



HISTORY OF THE CHURCH IN THE PHILIPPINES

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CHAPTER 24 OTHER SERVICES

Besides the services mentioned in the preceding chapters, the Church performed other services for the government in the Philippines, which we could group under the titles of general military service, military chaplaincy, and miscellaneous services.

1. General Military Services

1) *Exploration of the Moluccas.*— Among the first such activities, the services rendered by the Jesuit lay Brother Gaspar Gomez stand out. Around 1593 he undertook a commission entrusted to him by Governor Gomez Perez Dasmariñas, to go with the company of Captain Gregorio Cubillo to reconnoiter the Moluccas, find out the defensework, equipment, soldiers, allies and enemies of the king of Ternate, against whom the Spaniards were readying an expedition. Cubillo died in an accident and Brother Gomez fulfilled his commission and submitted the information needed. Although Dasmariñas was unable to carry out the planned invasion because he was assassinated by some Chinese crewmen off the coast of Batangas, October 25, 1593, the plan eventually succeeded in the time of Governor Pedro Bravo de Acuña, who entrusted the Jesuit Brother with the distinguished but difficult task of going to Spain to report the victory to the king.¹

2) *Defeated Soldiers in Formosa Return to the Philippines.*— In 1641, when Father Juan de los Angeles was a missionary in Formosa, he made a trip to Manila for the sole

¹ Saderra Masó, S.J., Miguel, *Misiones Jesuíticas en Filipinas* (Manila: Top. Pont. Univ. de Sto. Tomas, 1924), p. 32.

purpose of notifying the governor of the Islands and seeking aid against the danger threatening that island because of the Dutch. Don Sebastian Hurtado de Corcuera was then governor of the Philippines, veteran of several campaigns against Moslems. He sent only eight soldiers and a small band of auxiliaries aboard a decrepit boat. This explains why the Spanish garrison in Formosa had to surrender to the Dutch on 24 August 1642, when the latter presented themselves with superior forces before the fortress of Keelung. But the services of Father de los Angeles did not end here. Taken prisoner with the few remaining soldiers of the garrison to Batavia, he obtained from the Dutch governor, Anton van Diemen, the release of fifty Spanish soldiers whom he undertook to feed and lead back to Manila, where they arrived on 29 June 1643.²

3) *A Dominican Acting Governor-General.*—Fray Juan Archedera, O.P., governed the Philippine Islands in the interim capacity from 1745 to 1750. He ordered the melting of the best canons of the armory for some time, renovated the governor's palace and encouraged trade. For all of these activities, he received praise from the king as a loyal minister, worthy of greater tasks.³

4) *Four Student Companies at the University of Santo Tomas.*—During the war carried on by France and Spain against England from 1779 to 1783, the Rector of the University, Father Domingo Collantes, raised four companies of fifty soldiers each from among the students. This was due to a rumor that an English squadron from India was already on its way to the Philippines to bombard Manila, as had happened in 1762. The uniforms and the rations of that small company of two hundred men were for many months paid for by the University. The school also placed at the governor's disposal the supplies of rice and livestock available in its haciendas. For this, His Majesty, Charles III gave it the title of "Royal University" by a royal cedula dated 7 March 1785.⁴

² Ocio, O.P., Hilario Maria, *Monumento dominicano, o sea, Memorial de las Casas que ha adquirido la Prov. del SSmo Rosario de Filipinas. Desde 1587 hasta 1898.* MSS, AUST, Seccion "Hist.—Prov.," p. 410; Juan de los Angeles, O.P., *Formosa Lost to Spain*, in BR. XXXV, 128-162.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 412

⁴ *Fundacion del colegio y creccion de la Universidad de Santo Tomas (Manila, 1874)*, p. 27.

5) *Quartering of Soldiers in Church Buildings.* — Because of the constant threat of war between Great Britain and Spain during the succeeding years, Manila was always on war footing; and, since the government had no buildings to quarter the troops, it had to request the Augustinians and the Dominicans, among others, for part of the convent of San Agustin, various halls of the university edifice and the entire hospital of San Gabriel. Both orders acceded to the request, although they foresaw the losses and inconveniences which such guests could cause them, as happened in Santo Tomas, where the enrollment fell considerably. The troop occupied San Gabriel from 1795 to 1802, and from 1803 to 1814.⁵

II. Chaplains during Military Campaigns

6) *The Jesuits.* — We have already indicated the embassy of two Jesuit priests undertaken by commission of the government, to the Viceroy of India in Goa in order to unite the Luso-Hispanic forces for the purpose of dislodging the Dutch from the Moluccas. To this end, Governor Juan de Silva organized a fleet of ten ships and other minor craft, which, carrying on board 5,000 men, both Spaniards and Filipinos, unfurled its sails on 5 January 1616. Six Jesuit sailed as chaplains of the fleet: Father Pedro Gomez, rector of Malacca; Miguel Ignacio, rector of Cebu; Garcia Garces, Melchor de Vera, Manuel Ribeyro and a Japanese. This was the biggest and mightiest fleet to ever sail from the Philippine shores under the Spanish colors in the past. But almost nothing was accomplished against the enemy, due to the unexpected death in Malacca of Governor Silva who commanded it.

Hardly had this powerful armada sailed out of Manila Bay, when a Dutch squadron appeared off the Mariveles coast. The moment chosen by the enemy to attack could not be more timely, since the military force of the colony had sailed away with the governor. Nonetheless, the city did not lose heart. The people prepared themselves to win divine protection by their prayers and public orations. At the same time they set up the meager defenses available in the city. It was at this moment that a Jesuit lay brother, at the request of the royal audiencia, took charge of directing and organizing the artillery

⁵ *Informe del Rector, Fr. Juan Robles, al gobernador de las Islas* (hacia 1800), MSS, APSR, t. 244, fol. 349 v.

of the fortress. Fortunately, the enemy sailed away without attempting an attack.⁶

7) *The Victories of La Naval*.—In 1646, there appeared in the waters of the Philippines fifteen Dutch boats well equipped and strongly armed to conquer the islands, or, at least, the galleon that plied the Acapulco route and brought the annual royal subsidy. To repulse them, the government had only two ancient galleons, *La Encarnacion* and *Rosario*. Humanly speaking, it was imprudent and rash to launch these galleons on a fight. But, trusting in the Virgin of the Rosary, the Fil-Hispanic forces sailed out to meet the enemy. But before entering the combat, at the suggestion of the four Dominican Chaplains, soldiers and sailors prayed the rosary with real devotion and made the vow to join and go on procession to the Church of Santo Domingo if the Lord should give them the victory. Indeed, in the five naval encounters which occurred between the two squadrons, the Catholic force always emerged the victor. Because of these victories, believed to be miraculous by the ecclesiastical chapter sitting *en banc*, the city of Manila obliged itself to celebrate perpetually the eight day of the feast of the Holy Rosary with a mass and sermon. It is from this vow that the famous La Naval processions originated and have continued to be held without interruption from that time till our own days.⁷

8) *French-Spanish Expedition to Cochinchina*.—In August 1858, two battleships were headed towards Cochinchina, one Spanish, the other French, bringing on board the first contingent of a force of 1500 men which the Philippine government was offering for the success of the campaign against Tu-Duc, a persecutor of Christianity. With them went as chaplain the Dominican Fray Francisco Gainza, future bishop of Nueva Caceres. He was also acting as a member of the general headquarters of the French Vice Admiral, Rigault de Genouelly. This first division, occupied without bloodshed, the fortress of

⁶ Murillo Velarde, S.J., Pedro, *Hist. de la Prov. de Filipinas de la Compañia de Jesus* (Manila: en la imprenta de la Compañia de Jesus, 1749), t. II, fols. 1 v—3. "Even in the armada under the command of the Oidor Morga, which sailed in 1600 from Manila to fight the Dutch fleet of Oliver van Noort, there was a Jesuit who acted as chaplain, with a lay brother, and both died when the *capitana* went to the bottom, a result of its weak construction, more than anything else." (Colin, Francisco, *Labor evangelica*, Madrid, 1663, pp. 407-409).

⁷ Ocio, *Op. cit.*, pp. 411-412.

the *Observatory*, the *North*, near Turana (Nadang). Shortly after these, a second contingent of the Fil-Hispanic expeditionary force, consisting of 500 more men, left for Turana aboard the *Durance*. As chaplains, the Dominicans Manuel de Rivas and Francisco Rivas sailed with them. We could affirm that, in view of the results of this military enterprise from which Spain hardly had any gains, and the Church won, besides a recrudescence of the persecutions, merely the liberation of a small group of Spanish missionaries who sought refuge in the rescue boat, the *Pregent*, obtained from the French Vice Admiral, thanks to Father Gainza's tact and ingenuity. As for the rest, the Filipinos proved beyond doubt their heroism in the Saigon area in the fighting that dragged on for years against the Vietnamese. Father Gainza also received from the Spanish government the reward of the bishopric of Nueva Caceres as a reward for the services he had rendered to the country and the Church.*

III. Miscellaneous Services

9) *Protectors of Indios*. — In this catalogue of services, we must not forget the role the missionaries played for the Filipino people as their protectors. It is true that few of those apostles carried the formal title, for history remembers only the names of Fray Andres de Urdaneta, Bishop Salazar, and perhaps a third. But there were numberless religious, with no title or official commission, but moved only by evangelical charity, undertook this thorny task and protected the natives with all their zeal and influence." Such were, among so many eminent men. Bishop Miguel de Benavides and Bernardo Navarro, both of them Dominicans. The first, during a trip to Spain in 1591, obtained the permission to establish among the Manila residents the commerce with New Spain, bringing back the sum of P500,000 and not merely the capital which was the practice until then, while the profit stayed in Mexico. Besides, he also brought about the recognition of the rights the natives had over their mountains, lands and rivers, for it was not just to deprive them of this natural right simply by the fact that

* Gainza, O.P., Francisco, *Campaña de Cochinchina*, MSS AUST, T. 124.

"The Augustinian Diego de Herrera, writing to Philip II from Mexico, 16 January 1570, says: ". . . I came to this Nueva España to give information . . . of some injuries done to the natives on account of the extremities that the soldiers suffered . . ." (BR, III, 71)

of their submission to the Castilian crown and reduce them to the condition of slaves.¹⁰ Bishop Navarro interceded with Governor Juan de Silva, vainly seeking an end to the oppression of the people occasioned by the preparations readied to repulse the Dutch from this eastern part of the globe.¹¹

Another religious who purely out of charity assumed the difficult and bothersome task of defending the natives was the Franciscan Fray Francisco de la Trinidad who, "out of his tender love for the *indios* suffered many heartaches in their defense, because he was an outright defender against the *alcaldes* and *encomenderos* and other officials who molested them. He mothered them."¹²

Of Father Juan Antonio Campion who died in 1651, Murillo Velarde says that "he bitterly defended the *indios* from the vexations inflicted on them,"¹³ "for it is unbelievable," he adds elsewhere, "except by those of us who experienced it, that some petty officials of lowly rank could pretend to exercise so much authority over these unfortunate people. They imagine that, because of the latter's natural timidity, they could threaten these poor people with the gibbet and the sword."¹⁴

Among the norms which the Recollects formulated for their guide in Zambales missions, they decided, in regards to the protection that they ought to provide for the people: "the religious also made other resolutions pertaining to the protection and defense of the *Indios*, in case anyone should err by trying to do violence to them, so that, as true fathers, they might oppose courageously any annoyance that the malice of the heartless men of this always iniquitous age might attempt."¹⁵

10) *Voluntary Submission of the People to the Crown of Castilla Through the Efforts of Fray Miguel de Benavides.* — Because Philip II had scruples regarding the right of Spain to the Philippines whose conquest, according to some was unjustified, he tried, following the counsel of a theological meeting, to win from the native islanders, their voluntary submission

¹⁰ Ocio, *Rescña biografica* (Manila, 1891) I, p. 66.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 83-84.

¹² Martinez, O.F.M., Domingo, *Compendio historial* (Madrid, 1756) p. 53, col. 2.

¹³ Murillo Velarde, *Op. cit.*, p. 195, col. 2.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 246 v, col. 2.

¹⁵ BR, XXI, 152.

and acknowledgment of the Castilian kingship. He commissioned to undertake this delicate task in the provinces of northern Luzon newly designated Bishop Miguel de Benavides of Nueva Segovia. This prelate succeeded so well in this sensitive matter that the natives accepted with good grace their vassalage to Spain. What greatly helped this was the self-abnegation of the missionaries, who had captivated by their example and their self-sacrificing personal life, the hearts of the people; so much so that the people of Cagayan answered that they made themselves vassals of Spain because they had been sent missionaries; and that, had they known the great good that would come to them through the latter, they themselves would have gone to look for the missionaries.¹⁶

11) *The Casa of Father Moraga.* — This holy Franciscan performed for the Philippines one of the most important services ever done by any man, when he presented himself in 1618 to King Philip III in Madrid, to beg from him what the procurators of the other religious orders had failed to obtain, namely, that Philip order the abrogation of the decree just expedited by the monarch himself regarding the abandonment of the Philippines. In revoking the decree, the king spoke these unforgettable words: "Go with God, Father Moraga; for it will not be said of me that I neglect what my father won." This venerable Franciscan won such signal victory for Catholicism in the Philippines at the cost of his own life, for, with thirty religious missionaries he sailed in a fleet of six boats headed for Mexico, but which a violent storm destroyed and Father Moraga drowned as well as many others.¹⁷

¹⁶ Ocio, *Op. cit.*, p. 408. In the province of Ilocos, in the diocese of the bishop of Nueva Segovia, this was very well done; and submission was rendered to your Majesty. Likewise the whole district of Manila, a mission of the Augustinian fathers, has rendered submission. Laguna, in charge of the Franciscan Fathers, has not so easily yielded; for the natives there have asked a year's time in which to answer. . . . The same thing will be done in other provinces which ask delays" (*Letter from Governor Don Francisco Tello*, 12 July 1599, BR, X, 254; also p. 277).

¹⁷ Gomez Platero, O.F.M., Eusebio, *Catalogo biografico de los religiosos franciscanos de la Provincia de San Gregorio Magno de Filipinas* (Manila: Imprenta del Real Colegio de Santo Tomas, 1880) pp. 83-84. This was not the first time that in Spain they had thought of abandoning the Philippine Islands, as we read in Book VII, Chapter 8 of the life of Philip II by Cabrera: "the Council brought to his attention the many cares and expenses and the little profit which the Philippine Islands could occasion, and that it would be better to leave them aside. To this, he gave an answer worthy of so catholic a prince: 'If the revenue of the

12) *Water to Manila.*—Manila is based on a beachland watered by the Pasig river which flows into the bay. Right from the beginning, people felt the lack of potable water. The residents used to go and fetch it from Cavite, or in another spot three leagues farther away from the sea or the tides. The richer people used to build cisterns with which to gather rain water as it fell on the roof. But this was not always possible for the poor, although it was the most obvious and easy way.

The Dominicans sympathized with the people who had to suffer the inconveniences of the lack of drinking water and they sought and found in San Juan del Monte, five kilometers from the City, a source of pure and fresh water. They channeled it to the bank of Maitunas creek, by means of an open canal in the rocky terrain. From there, bancas transported it easily along San Juan river to Manila. The creator of this system was the engineer-historian, Fray Juan Peguero (+ 1690), for several years Vicar of the Dominican Sanctuary of the Holy Cross in San Juan. This work needed four years to complete 1686-1690, and several thousands of pesos charged to the Order.¹⁸ Later after 1882, thanks to a pious fund left by the Spaniard Don Francisco Carriedo in 1733, the city soon had throughout its streets, and even in many houses, abundant drinking water.¹⁹

Other services rather frequently rendered by the religious and the ecclesiastical chapter of Manila to the government, especially throughout the nineteenth century, included the submission of well-studied reports or answers to difficult and transcendent questions, acting as presidents or members of the board of governors of the *Obras Pias*, of councils to lay down educational programs, and acting as censors of books, etc.

Philippines and New Spain did not suffice to maintain one hermitage, even if it was only to preserve the name and the devotion to Jesus Christ, he would send the revenue of Spain by which to propagate His gospel." (Antolin, O.P., Francisco, *Camino de Ituy y Paniqui*, MSS, APSR, t. 110).

¹⁸ Ocio, *Op. cit.*, p. 142.

¹⁹ *Unitas* (November, 1933) gives a brief account by Santiago Artiaga and Manuel Mañosa, of Spanish projects to supply Manila with potable water. With regards to the Carriedo Fund, there is a "respuesta" or an opinion in answer to a consultation dating from the first half of the nineteenth century, which throws some light on the fortunes of this Pious Trust Fund, before the wishes of its pious founder could be fulfilled. (Cf. MSS, AUST, Sección "Consultas," formerly tomo 191, No. 8, p. 14, but now still uncatalogued).