 1848. He arrived in the Philippines on April 2, 1851 and was assigned to the convent of Sto. Nino de Cebu in 1854. he became the bishop of Nueva Caceres from 1880 to 1886. See Elviro J. Pérez, OSA, *Catálogo bio-biográfico de los religiosos agustinos de la provincia del Santísimo Nombre de Jesús de las Islas Filipinas* (Manila: Colegio de Sto. Tomás, 1901), 478-479.

¹⁰⁶ Casimiro Herrero, OSA, *Reseña que demuestra el fundamento y causas de la insurrección del 20 de enero en Filipinas, con los medios de evitarla en lo sucesivo* (Madrid: Imprenta de Segundo Martinez, 1872). The book was published in Madrid and was subtitled with "*Escrita en conformidad con la opinion de todos españoles, por uno de larga residencia en el país.*"

in precise truths and logic to convince everyone who reads it without passion.”¹⁰⁷ More so, it is clear that the work is a clear indication of the author's patriotism.¹⁰⁸ In his analysis, he began by defining what freedom is. He explained,

La libertad en el hombre es un atributo ó propiedad tan esencial como la inteligencia, porque es el resultado de esta y de la voluntad, facultades que tienden constantemente a la felicidad, ó sea a la consecucion de todo aquello que, segun la apreciacion de su limitado racioncinio, puede formar parte mas o menos integrante de obleto complejo, cuya posesion es reputada por un bien.¹⁰⁹

In the above-mentioned passage, Fr. Herrero pointed out that freedom in man is an attribute or property as essential as intelligence. In later discussions, he would argue against the reforms implemented in the Philippines. In the last article of his book, he suggested about the necessity to protect the integrity of Spain in order to prevent any insurrection.¹¹⁰ Likewise, in 1874, another book by Fr. Herrero was published under a pseudonym. The book, *Filipinas ante la razón del indio, obra compuesta por el indigena Capitán Juan para utilidad de sus paisanos y publicada en castellano por el español P. Caro*, claimed to be a Spanish translation of a Tagalog work by the simple and loyal Capitán Juan.¹¹¹ The author aimed to counteract the ideas of liberty, equality, fraternity, which he considered

¹⁰⁷ Herrero, *Reseña que demuestra*, 5-6.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 121.

¹¹¹ Casimiro Herrero, OSA, *Filipinas ante la razón del indio obra compuesta por el indigena Capitán Juan para utilidad de sus paisanos y publicada en castellano por el español P. Caro* (Madrid: A. Gómez Fuentenebro, 1874).

as being nothing but “legitimate fruits of Protestantism.”¹¹² He first refuted Protestantism and liberalism and presented the conditions of the Philippines before Spain’s arrival which he further used to establish the legitimacy of Spanish sovereignty and the latter’s subsequent contribution to the development of the colony.¹¹³ Here, Fr. Herrero also asserted the necessity of conserving religion, order, civilization and progress under the Spanish sovereignty.

Under the character of Capitán Juan, he claimed that the ancient Filipinos were submissive and respectful in spite of the fact that they were completely guided by nature. The reason for this must be sought in the climate which is conducive to laziness and inaction which makes submissiveness a necessity rather than a virtue. He also justified the special penal code implemented on the indios where he said that “moral sanctions were not real punishments because of our imperfect acquaintance with honor, with morality, and with justice.” He therefore asserted that Spanish law considered it important to adopt the custom of flogging with the *bejuco* as a common punishment.¹¹⁴ His rather prejudiced judgment on the natives’ culture was presented at the end of his book:

What was their religión [the ancestors of the Filipinos]?

A mass of ridiculous superstitions, which deprived them of liberty and filled them with error.

Why should this society not be called peculiarly Filipino since it is located in our land and we are the majority?

Because we have contributed nothing of what constitutes civilized society; it is the Spaniards who

¹¹² John Schumacher, SJ, *The Propaganda Movement (1880-1895): The Creation of a Filipino Consciousness, The Making of the Revolution* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1997), 214.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ Herrero, *Filipinas ante la razón*, 109-111; 137-138 quoted in Schumacher, *Propaganda Movement*, 215.

have done it all.¹¹⁵

The Augustinians and Rizal's *Noli me Tangere*

The publication of Jose Rizal's *Noli me Tangere* was met with resentment and suspicions among the friars and the Spanish officials in the archipelago. During this time, two Augustinian friars actively campaigned against Rizal's novels. The Augustinians, Salvador Font¹¹⁶ and Jose Rodriguez Fontvella¹¹⁷ took upon themselves to condemn the novel and to prevent its circulation. Fr. Fontvella wrote the *Cuestiones de sumo interes* which consisted of eight pamphlets. The first booklet appeared on July 18, 1888. Retana in his description of Fr. Fontvella said,

Some of those small pamphlets could not but make the public smile. Father Rodriguez was one of those extraordinary mystical friars living completely outside the real world. Thus everything looked to him sinful. He was always ready to condemn the great majority of newspapers. Regarding novels, naturally all. Even more candid ones were sinful to him. It is for this reason that we, sometimes call some of his pamphlets 'candid'. On the other hand, no one can doubt the apostolic zeal, the natural kindness, the elevated and

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 274, 277 quoted in Schumacher, *Propaganda Movement*, 215.

¹¹⁶ Fr. Salvador Font joined the Augustinians at the age of 19. He received his religious habit in 1863 in the Augustinian College in Valladolid. In 1869 he was ordained a priest and was assigned at the convent in Guadalupe where he studied the Tagalog language. See Pérez, *Catálogo bio-biográfico*, 540-541.

¹¹⁷ Fr. José Rodríguez Fontvella was born in Valdesoto in Asturias in 1849. He professed his vows in Valladolid on October 7, 1865. In 1872, he was ordained to priesthood in Manila and was assigned as the parish priest in Pulilan (1873), Paombon (1875), Pateros (1877), and Calumpit (1882). In 1885, he was assigned prior at the Convento de Guadalupe. He died on July 18, 1893. See *Ibid.*, 551.

humanitarian sentiments of Fr. Rodríguez, an exemplary and completely virtuous man, a friar, in a word, whom no one, without doing him injustice, could favorably criticize. It is not surprising, therefore, that his death has been greatly felt in the Philippines. He carries to his tomb nothing but blessings. He was a saint rather than a man.¹¹⁸

The Augustinian Fr. Santiago Vela also evaluated the work of Fr. Rodríguez. He noted that,

...these pamphlets...have been strongly criticized by Spaniards both progressive and separatist, represented by *La Solidaridad* under the pretext of fomenting the sectarian campaign against the religious corporation of the Philippines...although he was very well intentioned, his propagandistic pamphlets were untimely, considering the circumstances of the moment.¹¹⁹

Furthermore, at the time of Spanish rule, all local books and newspapers were censored and no book could be introduced into the country without the approval of the *Comision Permanente de Censura*.¹²⁰ With the help of many of his friends, Rizal was able to smuggle his novels into the country. But this did not prevent the friars from obtaining a copy of it. Archbishop Pedro Payo, OP, sent a copy to the rector of the University of Santo Tomas for judgment. The committee appointed by the rector declared the novel as “heretical, impious and scandalous in the religious order, and anti-patriotic, subversive of public order, offensive to the government of Spain and to its method of procedure in

¹¹⁸ W.E. Retana, *Aparato bibliografico*, III, 241 quoted in Rodríguez, *Augustinian Monastery*, 248.

¹¹⁹ Santiago Vela, *Ensayo*, VI, 631-632 quoted in Rodríguez, *Augustinian Monastery*, 249.

¹²⁰ Schumacher, *Propaganda Movement*, 92.

these Islands in the political order.”¹²¹

Salvador Font's *Filipinas Problema Fundamental*¹²²

After the declaration of the committee assigned by the rector of the University of Santo Tomas, the *Comision Permanente de Censura* was asked to give a final decision on whether the *Noli me Tangere* was to be allowed to enter into the archipelago. The Augustinian friar, Salvador Font, who was a member of the *Comision*, prepared the report on December 29, 1887. In his report, he firmly recommended the prohibition of the book.¹²³

Later on, in 1891, he reprinted his censure in his book which he anonymously published, the *Filipinas Problema Fundamental por un Español de larga residencia en aquellas islas*. The book, however, was strongly criticized by the enemies of the friars. Here, Fr. Font clarified, “This pamphlet is nothing more than a warning that I give to all lovers of national integrity.”¹²⁴ He began by pointing out the problem as to why the Philippines lagged behind other colonies such as England's Hong Kong, Singapore and Colombo, Holland's Java, and France's Tonkin. He wrote:

Tenemos la agricultura rudimentaria
o abandonada. De veintiseis millones de
hectareas de terreno cultivable solo hay
cultivados dos o tres millones, y la mayor

¹²¹ W.E. Retana, *Vida y escritos del Dr. Jose Rizal* (Madrid: Victoriano Suarez, 1907), 128-129 quoted in Schumacher, *Propaganda Movement*, 93.

¹²² Salvador Font, OSA, *Filipinas Problema Fundamental por un Español de larga residencia en aquellas islas* (Madrid: Imprenta de Don Luis Aguado, 1891).

¹²³ Schumacher, *Propaganda Movement*, 94.

¹²⁴ Font, *Filipinas Problema Fundamental*, 8. Fr. Font wrote the following at the beginning of his book: “Este folleto no es mas que una voz de ¡alerta! Que damos a todos los amantes de nuestra integridad nacional.”

parte esta cultivado por los frailes, que son los unicos que han hecho alli alo determinado y permanente. Los chinos corrompen el comercio y falsifican todas industrias, y la mayor parte de los frutos del pais producidos con el sudor del indigena, son arrebatados por manos extranjeras.¹²⁵

He pointed out that the abandonment of agriculture as well as the corruption of the Chinese brought negative effects on the economy of the islands. He said that of the sixteen million hectares of land, only two or three million was cultivated and mostly by the friars who were the only ones who made something concrete and permanent efforts. Consequently, he also criticized the reforms initiated by the government as nothing but a “foolish encouragement to the progressives or the filibusters.”¹²⁶

In his demonstration, he cited the passages, as well as, the pages from the *Noli* which contain the respective attacks. For instance, he quoted several pages from the *Noli* which purportedly attack the doctrines of the Catholic Church:

En la pagina 32. Niega el dogma católico de la *Comunión de los Santos*, y se burla de la intercession de éstos delante de Dios en favor de la Iglesia militante.

Pagina 67. Niega rotundamente la existencia del Purgatorio, y desarrolla las ideas luteranas y calvinistas sobre esta material que, como es sabido, están en complete contradiccin con nuestras creencias nacionales.¹²⁷

With regard to his censure of the *Noli* he summarized that the novel was a direct attack on:

...the religion of the state, [and]

¹²⁵ Font, *Filipinas Problema Fundamental*, 5-6.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 23.

institutions and persons worthy of respect because of their official character, [but also] the book is full of foreign doctrines and teachings, and its overall effect is to inspire in the submissive and loyal sons of Spain in these distant islands a deep and burning hatred for the Mother Country. For it sets above her foreign nations, especially Germany, for which the author of the *Noli me tangere* seems to have a special predilection. His only objective is the independence of the country.¹²⁸

These assertions, nevertheless, were met with various criticisms especially from the followers of Rizal and his fellow reformers. Marcelo del Pilar reacted that the censor (Fr. Font) omitted words that completed and justified the author's thought. The simple perusal and comparison with the censored book were, he said, enough to show the ignorance and bad faith of the censor.¹²⁹

Fr. Santiago Vela, moreover, offered an analysis of Fr. Font's book and as to why Fr. Font wrote it.

Fr. Font left the archipelago in circumstances hardly favorable to the pacific dominion in the Islands, due to the anti-Spanish demonstration held in May, 1888, whose consequences are well known to those dedicated in evaluating the latest events in the Spanish-dominated Philippines. The task demanded from our biographee in the court require a high-caliber courage. On one side, there was obvious need to change the fast-growing opinion of those who battled for the

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 23-42 quoted in Schumacher, *The Propaganda Movement*, 94. The researcher uses the English translation of Schumacher in this part of Font's book.

¹²⁹ Marcelo H. del Pilar, "Before Monkish Hatred in the Philippines," 736.

emancipation of the Islands. On the other, Fr. Font did not fall short in the expectation of those who placed him there to reestablish normalcy between the peninsular and the Filipinos. No one can ignore his untiring efforts to achieve this purpose, as attested by the witness who testified of his relentless participation, either oral or written, among the elements of Sagasta and Canovas Government in favor of the Spanish cause in that remote blossom of our crown.¹³⁰

Other Notable Friars

The Anti-Friar Manifesto of 1888 called for the total expulsion of Archbishop Pedro Payo, OP, and the religious orders. The demonstrators upheld that the friars were solely responsible for the failure of implementing reforms and progress. Among the Augustinians who offered their opinion with regard to situations on the islands were Fr. Antonio Fermentino and Fr. Tomás Gresa.

The pamphlet *Filipinas en su yugo* by Fr. Fermentino was published under the pen-name, D. Agustin. It was originally printed in *El Porvenir de Visayas* and reproduced in some Madrid daily newspapers. It was separately published in 1888. Fr. Santiago Vela assessed that, “Fr. Fermentino, added this most remarkable booklet containing the picture of the real native and proposing what is more in accordance with his temper and likes; not by compelling him to enter into a new path forgetting the well-trodden one, which, till the present, had led him to comfort and prosperity not enjoyed by other countries under non-Christian dominion.”¹³¹ In this pamphlet, Fr. Fermentino warned about the dangerous

¹³⁰ Santiago Vela, *Ensayo*, III, 643-644 quoted in Rodriguez, *Augustinian Monastery*, 255-256.

¹³¹ Santiago Vela, *Ensayo*, II, 409 quoted in Rodriguez, *Augustinian Monastery*, 254.

results of a badly organized campaign for reforms and the erroneous notion on progress which man wanted to be forcefully implemented in the country.¹³²

In connection with this, Fr. Tomás Gresa also commented on the ideas of Fr. Fermentino in a letter to Fr. Mariano Isar.¹³³ The pamphlet, he said, is a timely suggestion on the conditions of agriculture and industry in the islands. He affirmed the reasons for the deteriorating situations and the means to solve them. On the contrary, in his commentary, he offered a defense for the natives and their present situation.

The portrayal of some characters of the Archipelago, as well as the manner, abuses and excesses of the natives are drawn with too dark colors. Even if there is certain degree of truthfulness, as affirmed in the booklet, the excesses are neither frequent nor as common as the author assumes. The publication of the booklet, as far as style, wording and expression are concerned aside from the above-mentioned inaccuracies and errors, was neither timely nor convenient. Still worse, it can be used by the wicked parties, as a powerful weapon to prolong the war. Had the above-mentioned items been drawn with more sobriety, and less gloomy colors, a more polished style, and a greater stress on religious matters, it might have turned out of great interest to the country.¹³⁴

The Newspaper Project as an Attempt to Uphold the Interests of the Order

The growing turmoil in the islands made the friars realize the need to devise a better solution for the religious in

¹³² *Ibid.*, II, 409 quoted in Rodríguez, *Augustinian Monastery*, 254.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ Archivo del Estudio Teológico Agustiniiano Valladolid, leg. 4.396, fol. 23rv quoted in Rodríguez, *Augustinian Monastery*, 254. Hereafter cited as AVall.

the Islands. The friars were aware of the various accusations being leveled against them.

In 1889, Fr. Font was sent back to Madrid with the purpose of establishing a new daily which aimed to uphold the traditional policies, to look after the interests of the Spanish nation in the Islands, and to protect the prestige and work of the religious orders.¹³⁵ Upon his arrival, Fr. Font immediately set out the plans for the inauguration of the newspaper. Unfortunately, the Provincial Fr. Tomas Gresa changed his mind and suggested calmness, since the situation in the Philippines was growing more and more difficult for the friars.¹³⁶ Fr. Gresa, later on, argued that the situation in the Philippines could not be resolved by a new daily in Madrid. He believed that the problems in the Philippines were too serious to be held back with simple defensive campaign. Also, there were problems which the government in Madrid could not resolve due to their ignorance of the real political situation in the Islands.¹³⁷ The project of founding a newspaper to defend the interests of the friars was therefore not realized.

Responses to the Various Accusations Against the Friars

The friars and the religious orders were blamed to be the main reason for the Filipino people's revolt against Spain. The anti-friar character of the revolution culminated with the violence inflicted on the friars. Though not totally new to the revolutionaries, the call for the total expulsion of the friars from the Philippines became violent and calamitous.

The Friars' Political Influence

Fray Manuel Gutiérrez, prior provincial of the

¹³⁵ AVall, leg. 143, fol. 121rv quoted in Rodríguez, *Augustinian Monastery*, 256.

¹³⁶ AVall. Leg. 143, fols. 125-130 quoted in Rodríguez, *Augustinian Monastery*, 256

¹³⁷ Rodríguez, *Augustinian Monastery*, 257.

Augustinians, together with the superiors of the religious orders in the Philippines including the Jesuits, wrote a lengthy defense to answer the accusations against them. This document is known as the Friar Memorial of 1898 published in Manila on April 21, 1898. Fray Manuel Gutiérrez, provincial of the Augustinians, Fray Gilberto Martín, commissary-provincial of the Franciscans, Fray Francisco Ayarra, provincial of the Recollects, Fray Cándido García Valles, vice-provincial of the Dominicans and Pio Pí, superior of the mission of the Society of Jesus were the signatories of this exposition.¹³⁸

The Memorial was an exposition of the threats facing the Spanish authority in the archipelago and the “conspiracy” to defame the monastic orders especially during the outbreak of the revolution. One of the major oppositions of the friars was against the accusation that they meddled with the governance of the Islands through which they insisted to have been always submissive and obedient to the Spanish monarch.¹³⁹ Through this Memorial, they presented the various achievements they had made in the name of the Spanish government. They helped in incorporating the islands to the Spanish crown, defended the natives against the abuses of some Spanish officials, promoted progress in material, intellectual and spiritual life of the Filipinos, propagated Catholicism, and nurtured morality among the inhabitants of the islands. The religious, moreover, were the “only permanent and deeply-rooted Spanish institution in the islands, with a suitable and rigorous organization perfectly adapted to these regions.”¹⁴⁰ They admitted that the very reason for persecuting them was their religious and political significance. Additionally, the friars and Jesuits claimed that

¹³⁸ Manuel Gutiérrez, OSA, et al., “The Friar Memorial of 1898,” in *The Philippine Islands*, ed. and annotated by Emma Helen Blair and James Alexander Robertson 52: 227-286. The memorial was addressed to the Minister of Ultramar in Spain.

¹³⁹ “Friar Memorial of 1898,” 228-229.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 238.

they:

...neither have we any influence over the press; we do not possess a nucleus of attached partisans to shout for us and overexcite so-called public opinion: in one word, we are without all the methods that are used in modern public life to gain respect and fear, to influence the nation, and cause all the shots of slander or ignorance to strike ineffectually against us.¹⁴¹

In their analysis, they pointed out that attacking the religious orders was a tactic of the filibusters since if they accused the government employees, or the military, or the governors or the directors of the treasury and attributed the insurrection to them rather than the friars, they would have lost any support from the peninsulars who would undoubtedly act in Spain's defense.¹⁴²

In their defense against their detractors, they denied that they committed abuse in exacting parochial fees and challenged their accusers to consult the laws of the Church; that they were hostile to education and the advancement of knowledge; and that they despised the intelligent men of the country and made them the object of every kind of persecution.¹⁴³

The Morality of the Friars

With the regard to the allegations of immoralities, they strongly opposed their accusers in this manner:

And so long as our systematic accusers do not prove that the orders consent and do not check the sins, in great part humanly inevitable--considering the conditions under

¹⁴¹ "Friar Memorial of 1898," 231.

¹⁴² "Friar Memorial of 1898," 243.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 247-248.

which those dedicated to the ministry live--of the very few religious who have the misfortune and weakness to fall, they have no right to dishonor us and to cry out against what we are first to lament and try to correct.¹⁴⁴

In this, the friars also admitted that though there were some who violated their vows, it is, however, unfair to identify the religious orders as immoral. They further argued that the "outcry against the vices and immoralities of the regulars seemed to be inspired by Protestantism and anti-clericalism."¹⁴⁵

The Wealth of the Friars

With respect to their wealth and possessions, they wrote, "We shall not rebut the shamelessness of supposing that part of our property has a criminal origin, and that we are certain despots in our rural estates who suck blood of our tenants by various methods, an infamy so often refuted with authentic data of overwhelming proof."¹⁴⁶ More importantly, they also denied the allegations that they were the absolute masters, not only of consciences, but also of the whole archipelago. Similarly, they refuted the claim that they controlled the government as if it were the "executor of their will."¹⁴⁷

In trying to explain the situation of the islands especially the various causes that led to the outbreak of the revolution in 1896, the latter part of the memorial was dedicated to condemn the origins of the revolution. They emphasized that masonry, Spanish officials who maligned the religious and the *ilustrados*, played an active role in propagating anti-friar propagandas in the Philippines.

In the final analysis, the Friar Memorial did not

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 249.

¹⁴⁵ *Ib id.*, 248.

¹⁴⁶ "Friar Memorial of 1898," 251.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

only aim to refute the accusations against them, but that it desired to give an account before the Spanish officials that the religious orders, as well as the Jesuits, were in no way responsible for the outbreak of the 1896 revolution. The exposition they made wanted to clarify their positions and the difficulties they experienced due to the anti-friar attitudes of the time. Thus, they candidly wrote,

We have come to the islands to preach and to preserve the Christian faith, and to instruct these natives with the celestial food of the sacraments and the maxims of the gospel; to prove that the principal intent of Spain, on incorporating this territory with its crown was to Christianize and civilize the natives.¹⁴⁸

The Augustinian Friars' Reactions against Masonry

Additionally, masonry was blamed to have played a significant part in the emancipation of most of the Spanish colonies including the Philippines. Masonic lodges in the nineteenth century served as centers of liberal conspiracies against the clerical and reactionary governments in Spain.¹⁴⁹ The masonic influence in the nationalist movement, which held anti-clerical measures, essentially compromised the position of the religious orders.

In 1897, Fr. Eduardo Navarro,¹⁵⁰ the commissary procurator of the Augustinians, published his *Filipinas*

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 264.

¹⁴⁹ John N. Schumacher, SJ, "Philippine Masonry to 1890," in *Asian Studies* Vol. 43 No. 1 (2007): 328.

¹⁵⁰ Fr. Eduardo Navarro was born in Valladolid and joined the Augustinian Order when he just seventeen years old. He received the Augustinian habit in 1860 and was ordained as priest in Manila in 1866. On September 9, 1885, he was assigned as rector of the Monastery in Escorial. Afterwards, on November 4, 1887 he was appointed as the Augustinians' *comisario-procurador* in Madrid. See Pérez, *Catálogo bio-biográfico*, 532-534.

estudio de algunos de actualidad.¹⁵¹ The work aimed to assess the events in the Philippines to which the friars were involved. At the beginning of the book, Fr. Navarro condemned the insurrection in the Philippines as an act of ingratitude which was inspired by the activities of Masonry. He wrote:

La insurrección filipina, colmo de ingratitud y conjunto detestable de bajas pasiones alimentadas y excitadas por las logias, adquirió desde los primeros momentos tanta magnitud, y formas tan inesperadas y alarmantes, que á no conocer al indio con todas sus deficiencias por una parte y por la otra lo indomable del genio español y las energías y vitalidad de esta Patria amada, podría haberse creído era llegado el instante de que quedase sepultado en las ribers de aquellas Islas el esfuerzo titánico y constante de más de tres centurias.¹⁵²

The tenth chapter of the book exclusively dealt on masonry. His discussions began with the historical development of masonry in Europe and on how it entered the Spanish soil. Masonry reached the Philippines through some Spanish officials who eventually succeeded in influencing many Filipinos.¹⁵³ Thus, he argued that the works of the propagandists, as well as, the birth of the *Katipunan*, were effects of masonic activities. He also mentioned that the works of Jose Rizal namely, the *Noli me Tangere* and the *El Filibusterismo*, manifested a perversion in character and

¹⁵¹ Eduardo Navarro, OSA, *Filipinas estudio de algunos asuntos de actualidad por el R.P. procurador y comisario* (Madrid: Imprenta de la Viuda de M. Minuesa de los Ríos, 1897). The work was dedicated to the procurators of the Dominicans, Franciscans, and the Augustinian Recollects namely, Fr. Matías Gómez, OP, Fr. Cecilio García, OFM, and Fr. Juan Gómez, OAR.

¹⁵² Navarro, *Filipinas estudio de algunos*, viii.

¹⁵³ Navarro, *Filipinas estudio de algunos*, 222-241.

morals. The attacks against the friars, who upheld order and morality among the people, were generally aimed at weakening their authority. He thus concluded that the attackers of the friars were “subversive, ambitious, and ungrateful.”¹⁵⁴

Furthermore, when the Americans eventually gained control of the islands, the demand to expel the friars was mostly expressed by the affluent citizens of the Philippines. During this time, it was concluded that the friars were responsible for Spain’s loss of the archipelago. The American government through the Schurman (1899) and Taft (1900) Commissions investigated on the issue and interviewed some citizens, mostly from the *ilustrados* and the wealthy class, who were generally against the friars. The opponents of the friars argued that their continuous presence in the Philippines would compromise the peace and order under the new government.¹⁵⁵

To answer this accusation, Fr. Eladio Zamora, OSA published his book, *Las corporaciones religiosas en Filipinas* in 1901.¹⁵⁶ Here, Fr. Zamora looked into the problem closely through providing historical arguments. He argued that the religious orders in the Philippines significantly contributed to its development and were greatly esteemed by the people.¹⁵⁷ The religious orders, he said, had been important in the pacification of the islands for the Spanish crown. Right from the time of Fr. Urdaneta, the Augustinians, had already

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 256.

¹⁵⁵ Quilatan, “Friar Hacienda,” 140.

¹⁵⁶ Fr. Eladio Zamora, OSA received his religious habit in 1868 in Valladolid. In 1875, he was sent to Manila. He studied the Visayan language and was eventually assigned to the parishes in Pototan, Mina, Guimbal, and Ivisan from 1877 until 1884. He returned to Spain in 1893 and was appointed as vice-rector at the Colegio del Escorial for two years. See Pérez, *Catálogo bio-biográfico*, 504.

¹⁵⁷ Eladio Zamora, OSA, *Las corporaciones religiosas en Filipinas* (Valladolid: Imprenta y Librería Religiosa de Andrés Martín, 1901), 404-405.

offered their services for Spain. More so, he asked that if they were the main cause of Spain's loss of the Philippines, the friars would have been very "ignorant and unconscious."¹⁵⁸ To justify his arguments, he wrote:

Las órdenes monásticas, que cooperaron á la Conquista del Archipiélago, y formaron los pueblos, evangelizaron y civilizaron á los individuos, no podían ignorar lo que convenía á los intereses del país, de la patria y a sus propios intereses....¹⁵⁹

He also enumerated the various hardships that the religious orders encountered in order to fulfill their duties. Through his exposition, he desired to defend the religious orders who above all love God, their homeland, and their adopted country. Accordingly, it is, therefore, fitting to say the friars were "hyper-patriotic" and "ultra-Spanish" who tirelessly represented Spain and her interests.¹⁶⁰ It was, however, the machinations of masonry that put the friars into bad light. Masonry, he argued, desired to attack the friars' exalted positions in the Philippine society by throwing various accusations against them.¹⁶¹ In the end, Zamora would assert the friars could never compromise their love for the motherland and would always be faithful to her interests. It was those who had their own interests in the islands that constantly blamed the friars for Spain's loss.

Conclusion

The proliferation of anti-friar writings both in the islands and in Spain did not stop the friars from responding to the various attacks thrown against them. In the discussion of their responses, it is important to note that the friars'

¹⁵⁸ Zamora, *Las corporaciones*, 427.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 429.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 431-435.

responses often had the tendency to downgrade the Filipinos which, of course, did not do well with the latter. In their attempt to establish the legitimacy of Spanish sovereignty in the islands, the friars were at times inclined to demand gratitude because of their claims on the Filipinos' progress under Spanish rule. The books, pamphlets, memorials and other writings produced by the friars at this period generally reflected their patriotism and their loyalty to Spain which was precisely one of the main reasons for their enemies' aversion toward them. Some of the friars, in their desire to preserve their presence in the islands, argued that liberalism posed a great danger to Spanish sovereignty. They often put the blame on the rise of Masonry among the elite and learned Filipinos as well as the Spanish officials who slandered them. It is also important to note that there was a particular time among the Augustinians when they rather preferred silence than directly combating the charges against them. This is exemplified in the manner Fr. Gresa decided on calmness rather than direct fight against their critics.

The Augustinian response generally began with the achievements and developments that they had contributed to the Filipinos as what was common among the religious orders at that time. Through this, they aimed to justify their cause and mission. Among the interesting conclusions that may be drawn from this is the cooperation present among the religious orders at that time. Many Augustinians coordinated with other religious orders in order to present their arguments and response. More so, the answer of the Augustinians did not just exclusively desire to vindicate their own name but also the religious orders in general.

The Anti-Friar Literary Campaign was most of the time shrouded by exaggerations in order to gain sympathy and greater following. The friars also recognized the need to respond to the various criticisms. They also felt the need to maintain their dignity since the campaign had already

tarnished their revered positions.

The nineteenth century Philippines may be specifically characterized by the arguments between the friars and their enemies. Moreover, the accusations against the friars especially with regard to their political positions often came from the *ilustrados* and the wealthy class of the Philippine society. It is well to note though that the anti-friar literature in the nineteenth century does not reflect the general attitude of the Filipino people toward the friars.

Popular religiosity and Pope Francis

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The Philippine movie *Santa Niña* by the director Emmanuel Palo moved me in a deep way. In the film you can check the scope and extension of popular religiosity, how it spreads around, the disaffection of the clergy regarding it, and also the maximum expression of devotion and offering oneself to God in the crucifixion of the holy baby's father (Coco Martin).

Until 1958 nobody spoke or wrote about popular religiosity, in spite of the fact that it was always alive and flourishing in every part to the world since the beginning of times. From 1958 until now something was generated and we have walked a long way on the nature and forms, shapes, art and history of popular religiosity. There are many books and papers about popular religiosity in Catholicism, and in the other religions of the world.

Nevertheless, it is very difficult to describe this dimension of religious life called popular religiosity, or unofficial religion, invisible religion, common religion,

religious populism. The mountain of books signal an aspect of being religious nor in the formal religious beliefs, systems and institutions as L. Schneider wrote in 1958, when he was the first to mention the notion of popular religiosity.¹

That's why to understand today's topic I will state the minute definition of popular religiosity adopted by the 3rd General Conference of the Latin American bishops, in Puebla de los Angeles (Mexico, 1979). Here is the text:

By religion of the peoples, popular religiosity or popular piety, we understand the group of profound beliefs sealed by God, from the basic attitudes derived from the convictions and the expressions which manifest them. It is about the way or of the cultural existence that the religion adopts in a determined group of peoples. The religion of the Latin American peoples, in its most cultural characteristic, is the expression of the Catholic faith. It is a popular Catholicism.²

This definition, as one can consider, does not worry about the polarization among harsh opponents and condescending supporters. It is not a question of disagreement, but of the reality that the former (the intellectual orthodoxy: religious, priests in touch with the poor, incurable sick people, the marginalized, the ignorant) are attracted by the tips of a two part magnet. There is a religion for the professional, the experts in the contents of dogma and the priests.³

I'll develop my lecture according to the

¹ SCHNEIDER, LOUIS – SANFORD DORNBUSCH, *Popular Religion: Inspirational Books in America*. Chaicago, U.P., 1958.

² PUEBLA. III. General Conference of the Latin American Bishops. *Final Document*. 1979. Nr. 444.

³ MOUW, RICHARD J., *Consulting the faithful: What Christian Intellectuals Can Learn from popular Religion*. Grands Rapids, Eerdmans, 1994.

epistemological and hermeneutical thought of the classical books by the famous Canadian philosopher and theologian Bernard Lonergan.⁴

Beliefs, attitudes, and expressions give rise to certain cultural patterns which determine the spiritual idiosyncrasy of a people. It is religion that shapes culture, as popular religiosity touches everything in its way: society, economy, art, education. The opposite phenomenon to what happens today: culture shapes religion. That could would be nothing but culture (laws, decrees, customs, advertisements, consumerism) invades religion and takes away its essence. At least popular religion, despite its excesses, keeps the faith in God and in its own way fulfills the rites, commandments, processions, pilgrimages and promises.

The Grace of God is manifested through socio-cultural events that today we do not approve. The Hispanic period in Latin America, the Philippines, and some African countries planted the Catholic Faith. Complain of the Spaniards and their methods are useless, as protest against the evangelical and sects, and their methods. God gave us the grace to know the work of redemption through His Son Jesus Christ, and strengthened our lives by the gift of the Holy Spirit in a spiritual or mystical Body, the Church. God intervened in the wonderful experiences that lead to beliefs. That is the case of Catholicism in Korea, introduced by laymen rather than priests.

The aim of this conference is to analyze what is happening today in society and in the Church to compare with the current Pope's efforts to transmit the Gospel. In

⁴ LONERGAN, BERNARD, *Insight* (1957) and *Method in Theology* (1972). I mean "classic" in the sense of TRACY, DAVID W., *The Analogical Imagination. Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism*. New York, Crossroad, 2000, p. 99-153. See also SANTAGADA, OSVALDO D., *Be Attentive. Be Intelligent. Be Rational. Be Responsible. The Transcendental Precepts according to the Method of Bernard Lonergan*, in *Dios es Espíritu, luz y amor. Homenaje a R. Ferrara*. Buenos Aires, Facultad de Teología, 2005, p. 477-496.

addition, we want to propose some actions to move those persons blocked by situations that they fail to understand.

Popular Beliefs Today and Changes

There are now many social transformations. These transformations have affected our present culture in such a way that we are, with the conscience or without it, living in a new world in which new processes and new differentiations occur. The social changes which I mean are, first, in the family. Everybody knows that family is not what it used to be. The patriarchal style of the Roman Empire is finished. The hypocritical style of the British Empire, also. The macho style of Latin American and Spanish speaking countries has died. Women have a new role in the family, society and Church as well. The changes I speak of are revolutionary. Nevertheless, the family stands firm, and only a higher horizon opens to it. Secondly, changes occur too in the educational field because the new technology offers a new viewpoint as how things should go with children, kids and young people from kindergarten children to doctoral candidates. Man makes men. The circumstances have changed and developed. Thirdly, there are the transformations in science and arts, be they history, sociology, physics, chemistry, neurology, politics, law, economy, and a lot of new departments of scientific thought. They had a rude beginning, and can experiment decline or progress. We must remember that these changes are changes of meaning.

Changes in the way we think of family, education and science have not touched popular beliefs. Why is it so? Popular beliefs, although concrete, come forth by a spiritual dynamic, which is a constant element in human nature. And the changes I mentioned need to be verified as to what extent they are authentic or unauthentic, because they are variable elements in human historicity. Popular beliefs and changes in culture are very complex because they are components

of a concrete human reality. Authenticity or unauthenticity are the keystones for a culture and a religion to progress or regress. People nowadays use to think that everything that comes from the *scientific* or religious worlds mean *progress*. That's not the case. Men and women who deal with science, education and family fields and with popular beliefs must demonstrate previously or afterwards that their insights come from persons who have generated in themselves a right affectivity. Authenticity springs from true love and generates progress in the culture, society and religion. On the contrary, unauthenticity, which bears the fruit of hate, violence and division, brings about a decline of societies, cultures, and religions.

The same happens with the changes in the field of the different religions, first in the Catholic Church. For those among us who belong to the previous age from Vatican Council II, things were clear and sound. Everybody knew his or her task, the laws were obeyed and the authority was not put into question. That does not mean that there was a uniformity of thought, but in the common lives the Church appeared as a monolithic group. We belonged to a Church that recognized the power of reason and supremacy of the supernatural, but had no idea of human historicity. In those days nobody spoke about community, although everybody talked about the Church as institution because reaching out the spirit of community is an achievement of men and women. One can build a community only with love. The big mistake of Christians and other religious leaders is to have thought that by spelling the word community, it magically created it. New streams of modern thought have changed religions, and the Church as well. I am referring to individualism, secularism and materialism, which seem to destroy the roots of Christian and other religions values. Let us think about the millions of men and women who live in extreme poverty because of that. These are the people from the periphery, expression loved by Pope Francis,

that is to say, far away from the main stream of dominant cultures. In this sense, Christians from the poor of Thailand, the Philippines, Japan and Malaysia can do a lot of good to those from the “center.” There are now currents of relativism and subjectivism which oppose the established objective moral order based on natural law, and are indifferent to religious freedom. And those currents entered slowly in the ministers or head of religious groups. For the Church and other religious groups to overcome the decline of society and cultures is the beginning of true religious behavior and of unity and dialogue in the world, unless they use popular beliefs as a way of easy gains.

There is also a new chapter of changes unprecedented. These are the changes in the earth nature itself. New inventions and the abuse of natural resources have resulted in climate change, terrible tsunamis, new earthquakes, air pollution, spoiled waters, and a change in ecology itself.⁵ Species of animals, birds and fish are disappearing, the eternal ices are melting down; ocean waters are thought to flood flat cities in a near future, and some resources of the earth have been destroyed. There are places which are now poisoned and, for that reason, peoples of different parts of the world have died or are seriously ill. This predation of the earthly nature caused by men has also an impact on the popular beliefs. Previously, people thought of nature as *sacred*. To destroy nature was equal to infringe on the realm of God or the divine. There are today persons who are not interested on the generosity with the poor because their only focus is to get more money. Let us remember that nature is what man received at birth. On the other hand, changes come from what man makes of man.

How is it possible that people, instead of diminishing their beliefs in the divinity, have increased them, in spite of so many changes in society, groups and nature? The intentions of many empiricist philosophers have not

⁵ FRANCIS, Letter *Laudato si'*. 2014, passim.

achieved their goals. People are more religious than ever. Surely, there are less *churched* persons, but that belongs to the field of the failure of ministers to increase the level of their teaching procedures. I cannot prove with statistic what I am saying, but it is an overwhelmingly reality of which we are witnesses. In any case, the unauthenticity of persons, the lack of affective conversion, are some of the causes that make unauthentic a religious practice or tradition.

The Current Confusion: The Disenchantment

Transformations mentioned above have given rise to a widespread disenchantment of the peoples around the world. Others will say that today's social changes have given rise to alienation.⁶ That's why many people seek religion, at times like mistaken myth and mistaken magic, to overcome hate and resentment.⁷ There is, of course, the distortion of human silliness, weakness, and wickedness. However, men and women need some kind of belief to appropriate their religious treasure. Sociologists treat beliefs as *sociology of knowledge*. Be it so, it is possible for a person to have beliefs because one has inner experiences, insights, and judgments. However, each person has an enormous amount of experiences inherited from their ancestors or even belonging to the living memory of the peoples. Beliefs are a kind of assent to what others have discovered all over the history. We can have an immense crowd of witnesses who accept the truths we believe in. Nevertheless, we must verify our beliefs in an ongoing process of authentication, to ascertain

⁶ WESTBROOK, DAVID A., *City of gold: an Apology for global Capitalism in a time of Discontent*. New York, Routledge, 2004. SCHACHT, RICHARD, *Social Structure, Social Alienation and Social Change*, in *American Philosophical Quarterly* 23 (1986) 1, p. 47ss.

⁷ LONERGAN, BERNARD, *Prolegomena to the Study of the Emerging Religious Consciousness of our Time*, in *A Third Collection, papers by B.L. Lonergan edited by Frederick Crowe*. New York, Paulist Press, 1985, nr. 5, p. 55ss.

that they come from true love and not from corruption and distortion.

How is disenchantment generated in people? Concrete life has been filled by the affection for the scientific, technological, and consumerism style. Furthermore, people are affected by the lies, distortions, widespread corruption, lust for power, the loss of the value of work, and a constant pursuit of pleasure, entertainment, fun and social invitations. You can add to this the current individual narcissism which is a love of the self. All this has caused a very complex spiritual fatigue to assume the elements belonging to religious beliefs. A lot of persons have transferred their power of judgment to others, which is a serious mistake.

This transference is easily found in how many persons are attracted by mistake to magic. There are a lot of frauds concerning concrete life going on. Beliefs are procrastinated and the tremendous fund of human religiosity cannot arrive to a real faith.

Faith is a knowledge that comes forth from the love of God. This is a higher level in our concrete lives. When we are in love we overcome every fatigue, because love is a dynamic strength that goes away from the unauthentic paths and begins to follow a true and right road. Love is of a real complexity, because contrary to what people—even learned people—think, love is not abstract, but concrete. And the concrete is always complex.⁸

That is why religious faith is different from theological assumptions. Theology can be unauthentic because of lack of love: that is lack of an affectivity ordered to the true and the good. You can read lots of theological books and never find a line giving you the impulse to love. Like with those in the scientific realm, there is a need to convert the affectivity,⁹

⁸ LONERGAN, BERNARD, *Finality, Love, Marriage*, in *Collection, Papers By Bernard Lonergan edited by Frederick Crowe*. New York, Herder, 1967. Nr. 2, p.16ss, esp. p.23.

⁹ SCANNONE, JUAN CARLOS, *Afectividad y método*, in *Stromata*

as to get into the state of being in love. Religious people have an intuition about what comes from love or not.

The issue for those who have a religious faith is how to pass their faith to the new generations in this world of historical transformations. There are now new insights about man and nature, about dialogue among men, about respect for other people styles and traditions. Nevertheless, we cannot rely only on our insights, experiences, and judgments of value. There exists also a hidden treasure in our hearts, accumulated from the wisdom of our ancestors, the experiences of the saints and mystics, the conscience of the people we belong to. There we can have the meanings and interpretations of a history of men and women who believe in God and have been in love with God.

This love of God and the love of God for us as well can give rise to a new way in family life, in union among nations, and in a renewed generosity for those who live marginalized, in poverty and in any sort of need. Because there is love to our family, love to our country, and to God. Love is simply a search of good.¹⁰ Love is also the first principle of the movement to attain the desired goods.¹¹ Besides, love is the principle of union among persons what St. Thomas Aquinas names *amor concupiscentiae* (community); and the principle of union with God in the beatific union, *amor amicitiae* (consummation).¹²

This effort to love God and be in love with Him has communal results: new inventions for the common good, new way of using the powers given by the polls, new ways to help the world to find how to spare the energies and resources of earthly nature.

Now it is easy to understand the reality of today's disenchantment of people, the sense of discontent.

65 (2009), p.173-186.

¹⁰ THOMAS AQUINAS, ST., *S.T., I-II, q. 25, a. 2 in c.*

¹¹ ID., *S.T., I-II, q. 26, a. 1*

¹² ID., *S.T., I-II, q.26, a. 4 in c.*

Disenchantment is a sense of discontent of the population that stem from a loss of authority of the leaders. The Roman Catholic Church has always been perceived by the collective conscience of many nations¹³ as an institution preserving the national collective memory and representing a basic ethical consensus on various choices, modes of feeling, and lifestyles. In this way, Catholicism has functioned as a type of civil religion. In recent years, however, the foundations for ethical consensus have faltered among the population in the key areas of family ethics, models for procreation, and the relationship between social solidarity and the logic of competition. At the same time, the mass media are becoming the true disciples of the Church, since they promote discourse on values and ethics in the absence of alternative social figures. Additionally, the media fill-in a growing void stemming from the breakdown of classic systems of thought like marxism, socialism, and liberalism. In front of this emptiness, people are in search of a belief deep enough to make them stay firm in their lives. So disenchantment increases popular beliefs in a slow but constant way.

Pope Francis' Efforts to Change Popular Beliefs into True Faith

Since the beginning of his mandate in 2013, Pope Francis has used the concept of periphery as a metaphor for social marginality. However, the notion of periphery also seems to target the asymmetries generated by the liberal version of globalization. Pope Francis' narrative has to be read in the broader context of the relation between religions and globalization. A way to analyze the role of religions consists in considering them as agencies defending the perspective of a universal community, putting into question the national political boundaries and contesting the existing global order. Understood in those terms, the concept of

¹³ Like Buddhism in other nations.

periphery is a powerful word, because it suggests that it is possible to get a wider perspective of the current state of the world looking from the margins rather than from the center. When Pope Francis was elected he said: It seems that my brother Cardinals have gone almost to the ends of the earth to get [a new bishop of Rome] (*finis terrae*).¹⁴ For the Roman Church, the United States of America are a kind of periphery. Let us remember that the task to make Catholicism acceptable to the American population (e. g.: bishop John Ireland¹⁵) was repeatedly condemned by the Holy See as a new heresy: the “Americanism.”¹⁶ The Church of Rome was opposed to any changes even small liturgical matters, which do not belong to the deposit of the Faith (*depositum fidei*). Fr Matteo Ricci (1552–1610), Jesuit missionary in China was seriously warned by the Roman superiors that the liturgical garments for Easter should be white and against any type of cult to the ancestors.¹⁷ Thereafter, the evangelization of those peoples was terribly damaged. The same happened in the XXth century with Fr. Vincent Lebbe (1877–1940), a Belgian missionary who asked permission not to use the white garments on Easter, because white is the color of grief among Chinese. He was obliged to travel to Rome and cardinal Franzelin sent him as a prisoner to the abbey of Saint Martin de Ligugé (and this happened during the antichristian movement in China called the war of the boxers: 1920–1928).¹⁸

The following is an interesting example of how Pope

¹⁴ March 13, 2013 The first words of the Pope.

¹⁵ IRELAND, JOHN, *The Church and Modern Society*. New York, Mc Bride and Co. [n.d.]

¹⁶ LEO XIII, *Letter encyclical* *Longinqua oceanis*. Jan., 6, 1895. ID., *Letter encyclical* *Testem benevolentiae*. Jan. 22, 1899.

¹⁷ CLEMENT XI, *Papal bull* *Ex illa die*, March 19, 1715. – BENEDICT XIV, *Papal bull* *Ex quo singulari*. July 11, 1742.

¹⁸ SOETENS, CLAUDE, *La vie de Vincent Lebbe*. Paris, Hachette, 1988, p. 108ss. – KLEIN, THORALF, *The case of the Boxer war*, en *Curch History* 82 (2013) 2, p. 399ss.

Francis unites popular beliefs (the margins) and faith (the center):

The Church loves you! [1] Be an active presence in the community, as living cells, as living stones. The Latin American Bishops wrote that the popular piety which you reflect is “a legitimate way of living the faith, a way of feeling that we are part of the Church” (Aparecida Document, 264). This is wonderful! [Popular religion is] a legitimate way of living the faith, a way of feeling that we are part of the Church. Love the Church! Let yourselves be guided by her! [2] In your parishes, in your dioceses, [you must] be a true “lung” of faith and Christian life, a breath of fresh air! In this Square I see a great variety: earlier on it was a variety of umbrellas, and now of colors and signs. This is also the case with the Church: a great wealth and variety of expressions in which everything leads back to unity; the variety leads back to unity, and unity is the encounter with Christ. [3] I would like to add a third expression which must distinguish you: missionary spirit. You have a specific and important mission, that of keeping alive the relationship between the faith and the cultures of the peoples to whom you belong. You do this through popular piety. When, for example, you carry the crucifix in procession with such great veneration and love for the Lord, you are not performing a simple outward act; you are pointing to the centrality of the Lord’s paschal mystery, his passion, death, and resurrection which have redeemed us, and you are reminding yourselves first, as well as the community, that we have to follow

Christ along the concrete path of our daily lives so that he can transform us. Likewise, when you express profound devotion for the Virgin Mary, you are pointing to the highest realization of the Christian life, the one who by her faith and obedience to God's will, and by her meditation on the words and deeds of Jesus, is the Lord's perfect disciple.¹⁹

You express this faith, born of hearing the word of God, in ways that engage the senses, the emotions and the symbols of the different cultures

In doing so you help to transmit it to others, and especially the simple persons whom, in the Gospels, Jesus calls "the little ones." In effect, "journeying together towards shrines, and participating in other demonstrations of popular piety, bringing along your children and engaging other people, is itself a work of evangelization" (Aparecida Document, 264). When you visit shrines, when you bring your family, your children, you are engaged in a real work of evangelization. This needs to continue. May you also be true evangelizers! May your initiatives be "bridges", means of bringing others to Christ, so as to journey together with Him. And in this spirit may you always be attentive to charity. Each individual Christian and every community is missionary to the extent that they bring to others and live the Gospel, and testify to God's love for all, especially those experiencing difficulties. Be missionaries of God's love and tenderness! Be missionaries of God's mercy, which always forgives us, always awaits us and loves us

¹⁹ *Lumen Gentium*, 53.

dearly.²⁰

For Pope Francis then popular religiosity is a legitimate way of being in love with one another, with the social community and with God; secondly, the variety of expressions lead to unity; thirdly, to keep alive the soul of the peoples we need to unite faith and culture by the means of popular religion.

For this extraordinary task the Pope asks three conversions: intellectual, moral, and religious.²¹ This last conversion was called affective conversion in later Lonergan²² and referred to three levels of love: familial love, neighbors love (loyalty to civil community), and religious love (being-in-love without restrictions). This movement is an ongoing process of self transcendence. There is the intelligent self moving to a universe of being. There is the moral self, advancing from individual satisfactions to group interests. There is a more intimate state liberating a dynamic of love: first, love of husband and wife, parents and children; second, love of civil community; third and final, God's gift in his own love flooding our hearts through the Holy Spirit given to us.²³

Pope Francis tells us that one individual person cannot change culture. We need to be united in a community of love to understand the complex circumstances of men and women. I spoke of changes and transformations: they seemed rather different and variable. However we can discern in those changes a certain unity in the middle of a

²⁰ FRANCIS, Homily on the Day of Confraternities and Popular Piety. May 5th, 2013 .

²¹ LONERGAN, BERNARD, *Method in Theology*. Minneapolis, Seabury Press, 1979², p. 217, 318, 338.

²² FIGUEROA, PABLO M., *La significación del ideal moral de autenticidad en la ética existencial de Bernard Lonergan*. San Miguel, Facultad de Filosofía, 2010. Ad i. m. p. 205-208. (Dissertation).

²³ ID., *Natural Right and Historical Mindedness*, in A Third Collection papers by Bernard Lonergan edited by Frederick Crowe. New York, Paulist Press, 1985, p. 169, esp. 175.

confused multiplicity. We must reconstruct the constructions of human spirits to discover mankind in its utmost and intimate being.

The practices and beliefs that Pope Francis refer to as legitimate are expressions of a loving faith, or—to say it in another way—a faith that springs forth from the love of God. In fact, faith is a knowledge that comes as a gift from God, and with the faith God gives us another gift: His immense love for all the humankind and for each person in particular. On the other hand, man loves God above all things, except that because of the wounds in human nature man's rational will seeks the self and then becomes selfish and wicked. It's our condition because "most men will what is noble but choose what is advantageous."²⁴ Nevertheless, one can lay aside the egoism and search to be a true friend to oneself and to others. Then man finds the treasure of religious practices.

Of course, religious practices are different from people to people, tribe to tribe, region to region, nation to nation. They are a matter of human convention, constructions of the human spirit who does not understand how can be spiritual and body as well. There is a religious root in the human spirit: from that root stem all religious practices until they arrive to be converted into true faith and love. The question is that what have been made by human construction or convention can also be unmade by another convention. This can sound scandalous, because underneath the manifold of human traditions there is some universality and permanence. This factor of permanence can be interpreted as coming from human nature itself or else from human historicity. There is in each man an immanent principle of elevation: the human spirit.²⁵ This human spirit is the font from which arise questions and answers. A question moves us. An answer

²⁴ ARISTOTLE, *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII, 1162b. London, Heinemann, 1934.

²⁵ SANTAGADA, OSVALDO D., *Futuro: búsqueda de espiritualidad y predicación*. Buenos Aires, Diakonia, 2011. P. 1-25.

makes us rest. We are such kind of spirits: always between movement and rest. That is what St. Augustine says in this extraordinary manner: [Oh God] “you have made us and drawn us to yourself, and our heart is unquiet until it rests in you.”²⁶

The human spirit asks questions and gives answers, for the intelligence, for the reflection and for deliberation. However, nobody finds his final rest only with the answers to those questions. There is a point in which the human spirit finds union and happiness: that is the state of being in love with God. Popular religion reaches out its goal resting in God and only in Him. And when we reach God we fall in love, and life begins again.

There are three kinds of love: first, love of married people, love for parents and children and friends; secondly, love for neighbors which is a kind of loyalty to the humankind; love for the disinherited, the marginalized, the poor and those in special needs; and eventually there is the love God gave us as a Grace, a gift: it is His own love poured to us by the Holy Spirit. When we arrive to this dynamic state of love everything is new and we can build a new world.

Conclusion

We arrive now to what every person with good conscience has learned in these last times from the attitudes of Pope Francis. He is teaching us to be loving persons, like he is himself. He expresses his love for all in every way possible. He overcomes all conflicts and dialectic telling us to love without tiredness. Love is the tool that can move all hearts and discover a new world of understanding, and good decisions. Love can only spring from persons who are free, committed to humankind. That is what God wants from us all. Pope Francis teaches us: Be missionaries of God’s love!

²⁶ AUGUSTIN, ST., *Confessions*, L ib. 1:1-2.

Care for God's Creation

Jaazeal Jakosalem, OAR

Introduction

“This sister now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life.”¹

The Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* of Pope Francis made us realize once again the obligation to take care of God's Creation.

Our people and our planet have suffered enough destructions from catastrophic natural disasters, climate change realities, human cost of climate-related tragedies, enormous pollution and waste problems, and over-development but not people-development. Why should we care? Pope Francis echoes the statement of Patriarch Bartholomew,

¹ Pope Francis, The Encyclical on the Environment on Care for Our Common Home *Laudato Si'*, (May 24, 2015), par. 2 (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2015).

For human beings... to destroy the biological diversity of God's creation; for human beings to degrade the integrity of the earth by causing changes in its climate, by stripping the earth of its natural forests or destroying its wetlands; for human beings to contaminate the earth's waters, its land, its air, and its life--these are sins; for to commit a crime against the natural world is a sin against ourselves and a sin against God.²

The following are key learning principles why we should care for creation: (a) We are created by God, and exist together with all other creatures, (b) We have destroyed creation; failing to care the gift of creation, the earth now cries for the destruction, and the poor continues to suffer more and more because of our selfishness; (c) We need to change our framework of development--from profit-over-people to people-over-profit (environment-over-profit); most importantly--our life witnessing; and (d) We have to restore creation, renew our commitment to protect our planet; for this, a conversion of every individual and of groups and institutions at every level, from local communities to global humanity is much needed.

Creation is the Original Blessing

Our faith beginnings tell us of the immense beauty of life as a gift completely shared to humanity by our Creator, "The Lord God then took the man and settled him in the garden of Eden to cultivate and care for it" (Gen 2:15). This life is shared from the Creator to his creation.

We need to read the biblical context of Creation from a transformative lens. Our life originates from God's breath with the all-loving intention of our Creator for the fullness of life--a life He shared, a life He fully lived and a life He cannot

² *Laudato Si'*, 8.

take away from us. The original blessing puts emphasis on the immense gift of the creator.

Our *oikos* (home) is the Earth. This home is also the home of the Godhead, “God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it He rested from all the work He had done in creation” (Gen 2:3). And so, the life created on earth, is a life envisioned by God to make all living creatures live in harmony with each other.

The theological locus of the Catholic Church’s concern for the environment is always “faith seeking relevance” along the frameworks of the social encyclicals and of Vatican II reforms. It is a faith rooted in the events of the lives and hearts of the people, not in the Church as a structure. As lived and integrated with the life and mission of the Church, care for creation has been a praxis long before in monasteries, mission areas and churches. Along theological lines, we heard of creation theology—a theology seeking to articulate the dynamics of doing eco-theology in church life. Likewise at present time, there are bishops, priests, religious and laypeople who are actively involved in campaigns and often have offered their lives for the protection of the environment. In the Philippine experience, we recall the heroic life of Fr. Neri Satur, a forest defender in Bukidnon who was killed for his dedication in the defense of the forest.

We also heard of the eventual proclamation of Bishops’ conferences all over the world. Special emphasis is given to the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). The CBCP’s assessment “our country is in peril. All the living systems on land and in the seas around us are being ruthlessly exploited”³ moved the Philippine bishops (as early as 1988) to issue a pastoral letter entitled “*What is Happening to our Beautiful Land?*” Towards the conclusion of the pastoral letter, we hear the

³ Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, *What is Happening to our Beautiful Land?* (January 29, 1988).

Bishops' lament,

We reap what we sow; the results of our attitude and activities are predictable and deadly. Our small farmers tell us that their fields are less productive and are becoming sterile. Our fishermen are finding it increasingly difficult to catch fish. Our lands, forests and rivers cry out that they are being eroded, denuded and polluted. As bishops we have tried to listen and respond to their cry. There is an urgency about this issue which calls for widespread education and immediate action.⁴

It is equally important to cite the clarion call of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops:

The environmental crisis of our own day constitutes an exceptional call to conversion. As individuals, as institutions, as a people, we need a change of heart to save the planet for our children and generations yet unborn. So vast are the problems, so intertwined with our economy and way of life, that nothing but a wholehearted and ever more profound turning to God, the Maker of Heaven and Earth, will allow us to carry out our responsibilities as faithful stewards of God's creation.⁵

Indeed, we echo the concerns of the bishops across boundaries, the demand for immediate action and the call to conversion to address the ecological crisis.

Certainly, we owe St. John Paul II for his call for ecological action emphasizing that the ecological crisis is a moral problem. He said:

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Renewing the Earth: An Invitation to Reflection and Action on Environment in Light of Catholic Social Teaching*, A Pastoral Statement of the United States Catholic Conference, (November 14, 1991).

We cannot interfere in one area of the ecosystem without paying due attention both to the consequences of such interference in other areas and to the well-being of future generations.... While in some cases the damage already done may well be irreversible, in many other cases it can still be halted. It is necessary, however, that the entire human community—individuals, States and international bodies—take seriously the responsibility that is theirs.⁶

This message was delivered ahead of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit which, from then on, echoed in the dioceses and parishes, among pastors and lay leaders setting up “ecological desk” as a way to actively address environmental issues.

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI believes that “the Church has a responsibility towards creation, and she considers it her duty to exercise that responsibility in public life, in order to protect earth, water and air as gifts of God the Creator meant for everyone, and above all to save mankind from the danger of self-destruction.”⁷ The Pope’s legacy is on providing the social and theological principle for the Church’s ecological responsibility—“the indivisible relationship between God, human beings and the whole of creation.”⁸

⁶ Pope John Paul II, *Peace with God the Creator, Peace with all of Creation*, Message for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace, (January 1, 1990).

⁷ Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, par 51, Rome (June 29, 2009).

⁸ Pope Benedict XVI, *If You Want to Cultivate Peace, Protect Creation*, Message for the Celebration of the World Day Of Peace, 14 (January 1, 2010).

Destroying the Earth, Oppressing the Poor

Creation Care is inseparable with social justice. “We need to strengthen the conviction that we are one single human family. There are no frontiers or barriers, political or social, behind which we can hide, still less is there room for the globalization of indifference.”⁹ Undeniably, the poor are the victims as Pope Francis insists, “We have to realize that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.”¹⁰

The Pope criticizes existing political, economic and technological structures as being enslaved with economic interest such that the common good becomes the collateral damage. Thus the Pope voices out to stop the talking, but do the acting— now!

It is remarkable how weak international political responses have been. The failure of global summits on the environment make it plain that our politics are subject to technology and finance. There are too many special interests, and economic interests easily end up trumping the common good and manipulating information so that their own plans will not be affected.¹¹

The encyclical *Laudato Si'* articulated the vision of a Church of the People. It did present a clear understanding or a new manifesto close to the hearts of the people, “We hope this call to action reaches beyond the Catholic Church and into the hearts of everyone who understands the moral obligation we have to protect our resources and those most afflicted by climate change,” as manifested by a statement

⁹ *Laudato Si'*, 53.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.* 54.

from Al Gore's The Climate Reality Project.

Laudato Si': Responding to the Challenges of the Ecological Crisis

Pope Francis felt the climate crisis as real and factual. During his pontificate, he witnessed the devastation of lives, properties and the displacement of millions caused by Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, Cyclone Pam in Vanuatu and the recent Nepal Earthquake and for these he noted the "immensity and urgency of the challenge we face."¹² These have let the Pontiff to consistently offer special prayers for the victims in his Angelus, and even to encourage and mobilize the Church aid agencies to give support. In search not only for a curative approach but for a definitive solution to the climate crisis, Pope Francis said:

An effective fight against global warming will be possible only through a responsible collective action, which overcomes particular interests and behaviours and development unfettered by political and economic pressures. A collective response which is also capable of overcoming mistrust and of fostering a culture of solidarity, of encounter and of dialogue; capable of demonstrating responsibility to protect the planet and the human family.¹³

He re-emphasized too the call of his predecessors that the climate crisis "is a serious ethical and moral responsibility" (*Message to the UN Convention on Climate Change*).

Pope Francis' essential teachings in *Laudato Si'*¹⁴

¹² *Laudato Si'*, 15

¹³ Pope Francis, *Message on the Occasion of the 20th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*, Vatican, (27 November 2014).

¹⁴ Cardinal Peter K.A. Turkson, "Laudato Si's Challenge to

may be articulated into the following: (a) To propose a social teaching of the Church that creates awareness about the “immensity and urgency of the challenge of the present situation of the world and its poor: the two fragilities lie at the heart of Pope Francis’ integral ecology, (b) To make an urgent appeal for a new dialogue about how to shape the future of our planet, especially through an ecological conversion, an education in ecological citizenship and an ethical and spiritual itinerary to reduce our footprint and reverse the deterioration of the natural and social environment, (c) to encourage humanity to respond to the urgent appeal with his profound faith and trust in humanity’s ability to work together to build a common home.

The reality of the ecological crisis is already present in the social consciousness of Filipinos. They are aware that the earth is deteriorating. It may not be a substitute to the varied social crisis in the Filipino society, but it is connected to the maladies of hunger, homelessness, and other social ills.

The reality of the ecological crisis, proven by the catastrophic impact of typhoons and other disasters, made us aware that the time to act is now, not tomorrow. The reality of the ecological crisis, with the growing phenomenon of climate victims, must awaken in us active climate actions in behalf of the voiceless people and devastated planet. The reality of the ecological crisis should convince our political and institutional leaders to seriously respond to the challenge of *Laudato Si’* by stopping the construction of coal-fired power plants, transition and embrace the new renewable energy models and respond to climate adaptation challenges. Key areas of our Philippine ecological sites of struggles are mining, coal-fired power plants, reclamation projects, our forests and our oceans. The destruction of these areas affect the cultural, ethnic and livelihood of local communities.

Social Conscience: Society and Nature Together”, *Intercultural Human Rights Law Review*, Vol. 11 (2016), 2.

Likewise, key areas of our environmental action and action (from ridge to reef) are biodiversity conservation, coastal & marine conservation and production, waste management and responsible energy choice.

Care for Creation Guided by *Laudato Si'*

Those who accept the challenge to take care of creation need to be guided by the formative and transformative principles offered by the Pope through the document *Laudato Si'*. These principles center of the themes of Continuity, Collegiality, Conversation, Care, Conversion, Citizenship and Contemplation.

Pope Francis traces with **continuity** the Church's concern for creation, he recalls the initiative of his predecessors: Pope Saint John XXIII's proposal for Peace, Blessed Paul VI's approach of "common destiny by solidarity" to address the environmental crisis, St. John Paul II's call for the need of "new solidarity" and Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI's new direction of "intergenerational solidarity" to address holistically both the natural and social ecological imbalance. And Pope Francis in his encyclical introduces a "new and universal solidarity" in caring for creation.

The principal sources of the encyclical were the pastoral letters of the different episcopal conferences around the Catholic world. Notable is the **collegial** concern of the bishops on caring for our damaged planet and people. The Pontiff makes the concerns of the bishops a pressing concern of the Church. With the publication and call for action of the encyclical; there is a need for the bishops to give in return to the spirit of Pope Francis' call on "cry of the earth, cry of the poor"; hoping that *Laudato Si'* may find its way in the implementing program of the local churches—across the Catholic world and beyond.

The encyclical was crafted across the unifying spirit on how people of color, faith experiences, and uniqueness of

advocacy must take a collective stand to save Mother Earth from ecological destruction. Pope Francis communicated beyond barriers, he **conversed** with climate scientists, notable climate activists, eco-theologians of different faith traditions, even atheists. His concern for creation reverberates in the hearts of Christians, Muslims and non-believers across cultures.

The word “**care**” spells out the embracing message of the encyclical. Care for the poor, care for the planet, care for nature, care for the communities, care for people-care for God’s creation. More meaningful than the word “stewardship,” “care” encompasses the meaning of love. The way to save the planet is to care for creation.

Pope Francis demands an ecological transformation, both personal and institutional. In each of us, we need “ecological **conversion**, whereby the effects of our encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them. Living our vocation to be protectors of God’s handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience.”¹⁵ This likewise is a way to reconcile with creation where “we must examine our lives and acknowledge the ways in which we have harmed God’s creation through our actions and our failure to act. We need to experience a **conversion**, or change of heart.”¹⁶

This calls for a formative action, which is to respond to the educational challenge of caring creation is likewise a call “to restore the various levels of ecological equilibrium, establishing harmony within ourselves, with others, with nature and other living creatures, and with God.”¹⁷ Inevitable this call results to the coming together and the creation of a culture of “**ecological citizenship**” who are continuously aware of their duty to “create a culture of shared life and

¹⁵ *Laudato Si’*, 217.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* 218.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

respect for our surroundings.”¹⁸

It is only through re-examining our faith-beginnings and **contemplating** on our experience with the gospel of life, and on the life of witnesses that we come to understand that,

The ultimate purpose of other creatures is not to be found in us. Rather, all creatures are moving forward with us and through us towards a common point of arrival, which is God, in that transcendent fullness where the risen Christ embraces and illumines all things. Human beings, endowed with intelligence and love, and drawn by the fullness of Christ, are called to lead all creatures back to their Creator.¹⁹

From here, our praxis of caring for our common home is grounded on the formative development of our faith-experience that values the sacredness of everything that exists. As Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, the Archbishop of Manila says “Love the environment, it is from God and love others because your fellowman is the summit of the Lord’s creation.”

The Challenge of Caring Creation: A Conclusion

Creation Care is a living Integral Ecology. It is, in all elements of ecology, the quality be it environmental, economic, social, cultural, behavioral, and structural. In each, aspect, Pope Francis creatively examined the areas of failure and proposed growth that will “seek comprehensive solutions which consider the interactions within natural systems themselves and with social systems.”²⁰

Creation Care is witnessing. The message of *Laudato Si*’ is a call to be a witness, encouraging us to make

¹⁸ *Ibid.* 213.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* 83.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 139.

an individual act-response. One can engage in eco-prayer reflection or do some personal inventory of eco-witnessing or simply make a list of eco-inventory of personal waste impact or conservation initiatives.

Creation Care is praxis-oriented. We can try the green actions proposed by Pope Francis by

... avoiding the use of plastic and paper, reducing water consumption, separating refuse, cooking only what can reasonably be consumed, showing care for other living beings, using public transport or car-pooling, planting trees, turning off unnecessary lights, or any number of other practices. All of these reflect a generous and worthy creativity which brings out the best in human beings. Reusing something instead of immediately discarding it, when done for the right reasons, can be an act of love which expresses our own dignity.”²¹

Creation Care is integral. We are made to believe that we can use the earth’s resources for the good of humanity and the economy; not mentioning the sustaining importance of the cycle of life, giving to the interconnectedness of everything.

Creation Care is sustaining our ecological faith in the lights and shadows of our climate action.

May our struggles and our concern for this planet never take away the joy of our hope.²² God, who calls us to generous commitment and to give him our all, offers us the light and the strength needed to continue on our way. In the heart of this world, the Lord of life, who loves us so much, is always present. He does not abandon us, he does not leave us alone, for

²¹ *Ibid.* 211.

²² *Ibid.* 244.

he has united himself definitively to our earth,
and his love constantly impels us to find new
ways forward.²³

²³ *Ibid.* 245.

TO ALL CONTRIBUTORS

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