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# Racial Exclusion in the Mendicant Orders from Spain to the Philippines

Damon Woods

"The Spanish history of the Philippines begins and ends with the friar."<sup>1</sup> So begins Leon Guerrero's prologue to his biography of Jose Rizal, considered by many to be the national hero of the Philippines. Part of that history involved the exclusion of Filipinos from the priesthood based on the mechanism of the concept of the purity of blood.

The term friar generally referred to a member of one of the four Mendicant Orders: the Dominicans, Augustinians, Franciscans, and Carmelites. Only the first three were present in the Philippines. The friars were members of the regular clergy, one of the two major groups of clergy which make up the Roman Catholic Church: the secular (or diocesan) and the regular. Secular comes from the Latin *sæculum*, and refers to those clergy men who live in the world at large, as opposed to the cloister, and follow no religious rule. The secular clergyman may possess his own property and owes his obedience to the bishop, though not renouncing his own will.<sup>2</sup> The regular clergy are those who follow a special rule, "regular" from the Latin *regula* meaning rule. The Mendicants belong to the second category.<sup>3</sup> Although the friars resisted the entrance of Filipinos into either the secular or regular clergy, it is the practice of racial exclusion that prevented the Filipinos from entering the different Mendicant Orders which is the focus here. In 1750, after almost two centuries among the Filipinos, only 142 Filipinos were in the priesthood, and they had been trained only for low ranking,

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subordinate positions. They were given much of the busy work of the parish, but were denied the fees and prestige of running a parish. "The regulars, believing the Filipinos were fit only for subordinate positions, gave them only a minimum of training."<sup>4</sup>

While a number of explanations, as well as theories, exists for the exclusion of Filipinos from the Mendicant Orders, the mechanism of *limpieza de sangre* was one of the means used by the Orders to exclude Filipinos from the clergy. *Limpieza de sangre*, also referred to as *pureza de sangre*, purity of blood, required that a person must prove his or her ancestry to be Old Christian for four previous generations. Those who possessed such ancestry were thought to be of pure blood while those who failed to fulfill the requirement were thought to lack the essential purity of blood.

The Spanish provinces of the Franciscans provide a suitable vehicle for a study of the use of the *limpieza de sangre* as a concept and mechanism for excluding certain segments of the population from certain offices, for several reasons. First, although they lagged behind somewhat, the policies of the Franciscans mirrored those of Spanish civil and religious structures, including those of the other Mendicant Orders in Spain. Secondly, the material regarding the requirements of candidates seeking to enter the Order is accessible. This is seen particularly in the work of Francisco Morales. In his book *Ethnic and Social Background of the Franciscan Friars in Seventeenth Century Mexico*, he includes a study of the development of the requirements made of candidates, from St. Francis through the seventeenth century.<sup>5</sup> Thirdly, the work of the Franciscans in training and allowing Indians, mainly the Nahuas of Central Mexico, into their Order and the ensuing failure seems to be the reason given for the later exclusion of natives from the clergy.

The original constitutions for the Franciscans were written by St. Francis. In the Rule of 1223, a revision of the Rule of 1221, St. Francis wrote down the qualifications required of incoming candidates. The candidates were to be good Catholics and unmarried or if married given permission by the bishop to enter. Candidates were also to sell all their material possessions and give all monies to the poor.<sup>6</sup> The General Constitutions of Narbonne of 1260 were more specific in the requirements for candidates. Examiners questioned each candidate as to his physical health, his marital status, his economic status--whether free from debt, whether under the ban of excommunication or whether he belonged to another order.<sup>7</sup> The Constitutions of Perpignan in 1331 added the requirement

that the candidate's parents be legitimately married and that he be of good reputation. The Farinerian Constitutions of 1354 expanded further the list of qualifications.<sup>8</sup> The Constitutions of Barcelona in 1451 were essentially the same.<sup>9</sup>

Not until 1525 did the various constitutions of the Spanish provinces of the Franciscans begin to mention racial exclusion. The issue was discussed for at least fifty years before it became a part of the requirements of candidates. The focus of the discussion was the conversion of Jews and their entrance into ecclesiastical positions. The Franciscan Order was also involved in the debate. Fray Alonso de Espina of the Franciscan Observants held that the difference between a real Jew and a Jew converted to Christianity was that one practiced Judaism openly and the other secretly. Admission was not forbidden to *conversos*, Jews who converted to Christianity, but warnings were given that their admission required great care. Conversos were thought to possess three bad habits: "arrogant ostentation...; avarice and cupidity...; [and] a weak physical condition...."<sup>10</sup>

The arrangement by which Christians, Jews, and Moslems lived in the same cities and towns began to fall apart toward the end of the fourteenth century. The anti-Jewish riots of 1391 occurred across Castile, Catalonia and Aragon. The anti-Semitism sweeping through much of Spain caused many Jews to seek refuge through conversion to the Christian faith. They were called *conversos*, *confesos*, and *cristianos nuevos* (New Christians). For those who converted, barriers which once excluded them as Jews from certain positions were now gone. As such, there were benefits to converting.

The rise of conversos to positions of power, prestige, and profit was given as the cause of riots in the middle of the fifteenth century. The Toledo riots in 1449 led to the first decree of *limpieza de sangre*, which excluded all persons of Jewish ancestry from municipal office.<sup>11</sup> Henry Charles Lea points to the religious confraternities as the first to require the purity of blood or descent of those seeking to join.<sup>12</sup>

There are different theories as to the origin of the concept of *limpieza de sangre* or *pureza de sangre*. Americo Castro in his work *The Spaniards* intrigues with the statement: "The more Hispano-Hebrews were persecuted, the more the Semitic system of purity of lineage was taken over."<sup>13</sup> This is ironic in that while legislation resulting from the *limpieza de sangre* concept affected Moslems as well as Jews, the concept was primarily anti-Semitic. As late as

1565, a distinction was made between those Jews who had converted and Moslems who had converted. Philip II ordered that *Moriscos* (converted Moslems) be appointed as familiars of the Inquisition. In 1573, the ban which applied to converted Jews (*Maranos*) who were unable to prove at least four antecedent generations of Christians in their ancestry, was extended to the *Moriscos*

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The constitutions of the Spanish Franciscans did not contain absolute prohibition against receiving those descended from Jewish heritage into the Order until 1525. This statute was sanctioned by Pope Clement VII. The reaction within the Order was varied, with strong objections coming from some quarters. The debate continued for more than thirty years. Julius III revoked the Brief of Clement VII which had sanctioned the prohibition of candidates of Jewish ancestry, but Paul IV in 1559 and Gregory XIII in 1573 sanctioned the statute of purity. Finally in 1583, the General Chapter meeting in Toledo incorporated the Statue of Purity of Blood in its legislation. This statue remained in effect for more than two hundred years.<sup>15</sup>

The Franciscans trailed the other Mendicant Orders in Spain in applying the *limpieza de sangre* restriction to their candidates. The Hieronymites did so in 1486. One house of the Dominicans established a similar statute in 1496; the reformed Benedictine abbey of Montserrat in 1502. Despite the statutes, conversos rose to positions of importance in the religious orders of the Hieronymites, Cistercians, and Augustinians.<sup>16</sup>

Franciscan requirements for candidates evolved from lenient to severe. Initially indigenous persons were permitted to enter the Order. Later indigenous candidates were excluded for a variety of reasons. Finally *limpieza de sangre* statutes were applied so as to exclude indigenous candidates from the Order entirely. This evolution cannot be explained by looking at the Franciscans alone, but demands an overview of the activities within other parts of the Church and society.

As the friars began their work in New Spain (Mexico), the statutes of the purity of blood were becoming entrenched in Spain. As previously mentioned, it was not until 1525 that the Spanish provinces of the Franciscans contained the absolute prohibitions based on *limpieza de sangre*. Thus the work of the Franciscans in the New World, especially Mexico, did not initially reflect any exclusion based on one's heritage.

In 1525, Rodrigo de Albornoz petitioned the king for the establishment of a college to train Indians for the priesthood. "The missionary work of an ordained Indian priest would be more effective than that of fifty missionaries brought over from Spain." Two years later in 1527, a mere three years after becoming established in Mexico and two years after the acceptance of the exclusion of the purity of blood in Spain, the Franciscans received three Indians into the Order.<sup>17</sup> None of the candidates continued in the Order. Bernardino de Sahagun writes of the experience:

...at first we tried the experiment of making them religious, because it seemed to us that they would be adaptable to ecclesiastical ways and to the religious life. The habit was given to two young Indian men, the most intelligent and devout among them, who preached the doctrines of our Holy Catholic Faith to their fellow natives with great fervor, and it seemed to us that if they were garbed in the clothing of our Holy Franciscan Religion and preached with equal fervor, there would be a great harvest of souls.<sup>18</sup>

This was not the only attempt by the Franciscans to bring Indians into their Order. The Colegio de Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco was opened with great ceremony with Bishop Zumarraga (a Franciscan), as well as the president of the Audiencia in attendance. The purpose of this institution was to train the sons of the great families. The subjects taught by the Franciscans to the Indians--Latin, the arts and the principles of scholastic theology--points to their intention to prepare the students for the priesthood.<sup>19</sup> Thus, the Ecclesiastical *Junta* of 1539 approved the decision to give Minor Orders to the Indians possibly as the first step to ordination.<sup>20</sup>

The Colegio de San Juan de Letran in Mexico City existed as a college for the education of mestizos. Beginning in 1534, a series of royal cédulas granted aid and support to the school. In 1552, petitions were sent by the college to the Council of the Indies for additional subsidies. The Council sent its recommendations to the king. With this letter (consulta), the Council sent a report probably written by the agent of the college. In this now anonymous report, it is stated that at least twenty mestizos who had studied at this college had taken the habit of the Franciscans or the Dominicans.<sup>21</sup>

As the statutes of the purity of blood became more entrenched in Spain, attitudes towards the Indians began to harden. These attitudes were found throughout the Orders and the Church. The Dominican provincial of Mexico wrote to the Visitor of New Spain in 1544:

...the Indians ought not to be permitted to study [arts and theology], because no good will come of it; in the first place, because they will never turn out to be regular preachers, since to preach effectively it is necessary that the preacher have some ascendancy over the people, and these natives have no ascendancy whatever over their own. Secondly, because one cannot be sure of them, and the preaching of the Gospel cannot be entrusted to them, for they are but new in the Faith and it has not yet taken firm root in them. Thus they are liable to give expression to erroneous doctrines, as we know from experience some have actually done. Thirdly, because they have not the capacity to understand firmly and aright what pertains to the Faith, and the reasons thereof, nor is this language such as to be able to express them with propriety...And from this it follows that they ought not to be ordained to the priesthood, for their being priests will give them no better standing than they have now.<sup>22</sup>

The First Council of Mexico (1555) set the position that the sacred orders were not to be open to Indians, mestizos, and mulattos, who were put in the same class with the descendants of Moors and persons sentenced by the Inquisition. It is worth noting that the fact of establishing such a position implies that there was some discussion of the matter. That it surfaces again in later councils in Mexico suggests that it was not a dead issue.

The Third Council of Mexico (1585) continued this position declaring:

That respect and reverence may be shown to the order of clerics, the sacred canons decree that those who suffer from natural defects which, though not culpable, detract from the dignity of the clerical state, should not be ordained, lest the recipients of

holy orders suffer contempt and their ministry be held in derision. Wherefore this Synod forbids...that Mexicans who are descended in the first degree from Indians, or from Moors, or from parents of whom one is Negro, be admitted to Holy Orders without great care being exercised in their selection [sine magno delectu].<sup>23</sup>

The earliest constitutions of the Franciscans in the New World, written in 1538-1540 for the Province of the Holy Cross of Española, showed this anti-native attitude. It was specific in its view of the entrance of mestizos and confesos into the Order. In no way ("en nynguna manera") were any confesos or mestizos to be received into the Order, for fear of many scandals.<sup>24</sup>

The first of the Franciscan constitutions written in Mexico in 1567 (others followed in 1614, 1648 and 1667), sanctioned by the Province of the Holy Gospel, was specific as to the admittance of non-Spaniards into the order. No Indian or mestizo was to receive the habit of the Order, unless by the unanimous consent of the Father Provincial and the Definitorium of the Province.<sup>25</sup> The ban on allowing Indians and mestizos as candidates into the Order was not based on the *limpieza de sangre* until the *Constituciones Provinciales* of 1614 (approved in 1615 for the Province of the Holy Gospel).<sup>26</sup>

Two practices, one Spanish and the other Catholic, during the late sixteenth century aided the move to extending the purity of blood to the Indians. During this period, candidates for various administrative, ecclesiastical posts or for "whatever favor proceeded from the Crown" had to go through an interrogation regarding their background. The following example is from 1585:

Item, whether they know the aforementioned--his father and his aforementioned grandparents--on his father's side, and all his other ancestors on his father's side, each and every one of them have been and are old Christians, of clean blood, without racial blemish, and that they are not descended from Jew, Mohammedans or converts, nor recently converted from any other sect, and have always been known to be such; and on the other hand, that there has been no gossip nor rumor concerning them, and if there has been, that the witnesses would



have known or heard about it according to the knowledge and information that each and everyone of the undersigned has.

Francisco Morales believes that the Franciscans used this form of interrogation, though not making it part of their legislation until later.<sup>27</sup>

In 1587, Pope Sixtus V established a new regulation regarding the admission of candidate into the various orders. In the Apostolic Constitution *Cum de omnibus*, Three specific requirements of any candidate for any religious order were given. First, no candidate could be of illegitimate birth which was the result of incest or sacrilege ("ex incestu aut ex sacrilegio"). Second, any candidate of illegitimate birth (*spurios vel naturales*) could be accepted if showing proper proofs of piety, character and habits. Such a person could never hold office within an order. Third, each candidate was to present detailed information about his parents, nationality and habits. This was intended to keep out those who were undesirable, such as those seeking to escape legal prosecution. Whatever its intent, it fit into the existing system in Mexico of requiring candidates to answer questions about their lineage.

The requirements established by Sixtus V were considered too strict by some orders. With regard to the particular issue of illegitimacy ("*spurios vel naturales*") of a candidate's birth, Gregory XIV restored to the orders the right to grant dispensations to candidates if their conduct justified such action. The Spanish Franciscans obtained permission from Clement VIII for the local Franciscan authorities to examine all such information.

The actions of the Spanish throne and the papacy gave rise to the *información*, a document required by the religious orders from the end of the sixteenth century. The General Chapter of Valladolid in 1593 required that *informaciones* be obtained by all the provinces of the Franciscan order.<sup>28</sup>

The Franciscan constitutions of 1614, *Constituciones de la Provincia*, approved in 1615 for the Province of the Holy Gospel in Mexico, used the language of the purity of blood: no Indian may be received into this Province nor anyone who is not pure Spanish (*cuarto de mestizo*) reverting to the fourth generation.<sup>29</sup>

The statutes regarding the purity of blood were uniquely Spanish and a part of the Spanish branches of the Orders. Thus, the position of the Spanish Franciscans stood in contrast to those from Portugal. In the same way that the Franciscans were the first

order in Mexico, they were for the first four decades of the sixteenth century, the only religious order present in Asia. In exploring the African coast in their attempts to reach India, the Portuguese made converts. A number of West Africans had been taken to Lisbon, where some received religious training. A Lisbon-trained Congolese, at the insistence of King Manuel of Portugal, was ordained in 1518 as titular Bishop of Utica. A black man as bishop would not happen again for several centuries. A papal brief, also in 1518, gave the royal chaplain authority to ordain Ethiopians, Indians and Africans.<sup>30</sup>

It was not until 1541 that the Portuguese began a serious attempt to train a native clergy.<sup>31</sup> A year before the arrival of St. Francis Xavier in Goa, a seminary for natives had been established and several Malabar priests had been ordained. In 1556 there were 111 students at this seminary: nineteen European-born Portuguese; ten Asian-born Portuguese; fifteen Eurasians; thirteen "Malabares" (probably St. Thomas Christians); twenty-one Canarins or Marathi-Konkani inhabitants of Goa; five Chinese; five Bengalis; two Peguans; three "Kaffirs" or Bantu from East Africa; one Gujarati; one Armenian; five Moors; six Abyssinians; and five from the Deccan sultanates. However, within thirty years, there came a hardening of the attitudes of all the orders against the ordination of natives to the clergy. St. Francis Xavier, who supported and reorganized the seminary and College of St. Paul, which in 1556 had 111 students from all over Asia, did not advocate that Indians should be allowed into the Society of Jesus. He was willing to train them for the secular clergy but not for his own Order.<sup>32</sup>

Although the purity of blood was a Spanish concept, initially, the Jesuits in Spain did not subscribe to the idea. The second Vicar General, Diego Laynez was of Jewish descent. In time, however, the Society of Jesus found that the rule of St. Ignatius--that a candidate's descent was unimportant--could not be upheld in Spain.<sup>33</sup>

The first religious order to arrive in the Philippines was the Augustinians in 1565, followed by the Franciscans in 1577. Philip II, in 1594 in a letter to the governor in Manila, divided the Philippines up among the religious Orders. De la Costa states that by 1605, the majority of the natives were baptized. Yet in 1750, there were only 142 Filipino priests in 1750.<sup>34</sup> Ecclesiastical legislation of the various councils in Spanish America was extended without any changes to the Philippines. In time, the issue of Filipinos in the clergy came to the surface.

In 1596, the Colegio de Niños was founded in Manila with government support. Patterned somewhat after the Colegio de Santa Cruz Tlatelolco (mentioned above), it was established by the Jesuits. The colonial administration hoped that this school, which taught reading, writing, doctrine and arts would provide administrative workers, not priests. The school closed in 1601 when the government withdrew its financial support.<sup>35</sup>

Fray Diego Aduarte, a Dominican missionary who became Bishop of Nueva Segovia in 1632, a diocese in the Philippines (one of the five at the time), strongly opposed a proposal by Fray Diego Collado, also a Dominican, to "found a religious congregation which would accept Filipino vocations for missionary priests." Aduarte wrote of this plan that; "it was something not considering...[and] it ran counter to the views of all intelligent persons who had ever been in the Indies, and against everything that experience had shown, ever since the religious Order had worked therein."<sup>36</sup>

The Governor-General of the Philippines, Sebastian Hurtado de Corcuera, founded the Seminary of San Felipe de Austria at Manila in 1641. The school set forth a number of guidelines that candidates had to meet. Rule 3 stated that; "the collegiates must be of pure race and have no mixture of Moorish or Jewish blood, to the fourth degree, and shall have no Negro or Bengal blood, or that of any similar nation, in their veins, or a fourth part of Filipino blood."<sup>37</sup> The Crown attempted to remedy the situation to no avail. In 1677, the King of Spain sent a letter to the ecclesiastical authorities in the Philippines, encouraging them to train Filipinos for the priesthood. The reaction of the ecclesiastical establishment was "instantaneous, unanimous, and negative."<sup>38</sup>

Charles II of Spain in a royal cedula dated March 12, 1697, declared all Indios to have "purity of blood." This was done in order to elevate all the Indios considered principales (nobles) by the Spaniards to be on an equivalent level with Castilian nobles and the non-principales were to be equal in status to Castilian commoners. The governor of the Philippines set this decree aside with the policy of "*obedezco pero no cumpro*" ("I obey but do not comply").<sup>39</sup>

By 1700, natives were not being educated or trained for the priesthood and as a result none were ordained into the priesthood. The governor in June of that year, responded to an inquiry by the Crown as to whether or not any seminary existed to train native secular priests. He answered that "there was not and never had been any such institution in Manila, adding that he himself saw no

necessity for it."<sup>40</sup> A seminary was finally established for Filipinos in 1702. Philip V, the first of the Bourbons, wrote that a seminary should be established for eight seminarians and open to *Indios*.<sup>41</sup> This was seen by some as the opening up of education and the priesthood to native Filipinos. But it is uncertain, even questioned, that the eight seminarians were native Filipinos. Abella argues that they were in fact Spaniards born in the Philippines, that is, those known as Filipinos during that time.<sup>42</sup>

Why did the Spanish provinces of the Mendicant Orders extend the *limpieza de sangre* to apply to the indigenous populations in the New World and exclude natives from their orders and the clergy in general? John Phelan wrote in his work, *The Hispanization of the Philippines: Spanish Aims and Filipino Responses, 1565-1700*:

Motivated by ethnocentric prejudice and by a selfish desire to preserve their privileged position, the Spanish regular clergy deliberately stunted the growth of the Filipino priesthood. By deliberately restricting the number of Filipino priests and the quality of their training, the Spanish clergy unwittingly sponsored the 'Philippinization' of Spanish Catholicism in such a fashion that they virtually lost control over the direction and shape of folk Catholicism."<sup>43</sup>

"Ethnocentric prejudice" or racism was certainly present, but seems a simplistic answer to a complex issue. I would suggest that there were two significant reasons for the exclusion of Filipinos on a racial basis.

First, the issue of money and power was at stake. The Orders were supported by the Crown in the system known as the *Patronato Real*.<sup>44</sup> Bringing Indians into the Order might require sharing that support. Beyond the support was the power and authority which the orders had over certain dioceses as well as lands. In the second half of the sixteenth century, the friars were in a desperate struggle to retain the authority and influence they had in Mexico; a struggle they eventually lost. Those outside the Orders did not deliberately set out to undermine the authority or power of the friars. The changes that occurred reflected the demographic shift caused by increasing Spanish emigration to Mexico. The pioneers had to share their territory with the new immigrants from Spain. In the

early years of the Spanish period in Mexico, the friars were a significant force because of their number as a part of the total Spanish population. The friars learned the local languages and set up parishes based on existing Indian structures throughout central Mexico.

The 1540's saw the epidemics which decimated the Indian population. As the number of Indians decreased sharply and the number of Spaniards increased, contact between the two became the norm rather than the exception. This contact undermined the position the friars had once enjoyed. Thus in the second half of the sixteenth century, one finds the friars seeking to justify their position as well as calling for a return to the former situation. Geronimo de Mendieta's *Historia ecclesiastica indiana*, written in 1596, used the teachings of the medieval mystic Joachim of Fiore to explain that the friars were to be the leaders of the third epoch of human history, that of the Church of the Spirit. Since the Indians belonged to this third epoch of history, the friars should be put in charge of them. The Audiencia, the political arm of Spanish power in the New World, was according to Mendieta, the "image and figure of hell itself." The repartimiento, a form of labor contract which required more contact between the Spaniards and the Indians, was "the worst and most harmful pestilence of all."<sup>45</sup>

As the friars struggled with other Spaniards to retain their position and power, they were not inclined to share their dwindling resources with any Indians who might want to become members of their orders. Mendieta sought to justify the retaining of the friars' position and the continuing of the *Patronato Real*.

...that the majority of them are not fitted to command or rule, but to be ruled. I mean to say that they are not fitted for masters but for pupils, not for prelates but for subjects, and as such they are the best in the world. So good are they in this respect, that even I, poor and weak as I am, with only the backing and favor of the king, I could with little aid from any companions have a province of 50,000 Amerindians so well ordered and Christian that it would seem to be a monastery.<sup>46</sup>

What need was there for Indians to serve as friars?

A second reason for the exclusion of Indians from the Orders was the sense of disappointment which set in after the initial eu-

phoria. Phelan divided the Christianization of the Philippines into three periods: 1565-1578, preparatory and exploratory; 1578-1609, "the golden age of the missionary enterprise"; 1610-1635, second generation complex (acute disappointment).<sup>47</sup> These three stages match what occurred throughout Spanish America. The first friars were filled with enthusiasm and thought anything was possible. It was during this period in Mexico that the experiment of Indians in the Order was attempted. As time went on, it was not simply the initial failures, but a deep sense of disappointment; the second generation complex. All that had seemed possible now seemed impossible. Thus one finds the Colegio de Santa Cruz Tlatelolco being established and closing and the same with the Colegio de Ninos in Manila. This disappointment brought with it a cynicism with regard to the spiritual condition and abilities of the indigenous people.

For the most part, suggestions that indigenous populations be represented in the clergy came from those outside the work with those peoples. For example, the visitor of the Jesuit missions in Asia, Father Alexander Valignano in a consultum caused the following resolution to be adopted:

It is necessary that there should be a bishop in Japan. but let him not be sent from Europe, a stranger both to the language and the customs. It is abnormal for a Church to be without a bishop; and yet here a foreign bishop will not do. Consequently natives must be put to the test: we shall see whether one of them will be worthy of the episcopate. As far as the Japanese are concerned, there are grounds for hoping that if they are well trained in learning and piety in the seminaries, they can become as capable as Europeans of becoming religious, priests, and bishops.<sup>48</sup>

In different statements of 1626 and 1659, Rome urged that there be native priests in Japan, Tonkin, China, and Cochinchina. In 1680, Pope Innocent XI wrote to the Vicar Apostolic of Tongking: "We would rather learn that you have ordained one native priest than that you have baptized 50,000 pagans."<sup>49</sup>

But those working among the native populations had come to see that the transforming of these people into Christians was a difficult if not a wholly impossible task. To consider allowing them

into religious orders was unthinkable. In theory, one could suggest native priests, but those who worked among the people believed the reality to be much different.

J. Jorge Klor de Alva, in an article titled, "Sahagun's Misguided Introduction to Ethnography and the Failure of the Colloquios Project," deals at length with the keen sense of disappointment Sahagun expressed at what he perceived to be the failure of the friars to bring about genuine change in the Indians and their lives. Sahagun, arriving in 1529, was apart of the initial work among the Nahuas. Toward the end of his life his writings were filled with a sense of the failure of the friars to effect any real conversion. He "records for the first time his opinion that the pioneer Franciscans were not fully aware of the meaning of Christianity had for many (most?) of the natives." Sahagun himself wrote: "We can consider well-understood that having preached to them for more than fifty years, if today they were left on their own...I believe that in less than fifty years there would be no trace of what has been preached to them."<sup>50</sup> For all the work of the friars, Christianity had failed to pierce the native soul.

In her book on the work of translating done by the friars in sixteenth-century Mexico, Louise Burkhart presents the idea that the Nahua and Christian religions were not simply different religions but different kinds of religions. Thus those doing translation work could find similar terms in each language, but those terms had entirely different contexts.<sup>51</sup> This could and I believe did lead to that acute sense of disappointment within the various orders.

This disappointment was found also in the Philippines where the native religion was also a different kind of religion. The sense of frustration led to disappointment and then to cynicism. The friars did not understand the differences which stood between them and the natives. Many of these differences remain today.

The mechanisms created by the use of the concept of *limpieza de sangre* provided the Mendicant Orders, and others, the means to exclude natives from their orders.

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#### NOTES

1. Leon Ma. Guerrero, *The First Filipino* (Manila: National Historical Commission, 1969), p. XIX.

2. A. Boudinhon, "Secular Clergy," *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. XIII, pp. 675-676.

3. Though originally intended for those in the Rule of St. Benedict as early as 755 (the Council of Vernuil), the title "ordo regularis" (as opposed

to "ordo canonicus") evolved and came to refer to those who had taken a vow of poverty. A. Vermeersch, "Regulars," *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. XII, pp. 723-724.

4. John Leddy Phelan, *Hispanization of the Philippines: Spanish Aims and Filipino Responses, 1565-1700* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1957), p. 86.

5. I must acknowledge my immense debt to Francisco Morales and the research he has done on the evolution of the constitutions of the Spanish provinces of the Franciscans. This research provided the background for his work on the seventeenth-century Franciscans of Mexico as the title of his book indicates. I have taken the background research material and gone in a different direction, focusing on the exclusion of the indigenous peoples from the clergy. While Morales touches on this area, it is not the focus of his book. I have included his translations of sections of the constitutions when available.

6. The ministers must carefully examine all candidates on the Catholic faith and the sacraments of the Church. If they believe all that the Catholic faith teaches and are prepared to profess it loyally, holding by it steadfastly to the end of their lives, and if they are not married; or if they are married and their wives have already entered a convent or after taking a vow of chastity have by the authority of the bishop of the diocese been granted this permission; and the wives are of such an age that no suspicion can arise concerning them: let the ministers tell them what the holy Gospel says (Mt. 19:21), that they should go and sell all that belongs to them and endeavor to give it to the poor. Marion A. Habig, ed., *St. Francis of Assisi: Writings and Early Biographies* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press), p. 58.

7. Recipiendus ad Ordinem, postquam examinatus fuerit secundum Regulam de fide et ecclesiasticis sacramentis, interrogetur nihilominus de subscriptis, videlicet, si corpore sit sanu, si conditione liber, si matrimonio no adstrictus, si debitis expeditus, si excommunicationis gravis vinculo non ligatus, si Religionem aliam non egressus, si voluntate promptus ad Religionis onera perferenda. Tandem sibi Regula et asperitates Ordinis exponantur. Michael Bihl, ed., "Statuta Generalia Ordinis edita in Capitulis Generalibus celebratis Narbonae anno 1260, Assissi anno 1279, atque Parisii anno 1292," *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum*, XXXIV (1941), p. 39.

All candidates for the Order, after having been examined concerning the Rule, the Faith, and the Sacraments of the Church, are to be interrogated also about the following: whether he enjoys physical health; whether he is a free man; whether he is married; whether he is free from debt; whether he is under ban of excommunication; whether he has belonged to any other Religious Order; whether he is willing to carry on the work of the Order. Francisco Morales, O.F.M., *Ethnic and Social Background of the*



*Franciscan Friars in Seventeenth Century Mexico* (Washington D.C.: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1973), p. 7.

8. Statuimus in principio, quod qui venientem ad Ordinem nostrum debet in fratrem recipere, diligenter inquirat et attendat sollicite, quod recipiendus, ut docet Regula, sit fidelis et catholicus, de nullo errore suspectus, matrimonio non ligatus, corpore sanus, animo promptus, legitime natus, debitis expeditus, conditione liber, aetate XIV annorum ad minus, nisi fuerit a parentibus oblatus, nulla vulgari infamia maculatus, competenter litteratus vel ad labore fratribus honestos et utile aptus, aut talis conditionis existens, quod eius receptio clero et populo non modicam aedificationem afferret. Michael Bihl, ed., "Statuta Generalia Ordinis edita in Capitulo Generali anno 1354 celebrato, commuinter Farinerianna appellata," *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum*, XXXV (1942), p. 83.

We order, in the first place, that persons charged with receiving aspirants to our Order inform themselves very carefully whether the applicant agrees to abide by the Rule, is a faithful Catholic under no suspicion of heresy; is unmarried; whether he enjoys good health and is totally decided (to enter the Order); whether he is the child of a legitimate marriage; is free from debt; whether he is a free man; whether he is at least fourteen years of age, or, if not, whether he has been offered by his parents; whether he is free from scandal; whether he is either sufficiently literate or suitable for the honest and useful tasks of the friars; or at least whether he possesses such qualities that his admission to the Order will serve for the edification of the clergy and the public. Francisco Morales, O.F.M., *Ethnic and Social Background of the Franciscan Friars in Seventeenth-Century Mexico*, p. 8.

9. Statuimus in primis, quod qui venientem ad Ordinem nostrum debet in fratrem recipere, diligenter inquirat et attendat sollicite, quod recipiendus, ut docet Regula, sit fidelis et catholicus, de nullo errore suspectus, matrimonio non ligatus, corpore sanus, animo promptus, legitime natus, debitis expeditus, conditione liber, aetatem attingens XVI annorum ad minus, nulla infamia vulgari maculatus, competenter litteratus vel ad labore fratribus honestos et utiles aptus aut talis conditionis existens, quod eius receptio clero et populo non modicam aedificationem afferret. Michael Bihl, ed., "Statuta Generalia Observatium Ultramonanorum anno 1451, Barcinonae condita," *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum*, XXXVIII (1945), p. 125.

10. Francisco Morales, O.F.M., *Ethnic and Social Background of the Franciscan Friars in Seventeenth Century Mexico*, pp. 9-11.

11. J.H. Elliott, *Imperial Spain: 1469-1716* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1964), p. 95.

12. Henry Charles Lea, *The History of the Inquisition in Spain*. (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1922), Vol. 2, p. 285.

13. Americo Castro, translated by Willard F. King and Selma Margaretten, *The Spaniards: An Introduction to Their History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), p. 67. Bension Netanyahu's article, "Americo Castro and His View on the Origins of the Pureza de Sangre," is a fascinating response to Castro's theory. Castro's use of medieval rabbinic sources provide the strongest evidence for his position.

14. R. Trevor Davies, *The Golden Century of Spain: 1501-1621* (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1937), p. 11.

15. Francisco Morales, O.F.M., *Ethnic and Social Background of the Franciscan Friars in Seventeenth Century Mexico*, pp. 12-14.

16. J.N. Hillgarth, *The Spanish Kingdoms: 1250-1516: vol. II 1410-1516 Castilian Hegemony* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), pp. 458, 464-465

17. There is some disagreement over the exact number. Motolinia in his *Historia de los Indios* puts the number at three, while Sahagun in his *Historia General de las Cosas de las Nueva España* says two.

18. Francisco Morales, O.F.M., *Ethnic and Social Background of the Franciscan Friars in Seventeenth Century Mexico*, p. 23. See Sahagun, *Historia General de las Cosas de las Nueva España*, Lib X, cap. XXVII.

19. Robert Ricard, *The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico*, pp. 218-219. Chapter 14 is entitled "Training an Elite: the Problem of a Native Clergy." Ricard blames the later exclusion of Indians from the Mendicant Orders on the failures of early experiments.

20. Francisco Morales, O.F.M., *Ethnic and Social Background of the Franciscan Friars in Seventeenth Century Mexico*, p. 25.

21. Frances V. Scholes, "The Colegio de San Juan de Letran in 1552," *The Americas*, Vol. II (1945-46), pp. 101-106; cf., Francisco Morales, O.F.M., *Ethnic and Social Background of the Franciscan Friars in Seventeenth Century Mexico*, p. 25.

22. Horacio de la Costa, S.J., "Development of the Native Clergy in the Philippines," in *Theological Studies*, Vol. VIII (1947), pp. 217-250; revised and expanded version in Gerald H. Anderson, ed., *Studies in Philippine Church History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969), p. 74. Endnotes are from the expanded version.

23. Ibid.

24. Antonine S. Tibesar, "Documents: Constitutions of the Franciscan Province of the Holy Cross in Española (1538-1540)," in *Americas*, Vol. XIII, no. 4 (April 1957), pp. 391-398. The first section entitled "De La Reception e Ynformacion de los Novicios" includes the following: "Primeramente hordenamos que ninguno novicio sea recebido sino segund nuestros estatutos generales mandan: y en nynguna manera sea recebido nynguno confeso ni mestizo pues claramente nos consta por muy clara experiencia por los unos venir nuestra religion en obprobrio y dirisum omni populo y por los otros aver hecho muchos escandalos."

25. Joaquin G. Icazbalceta, ed., *Codice Franciscano* (Second Edition, Mexico: Editorial Salvador Chavez, 1941), p. 132. "Item ordenamos que ningun indio ni mestizo pueda ser recebido al habito de nuestra Orden, ni los nacidos en esta tierra puedan ser recibidos, si no fuere por el P. Provincial y Discretos de la Provincia juntamente, y la recepsion de otra manera hecha sea en si ninguna."

Item, we decree that no Indian or mestizo may be received to the habit of our Order, nor those born in this country be received it be by the unanimous joint action of the Father Provincial and the Definitorium of the Province. Any investiture made contrary to this provision is invalid. Francisco Morales, O.F.M., *Ethnic and Social Background of the Franciscan Friars in Seventeenth Century Mexico*, p. 16.

26. Morales, pp. 16-17.

27. An example is given from February, 1585, showing use of such interrogation by the Franciscans: I, Fray Diego Cordero, do declare that I am at present master of novices in this convent of our Father St. Francis in Mexico, and I do faithfully swear that, in February of 1585, in the presence of all the capitular friars gathered together at the sound of the bell in said convent, Fray Francisco de Espinoza and Fray Diego de San Juan did make the following declaration regarding a chapter which is in the Statutes of our Order which states that if at any time it should be known or heard that they are descendants within the fourth degree of lineage of Jews, new converts or of heretics, condemned to be burnt alive or in effigy, that their profession is null and void, and they will be dishonorably expelled from our Order; to which the aforementioned Father Guardian did bear witness and order compliance, and to which the aforementioned Fray Francisco de Espinoza and Fray Diego de San Juan did consent and sign their names. Francisco Morales, O.F.M., *Ethnic and Social Background of the Franciscan Friars in Seventeenth Century Mexico*, pp. 14-15.

28. *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19. An example of such an información given in 1594 by one Diego de Mancilla seeking to enter the Order: Fuele preguntado de donde ser y si tiene padre or madre, y como se llaman, y si tiene aguelos y aguelas, y si las conocio y conoce y donde sean naturales, y si el o sus pregenitores sean de algun linaje maculado, conviene a saber, de judios, moros, esclavos, herejes, o reconciliados o quemados o de alguna macula por la cual no deba ser recebido en la Orden, o si viene huyendo del siglo por delitos que haya acometido o por deudas que daba.

An example from 1640 shows that the purity of blood remained a part of the qualification: A la tercera dijo que el dicho Agustin de Vetancour y los dichos sus padres son tenidos y habidos por cristianos viejos, y ha oido decir que los abuelos y ascendientes los fueron sin raza de moros, ni de judios ni de otra cualquiera secta de los nuevamente convetidos, y que no ha sido ninguno de los castigados por el Santo Oficio, ni infamados por cualquier otra justicia. Francisco Morales, O.F.M., *Ethnic and Social*

*Background of the Franciscan Friars in Seventeenth Century Mexico*, pp. 132, 135.

29. Francisco Morales, pp. 16-17.

30. Charles R. Boxer, "The Problem of the Native Clergy in the Portuguese and Spanish Empires from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries," in G. J. Cuming, ed., *The Mission of the Church and the Propagation of the Faith* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. 86. One could argue from the numbers that the Portuguese Franciscans did not pursue the admission of indigenous peoples into their Order. After all, between 1510-1661, only half a dozen Indians entered the Order. There are two reasons for this; first, in the earlier stages of their work in India, the Franciscans did not have many converts--Hinduism and the caste system were deeply entrenched; second, in 1580, Portugal and Spain were under one monarchy, and the concept of the purity of blood was extended to the Portuguese religious orders.

31. This comparison may be somewhat unfair. As the Portuguese Franciscans carried on their work in Asia, the Spanish Franciscans were undertaking their first experiments of training Indians for their Order. It is highly doubtful however that the Portuguese's would have excluded natives from the clergy, and certainly not based on the purity of blood which was a Spanish concept and not practiced by the Portuguese.

32. Charles R. Boxer, p. 89; Horacio de la Costa, S. J., pp. 75-76.

33. James Broderick, S. J., *The Progress of the Jesuits (1556-79)*, (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1947), p. 119. J.N. Hillgarth, *The Spanish Kingdoms: 1250-1516, Vol. II 1410-1516 Castilian Hegemony*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), p. 466. When in 1622, a history of the Jesuits was published, which mentioned Laynez's heritage, there was an outcry from the Spanish Jesuits. A portion of a letter from the province of Toledo will serve to show the feelings of the Jesuits in Spain. "The Province of Toledo, united in a congregation, unanimously petitions our Reverend Father General to see to it that what is written in the second volume of the *History of the Society* about the ancestry of Father James Laynez is deleted. We beg for the removal of so great a slur on the sweet memory of so great a Father. Let there be no mention of it whatever in the second edition, and in this first we ask that Father General would immediately cause the page containing this foul blot which damages the whole Society to be cut out and replaced by another asserting the *purity and nobility of the Father's lineage*. (emphasis mine)

34. Gregorio F. Zaide, *Catholicism in the Philippines* (Manila: Santo Tomas University Press, 1937), pp. 41-42; Horacio de la Costa, S.J., p. 70. John Leddy Phelan, p. 86.

35. Domingo Abella, "Spanish Philippines in the Seventeenth Century: A Beleaguered Outpost of the Empire," in Abella, *From Indio to Filipino*, pp. 65-66.

36. Charles R. Boxer, pp. 92-93.

37. ...ordeno y mando que el que uviere de ser colegial esta obligado ante todas cosas a dar informacion de que es limpio de toda mala rassa de moro judio penitenciado porpel sancto officio el y sus acendientes dentro del quarto grado ni de negro bengala ni otra nacion semejante ni a de tener quarto de naturales de la tierra la qual se a de presentar ene el gobierno. Pablo Pastells, S.J., *Labor Evangelica* (Barcelona: Imprenta y Litografia de Henrich y Compañia, 1900), Vol. II, p. 264. The translation given above is used by Boxer and de la Costa. The use of the word Filipino is somewhat misleading. The term used in Spanish was "natural de la tierra." "Those priests of the seventeenth century who are spoken of in the sources as *naturales* or Filipinos were in reality not Indios but Españoles Filipinos, i.e., criollos, men of Spanish blood, born in the Philippines." John N. Schumacher, S. J., *Readings in Philippine Church History* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press), p. 195. In his work, From Indio to Filipino, Domingo Abella explains the mistakes that a historian may make if the term Filipino is applied to a native of the Philippines prior to the nineteenth century. Thus the Filipino Miguel Lino de Espeleta who became Archbishop of Manila in the second half of the eighteenth century was a "full-blooded Spaniard born in the Philippines," p. 30.

38. Horacio de la Costa, S.J., "The Development of the Native Clergy in the Philippines," *Theological Studies*, Vol. VIII (1947), pp. 217-250; revised and expanded version in Gerald H. Anderson, ed., *Studies in Philippine Church History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969), pp. 81-82.

39. Luciano P. R. Santiago, "The Houses of Lakandula, Matanda and Soliman (1571-1898): Genealogy and Group Identity," *Philippine Quarterly of Culture & Society*, Vol. 18, no. 1, pp. 60-61.

40. Horacio de la Costa, S.J., *The Jesuits in the Philippines, 1581-1768* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), pp. 572-73.

41. John N. Schumacher, S.J., p. 197.

42. Domingo Abella, "State of Higher Education in the Philippines to 1863--A Historical Reappraisal," *Philippine Historical Review*, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 19.

43. John Phelan, *The Hispanization of the Philippines* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1959), p. 160.

44. The *Patronato Real* was an arrangement established by Julius II in which he granted to Ferdinand and his successors the exclusive right: (1) to build churches in the Spanish colonies; (2) to nominate candidate for positions, including bishoprics, abbeys, canonries and other ecclesiastical benefices, in the Spanish colonies. This meant that every priest in the Spanish colonies was appointed or approved by the Crown and depended on the Crown for his support. The friars were, in other words, salaried government officials. Horacio de la Costa, pp. 69-70.

45. John Leddy Phelan, *The Millennial Kingdom of the Franciscans in the New World: A Study of the Writings of Geronimo de Mendieta (1525-1604)*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1956). Mendieta's work, which was a history of the work of the Franciscans in Mexico, was completed in 1596 but not published until 1870. Mendieta's ideas were inflammatory and certain to offend almost everyone, especially the king, Philip II.

46. C. S. Braden, *Religious Aspects of the Conquest of Mexico* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1930), p. 272. Note the words "with only the backing and favor of the king," a reference to the continuing of the *Patronato Real*.

47. John Leddy Phelan, *Hispanization of the Philippines*, p. 71.

48. Horacio de la Costa, S.J., p. 76.

49. Charles R. Boxer, "The Problem of the Native Clergy in the Portuguese and Spanish Empires from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries," in G. J. Cuming, ed., *The Mission of the Church and the Propagation of the Faith* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. 86.

50. J. Jorge Klor de Alva, H.B. Nicholson, Eloise Quinones Keber, eds., *The Work of Bernardino de Sahagun: Pioneer Ethnographer of Sixteenth-Century Aztec Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988), pp. 88-89.

51. Louise M. Burkhart, *The Slippery Earth: Nahuatl-Christian Dialogue in Sixteenth-Century Mexico* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1989), pp. 184-193. While Burkhart's work has been criticized because of her lack of familiarity with Catholic dogma, it has much to offer. Burkhart has made future works possible because of this book. Her pointing to the differences between Christianity and the religion of the Nahuas is one of the more significant aspects of this work.

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