PEDRO PELÁEZ' "BREBES APUNTES SOBRE LA CUESTION DE CURATOS DE FILIPINAS:" A TRANSCRIPTION

Albert C.A Flores

The question over the rights of the Filipino secular priests to the parishes was one of the issues which confronted the Philippine Church in the nineteenth century. Known as the "secularization controversy" in as much as it dealt with the question of transferring the administration of the parishes to the secular clergy, this conflict involving the Spanish regular clergy and the Filipino secular priests saw the emergence of Pedro Pablo Peláez as the leader of the Filipino clergy. Peláez championed the cause of the Filipino secular priests and he fought for their rights to the parishes. Asserting that these rights were solidly based on Church law, he wrote several works in favor of the Filipino clergy. "Brebes apuntes sobre la cuestion de curatos de Filipinas" was his last written work on the matter and it presented the main points of his position regarding this whole issue of the administration of parishes.

In the present article, the full transcription of Pedro Peláez' "Brebes apuntes" is given. The transcription is preceded by a brief historical background and a summary of this last important work of Peláez.

Historical background

Biographical sketch

Pedro Pablo Peláez was born in 1812.[1] in Pagsanjan, which was then the capital of the province of Laguna. The available evidence suggests that he was a full-blooded Spaniard, or more precisely, a creole.[2] His father, José Peláez Rubio, a peninsular, had been the *alcalde mayor* or provincial governor of Laguna, while his mother, Josefa Sebastian Gomez Lozada, was a creole of Spanish parents.[3] His only other sibling was Maria Francisca, who was likewise his heiress.[4] Although Peláez was

---

[1] There is no agreement on the exact date of Peláez' birth. Some put it on 12 June 1812 (see Manuel Artigas y Cuerva, *The Events of 1872: A Historico-Bibliographical Account*, trans. and notes by Onofre D. Corpuz [Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1996], 43; Carlos Quirino, *Who's Who in Philippine History* [Makati, Metro Manila: Tahanan Books, 1995]), while others assert that Peláez was born on 29 June 1812 (see Marcelino Foronda, *Manila* [Madrid: Editorial MAPFRE, 1992], 150; *Filipinos in History*, 5 vols. [Manila: National Historical Institute, 1989-1992], 2: 92).

[2] According to Onofre D. Corpuz, during the early 1800s, the *criollos*, or Philippine-born Spaniards, were re-assessing their place in Philippine society. "An important development that affected their status in Filipinas was the tide of separation in the American colonies during the 1820s. Many of the leaders in the revolutions had been creoles in the government, military and secular clergy. In Manila, during the early 1840s, the creoles were again identified with the separatist sentiments. Life became more difficult for them. As the nineteenth century wore on, even the peninsulars in the colonial posts in Manila had to give way to the new functionaries sent from Madrid after every change of political party. And so, more and more creoles followed the Spanish *mestizos*, who had followed the Chinese *mestizos*, who had made their decisions long ago, for a life in their native land. The Creole position became pragmatic." [O. Corpuz, *The Roots of the Filipino Nation* (Quezon City: Aklahi Foundation, 1989), 50-51].

[3] Some have identified Peláez' mother as a Filipina [see M. Foronda, *Manila*, 150; *Filipinos in History*, 2: 91], but it must be remembered that during the nineteenth century, the term "Filipino" was used to refer to Philippine-born Spaniards or the *criollos* [see Domingo Abella, *From Indio to Filipino and Some Historical Works* ([Manila?]: M. Romualdez Abella, [1978?]), 19].

[4] Luciano P.R. Santiago, "The Filipino Priest-Doctors in the Nineteenth Century (1801-1871)," *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society* 13 (1985): 44. L. Santiago has found a document in the Philippine National Archives [PNA], "Doña Maria Peláez sobre Abintestado y declaración de heredera de Don Pedro Peláez (1868)," *Bienes de Difuntos*, legajo no. 63, which contains his baptismal certificate and that of his sister.

of Spanish blood, he fully allied himself with the Filipino secular priests and thus, his championing the cause of the native clergy is shown to be founded on a deep-seated conviction rather than drawn from racial lines.

With the death of his parents when he was still a young boy,[5] Peláez had to work hard to complete his lower schooling, which he finished in his hometown.[6] Being an orphan of a Spanish functionary, he was able to stay with the Dominicans in one of the latter's convents in Manila, and in exchange for his services there, he was able to study in the Colegio de San Juan de Letran and later, in the University of Santo Tomas.[7] From this last institution, Peláez graduated with a degree in philosophy on 20 February 1829 as well as a bachelor's degree in theology on 21 January 1833.[8] On 5 December 1836, he earned his licentiate degree in theology, and some years later, he was conferred the doctorate theology.[9] Ordained to the priesthood sometime in the mid-1830s, he was subsequently assigned to the *cabildo ecclesiastico* of the Manila cathedral. His rise in the archdiocese was steady and in the succeeding years, he was to hold

---

[5]John N. Schumacher, "The Man who Refused to Live a Lie" in *Filipino Heritage: The Making of a Nation*, ed. Alfredo Roces, 10 vols. (Manila: Lahing Pilipino Publishing Inc., 1978) 6: 1574.

[6]Zoilo M. Galang, *Encyclopedia of the Philippines*, 20 vols. (Manila: Exequiel Floro, 1950-1958) 3: 397.

[7]M. Foronda, *Manila*, 150.

[8]M. Artigas y Cuerva, *The Events of 1872*, 43.

[9]M. Artigas y Cuerva does not give a precise date when Peláez received his doctorate, although he says that it was shortly after he received the license. [M. Artigas y Cuerva, *The Events of 1872*, 43.] Others, however, put it in 1844 [see L. Santiago, "Filipino Priest-Doctors," 44; M. Foronda, *Manila*, 150; *Filipinos in History*, 91]. In the *Guia de Forasteros en las Islas Filipinas para el año de 1843* (Manila: Amigos del Pais, 1843), p. 102, the title "licendiado" appears before his name, but in the *Guia* for 1848, Peláez appears with the title of "doctor" [*Guia de Forasteros ... para el año de 1848*, p. 85]. In the records of the Archdiocesan Archives of Manila [hereinafter cited as AAM], the title "doctor" appears in his signatures starting in 1846 [Carlos Quirino, "A Checklist of Documents on Gomburza from the Archdiocesan Archives of Manila," *Philippine Studies* 21 (1973): 24]. He must have earned that degree in theology sometime between 1844 and 1845.

important positions in the cathedral chapter. In the *Guia de Forasteros* for 1843, he was listed as *canónigo magistral* and one of the six *consiliarios* of the Congregacion de San Pedro Apostol.[10] In 1845, Governor General Narciso Clavería designated him acting *medio racionero*, a position receiving a benefice from the government, which was duly confirmed by the queen the following year.[11]

In 1846, the Recoleto José Aranguren[12] became the archbishop of Manila, and he appointed Peláez as secretary of the chapter and administration.[13] The following year, upon the archbishop's recommendation, Governor Clavería named Peláez *racionero* of the archdiocese,"[14] and in 1848, the members of the *cabildo* elected him once more as *canónigo magistral*."[15] In 1855, Peláez was named *canónigo penitenciario*"[16] and was likewise elected *secretario capitular*."[17] By 1858, he was listed in the annual report of the cathedral as "canónigo penitenciario,

---

[10] *Guia de Forasteros ... para el año de 1843*, pp. 163, 259.

[11] Peláez was named to the post on 20 December 1845 since Joaquin Arlegui had been promoted. The appointment was ratified by the queen on 31 August 1846. AAM, 12.E.14, *Titulos, Reales y Titulos* (1843-1914), folder 5-7, "Titulos (Reales) (1844-1914)."

[12] For a study of Archbishop Aranguren's tenure, see Pedro Carmelo Digal Balili, Jr., *Mons. Jose Aranguren: His Times, Life and Pastoral Actions. Archbishop of Manila, 1846-1861* (Ph.D. diss., University of Navarre [Spain], 1992).

[13] Archbishop Aranguren announced the appointment of Peláez and several others in his circular dated 20 March 1846. AAM, 7.A.2, *Asuntos del Cabildo Eclesiastico* (1849-1879), folder 2, "Asuntos del Cabildo Eclesiastico (1845-1949)."

[14] Governor Clavería appointed Peláez to the position on 25 February 1847. AAM, 12.E.14, *Titulos, Reales y Titulos* (1843-1914), folder 5-7, "Titulos (Reales) (1844-1914)."

[15] On 5 August 1848, the members of the cathedral chapter reported to Archbishop Aranguren that they had chosen Peláez for the position since no one else applied within the specified period. Ibid.

[16] On 9 January 1855, Governor General Manuel Crespo informed the archbishop that the queen had named Peláez as *conónigo penitenciario* since Sebastian Moron had refused the position. AAM, 7.A.2, *Asuntos del Cabildo Eclesiastico (1849-1879)*, folder 2, "Asuntos del Cabildo Eclesiastico (1845-1949)."

[17] On 15 August 1855, the members of the *cabildo* elected Peláez to the position of *secretario capitular* in order to replace Manuel Peralta, who renounced the office. [Ibid.]

examinador sinodal, juez comisario apostolico, subdelegado de la cruzadas, y exactor de mesadas eclesiasticas." [18]

When Archbishop Aranguren died on 18 April 1861, the government of the archdiocese passed to the cathedral chapter, which elected Peláez on 23 April to the office of *vicario capitular.* In effect, Peláez was elected as acting archbishop of Manila and was to govern the archdiocese until the arrival of the new archbishop, Gregorio Melitón Martínez."[19] According to the Dominican Francisco Gainza, who became the bishop of Nueva Cáceres from 1862 to 1879, Pelaez' election as vicar capitular was generally well-accepted since he was the most capable, prudent and virtuous member of the secular clergy.[20] Nevertheless, in relaying the Holy See's confirmation of the election,[21] Lorenzo Barili,"[22] then the nuncio in Madrid, expressed the apprehension that the colonial

---

[18] AAM, 37.A.1, *Catalogo del Eclesiastico Personal (1760-1892, 1958, 1960-1961, 1965, 1967-1968),* folder 5-6, "Documentos Personales - Catalog del Personal Eccl., (I762-1859)."

[19] Letter of P. Peláez to Nuncio Barili, 24 April 1861 in Archivio Segreto Vaticano [hereinafter cited as ASV], Archivio della Nunziatura di Madrid, 447.

[20] Letter of F. Gainza to Nuncio Barili, 5 May 1861 in ASV, Arch. Nunz. Madrid, 447. http:// mymovies.it / dizionario / recensione.asp?=16428&ut=2

[21] David Sterritt, <article title,> in *Christian Science Monitor* (July 11, 2005), also at http// www.csmonitor.com/2005/0304/p14s01-almo.html (accessed August 17, 2005).

[22] "Lorenzo Barili was born in Ancona, Italy on 1 December 1801. Ordained in September 1827, he taught for a while philosophy at the seminary in Ancona. Then he entered the Vatican diplomatic service, starting as *auditor* at the Nunciatures of Naples and Lisbon. He was named Internuncio in Brazil in 1848, later transferred to Colombia in 1851. He subsequently represented the Holy See in Ecuador, Venezuela, Bolivia and Peru. In 1857, he was named Apostolic Nuncio of Spain. Created Cardinal in March 1868, he was recalled to Rome where he worked at various Roman congregations. He died in the Eternal City on 8 March 1875. The letters of Nuncio Barili, covering a 12-year sojourn in Madrid, are kept in 109 boxes at the Vatican Archives." [Antonio V. Uy, *The State of the Church in the Philippines, 1850-1875: The Correspondences between the Bishops in the Philippines and the Nuncio in Madrid* (St. Augustin: Steyler Verlag, 1984), 203] See also Vicente Carcel Ortí, "El archivio del Nuncio Barili, 1857-1868,"

government in Manila might pose some difficulties regarding Peláez' selection.[23] But those fears were unfounded. In fact, some months later, Gainza reported to Nuncio Barili that Peláez was governing the archdiocese quite capably, with no problems with the civil authorities and the religious corporations, and thus, Archbishop Martínez could take his time in finishing his business in Spain and he did not have to hurry in coming to Manila.[24] As ecclesiastical governor of the archdiocese, Peláez addressed various issues which demanded his attention. He was "profoundly concerned for religious matters, [and] anxious to bring about reforms in the Church.[25] For instance, he protested against the colonial government's inaction regarding the proliferation of periodicals like *El Español de ambos mundos*, which contained heretical and anti-Catholic material.[26] He visited the religious community of San Juan de Dios, and tried to help them resolve their problem.[27] He also sent a thousand mass stipends for the priests in Italy, whose lives were made difficult by the

---

[23] Letter of Nuncio Barili to P. Peláez, 22 June 1861 in ASV, Arch. Nunz. Madrid, 447. Nuncio Barili feared that the colonial government would not accept Peláez as an ecclesiastical judge since it might consider him unqualified for the office for not possessing the normal requirements. The nuncio was most probably alluding to the fact that Peláez did not have a doctorate in canon law.

[24] Letter of F. Gainza to Nuncio Barili, 25 October 1861 in ASV, Arch. Nunz. Madrid, 447.

[25] John N. Schumacher, *Revolutionary Clergy: The Filipino Clergy and the Nationalist Movement, 1850-1903* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1981), 7.

[26] Letters of P. Peláez to Nuncio Barili, 25 October 1861 and 24 November 1861 in ASV, Arch. Nunz. Madrid, 447.

[27] Letter of P. Peláez to Nuncio Barili, 25 December 1861 in ASV Arch. Nunz. Madrid, 447. Peláez had to deal with the problem of regularizing the election of the new provincial superior of the Fathers-Hospitallers of San Juan de Dios. "The Order of St. John of God had originally been brought to the Philippines to administer the hospital which came to be known as San Juan de Dios ... With the suppression of the religious orders in Spain in 1836, they likewise ceased to exist in the Philippines during the course of the nineteenth century." [John N. Schumacher, *Father José Burgos, A Documentary History: With Spanish Documents and their Translation* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1999), 206-207, footnote 11].

risorgimento movement.[28] His one-year interim administration of the archdiocese was basically satisfactory, and this judgement was clearly shared by Archbishop Martínez, who wrote to Peláez shortly after his arrival in Manila in 1862:

Somewhat freer now and having recovered from the fatigues of my long voyage, whose burdens allowed me to make demands on your kindness to continue in the government of this diocese, I believe the moment has come for me to be able to relieve you of your administration, as in effect I am doing. The confidence your reverence has inspired in me, in harmony with the way you have reciprocated, obliges me to manifest my satisfaction – which explains the choice of the Most Illustrious and Venerable cathedral chapter of this Holy Metropolitan church in electing you as Vicar Capitular during its vacancy. But in assuming from today the episcopal direction of the archbishopric, I do not renounce the cooperation your reverence could lend me for the greater success in the dispatch of ecclesiastical matters. Please accept all my gratitude as a tribute to your signal services, and my apostolic benediction as a token of my affection in Jesus Christ towards your reverence"[29]

The following year, Peláez was appointed treasurer of the metropolitan church of Manila. He was installed into this office during the solemn rites held at the cathedral on 13 April 1863.[30] A few weeks later, on 3 June, a devastating earthquake struck the city. Peláez and several others were celebrating the rites of Corpus Christi at the cathedral, when the earthquake destroyed the roof of the edifice and buried them under the debris, which took three days to clear.[31] Peláez' corpse was later found in

---

[28] Letter of P. Peláez to Nuncio Barili, 5 October 1861 in ASV, Arch. Nunz. Madrid, 447.

[29] C. Quirino, "Documents on Gomburza," 25.

[30] On 5 January 1863, the queen appointed Peláez acting treasurer of the cathedral after Juan José Zulueta died. Two months later, or, 3 March 1863, his appointment became permanent. AAM, 7.A.2, *Asuntos del Cabildo Eclesiastico (1849-1879)*, folder 2, "Asuntos del Cabildo Eclesiastico (1845-1949)."

[31] C. Quirino, "Documents on Gomburza," 26.

a kneeling position, beside his friend, Ignacio Ponce de Leon, underneath the ruins of the Manila cathedral.[32] Aside from his involvement in ecclesiastical administration, Pedro Peláez also devoted part of his time to teaching. He taught philosophy at the Jesuit Colegio de San José, and lectured in philosophy and theology at the University of Santo Tomás.[33] As a teacher, he inspired young students like José Burgos,[34] and he urged many of them to excel, to pursue advance degrees and to have a high standard of priestly life.[35] His contribution to education was acknowledged by Governor Antonio Urbiztondo, who designated him as a member of the committee which studied and planned educational reforms in the country. The recommendations of this committee were later made the basis for the 1863 decree on education.[36] As the most distinguished priest of the archdiocese, Peláez enjoyed a considerable

---

[32] *Filipinos in History*, 92.

[33] Ibid.

[34] José Burgos has traditionally been regarded as the protégé and disciple of Peláez, as well as the precursor of Jose Rizal. Like Peláez, he fought for the rights of the Filipino clergy and played an important role in the development of national consciousness. His execution in 1872, together with Frs. Mariano Gomez and Jacinto Zamora, marked "a turning point in the history of Filipino nationalism, a catalyst which brought together the liberal reformist elements in Philippine society with the growing self-awareness of a people into a movement that before long would be directed at independent nationhood." [J. Schumacher, *Burgos*, 1] See also John N. Schumacher and Nicholas Cushner, "Documents Relating to Father José Burgos and the Cavite Mutiny of 1872," *Philippine Studies* 17 (1969): 457-529; Fidel Villaroel, *Father José Burgos, University Student* (Manila: University of Santo Tomás Press, 1971); and Sol H. Gwekoh, *Burgos, Gomez, Zamora: Secular Martyrs of Filipinism* (Manila: National Bookstore Inc., 1974).

[35] Cristina Sabado, *Philippine Church History* (Makati, Metro Manila: Salesiana Publishers, 1990), 80.

[36] *Filipinos in History*, 92.

influence over the Spanish and Filipino clergy, particularly over the members of the *cabildo.*[37] He was known to have been more diligent than most in his studies and he was recognized for his intelligence and clear insight.[38] He won renown as a preacher and among his more famous sermons was the one he delivered on 30 November 1855, the feast of St. Andrew and the commemoration of the 1574 victory of the Spanish army over the attempted invasion of the Chinese pirate Limahong.[39] Through the initiatives of his friends who wanted them preserved, his sermons were compiled and posthumously published. The *Colección de sermones predicados por el Doctor D. Pedro Pablo Peláez*[40] included some of the more memorable sermons he delivered, like the sermon on Nuestra Señora de Guia, delivered on 18 December 1838 at the Manila cathedral, before the *cabildos* and the royal *audiencia*,[41] and the sermon on St. Thomas Aquinas, which was delivered on 7 March 1863 before the faculty of

---

[37] In his letter to Ultramar, Archbishop Martínez reported that when he arrived in Manila, he found that both Spanish and Filipino members of the cathedral chapter were under the influence of Peláez. He observed that "Dr. Don Pedro Peláez, a priest of austere habits and of solid learning ... attracted to himself friends and enemies. For the native clergy, he was an oracle without whose advice they did nothing, and a solicitous agent who with efficient zeal took on himself and directed their affairs both in the ecclesiastical and civil sphere, both in Manila and in the Overseas office [Ultramar]." [Letter of Archbishop Martínez to Ultramar, 22 June 1863, Archivo Histórico Nacional [AHN], Ultramar, leg. 2255, exp. 9, cited in A. Uy, *State of the Church in the Philippines*, 236].

[38] M. Artigas y Cuerva, *The Events of 1872*, 43.

[39] P. Peláez, *Discurso que en la solemne festividad con que anualmente celebra la ... ciudad de Manila la Victoria alcanzada por las armas españolas el dia de San Andres de 1574 contra el pirate Limaong ... el dia 30 de Noviembre de 1855.* (Manila, 1855). A copy of this is 15-page homily is found in the Newberry Library, Chicago. [D. V. Welsh, *A Catalogue of Printed Materials relating to the Philippine Islands, 1519-1900, in the Newberry Library* (Chicago: Newberry Library, 1959) 36].

[40] Pedro Peláez, *Colección de sermones predicados por el Doctor D. Pedro Pablo Peláez* (Manila: T. Portanet, 1869). A microfilm copy of this is found in the microfilm section of the Rizal Library, Ateneo de Manila University (Quezon City, Philippines). [*Printed Materials in Microform* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University, 1994), 65].

[41] P. Peláez, *Colección de sermones*, 40-48.

the University of Santo Tomás.[42] Pedro Peláez likewise made a notable contribution to Philippine journalism. Together with some Dominican religious, with whom he was closely associated, Peláez founded the first religious newspaper in the country, *El Catolico Filipino*, which was started in the summer of 1861.[43]

According to Gainza, Peláez was the one who conceived the idea of a Catholic newspaper as well as the one who ended up being its chief editor.[44] Towards the end of the year, however, *El Catolico Filipino* encountered some problems and clashed with the *Diario de Manila*,[45] which had "declared war against it."[46] Gainza pointed to the *peninsulares* as the enemies of *El Catolico Filipino* and he castigated the government for its inaction on the matter. But in his book *El Periodismo Filipino*, Wenceslao Retana[47]remarked that what contributed decisively to its disappearance

---

[42] Ibid., 14-22.

[43] F. Gainza reported to Nuncio Barili that the newspaper was started in the summer of 1861. [Letter of F. Gainza to Nuncio Barili, 25 October 1861 in ASV, Arch. Nunz. Madrid, 447] Wenceslao E. Retana erroneously asserts that the newspaper was begun in 1862: "I should mention that Sr. Diaz Puertas [that is, in his *Ligeros Apuntes sobre la Imprenta en Filipinas*] gives the year of the founding of the newspaper as 1861. I have a copy of the number 54 of the Hora Diaria de El Catolico Filipino corresponding to April 5, 1862. The headline reads: Year I; there is no doubt, therefore, that this newspaper was born in 1862, unless "Year I" refers only to the Hoja, which is not probable." [Wenceslao E. Retana, *El Periodismo Filipino (Journalism in the Philippines, 1811-1894)*, trans. Rodolfo L. Nazareno and Maria Elena Peña (Manila: Philippine Press Institute, 1991), 34.

[44] Letter of F. Gainza to Nuncio Barili, 6 October 1861 in ASV, Arch. Nunz. Madrid, 447. The four Dominicans in the staff of *El Catolico Filipino* were PP. Ama, Corominas, Fonseca and Gainza.

[45] For a brief history of *Diario de Manila*, see W. E. Retana, *El Periodismo Filipino*, 20-26.

[46] A. Uy, *State of the Church in the Philippines*, 233.

[47] The works of W. E. Retana, especially his bibliographies, have been a valuable source for historians because aside from providing much factual information on persons and events, they contain numerous documents, many of which are no longer available to researchers. See John N. Schumacher, "W.E. Retana: An Historiographical Survey," *Philippine Studies* 10 (1962): 550-576.

from the field of journalism was an article written by P. Fray Agapito Aparicio, a notable Augustinian, since it is a fact that two days after that article was published in *Diario de Manila*, attacking *El Catolico Filipino*, the latter stopped publishing. It seemed that in the shadow of religious ideas, the *El Catolico* used to expose its political leanings: what I mean is that not all its ideas were in consonance with the criterion that is genuinely Spanish.[48]

Actually, *El Catolico Filipino* did not quite "disappear" but merged with another periodical to form the *Oceania Catolica.* But Gainza himself hinted at the assertion made by Retana when he reported to Nuncio Barili that *El Catolico Filipino* was combined to another newspaper because of the tendentious articles of the indigenous clergy.[49]

The most important undertaking of Peláez, however, was his work on behalf of the Filipino secular priests. He was an ardent defender of their rights and their well-being, and he firmly believed that they were as capable as the Spanish regular clergy. When the question over the administration of the parishes emerged anew in the late 1840s, Peláez led the Filipino clergy in their first collective action to assert their rights.

---

[48] W. E. Retana, *El Periodismo Filipino*, 34-35.

[49] Letter of Bishop Gainza to Nuncio Barili, 8 January 1863 in ASV, Arch. Nunz. Madrid, 447. Peláez, on the other hand, wrote to the nuncio and explained that the real cause was the lack of unity and interest on the part of the clergy. [Letter of P. Peláez to Nuncio Barili, 8 February 1863 in ASV, Arch. Nunz. Madrid, 447].

Case of Cavite, 1849-1851

In the late 1840s, some religious orders requested that parishes be turned over to their administration. Among them were the Franciscans, who, basing their claim on the royal decree of 1826,[50] petitioned Governor General Narciso Clavería in 1848 to transfer to them the parish of Quiapo. But Archbishop José Aranguren protested and pointed out that Quiapo was not a parish that was previously under their charge and thus, it was not covered by the provisions of the 1826 decree. As a consequence, the governor turned down the request of the Franciscans "for the present."[51]

This, however, was not the case with the parishes in Cavite. That same year, the Recoleto procurator in Madrid, Guillermo Agudo, requested that his order be given four parishes in Cavite.[52] He based his petition

---

[50] In 1826, Ferdinand VII issued a royal decree which made permanent the suspension of the *cedula* of 9 November 1774. The 1774 *cedula* ordered that all religious parish priests, even those who had submitted to episcopal visitation and the regime of the *patronato*, were to be replaced by secular priests. On the other hand, the 1826 decree ended all projects of secularization in the Philippines and completely reversed the colonial government's policy of gradual secularization of parishes. It ordered that all parishes which were transferred to the secular clergy in the time of Archbishop Sancho de Santa Justa be returned to the religious orders as soon as they became vacant because of the death or the transfer of the incumbent secular parish priest. Furthermore, it prohibited any future secularization without the express consent of the king.

[51] J. Schumacher, *Revolutionary Clergy*, 5.

[52] According to "Quejas y exposiciones del clero secular de Cavite contra la Real Orden de 9 Marzo de 1849, que disponía pasasen al clero regular (Recoletos y Dominicos) la administración espiritual de siete parroquias que el clero indígena poseia en aquella provincia, 1849-1851," which is found in the Archives of the Philippine Province of the Society of Jesus [APPSJ] [a microfilm copy is also found in the microfilm section of the Rizal Library, Ateneo de Manila University (Quezon City, Philippines); see *Philippine Materials in Microform*, 135], the Recoletos had first asked for *all* the parishes of Cavite.

on two grounds: first, because they needed to place the *definidores*[53] of their order somewhere near Manila so that they could work more closely with their provincial, who was in the capital, and second, because their congregation possessed haciendas in that province.[54] These reasons, however, were actually without any merit. There was no need to set aside parishes in Cavite for the Recoleto *definidores* because their order already possessed other parishes in Manila for this purpose.

The necessity of assigning four parishes of Cavite for their *definidores* was a false necessity because they already held the towns of Caloocan and Las Piñas in the very province of Manila, that of Imus in Cavite, a beautiful church and magnificent *convento* in San Sebastian, a suburb of Manila, and another large church and spacious *convento* in the port of Cavite.[55]

Furthermore, the Recoletos had just been given additional parishes in the island of Negros.[56] They were not exactly in excess of members, and thus they were in no position to attend to all these curacies.[57]

When the request reached Archbishop Aranguren, he did not make any objection, but he did, however, declare that he found no acceptable reason to remove the native clergy from the parishes they administered

---

[53] In the friar orders, the *definidores* were the ones who were "the advisors of the provincial and with whose consent certain matters could be decided outside the chapters. [They were] collectively referred to as *definitorio*." [John N. Schumacher, *Readings in Philippine Church History* (Quezon City: Loyola School of University, Ateneo de Manila University, 1979), 407].

[54] J. Schumacher, *Revolutionary Clergy*, 5.

[55] "Unsigned Letter of the Secular Clergy of Manila to the Regent of Spain Francisco Serrano" in J. Schumacher, *Burgos*, 225. J. Schumacher dates the letter between 1869 and 1871. [Ibid., 36].

[56] See Angel Martinez Cuesta, *History of Negros*, trans. Alfonso Felix, Jr. and Sor Caritas Sevilla (Manila Historical Conservation Society, 1980), 171-172. According to A. Martinez Cuesta, the scarcity of [secular] priests in the diocese of Cebu and the belief that the regular clergy could help stimulate the development of the island occasioned the turnover of the spiritual administration of Negros to the Recoletos.

[57] J. Schumacher, *Revolutionary Clergy*, 5.

for more than eighty years. Archbishop Aranguren further remarked that the reasons of the Recoleto procurator not only applied to the Recoletos but also to the Dominicans, who likewise possessed areas in Cavite. Unfortunately, this remark, which was probably intended to express a mild disapproval of the reasons cited by Agudo, was used by the colonial government against the Filipino secular priests. On 9 March 1849, the government promulgated a decree which not only awarded three parishes of the secular clergy to the Recoletos but also gave four parishes to the Dominicans, who had not even asked for them.[58]

The real motive behind the Recoleto procurator's petition remains rather unclear since the reasons he brought forward had existed long before the request was made. Moreover, the fact that no *definidores* were placed in the parishes until 1862 strongly suggests that this was not exactly the primary consideration. But the political motive behind the displacement of the Filipino clergy from the Cavite parishes appears to be rather obvious. The colonial government viewed the Filipino secular priests with suspicion and mistrust, and it was ready to remove them from any position of influence. Bishop Gainza pointed this out when he wrote to Nuncio Barili that it was basically a matter of government policy to exclude Filipinos from being parish priests because they were considered to be politically dangerous.[59]

Even before this incident, a "reverse secularization" had already been taking place, especially with the enforcement of the decree of 1826. But this transfer of parishes from the Filipino secular clergy to the Spanish regulars, carried out before 1849, was, to a certain extent, justified and

---

[58] Pablo Fernandez, *Dominicos donde nace el sol: Historia de la Provincia del Santisimo Rosario de Filipinas de la Orden de Predicadores* (Barcelona: n.p., 1958), 383. The parishes of Bacoor, Cavite el Viejo and Silang were given to the Recoletos, while the parishes of Santa Cruz, San Francisco de Malabon, Naic and Indang went to the Dominicans. [Letter of Archbishop Martínez to the Regent of Spain Francisco Serrano, 31 December 1879 in J. Schumacher, *Burgos*, 195].

[59] Letter of F. Gainza to Nuncio Barili, 21 February 1862 in ASV, Arch. Nunz. Madrid. Gainza admitted that the initiative came from the Recoletos, but he told the nuncio that the colonial government used that incident to take away more parishes from the Filipino clergy. Gainza also said that at that time, he opposed the acceptance of the parishes from the government.

readily explained. First, it had a semblance of justice because it was viewed as a restoration of the parishes which were previously administered by the friars and which originally belonged to them in accordance with the regime of the *patronato real* – although it must be kept in mind that "on a higher level, of course, the permanent possession by religious of regularly organized parishes was against the policy of the church as enunciated by the Council of Trent and repeated by various popes."[60] Second, there was a widespread failure of the ill-trained Filipino secular priests to properly administer the parishes and hence the preference for religious parish priests was somehow understandable. Finally, the regular clergy "were primarily motivated by the fact that ... they had built and nurtured these parishes in the first place ... [and] naturally, they felt a certain sense of pride in their corporate accomplishments, and a desire to see the work they had begun further developed."[61]

The decree of 1849, however, was none other than a clear deprivation of the Filipino clergy in Cavite. The Cavite parishes which were handed over to the regular clergy had never belonged to them, but either had been founded by the secular clergy or had been entrusted to them when the Jesuits had been expelled from the Philippines.[62] In addition, the transfer occurred at a time when the quality of the Filipino secular priests had begun to improve through conscious efforts to raise their intellectual

---

[60] J. Schumacher, *Burgos*, 10.

[61] J. Schumacher, *Revolutionary Clergy*, 4.

[62] "Letter of Secular Clergy" in J. Schumacher, *Burgos*, 227. In the letter, it was pointed out that there were only twelve parishes in Cavite in 1849. Four of these (Maragondon, Indang, Silang and Cavite el Viejo) were listed in the *Catalogus Christianorum quos Societas colit in Philippinis*, published in 1757, as among the ministries of the Jesuits. Three were founded after the Jesuit expulsion (Imus in 1797, Naic in 1797, Rosario (a) Salinas in 1845). On the other hand, the other five curacies (the port of Cavite, San Roque, Bacoor, San Francisco de Malabon, and Santa Cruz) had been parishes under the care of the secular clergy from the very beginning. Cavite thus became the principal area of the secular clergy in the archdiocese of Manila after the Jesuit parishes were handed over to them because of the Jesuit expulsion. The fact that a province close to the capital would be totally under the secular clergy was probably a cause of concern for the colonial government, and it may have been a factor in its decision to deprive the secular clergy of parishes.

and moral level. As a consequence, the decree provoked resentment among the native clergy in the archdiocese and it provoked them, for the first time, into collective action, under the leadership of Fr. Mariano Gomes,[63] the parish priest of Bacoor and vicar forane of Cavite, and Fr. Pedro Peláez, the secretary to the archbishop of Manila.

A representation to the queen was drafted, in which it was petitioned that either the 9 March 1849 decree be repealed or the Filipino clergy be compensated elsewhere for the parishes they were losing. Peláez supplied the final redactor of the *exposición*, most probably Gomes, with a number of suggestions and cautions. He reminded the latter that the issue of Filipino loyalty to Spain must be addressed since this was the colonial government's primary concern,[64] and that it was better to first show the *exposición* to Archbishop Aranguren (who was a Recoleto!) since it would come back to him for comments anyhow and since it was better

---

[63] "Belonging to the generation before Peláez and without the academic preparation of the latter, [Mariano Gomes] appears nonetheless to have excelled his own contemporaries and to have achieved a position of leadership in Cavite. Relatively little is known with certainty of his life from contemporary sources, but it is clear that his involvement in the defense of the rights of the Filipino clergy dated at least from a period when [José] Burgos and [Jacinto] Zamora were still boys." [Ibid., 13] There are more than two hundred letters to and from Mariano Gomes in the AAM, covering a period of twenty-eight years. These give a picture of a parish priest who was zealous in carrying out his duties. [C. Quirino, "Documents on Gomburza," 22] For a biographical sketch of Mariano Gomes, see E. Arsenio Manuel, *Dictionary of Philippine Biography*, 2 vols. (Quezon City: Filipiniana Publications, 1955) 1: 195-199. See also Luciano P.R. Santiago, "The Capellania of P. Mariano Gomes, 1822-1872," *Philippine Studies* 32 (1984): 325-334 and idem, "Before Bacoor: The Initial Career of P. Mariano Gomes (1822-1824)," *Philippine Studies* 33 (1985): 87-92.

[64] Peláez was correct in this assessment. Even before the document could be drafted, there were rumors about pulpit protests and meetings of the Cavite priests, and even about a conspiracy, that reached Archbishop Aranguren. "Emphasizing that he himself had tried to defend the rights of the Filipino clergy, the archbishop insisted in his letter to Fr. Gomez on the need for absolute obedience to the dispositions of the government." [J. Schumacher, *Revolutionary Clergy*, 6].

to get his approval on the matter.[65] It is not known with certainty if the exposition had been presented at all to the queen,[66] but the native clergy did, however, publish its substance anonymously in the 8 March 1850 issue of the Madrid newspaper, *El Clamor Público*.[67] This article in *El Clamor Público* refuted the reasons brought forward by the Recoleto procurator Agudo for the transfer of the parishes, and it answered as well the questions on the competence and loyalty of the Filipino secular priests.[68]

---

[65] J. Schumacher, *Burgos*, 12.

[66] In his *Revolutionary Clergy*, J. Schumacher asserts that the exposition was not presented to the government (p. 6), although in his book *Burgos*, he says, "It would seem that this document was actually sent to the queen." (p. 12, footnote 15).

[67] The article of the native clergy was reprinted in Pedro Peláez, *Documentos importantes para la cuestion pendiente sobre la provision de curatos en Filipinas* (Madrid: El Clamor Público, 1863), 78-85.

[68] The Recoleto procurator Agudo responded to the native clergy's article by arguing that since the parishes had been founded by the regular clergy (that is, the Jesuits), they should be returned to the regular clergy: "Es otro error suponer que los Eclesiasticos Regulares no tienen alli aptitud por derecho para ser Curas; pero no es nuestro objeto enumerar todas las equivocaciones que ha padecido el comunicante, porque seria una tarea larga y penosa, y para nuestro propósito basta observar que todas las reflexiones que se hacen en el articulo a que contestamos, carecen de fundamento en la parte doctrinal, y de exactidud en cuanto a los hechos, pues la provincia de Cavite era fundacion de los Padres Jesuitas, y el Clero Secular la administraba con el carácter de interinidad, como no podia menos de suceder, habiendo sido la conquista espiritual de dicha provincia, obra esclusiva del cello evangélico de los Regulares." [Ibid., 85]. Peláez answered Agudo's article with two letters, which assembled an impressive array of arguments from history and canon law. [The text of these two letters is also in P. Peláez, *Documentos importantes*, 86-102].

But Peláez and Gomes realized that the newspaper campaign was not enough. In May 1851, they solicited contributions from the native priests in order to raise funds for an agent in Madrid, who would work for the revocation of the 1849 decree and the restoration of the Cavite parishes which the secular clergy lost. A letter[69] which circulated among the native clergy explained the project:

The bulk of the money gathered will be reserved to reward the person in Madrid who brings this affair to a successful completion. He will receive one-half when the royal order is issued revoking the previous order. The other half will be given him when the order is executed here in the Philippines, because it will be part of his task to obtain from influential persons in Madrid urgent recommendations for the governor of these islands, his assessor and secretary, and for the fiscal of Her Majesty, that they carry out immediately the above-mentioned sovereign disposition.[70]

A list of the contributors to the project has survived and it shows that nearly all the native priests in Cavite supported the plan. In addition, there was a considerable number of priest-contributors from Manila and the nearby provinces of Batangas and Laguna. Unfortunately, however, the campaign was not successful. It did not achieve its goal. The royal order was not revoked and the Cavite parishes were taken away from the Filipino clergy. Neither did it change the policy of the government toward the Filipino clergy. Nevertheless, this failed initiative was important because as it has been previously pointed out, it marked the first collective action of the Filipino clergy to defend their rights.

---

[69] The complete text of this confidential letter to the secular clergy of the Philippines, which was dated May 1851, can be found in J. Schumacher, *Burgos*, 47-49.

[70] Ibid., 49.

The Decree of 10 September 1861

In 1859, the Jesuits, who were officially restored in the Philippines by the royal decree of 19 October 1852,[71] set foot on the islands for the first time since they were expelled in 1768. That year, the royal *cedula* dated 30 July was issued and it decreed in article 13 that the newly-restored Jesuits were to take over the spiritual care of the island of Mindanao and were to occupy the existing parishes there. The decree stipulated that in order to ensure a unified effort in Christianizing Mindanao, where little progress had been made towards the evangelization of the Muslims and the mountain peoples,[72] the Jesuits were to take charge not only of the new mission territories, but also of the parishes along the coast, which could serve as the base from which the missions into the interior of the island would work.[73] The Recoletos, who possessed these parishes

---

[71] This decree actually provided for a reorganization of the Church in the Philippines, especially the missions in Mindanao. The principal provisions of this decree can be found in Pablo Pastells, *Misión de la Compañia de Jesus en el siglo XIX*, 3 vols. (Barcelona: Editorial Barcelonesa, 1916-1917), 1: 6-11 and in A. Uy, *State of the Church in the Philippines*, 75-78.

[72] "For two centuries or more, Spain's control of the southern islands had been little more than nominal, except for a certain number of coastal towns, mostly in the north of Mindanao, which had been evangelized by the Jesuits and Recoletos. When the former had been expelled in 1768, their parishes and missions had passed on to the Recoletos, but due to the grave shortage of personnel ... little progress had been made towards the evangelization of the mountain peoples, to say nothing of the Muslims. Spanish concern had been aroused by the increasing British, French and German attention to the southern islands, and the necessity of making Spanish occupation an effective reality had turned Spanish government thinking to the revival of the missions." [J. Schumacher, *Burgos*, 14].

[73] P. Pastells, *Misión de la Compañia de Jesus*, 1: 22-23.

along the coast, were surprised and taken aback by the order to abandon the spiritual administration of the island and to transfer everything to the Jesuits.[74] Naturally, they protested because they founded some of these parishes while the others, which were transferred to them when the Jesuits had been expelled, had already been administered by them

---

[74] "But then, suddenly when nobody had an inkling, our Superiors were confronted with a Royal Decree ordering them to abandon forever the spiritual administration of Mindanao and turn it over to the priests of the Society of Jesus." [Licinio Ruiz de Santa Eulalia, *Sinopsis histórica de la Provincia de S. Nicolas de Tolentino de las Islas Filipinas de la Orden de Agustinos Recoletos* (Manila, 1925), 2: 254, quoted in P. Schreurs, "The Troubles They Have Seen: Caraga and the Recoletos in the Nineteenth Century," *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society* 15 (1987): 212]. Licinio Ruiz says that "the principal reason motivating the Royal decision was a report of the Bishop of Cebu dated 26 November 1857 wherein the prelate asked that once the Society of Jesus had been re-established in all Spanish dominions, this Society should be given the spiritual administration of the part of Mindanao comprising the Districts of Bislig, Davao, the province of Zamboanga, the island of Basilan and other places located east and south of the island. The reason was that the large size of Mindanao with its one and a half million inhabitants consisting of Christians, pagans and Muslims, made it very difficult for the Recoletos to attend to all the villages and new mission-stations." [L. Ruiz de Santa Eulalia, *Sinopsis histórica*, 2: 255, quoted in P. Schreurs, "Caraga and the Recoletos," 213]. According to L. Ruiz de Santa Eulalia, the Recoletos were not aware of the reasons why Bishop Jimeno made such a request, but it was clear from the 26 November 1857 letter that the bishop was convinced that "efforts and the resources of the Recoletos alone were insufficient to play the role expected from them in contemporary government plans for Mindanao" [P. Schreurs, "Caraga and the Recoletos," 213]. Here is an excerpt of the bishop's letter: "The complete conquest of Mindanao, until now not feasible, becomes now possible with the help of the re-established Jesuits ... the Bishops proposes that the administration of the established pueblos in the District of Bislig, and others, shall be ceded to the Jesuits, so that initially the new missionaries will have a foothold where they can start their ministry; afterwards they can penetrate in various directions to the mountains in the interior and to other places inhabited by pagans or Muslim yet to be converted." [Letter of Bishop Jimeno to the Queen, 26 November 1857 in the Archivo Provincial de los Agustinos Recoletos, Marcilla, Navarra, España (APAR), leg. 62-1, quoted in P. Schreurs, "Caraga and the Recoletos," 213].

for nearly a hundred years.[75] But the objections of the Recoletos did not convince the government to reconsider its decision. On 10 September 1861, another decree was issued.[76] It repeated the previous instruction that the Jesuits were to take over the Recoleto parishes in Mindanao as soon as they would become vacant through the death or transfer of the incumbent parish priest. In addition, it stipulated that as recompense for the parishes they were turning over to the Jesuits, the Recoletos were to be given parishes in Cavite or elsewhere, which were administered by the native clergy, as soon as these would become vacant, in the same way indicated for the Recoleto parishes in Mindanao.[77] Eventually, the Recoletos yielded and submitted to the demands of the 1861 decree. Writing to Bishop Romualdo Jimeno of Cebu, the Recoleto provincial Juan Félix de la Encarnación[78] informed the latter that due to the death of its parish priest, the parish of Mainit was vacant and that he was turning it over in compliance with the royal decree.[79] A few months later,

---

[75] See, for instance, the letter of Fr. Antonio Ubeda to Governor José Lemery, 4 March 1861 in Guillermo Agudo and Celestino Mayordomo, *Complemento de los Documentos del folleto de 14 Noviembre de este año de 1863 sobre cuestion de curatos* (Madrid: El Clamor Público, 1863), 12-15. Fr. Ubeda writes that the decree of 30 July 1859 would result in great damages ("los grandes daños morales y materials") for the Recoletos, who had labored in Mindanao for more than two hundred years. He suggests that the government retain the Recoletos in the island since they can be of service both to the Church and the state.

[76] The text of the decree was reprinted in P. Peláez, *Documentos importantes*, 104-105. An English translation can be found in J. Schumacher, *Burgos*, 215-217.

[77] P. Pastells, *Misión de la Campañia de Jesus*, 1: 23; L. Ruiz de Santa Eulalia, *Sinopsis histórica*, 2: 264, quoted in P. Schreurs, "Caraga and the Recoletos," 215.

[78] P. Juan Felix de la Encarnación had been the superior of the Provincia de S. Nicolas de Tolentino de Filipinas for two terms: 1849-1852 and 1861-1864.

[79] Letter of the Recoleto provincial to Bishop Jimeno, 10 February 1862 in APAR, Leg. 49 "Oficios," p. 252, quoted in P. Schreurs, "Caraga and the Recoletos," 215-216.

on 14 August 1862, the same provincial wrote to the governor general that he was handing over the curacies of Lubungan and Bislig, and the missions of Davao, Pollok and Isabel.[80]

The 1861 decree, which failed to provide "compensation" for the native clergy's losses, as it had done for those of the Recoletos, was clearly detrimental to the Filipino secular priests. Naturally, the latter raised objections and protested the royal order. Pedro Peláez, who, as vicar capitular, was then governing the archdiocese *sede vacante*, sent an *informe* dated 18 September 1861 to Governor General José Lemery, in which he presented the "convenience, not to mention the necessity," of temporarily suspending the execution of the royal decree, at least until the archdiocesan see was no longer vacant and Archbishop Martínez arrived.[81] This suggestion, however, was completely ignored.[82] The following year, Peláez protested anew. On 10 March 1862, he sent a

---

[80] The letter of the provincial can be found in Guillermo Agudo and Celestino Mayordomo, *Importantisima cuestion que puede afectar gravamente a la existencia de las islas Filipinas* (Madrid: El Clamor Público, 1863), 22-23. But even with these early turn-over gestures, "it appears that the Recoletos did not abandon Mainit and Bislig immediately. The last Recoleto left Mainit and Bislig only in 1871, Surigao also in 1871, Gigaquit in 1872, Butuan and Bunawan in 1875, Numancia in 1882 and Tandag in 1884." [P. Schreurs, "Caraga and the Recoletos," 216].

[81] The report of Peláez to Governor Lemery can be found in Isacio Rodriguez and Jesús Alvarez, "Inquietud en la Iglesia de Filipinas: amovilidad e inamovilidad del Clero regular," *Archivo Agustiniano* 82 (1998): 237-241. F. Gainza wrote to Nuncio Barili that he toned down Peláez' draft since he considered it much wiser to present the suspension as a temporary measure so as not to have a conflict of a political nature with the colonial government. [Letter of Fr. Gainza to Nuncio Barili, 25 December 1862 in ASV, Arch. Nunz. Madrid, 447].

[82] F. Gainza explained that with what happened in Latin America, the colonial government in Manila was fixed on its position and wanted that it would be obeyed. [Letter of Fr. Gainza to Nuncio Barili, 21 February 1862 in ASV, Arch. Nunz. Madrid, 447].

letter to Governor Lemery, and petitioned the latter to repeal the 1861 decree.[83] Asserting that the decree was harmful to the secular clergy, Peláez pointed out that the Filipino secular priests were very numerous and yet they only possessed very few parishes. He argued that to take away from them the very few parishes that they had was to further sink them into abjection and misery since it would mean that they would have very little hope of advancing in their career and that they would most likely remain as coadjutors to the religious parish priests. In other words, there was no incentive for the secular priests, whose being native did not hinder them from rendering good service to the Church. According to Peláez, this was not very good because both the Church and the state were bound to suffer in having a secular clergy *sin estímulos, aspiraciones ni educación.* In addition, the vicar capitular of Manila argued that no harm would result, not even to the Recoletos, if the decree were not implemented. He reminded Governor Lemery of the Cavite parish transfers in the early 1850s, when the Recoletos had received parishes without handing over any ministry to the Jesuits or any other religious order. This, he asserted, was the reason why it was not urgent to give them more. Moreover, he pointed out that the Recoletos were lacking members and in fact, were not able to assign anyone to their parishes in Cebu, Manila and Cardona, and thus, they need not be given any more curacies. Twelve days letter, the cathedral chapter, which was without any doubt led by Peláez, also sent an *exposición* to the queen, and presented their case.[84] They protested against the 1861 decree, and asked that it be repealed, but nothing came out of this.

---

[83] The text of this letter can be found in P. Peláez, *Documentos importantes*, 105-111 as well as in I. Rodriguez and J. Álvarez, "Inquietud en la Iglesia de Filipinas," 242-258. I. Rodriguez makes valuable comments on the points raised by Peláez, and provides a rather balanced perspective from the side of the regulars.

[84] The text of their *exposición* can be found in P. Peláez, *Documentos importantes*, 112-114 as well as in I. Rodriguez and J. Álvarez, "Inquietud en la Iglesia de Filipinas," 258-362.

On 20 June 1862, a royal decree was issued in response to Governor Lemery's inquiry regarding the 1861 *cedula.*[85] This royal order clarified the procedure for transferring parishes and it further specified that the parishes to be used to compensate the Recoletos were parishes of the archdiocese of Manila administered by the native clergy.[86] The Filipino clergy once more protested because such an arrangement would practically reduce many of them to being permanent coadjutors[87]to the religious parish priests since there would only be about a dozen parishes in the whole archdiocese for some four hundred secular priests. As Archbishop Martínez was to point out later:

If we deduct from those pertaining to the secular clergy those which had to be restored by virtue of the royal cedula of 1826, those which the royal order of 1849 disposed should be handed over to the Recoletos and the Dominicans, and the twenty-seven which, according to the cedula of 10 September 1861, are to be used to compensate the parishes and missions which the Recoletos are to hand over to the Jesuits in Mindanao, there will remain only twelve to reward deserving coadjutors. The priests of this latter class ... are very numerous.[88]

---

[85] Text of this decree in P. Peláez, *Documentos importantes*, 114.

[86] "Con el objeto de resolver las dudas ocurridas respecto á la inteligencia de dicha Real órden, ha tenido á bien declarar S. M. que, si al vacar los referidos Curatos en los terminus que la misma Real órden previene, no existiesen Jesuitas que se encarguen de ellos, contínuen proveyéndose como hasta aqui en Religiosos Agustinos Recoletos; y que solamente llegado el caso de la vacante y de la entrega á la Compañia de Jesus, sea cuando se indemnizase á la provincia de San Nicolas de Tolentino con otro de los Curatos de la de Cavite ó de la Diócesis de Manila, que estuviese servido por el Clero indigena y vacara de la manera dispuesta en la mencionada Real órden." [Ibid., 114].

[87] "For all the racial, personal, vocational shortcomings of the native clergy, it was the general opinion that they were necessary. And this was, again, the source of a problem. The regulars, and to some extent Bishops Gainza, Jimeno, and Aragonés, were of the opinion they were not fit and safe as parish priests; but they would make useful coadjutors." [A. Uy, *State of the Church in the Philippines*, 69].

[88] Letter of Archbishop Martínez to the Regent of Spain Francisco Serrano, 31 December 1879 in J. Schumacher, *Burgos*, 201-203.

Moreover, the displacement was precisely in Manila where the Filipino secular priests were better formed and better educated, many of them, in fact, having advanced degrees in canon law and theology.[89] It was clear, therefore, that the displacement of the Filipino clergy from the parishes was not due to their incompetence and incapacity. Rather, it was because of political and discriminatory reasons.

Around this time, the parish of Antipolo,[90] one of the wealthiest parishes in the country, became vacant, and Peláez quickly appointed Francisco Campmas, a Filipino secular priest, as interim parish priest. The Recoletos contested the vacancy under the 1861 decree. Their provincial, Fr. Encarnación, submitted a *terna* to Governor General Rafael Echague, from which the latter, as vice-royal patron, might designate one to the parish of Antipolo. The governor subsequently chose and presented the Recoleto Francisco Villas de San Lorenzo to Archbishop Martínez, who had just arrived to take possession of his see.[91] The archbishop of

---

[89] J. Schumacher, *Revolutionary Clergy*, 9.

[90] "One of the quaintest and best known pueblos of eighteenth century Filipinas was Antipolo. The town was situated in the hills twenty kilometers east of Manila ... [it] had been a mission and then a parish of the Jesuits since the late sixteenth century. It became famous as the home of the Virgin ... For having protected the galleons and crossed the ocean so many times as well as having staunchly delivered her devotees from the enemy, she was named Nuestra Señora de la Paz y Buen Viaje ... The pueblo of Antipolo flourished both from its shrine [of the Virgin] and its location near Manila during the decades of development of trade and agriculture and growth of population ... The curacy has become very rich since the 1740s. It was a worthy prize; it was known as the 'pearl of the curacies.'" [O. D. Corpuz, *Roots of the Nation*, 465-467]. After the Jesuits were expelled in 1768, the parish of Antipolo was turned over to the secular clergy since there were no Spanish seculars, and thus, it became a Filipino curacy. That would be changed by the 1861 decree.

[91] See G. Agudo and C. Mayordomo, *Importantisima cuestion*, 20-22.

Manila gave Villas canonical installation, but he did so under protest because he considered the Recoleto claim to be outside the scope of the 1861 decree.[92] Expectedly, the Antipolo incident elicited complaints from the Filipino clergy. But their earlier protests against the 1861 decree was already answered by the royal order of 31 July 1862, which demanded that the previous royal decrees be immediately carried out, *sin escusa ni tergiversación alguna*,[93] and thus, it was rather unlikely that the colonial government would side with them in the Antipolo case.

Was the Recoleto claim to Antipolo valid? It appears that Archbishop Martínez was justified in opposing the transfer "on the grounds that Antipolo was no longer vacant at the time that the royal decree became legally effective."[94] Peláez appointed Campmas on 13 January 1862. This was before Mainit became vacant due to the death of its Recoleto parish priest on 10 February 1862, and before the 20 June 1862 decree designating the parishes in Manila administered by the native clergy as the "source" for recompensing the Recoletos. Moreover, when Fr.

---

[92] In his letter to the regent of Spain, Archbishop Martínez wrote that "his position was not very far from wrong, since the council of state, meeting in a plenary session, adhered to his opinion, as may be seen from the royal order of 19 May 1864, which makes use of the formula: the council of state having been heard." [Letter of Archbishop Martínez to the Regent of Spain, 31 December 1870 in J. Schumacher, *Burgos*, 197-199]. Note, however, that this royal order confirmed the turnover of the parishes to the Recoletos, despite the opinion of the council of state, and despite the protests of the secular clergy.

[93] The text of the decree can be found in G. Agudo and C. Mayordomo, *Importantisima cuestion*, 31.

[94] J. Schumacher, *Revolutionary Clergy*, 9.

Encarnación presented the *terna* to the governor and asked for the parish of Antipolo, the Jesuits had not yet taken over any parish in Mindanao,[95] and the Filipino secular priests were still in active possession of the Cavite parishes and of Antipolo. While it is true that in compliance with the 1861 decree, the Recoletos "vacated" the parishes of Lubungan, Bislig, Davao, Pollok and Isabela, as their provincial declared in his 14 August 1862 letter to Governor Echangue,[96] it must be pointed out that they actually continued to administer these parishes for quite some time[97]– with the exception of the Isabela mission in Basilan which was handed over to the Jesuit Francisco Ceballos in September 1862 – since the Jesuits did not have the personnel to take over these curacies.[98] In other words, the Recoletos were asking for Antipolo when they had not

---

[95] The group of Jesuits led by Fr. José Fernandez Cuevas, and composed of six priests and four brothers, left Cadiz on 4 February 1859 and arrived in Manila on 14 April of that year. They first stayed in Manila and worked in schools, and in 1862, a group composed of one priest and two brothers reached Mindanao. See Horacio de la Costa, "The Society of Jesus in the Philippines, 1581-1959," *Philippine Studies* 7 (1959): 83-85. Nuncio Barili wrote to F. Gainza that he was informed by the Jesuit provincial in Spain that from what the provincial knew of the Philippines, no Jesuit has taken over any parish yet. [Letter of Nuncio Barili to F. Gainza, 21 October 1862 in ASV, Arch. Nunz. Madrid, 447]. See also the letter of Governor Rafael Echague to the Recoleto provincial Juan Felix de la Encarnación, dated 30 September 1862, in which Governor Echague approves the nomination of the Jesuit Francisco Ceballos to the parish of Isabela (in Basilan). Up until that time, therefore, only one Jesuit had taken over a Recoleto parish in Mindanao. The letter of Governor Echague can be found in G. Agudo and C. Mayordomo, *Complemento de los Documentos*, 23.

[96] The text of the letter can be found in G. Agudo and C. Mayordomo, *Complemento de los Documentos*, 22.

[97] See footnote 80 above.

[98] "La compañia de Jesus no cuenta hoy con personal disponibile para servir aquellos ministerios, á escepcion de la mision de la Isabela para la que propone el Superior de la órden al Padre Ceballos." [G. Agudo and C. Mayordomo, *Complemento de los Documentos*, 23].

yet handed over any parish to the Jesuits. This was clearly an incorrect and perhaps, even a twisted, interpretation of the 1861 decree. Before they could have an "indemnification" in Antipolo or elsewhere in the archdiocese of Manila, it was necessary that the Jesuits take over one or more of their parishes in Mindanao.[99]

Reform attempts and polemics

All these developments related to the 1861 decree, particularly the Antipolo affair, further divided the Filipino secular clergy and the Spanish religious orders. The conflict between the two over the parishes became more aggravated and complicated when an attempt to carry out reforms in the Church was made. In 1863, the three bishops, Archbishop Gregorio Melitón Martínez of Manila, Bishop Romualdo Jimeno of

---

[99] This is actually the point made by Nuncio Barili when he remarked that the Antipolo transfer was unjust. For Nuncio Barili, it was necessary that the Recoletos leave first the parishes in Mindanao, before they can receive any in Cavite. [Letter of Nuncio Barth to F. Gainza, 21 October 1862 in ASV, Arch. Nunz. Madrid, 447]. He was reacting therefore to the fact that the Recoletos were already asking for Antipolo when they had not yet left any parish in Mindanao. On the other hand, Francisco Campmas, the interim parish priest of Antipolo at this time, declared that it was not enough that there was a vacancy in Mindanao. "No basta que se verifique la vacante de uno o mas Curatos de Mindanao, sino que ha de verificarse además indispensablemente la entrega real y efectiva a los Misioneros Jesuitas; y de consiguiente, la fecha de la entrega de un Curato a estos es la que debe tenerse en cuenta pare determinar el Curato que corresponda dar en indemnizacion a los Recoletos; y es claro y evidente que debe ser el Curato de esta Diócesis que haya vacado ó vacare despues de la entrega del de Mindanao." [Letter of Francisco Campmas, 8 January 1863 in P. Peláez, *Documentos importantes*, 116]. He was saying, in other words, that the Jesuit must first take over the vacant parish in Mindanao before any indemnification to the Recoletos can be made. One can see in Campmas' line of reasoning the premise that the Recoletos would be willing to vacate their "difficult" parishes in Mindanao just so that they can get the "richer" parishes in Manila. Now, it is interesting to note that the Recoleto provincial Juan Felix de la Encarnación wrote to Bishop Jimeno of Cebu, on 18 May 1863, less than a year after the Recoletos received the parish of Antipolo, that "the parishes of Cavite, and more so Antipolo, are going to be ill-fated, and that ill fate will involve upheavals of incalculable dimensions." [L. Ruiz de Santa Eulalia, *Sinopsis histórica*, 2; 278, quoted in P Schruers, "Caraga and the Recoletos," 216]. But why then did they insist on taking the parishes in Manila?

Cebu and Bishop Francisco Gainza of Nueva Cáceres, met with the provincials of the different religious orders in the Philippines, namely, Juan Felix de la Encarnación, OAR, Benito Quintana, OFM, Rafael de Castro, OP, Felipe Fernandez, OSA, and Jose Cuevas, SJ.[100] The meeting was held in order to discuss the problems and the challenges facing the Church in the Philippines, and to undertake the appropriate measures of reform. The result was a series of documents, or *exposiciones*, drafted primarily by Bishop Gainza, which were then presented by the bishops to the government.[101] Two of these reform measures antagonized some members of the regular clergy and led to bitter polemic. The first was the *Exposición sobre la amovilidad*, which proposed that religious parish priests be *amovibles ad nutum*. This meant that they could be removed from the parishes both by the diocesan prelate and the regular [superior] *aequo jure*, and without the obligation of one manifesting to the other the reasons of the removal; consequently, without the process, sentence or the judicial procedure.[102]

The proposal actually called for the restoration of a general law of the Church, which had been earlier abrogated by the royal *cedula* of 1795. Issued by Carlos IV, this royal decree stipulated that religious parish priests could not be removed from their parishes without a formal ecclesiastical trial. In their exposition, the bishops asked for the revocation of the 1795 *cedula*, which they considered to be the cause of the weakening of religious observance and discipline. The other reform measure dealt

---

[100] Bishop Jimeno came to Manila in early 1863 to assist Archbishop Martinez at the consecration of F. Gainza as bishop of Nueva Cáceres. On that occasion, these reform-minded bishops decided to meet with the provincials of the religious orders in order to resolve the problems afflicting the Church in the Philippines.

[101] There were five *expociones* that were produced: (1) the exposition for the revocation of the royal *cedula* of 1795, (2) one on the rank and position of the archbishop and bishops in the Consejo de Administración, (3) another on the endowment of officials of the episcopal curia, (4) one on the *privilegium fori* of parish priests, and (5) an exposition requesting the Vincentians to take over the conciliar seminaries of Cebu and Nueva Segovia. [A. Uy, *State of the Church in the Philippines*, 142, footnote 13].

[102] Ibid., 141.

with the question of *clausura.* The bishops called for the reestablishment of the law of cloister in the parish *conventos.* This was the currènt practice among the Dominicans and the Jesuits, but it was not being observed in the other orders during the nineteenth century.

The bishops had hoped that they could get the support of the provincials of the religious orders regarding these reform measures.[103] But that did not happen. Although some religious agreed on the need for reforms,[104] others interpreted these proposals as an unjust attack on the regular clergy, especially since these measures were to be applied only to them, and not to the secular clergy, who, in their opinion, were much more in need of reform.[105] Moreover, there were those who considered the *amovilidad* exposition as providing an excuse to deprive the regulars of parishes, so that the seculars could step in and take over. According to the Dominican provincial Domingo Treserra, this was the reason why prominent Filipino priests, like Pedro Peláez, supported the bishops' *amovilidad* proposal. Finally, there were others who also asserted that the *amovilidad* issue was contributing to an atmosphere of political instability

---

[103] The different religious orders had opposed the 1795 *cedula* when it was introduced and the bishops were counting on them to support their proposal to revoke this royal *cedula.*

[104] For instance, Domingo Treserra, the provincial of the Dominicans, asserted that his opposition to the bishops' proposal was not because of fear of reforms. In fact, he agreed with it, "in its substance, object and end." However, he considered the matter anti-Spanish and anti-religious, and thus, he exerted efforts – and he would be successful in this – to have the bishops withdraw the proposal. [Ibid., 143-148].

[105] This was the criticism of G. Agudo and C. Mayordomo, because in fact, the bishops' *exposicion* did not utter one word on the secular clergy. [See G. Agudo and C. Mayordomo, *Importantisima cuestion*, 12]. Archbishop Martínez would recognize this shortcoming in the bishops' proposal. "In a later document of 1871 the archbishop was to acknowledge his mistake, and to ask (unsuccessfully) that the measure be applied equally to regular and secular clergy, averring that he had always intended it to be so, but that he had thought it better to ask it for the religious, since this was merely an application of the general law of the Church." [J. Schumacher, *Burgos*, 16].

since it was provoking ideas of "revolution" and "independence." This was closely related to the notion that undermining the religious orders was putting at risk the Spanish control over the islands. In the end, the reform measures became enmeshed with the whole issue of the parishes and the growing conflict between the Filipino secular clergy and the Spanish religious orders.[106] It was during this period that Pedro Peláez published anonymously his *Documentos importantes para la cuestion pendiente de curatos en Filipinas*,[107] which was a collection of documents favoring, as can be expected, the Filipino secular clergy. In this collection, he reprinted three works of Archbishop Basilio Sancho de Santa Justa y Rufina, namely, the 15 November 1768 exposition to Pope Clement XIII, the representation to Carlos III dated 10 May 1768, and the 1 October 1768 memorial to Carlos III, which brought back all the old polemics against the regular clergy.[108] Peláez likewise included a series of documents and letters directed to the periodical *El Clamor Público*, which supported and lauded the aspirations of the Filipino clergy in the matter of the parishes. With this publication, he took the offensive against the Spanish friars and argued against the recent deprivations of the Filipino secular priests, namely, the transfer of their parishes to the Recoletos.

---

[106] P. Treserra was successful in convincing the two other Dominican bishops Jimeno and Gainza to withdraw their support. Archbishop Martínez was thus left alone in advocating the amovilidad of the religious parish priests. Because of the erroneous interpretation given to the bishops' proposal, Archbishop Martínez asked the governor general on 3 September 1863 to suspend the course of the exposition. [A. Uy, *State of the Church in the Philippines*, 148].

[107] For Peláez' authorship of *Documentos importantes*, see Wenceslao E. Retana, *Aparato bibliográfico de la historia general de Filipinas*, 3 vols. (Madrid: Minuesa de los Ríos, 1906), 2, no. 1030. Retana wrote that "en esta importante colección trátase de probar, con documentos fehacientes, que los frailes no podían desempeñar legítimamente en propriedad parroquias." This compilation of Peláez is also cited [and praised] by Trinidad H. Pardo de Tavera, *Biblioteca filipina* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1903), nos. 873-877.

[108] "It was particularly the documents of Sancho de Santa Justa which were resented by the friars. From Peláez these documents were to pass into the writings of Burgos, and later to reappear frequently in the antifriar articles of Marcelo de Filar in *La Solidaridad*." [J. Schumacher, *Burgos*, 17, footnote 28].

The publication of Peláez' pamphlet provoked great resentment among the regular clergy. A few months after it came out, the Augustinian and Recoleto procurators in Madrid, Celestino Mayordomo, OSA and Guillermo Agudo, OAR, began to attack the Filipino clergy and Archbishop Martínez – whom they accused of being anti-religious and siding with the native clergy – with their articles in the Madrid newspapers, *La Regeneración*, *La Esperanza*, and *La Verdad*.[109] As a counter-reply to Peláez' compilation, the two procurators published *Importantisima cuestion que puede afectar gravamente a la existencia de las Islas Filipinas*, a collection of fifteen documents, which carried an introductory essay written by the two religious.[110] In this publication, as a response to the writings of Archbishop Sancho which were resurrected by Peláez, the two religious procurators reprinted documents – nearly all of which were written in the first half of the nineteenth century – which came from a number of governors general and other colonial officials. These documents not only criticized the inadequacy and the abuses of the native priests, but they also hurled suspicions and accusations against the loyalty of the Filipino clergy to Spain. That same year, the two procurators published another pamphlet, *Complemento de los Documentos del folleto de 14 Noviembre de este año de 1863 sobre cuestion de curatos*, which included more than twenty documents, including articles on the *inamovilidad* of the regular clergy

---

[109] Two of these newspapers, namely *La Regeneración* and *La Esperanza*, were run by the religious orders. [A. Uy, *State of the Church in the Philippines*, 152]. The attacks continued for quite some time, and Archbishop Martínez was tempted to fight back and subsidize a newspaper himself. Nuncio Barili, however, dissuaded him from carrying out his plan. [Ibid., 149; J. Schumacher, *Burgos*, 17].

[110] Some of the documents compiled by Agudo and Mayordomo in *Importantísima cuestión* had been published in 1826 by the Augustinian procurator, Francisco Villacorta, in *Papeles interesantes a los regulares que en las Islas Filipinas administran la cura de almas* in Madrid. Villacorta's work was later reprinted in 1838 in Valladolid. [The Valladolid edition was the one used in this study for comparing the contents of *Papeles interesantes* with those of *Importantísima cuestión*.] In 1897, G. Agudo reprinted anew most of the documents in *Importantísima cuestión* in Documentos interesantes acerca de la secularisación y amovilidad de los curas regulares de Filipinas (Madrid: Minresa de los Rios, 1897). The documents in all these compilations were derogatory of the Filipino clergy, questioning their ability and their loyalty to Spain.

like "Inamovilidad de los curas por derecho divino," "Inamovilidad de los curas por derecho ecclesiástico," and "Aplicación del Derecho canónico divino de la inamovilidad a los Religiosos curas, especialmente de Filipinas."

The friars' position in this question of *amovilidad* was strongly influenced by their view of the reform proposal as an attack against themselves and as a ploy to remove them from the parishes in favor of the secular clergy. The strategy they used in defending themselves and their rights to the parishes consisted in downgrading the abilities of the Filipino secular clergy and in questioning their loyalty to Spain. They raised the specter of political instability, and even revolution, in order to stress their claim that the reform measure was disastrous both for the Church and the state. This was rather unfortunate because it only intensified the suspicions against the Filipino secular priests and exacerbated the negative opinion about them.

The position of Peláez

In May 1863, Peláez wrote to Nuncio Barili in Madrid regarding a matter which he claimed the nuncio had some idea, namely, the transfer to the Recoletos of almost all of the secular clergy's parishes in Manila, which he asserted was carried out simply because the Recoletos were Spaniards and most of the secular clergy were natives.[111] To this letter dated 22 May 1863, Peláez attached a copy of an essay entitled "Brebes apuntes sobre la cuestion de curatos de Filipinas," which he had sent to the new minister or director of Ultramar.[112] This work of Peláez, which

---

[111] Letter of Peláez to Nuncio Barili, 22 May 1863 in ASV, Arch. Nunz. Madrid, 447.

[112] The recent changes in the Ultramar Ministry and the suggestion of someone in the Ministry who was sympathetic to the Filipino clergy convinced Peláez to send these "brief notes" to Ultramar. He also sent a copy to Nuncio Barili so that the latter could help in influencing the director of Ultramar.

has never been published,[113] was to be his last defense of the rights of the Filipino clergy. Divided into four sections, "Brebes apuntes" presents the essential points of his position on the whole issue of the parishes and the secular clergy.

"Brebes apuntes" reflects a Peláez who was very much concerned about the rights of the Filipino clergy and who saw the importance of carrying out reforms in the Church in the Philippines. Unfortunately, the cause he was fighting for as viewed by some as disastrous both for the Church and for Spain. Shortly after his death in the earthquake of June 1863, an article appeared in the newspaper *La Verdad*, which declared that the earthquake had providentially prevented the uprising under his leadership.

There were people disposed to attempt rebellion. Hence, it may be inferred how certain it is that all those who directly or indirectly try to downgrade, to kill, or to take away the prestige and moral force which our Spanish missionaries have there, and which it is so necessary to preserve in those islands, necessary help (even without adverting to it) those of bad intention in their efforts at emancipation. Take care, take care, our enemies are clever and astute. And if they find someone to hide them with his shadow, they will be daring and venturesome.[114]

This was actually the rumor that spread in Manila after Peláez's death: that there was a separatist movement under his leadership that was set to massacre the Spaniards and the friars during the Corpus Christi procession. The Dominican provincial Treserra appeared to have believed this. In his letter to Nuncio Barili, he said that we would

---

[113] A summary of "Brebes apuntes" is given in A. Uy, *State of the Church in the Philippines*, 241-245. The summary of Uy, however, is not quite organized and it does not follow the division of Peláez' work. Moreover, he attributed the recommendations found in the last part of "Brebes apuntes" to the letter which accompanied the notes.

[114] J. Schumacher, *Burgos*, 101.

have been victims of the revolution on the day of Corpus Christi – friars and Spaniards in the procession – leading one to suspect that Peláez and [Ignacio] Ponce [another Filipino member of the cathedral chapter] were the ringleaders of such wickedness.[115]

Although he did not give any names, Archbishop Martínez also reported the rumor:

With the terror which that terrible event left in the minds coincided rumors that there was a conspiracy against the regulars which would have broken out at the conclusion of the Corpus (Christi) procession; that threatening anonymous letters against them were circulating; and that two of the prebendaries who died in the ruins of the cathedral had concocted this infamous plots.[116]

This was not the first time that this accusation was hurled against Peláez. Even before his death, there were already rumors that circulated among the Spaniards of Manila, which accused him of being disloyal to Spain and of being involved in a plot to overthrow the Spanish colonial government. According to Gainza, "the rumors against Peláez was clearly a calumny and that it was known to be such by its authors."[117] In other words, the accusation against Peláez was false. This was clearly proven by his student and successor, José Burgos, when the latter published his *Manifesto que a la noble nación española dirigen los leales Filipinos.*[118] All the evidence points to Peláez as a man concerned with reforms in the Church and with the rights of the secular clergy.

---

[115] A. Uy, *State of the Church in the Philippines*, 144.

[116] Letter of Archbishop Martínez to Ultramar, 22 April 1864 in AHN, Ultramar, leg. 2006, exp. 41, quoted in A. Uy, *State of the Church in the Philippines*, 144.

[117] J. Schumacher, *Revolutionary Clergy*, 11.

[118] Text in J. Schumacher, *Burgos*, 57-105.

[His] demand is moderate – that Filipinos be recognized on their merits, even if they are not peninsular Spaniards. That such a basically moderate position could be met with the accusation of rebellion makes clear how unlikely Peláez was to meet success in his aspirations for equality. He had, however, set a precedent of resistance and militancy which set the stage for further developments.[119]

Summary of "Brebes apuntes"

"Brebes apuntes sobre la cuestion de curatos de Filipinas" has four main sections. In the first part of "Brebes apuntes," Peláez describes the developments leading to the parish transfers in favor of the Recoletos in the early 1860s, with references to the decrees of 1826, 1849 and 1861, which were all detrimental to the Filipino secular priests. Regarding the native clergy's recent deprivation of parishes in the archdiocese of Manila, Peláez asserts that there was no obligation to indemnify the Recoletos for the parishes they turned over to the Jesuits in Mindanao. Insinuating that the Recoletos asked for the Manila parishes because the Mindanao missions were, for them, "more of a burden than a benefice," he explains that in 1849, the Recoletos already received parishes in Manila and in Negros, for no reason whatsoever, and thus, there was no need to further transfer any parish to them. If, despite this fact, it was still insisted that they be indemnified, he suggests that they be given newly-created parishes or parishes in the diocese of Cebu to which Mindanao belonged. This second option, according to Peláez, is a better alternative for three reasons. First, there were very few secular priests in Cebu. Second, the Cebuano priests were not as prepared and educated as their Manila counterparts because they did not have educational facilities similar to those in Manila, and thus, the presence of the religious would be beneficial. Third, if the aim was to assert political control, it was better to assign the Spanish religious in Cebu, where, unlike in Manila, there were fewer Spaniards residing, who could report on the activities of the natives.

---

[119] J. Schumacher, *Revolutionary Clergy*, 12.

Peláez begins the next section of his work by showing that the laws of the Church are transgressed when parishes are transferred to the regular clergy when there are secular priests around. Relying mainly on Benedict XIV's *Cum nuper* of 8 November 1751,[120] Peláez raises some canonical points. First, the ancient canons of the Church have, in certain cases, allowed monks and members of the regular clergy to administer parishes. But the prevailing canonical norms prohibit regulars from exercising the office of caring for souls without apostolic dispensation. This dispensation, however, is granted by the pope only upon the request of the bishop, who sees such a dispensation to be of necessity and of use to the Church. Pius V, in his *Exponi nobis* of 23 March 1567,[121] allowed the religious, who were engaged in evangelization work in the Indies, to administer parishes and to perform other functions, because there were no – or very few – secular priests. But once there are enough secular priests to administer parishes, the regulars will cease to enjoy these privileges. In other words, the regular clergy can exercise the office of parish priest only when there is a lack of secular priests. If this, then, is the discipline of the Church, how is it possible, Peláez asks, that the secular priests are deprived of parishes in Manila? Peláez says that it is rather shameful that the Recoleto procurator in Madrid and the provincial in the Philippines ignored the Church practice. The Recoleto fathers accuse the secular clergy of being immoral, ignorant and disloyal to Spain, but these, according to Peláez, are unjust and unfounded. In spite of having few parishes in the archdiocese, there are several secular priests against whom "even the most insolent calumny finds nothing to say." The only "proof of lack of aptitude for parishes" that the Recoletos can cite against them is that they are natives. Asserting that other religious disapproved of and condemned the parish transfers, Peláez takes the offensive against the Recoletos. He says that the government cannot be blamed for not knowing the Church practice, but the Recoleto procurator should have informed the government that it was going against certain Church provisions. He says further that when the royal order of 10 September 1861 came out, the Recoleto provincial denied any knowledge about why it was passed, and he even suggested

---

[120] Peláez gave the year for *Cum nuper* as 1754.

[121] Peláez dated this 24 March 1562.

that its implementation be suspended until competitive examinations for the parishes are held. It is therefore odd, according to Peláez, that he changed his mind and was now asking that the royal order be enforced immediately.

In the third part of his "Brebes apuntes," Peláez shows that the transfer of parishes to the regular clergy violates two other laws. The first has to do with the "nomination" of religious parish priests. Peláez explains that one of the reasons for granting those privileges to the religious in the Indies was because it was believed that they knew the languages of the mission areas. But he claims that on the contrary, many of the religious parish priests during his time do not know the native language. This was not known before they were placed in parishes because the prescribed examination before the bishop had become a formality among the religious. Normally, the governor general forwards the *terna* submitted by the provincial to the bishop, who will then convoke a body that will administer examinations to the candidates. The results of these examinations are reported to the governor general, who then chooses, naturally on the basis of these results, the one most qualified to be presented to the bishop for canonical collation. Unfortunately, this procedure for appointing religious parish priests is simply not observed. The second violation has to do with the "permanence" of the religious parish priests. Peláez clearly supports the bishops' call for the *amovilidad* of the regular clergy. After citing Benedict XIV's *Cum nuper*, which teaches that the religious cannot administer parishes without this character of *amovilidad*, he says that this *amovilidad* character of religious parish priests was also demanded by the laws of the Indies, or more precisely, the *ley de la Concordia*, but it was revoked by the royal *cedula* of 1 August 1795. He points out, however, that when this 1795 *cedula* was enacted, the religious reacted against it and wanted it repealed. This suggests that they themselves held the *amovilidad* of religious parish priests, and thus, it is rather strange that now that the bishops are proposing the return to the general law of the Church, which was revoked by the 1795 decree, they are fighting against it.

According to Peláez, there are three things that the religious orders can do in the Philippines: (1) to extend the missions and to convert those who are not yet Christians; (2) to inspire those who are already

Christian to deepen their faith, showing them the beauty of worship and contributing to their leading moral lives; and (3) to serve as inspiration as well to the secular clergy, carrying out their ecclesiastical duties in an exemplary way and helping these seculars in their ministry to the faithful. Unfortunately, the possession of parishes and the desire to have more parishes prevent the religious from accomplishing these three tasks. But not only that. Peláez says that their having parishes is actually not in harmony with their religious, and thus, it leads to a weakening of their vows and their religious life so much so that they cannot even lead a moral life that is expected of any Christian. Peláez also makes mention of Fernando VI's royal *cedula* of 23 June 1753 which urged the religious to leave the parishes. This decree, however, allowed the regulars to keep one or two of the richer parishes in each province, which can serve as the base for those who are working in the missions. According to Peláez, this is the plan that should be adopted and followed in the Philippines.

In the concluding part of his work, Peláez makes several proposals. First, the government should examine and reconsider its position on the matter of the parishes, not in any way being influenced by the exaggerated reports of the religious procurators in Madrid. Second, the royal order of 10 September 1861, 20 June 1861 and 31 July 1862 should be suspended, and things should be brought back to the way they were, that is, before the implementation of these decrees. If the Recoletos still have to be indemnified, they should be given newly-created parishes in the diocese of Cebu. Third, the whole question of the parishes should he studied carefully. The plan of Fernando VI can be adopted or a new distribution of parishes in the islands can be made among the regular and secular clergy. Fourth, the appointment of religious parish priests should be carried out according to the prevailing canonical norms and other laws. Fifth, the number of seminaries should be increased and the training and formation in the seminaries should be improved so that there will be a greater number of secular priests qualified to become parish priests. Sixth, the missionary enterprise in the islands should be further studied, with attention equally given to the missions in Mindanao, in Luzon, in Mindoro and in the other islands. Finally, the possibility of other religious orders coming to the country should be considered because that will be truly beneficial for the Church in the Philippines.