

**Notes on**

**THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH  
IN THE PHILIPPINES\*  
1521 - 1898  
(continued)**

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**Chapter Ten**

**THIRD ORDERS, PIOUS WORKS, CONFRATERNITIES,  
ASSOCIATIONS, DEVOTIONS AND SANCTUARIES**

**A. Third Orders. —**

The third orders that have been truly relevant in Philippine Church History are the Franciscan and the Dominican.

1. *The Franciscan Third Order.* Fr. Domingo Martinez explains the beginning of the Franciscan Third Order in the Philippines in these words: "The third order of our father Saint Francis, (called, the Order of Penance) was founded in 1611 through the efforts of Fray José de Santa Maria, Guardian of our convent in this city (Manila). It has not ceased growing in numbers or in the fervor and zeal of the brethren, so much so that by their alms, it has reached that happy situation in which we see it today. It has its own chapel, with all the other signs of Christian piety, for the good of the poor and the great edification of the Christians."<sup>1</sup>

\* An essay towards a history of the Church in the Philippines during the Spanish period 1521-1898, translated by Jose Arcilla S.J., faculty member of Ateneo University, Department of History.

<sup>1</sup> *Compendio histórico de la apostólica provincia de San Gregorio de Filipinas* (Madrid, 1756) p. 111, No. 272.

In the beginning only Spaniards from Spain or America were admitted. But by 1619 this privilege had already been extended to those born in the Philippines and, in the course of time, even the natives were accepted. In 1865, there were 6,500 members. They proved to be of great help to the Franciscan fathers in the evangelization of the country and in the practice of works of mercy.<sup>2</sup>

2. *The Dominican Third Order.* The exact date is not known when the first Dominican tertiaries in the Philippines were accepted; but it is certain that it was during the first decades of the Dominican missionary enterprise here. Those who were received to the habit and profession of the Dominican third order were not formally organized into a unit until the end of the seventeenth century. By the Provincial Chapter held in Manila in 1698 Fr. Juan de Santo Domingo, the founder of the Beaterio de Santa Catalina, was empowered to organize into a unit the Dominican tertiaries, and for this purpose he convened on two occasions the elite. The election held during the first convention on 26 June 1699 resulted in the choice as Prior of the secular priest Don Santiago Marquez.

In the eighteenth century, the Dominican third order excelled more for the quality than for the quantity of its members. These included judges of the royal Audiencia, generals, captains, ensigns, secular priests who occupied distinguished positions in the hierarchy or held Cathedral benefices, besides ladies of high society. Towards the middle of the nineteenth century, membership increased, almost all of them Filipinos from Manila and suburbs. Of the fruits of sanctity which this institution produced, a more notable one was the lady Vicenta Bautista (+ 1908), born in Santa Ana (Manila) but a long resident in Lipa (Batangas), where she exercised an active lay apostolate through her good example and her natural gifts of attraction.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Pastrana, P. Apolinar, O.F.M., "The Franciscans and the Evangelization of the Philippines," *Boletín Eclesiástico* (Enero-Febrero 1965) 112-113.

<sup>3</sup> Legaspi, Leonardo, O.P., "Vicenta Bautista, T.O.P.," *Boletín Eclesiástico* (September 1965) 803-810.

## B. Pious Works (Obras pías)

3. The pious works occupy a special place in the profane and ecclesiastical history of the Philippines, not only for their social and charitable character, but also for their economic importance. Historically, we could define *obras pías* as "a deed of generosity by a person who, in life or at the hour of death, bequeathed part of his property (there were some who left all) so that it might be invested in a profitable commercial enterprise administered by a person or a trusteeship, almost if not always under church sponsorship, interests or profits from which might be used for cultural or charitable works. These could be the funding of a certain number of masses for the soul of the founder or for the holy souls (of Purgatory), or the provision of funds for the embellishment of the liturgy, the education of the orphans, the dowry of girls, help for the poor, the sick and those in prison, the maintenance of a Boys' Choir for the Cathedral, aid for the missions in and out of the Philippines."<sup>4</sup> Some *obras* were entrusted to the miter, others to the religious orders, and the rest to the pious brotherhoods, especially the *Mesa de la Misericordia*.<sup>5</sup> Throughout their existence the important ones were those entrusted to the bishops although like all the rest, they passed through high and low, through the risks of time. During the British invasion, enemy looting and the need to raise funds to complete the amount exacted by the enemy as war indemnification after the

<sup>4</sup> San Antonio, Francisco de, O.F.M., *Crónica de la apostólica provincia de San Gregorio de Religiosos descalzos de N.P. San Francisco en las Islas Filipinas, China, Japon, etc., Parte primera*. (Sampaloc, Imprenta de Loreto, 1738) p. 200, col. 1. "The *obras pías* are pious legacies, in which it was generally determined that two-thirds were to be loaned at interest for maritime commercial enterprises, until the premiums, which for the risk to Acapulco reached 50 per cent, to China, 25 per cent, and to India, 35 per cent, had increased the original capital to a certain amount. Then, the interest of that amount was to be applied for the good of the soul of the founder, or to pious or charitable ends." (Arenas, *Historia*, p. 397). "One-third was usually retained as a reserved [sic], to cover chance losses . . . . When the trade with Acapulco came to an end, the capitals could no longer be employed in accordance with the request of the founder, and they were loaned at interest in other ways." (Blair and Robertson, Vol. XXVIII, page 298, footnote).

<sup>5</sup> Tamayo, P. Serapio, O.P., *Idea general de la disciplina eclesiástica en Filipinas durante la dominación española* (Manila, 1906) pp. 104-108.

fall of the City almost left the *obras* bankrupt.<sup>6</sup> Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Archbishop Pedro Payo reorganized them. But in the first decades of this century, they suffered new losses when the Spanish prelates who all throughout had endeavored so much to administer and augment their capital had gone.

### C. Confraternities

4. *Confraternity of the Rosary.* Of the many confraternities which have struck deep roots in the soul of the Filipino people, the principal one is easily together with the devotion, the confraternity of the Rosary. Both started shortly after the Dominicans arrived in the Philippines. Still preserved is the Book of the Acts of the Confraternity of the Rosary which began in 1590 at the convent of Santo Domingo. Both flourished gloriously for three centuries, but especially after 1872, when the Perpetual Rosary, or the Honor Guards of Mary were established in the Church of Santo Domingo. However, the devotion fell off considerably in the provinces at the close of the last century because of lack of priests to propagate it with enthusiasm. Besides, certain fanatic spirits during the revolution of 1898 made use of the good faith of some members of the Perpetual Rosary to spread in Pangasinan the society called "Guards of Honor", which was no other than an element of disorder under the guise of religion.

5. *The Angelic Warfare and the Holy Name.* Two clearly Dominican confraternities which also spread to the Philippines are the Angelic Warfare and the Holy Name of Jesus. In his journey to Rome for the General Chapter of the Dominican Order in 1668, Father Juan Polanco, O.P. obtained from Pope Clement IX the faculty to establish the Confraternity of the Angelic Warfare in Santo Domingo church. This was the second establishment with apostolic approval outside of Louvain, where shortly

<sup>6</sup> "... the *obras pias* were obliged by force to surrender their funds amounting P357,379.00 and 4 *granos*, according to the receipts signed in favor of these very *obras pias* by the English Commissioner..." (APSR, Mss, Sección HCF, tomo 1, documento 6, folio 72.v).

before the Dominican Father Deurwerders had founded it.<sup>7</sup> The University of Santo Tomás offered a fertile field by the end of the nineteenth century for the growth of the Confraternity of the Most Holy Name of Jesus. But with the passage of the years, the initial fervor of the members cooled off almost completely, to revive anew in 1931 with the planting of the Holy Name Society.<sup>8</sup>

6. *Other Confraternities.* The Augustinians promoted in their churches and missions the Confraternity of Our Lady of the Cinchura. Likewise in many places, the Confraternity of the (Holy) Souls took root; but, as Bishop Miguel García of Nueva Segovia noted in a Report dated 1774, it had lost its renown in his diocese because of the interested designs of some members of the Confraternity.<sup>9</sup>

Another brotherhood equally worth mention is the Brotherhood of the Holy Burial and that of the Virgin of Solitude, established in Santo Domingo Church, perhaps soon after Pope Clement VIII signed the bull *De Salute Domini Gregis* (The Salvation of the Lord's Flock), by which he authorized the Priors of the Dominican convents in the Indies to found it canonically in their churches. One of the reasons which moved the Vicar of Christ to sign this particular bull was his knowledge of the great devotion the Filipinos, newly won over to Catholicism, professed to the Blessed Virgin Mary. This brotherhood, which languished in the course of time, was rehabilitated in 1751.

#### D. Associations

7. *Marian Sodalities.* In this matter we are faced with the Marian Sodalities which the Jesuit fathers established in Colegio de San José, first among the students and afterwards among other people. They were also called the Sodality of the Anunciation, and had three kinds of membership divided into as many groups: the

<sup>7</sup> Salazar, Vicente de, O.P., *Historia de la provincia del Santísimo Rosario de Filipinas* (Manila, 1742) pag. 37.

<sup>8</sup> *Acta Capit. Prov.* . . . 1890 (Manila, 1890) p. 10.

<sup>9</sup> *Relación del Estado de la iglesia de Nueva Segovia, en las Islas Filipinas remitida al Real y Supremo Consejo de Indias*, Ms., in APSR, Sección HEF (NS), 1774, folios 73, v-74.

first, that of the Spanish lay nobility; the second, that of the clergy and the students; the third, that of Tagalogs. Their purpose was the reform of manners through the reception of the sacraments and the presentation of literary works for the recreation and diversion of the republic.<sup>10</sup>

### E. Devotions

8. *Devotion to Our Lord.* The devotion to the holy cross has a special place in the history of the evangelization and christianization of the Philippines. Whenever the missionaries took possession of an area where they founded a town, the first thing they did was to raise the standard of the cross. From history and from paintings we know that the conquistadores did the same thing when they took possession of the Philippines in the name of God and of the king. Many towns of the Philippines used to observe the custom, inherited from Europe, of erecting "Calvaries", or fourteen crosses outside the *población* to represent the fourteen stations of the Way of the Cross, to facilitate the practice of this pious devotion by the faithful.

### 9. *Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary: the Rosary.*

Love for Mary, which the fervor of the first missionaries planted in the heart of the Filipino people, cooled off significantly with time. And so, in 1773, the Synod of Calasiao made an effort to revive it in the northern part of Luzon: "Indeed, we desire to impress and carve in the hearts of the faithful a heartfelt devotion and a tender love for the Blessed Virgin, the Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>11</sup>

This devotion was expressed in different ways: first, by the recitation of the holy rosary, publicly in the churches and privately at home. It would be a rare Dominican mission station where a part at least of the rosary was not recited daily. In some, it was recited completely:

<sup>10</sup> Chirino, Pedro, S.J., *Relación de las Islas Filipinas* (Manila: Historical Conservation Society, 1969), 169-210. Saderra Masó, P. Miguel, S.J., *Misiones Jesuíticas de Filipinas* (Manila: Imprenta de Santo Tomás, 1924), 10-11.

<sup>11</sup> *Actas*, Ms. in APSR, Sección HEF (NS), tomo 7, doc. 14, fol. 57.

in others they recited or chanted it in procession through the streets. In a certain place, as in Binondo, they recited the first two parts and the third was solemnly chanted throughout the length of the streets. It used to be customary for Filipinos before to carry the rosary around the neck, like the way the Dominicans wore it until 1969. In the schools administered by the Franciscans and the Dominicans, the rosary was recited one or two times daily.

The following paragraph of Father Murillo Velarde in his History is significant with regards to the devotion to the rosary: "The devotion to the Rosary of the Blessed Virgin is most unusual in Manila. Not only is there a procession through the streets at night, during which it is sung, but in the greater number of houses (if not in all) it is recited publicly, and in some it is repeated two or three times in the day. It has several times given me unbelievable joy as I walk through the streets, to hear the rosary of Mary recited aloud night and day. It is from this mainly that God grants his favors to these islands, through the intercession of His mother. And I believe it will be difficult to find a Spariard, an indio or a savage who does not bring a rosary and does not recite it daily, even if contrariwise his life is not too christian."<sup>12</sup>

For the rest, the devotion to the rosary has been the source of innumerable blessings to the Filipino people. Suffice it to mention, as an example, the five naval victories which two galleons manned by a combination of Filipino and Spanish forces won, through the intercession of our Lady of the Rosary, over superior Dutch forces in 1645. Since then, huge crowds of the faithful have flocked yearly in the first days of October before the miraculous image which is venerated in the Santo Domingo convent to thank God for so signal a victory.

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<sup>12</sup> *Historia de la Provincia de Filipinas de la Compañia de Jesus* (Manila: Imprenta de la Compañia de Jesus, 1749), fol. 7v, col. 2. This same author speaks of the pious custom, quite common among the Filipinos of other times, of wearing the rosary around the neck: "But in wanting to remove from him the rosary, which according to the laudable practice in these islands, he was wearing around the neck..." (*Ibid.*, fol. 45, col. 1); "No one [in Samar] left his house without wearing the rosary around his neck." (*Ibid.*, fol. 177, col. 2).

10. *Devotion to the Immaculate Conception.* Under the title of the Immaculate Conception, the Blessed Virgin Mary occupies also an honored place in the heart of the Filipino. For the sake of the truth however, we might say that this was an "official" rather than a popular devotion, in contrast to the truly popular devotion to the Rosary. As we have seen already, the Manila cathedral is dedicated to the Immaculate Conception.

When he erected the cathedrals of Nueva Cáceres and Nueva Segovia in 1595, Clement VIII wanted them also to be under the patronage of the Immaculate Virgin. When the bull which Spain had obtained for the celebration of the feast of the Immaculate Conception arrived in the Philippines, spirited religious festivities were held in Manila which are minutely reported by the historians Murillo Velarde, S.J. and Martínez, O.F.M.<sup>13</sup> Charles III, a loyal devotee of the mystery of the Immaculate Conception, wished the Spanish Cortes to declare the Immaculate Virgin as the Patroness of Spain and her dominions. Pope Clement XIII ratified this decision by a bull signed 8 November 1760 and promulgated by the king in all his dominions by royal cedula. The same pontiff, by the bull *Eximia pietas* (The Noblest Piety) of 14 March 1767 which he sent to the Philippines, disposed that in the Litany of Loreto the invocation "Mother undefiled" (*Mater intemerata*) followed by "Mother immaculate" (*Mater immaculata*).<sup>14</sup> The Jesuit fathers worked much to spread the devotion to the Immaculate Mother in their colleges and missions.

<sup>13</sup> Murillo Velarde, *Op. cit.*, fol. 12; Martínez, *Op. cit.*, pp. 167-168., Nos. 409-410.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59. The patronage of the Immaculate Conception for Spain and the Spanish dominions was granted by Clement XIII in 8 November 1760. On 16 April 1761, Charles III signed a royal cedula ordering its implementation in America and the Philippines. This cedula was dispatched by the Council of the Indies on 22 April 1761. Both the cedula and pontifical Brief were received in Bacolor (Pampanga) on 10 April 1763, during the British occupation of Manila. The Audiencia acknowledged it and arranged for its implementation on 24 May 1764. Cfr. APSR, Sección "Provincia-AP", tomo 21, doc. 29, p. 1.



11. *Devotion to the Saints.* The missionaries likewise propagated the devotion to the saints, giving preference as a general rule to the saints of their particular order. At times, due to an exaggerated cult given to some of the saints and the impressionable nature of the Filipino, the faithful have carried their devotion beyond what is right. Among the favorite saints of the Filipinos we might count Saint Dominic of Guzman, Saint Vincent Ferrer, Saint Anthony of Padua, Saint Monica and Saint Nicholas of Tolentino, and, in a special manner, the patron saints of each town.

12. *Veneration of Images.* There has also been some exaggeration in the veneration of the images of Jesus, Mary and the saints. According to the report of Sinibaldo de Mas, a Spanish traveller in the Philippines during the middle of the last century, the Filipino houses were filled with statues and paintings of the saints, of the virgins and of images of the Child Jesus. These images, generally small and richly clothed, with hands and face of marble, were shielded by a vigil lamp. There was no lack of houses of rich or noble families which seemed rather shops of images than dwellings of men, and some of these families used them as a status symbol, a reason for show and pride.<sup>15</sup>

#### F. Sanctuaries

13. Although not as famous as those in Europe, there has been no lack in the Philippines of many sanctuaries which have been all throughout centers of pilgrimages and excursions. In general, they go back to miraculous images which manifested protection to the believing townspeople, working once in a while some miracle. Almost all have been and are sanctuaries of the Virgin Mary, for not in vain have the Filipino people won the appellation of the people who loved Mary. These are the principal sanctuaries: *Nuestra Señora de Guía* in Ermita, Manila (its date of origin is not known for certain)<sup>16</sup>, the Sanctuary of the Holy Cross in San Juan del Monte, Rizal (1602)<sup>17</sup>, our Lady

<sup>15</sup> Cited in BR, *The Philippine Islands*, XL, 230.

<sup>16</sup> "In Honor of Ntra. Sra. de Guía," *Filipinas*, 12-XII-1968, p. 5.

<sup>17</sup> Peguero, Juan, O.P. *Compendio Historial*, Ms in UST, Sección "Provincia," tomo—, fols. 14-15.

of Casaysay in Taal, Batangas (1603)<sup>18</sup>, Our Lady of Manaoag in Pangasinan (1605)<sup>19</sup>, Our Lady of Piat in Cagayan (1623)<sup>20</sup>, Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage in Antipolo, Rizal (1626),<sup>21</sup> Our Lady of the Rosary in Orani (1684), Our Lady of Peñafrancia in Naga City (1712)<sup>22</sup>, The Black Nazarene in Quiapo; and foremost of all the Sanctuary of Our Lady of the Rosary in Santo Domingo church.

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<sup>18</sup> Martinez de Zúñiga, Joaquín, O.S.A, *Estadismo de las Islas Filipinas* (Madrid, 1893), tomo I, pp. 97-99.

<sup>19</sup> Aduarte, Diego, O.P. *Historia etc* (Zaragoza, 1693), p. 311.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 279-282.

<sup>21</sup> Murillo Velarde, S.J., *Op. cit.*, fols. 210v-211, 212-219.

<sup>22</sup> Anónimo, *Historia ni Nuestra Señora de Peña de Francia* (in Bicol) (Manila: Tip. Pont. de la Universidad de Santo Tomas, 1926).