

philippine studies

Ateneo de Manila University • Loyola Heights, Quezon City • 1108 Philippines

The Training and Background of the Spanish Hierarchy in the Nineteenth Century

Santiago Petschen, S.J.

Philippine Studies vol. 22, no. 1-2 (1974) 93–116

Copyright © Ateneo de Manila University

Philippine Studies is published by the Ateneo de Manila University. Contents may not be copied or sent via email or other means to multiple sites and posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's written permission. Users may download and print articles for individual, noncommercial use only. However, unless prior permission has been obtained, you may not download an entire issue of a journal, or download multiple copies of articles.

Please contact the publisher for any further use of this work at philstudies@admu.edu.ph.

<http://www.philippinestudies.net>
Fri June 27 13:30:20 2008

The Training and Background of the Spanish Hierarchy in the Nineteenth Century

SANTIAGO PETSCHEN, S.J.

The background and training of the clergy in Spain during the nineteenth century present an almost monolithic picture in the case of the members of the hierarchy and the more prestigious members of the Spanish church. Their family origins, their schooling, their priestly activities, the persecution they suffered and their adhesion to the Pope in Rome set them apart as men of a distinctive mould. And given the preponderant influence of the hierarchy in Spain at that time, their manner of thinking and living can be said to reflect the life of the rest of the Spanish clergy — of those working in the urban parishes or rural areas, of those who stayed in the metropolis or volunteered for the missions abroad.¹

In 1869, when universal suffrage was granted in Spain for the first time, three ecclesiastics were elected to the Constituent Cortes. Born at different times, coming from different regions, and playing different roles as priests, these three are a random example of the personality and actuations of the higher clergy in nineteenth-century Spain: Miguel Garcia, Cardinal Archbishop of Santiago, born in 1803 in the province of Salamanca;

1. There are practically no serious studies available on the Seminaries in Spain, or the lives of the principal ecclesiastical figures of nineteenth-century Spain, let alone their writings and other works. Partial research has already been initiated in the last decade or two, but so far it has been limited to one or another aspect of a still untapped subject for historical research. Some of these studies have been done by the professor of contemporary history at the University of Valencia, Dr. J. M. Cuenca Toribio. The role of the Spanish Church at the first Vatican Council has been studied by J. Martín Tejedor. Special mention should be made of the *Diccionario de historia eclesiástica de España*, 4 volumes (Madrid, 1972—74).

Antolín Monescillo, Bishop of Jaen, born in 1811 in the province of Ciudad Real; and Vicente de Monterola, Magistral Prebendary of the Cathedral of Vitoria, born in 1833 in the province of San Sebastián. Three different ages, three places of birth, three Seminaries of formation (Salamanca, Toledo, Pamplona), and three different positions in the Church; but they show common personal traits that were also found among the rest of the Spanish hierarchy.

The following article is a brief study of these three men with the purpose of understanding the personality of some key figures who made the decisions for the church in Spain in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

SIMILAR BACKGROUND, FAMILY, SCHOOLING

If we trace the individual backgrounds of Cardinal Garcia, Bishop Monescillo and Canon Monterola, we find a similar family atmosphere in which they grew up, one deeply impregnated by the Catholic faith kept alive by traditional practices quite common in that Iberian soil, especially in the rural zones of Vasco-Navarra. Such families, usually under the guidance of the local priest or teacher, were frequently in touch with the diocesan Seminary at the hour of deciding the future of the more talented or virtuous sons. This was the case of our three ecclesiastics. Probably, the decision to send the young Garcia to the Seminary was motivated by religious considerations,² a fact no less important even if they had hoped for a better career for the boy (as a matter of fact, Garcia, who came from a humble family, entered the Seminary on a scholarship grant from his local Ordinary).³ The same can be said of both Monescillo and Monterola.

2. See "Exposición del Metropolitano y Sufragáneos de Santiago sobre los estudios en los Seminarios," *La Cruz* (Santiago), 25 May 1864.

3. Lavin, "Oración fúnebre," *La Cruz* (1873: No. 1), 618. For a biography of Garcia, see Vicente de la Fuente, *Boletín del Clero Español en 1848* (Madrid, 1849), 74; *La Cruz* (1870: No. 1), 90; (1870: No. 2), 283; (1873: No. 1), 610—626. This last number includes a brief biography and a description of the exsequies at the Cardinal's death, plus the funeral oration given by Lavin at the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela.

Monescillo, also of a poor family of farmers, entered the Seminary at Toledo when he was 16 years old, at the suggestion of a friar laicized by the 1820 decree and who acted as the local leader. He obtained for the boy the economic support of the Dean of the Cathedral, Don Lorenzo Hernandez-Alba.⁴

Monterola entered the Seminary at Pamplona when he was only 13 years old, finishing his studies with ease. He pursued higher studies at Toledo, and at Salamanca he obtained a doctorate in Canon Law.⁵

The seminary training followed the traditional scholastic methods then considered as *the* means of intellectual formation. Years later, Monescillo defended the efficacy of this system in his second⁶ Pastoral Letter:

The enemies of the Church and of religion fear nothing more than our scholastic strategem, our method, our plan of studies, and that habit of analysis and criticism with which theological reason proceeds in discussing its subject matter. Those who mock our method of training and study know equally the advantages we have against them and their sophistries. No, they do not despise "scholasticism," although they say so; they fear it and would want to turn us away from this road to attack us without it, since they are impotent when we stay with our definitions, distinctions, analyzing and expressing in clear, precise and concrete terms the matter

4. Our source for Monescillo is the same review *La Cruz* (1891: No. 1), Appendix, whose author was most certainly its editor, León Carbonero y Sol. He also wrote *Biografía del eminentísimo señor D. Antolín Monescillo y Viso* (Madrid, 1895). See also Villazan Adanez, Bernardo, "Ensayo biográfico del Cardenal Monescillo, Arzobispo de Toledo, Primado de España, Patriarca de las Indias," *Cuadernos de Estudios Manchegos*, XII (Ciudad Real, 1962); Eliseo Sainz Ripa, *El Cardenal Monescillo*, doctoral dissertation presented at the University of Navarra, 1972, in the process of being printed.

5. For Monterola we have used the following sources: Loyarte, Adrian de, *Donostriarras del siglo XIX* (San Sebastian, 1913); Rico y Amat, Juan, *La Unidad católica. Biografía y discursos de los diputados católicos que han tomado parte en los debates sobre la cuestión religiosa en las Cortes Constituyentes de 1869* (Madrid, 1869); Anon, *Biografía de Don Vicente Monterola* (Madrid, 1869); de Esperanza, Vizconde, *La Bandera Carlista en 1871. Historia del Desarrollo y Organización del Partido Carlista desde la Revolución de Setiembre* (Madrid, 1871); Lopez-Alen, Francisco, *Iconografía biográfica de Guipuzcoanos Distinguidos* (San Sebastian, 1898).

6. Monescillo, A., "Segunda pastoral sobre la autoridad de la Iglesia," *Documentos y escritos doctrinales*, I (Toledo, 1897), 354.

under debate. The enemy we fight is as strong in artifices as he is weak in logic. Despising our learned metaphysics, and by force of unintelligible "metaphysics," he wants to pull down the grand monument raised by the science of theology to honor the reason of man.

The above shows how greatly Monescillo valued the scholastic method and how strongly he despised the "philosophies" newly in vogue. He was no exception, as all the bishops and the professors of the seminaries sang the same tune.

This protective attitude that fenced in the seminarians with scholasticism was coupled with an external discipline that not only shielded them from such ordinary cultural influences as are provided for in a high school or college campus, but throughout their formative years spent inside the seminary, they were deprived of the normal give-and-take of the streets of any modern city.⁷

A defensive orientation, then, and a manner of life we might call "clerical," plus a conviction of one's righteousness, a certainty of besting the opponent in debate, loyalty to a determined body of truths and a concrete good that had to be propagated and defended — for all of which adequate preparation was demanded: this was the attitude of our three ecclesiastics elected to the Cortes of 1869. This was the tradition, the very air they breathed in their youth, in the seminaries from the first year of studies until the last year when they left as priests to meet the outside world.

7. In 1865, Archbishop Claret wrote in connection with the norms to be observed by the students in the school he had founded at El Escorial: "The seminarians reside throughout the entire year, nay, years, at the Monastery, without leaving for their homes to pass their summer vacations, where not too few lose the grace and the virtues which they had acquired during the year at the Seminary. At El Escorial, where they spend their vacations, they are not only protected and preserved [in virtue] but also review what they know and acquire new learning, v.g., languages, the natural sciences, which, being enjoyable, give them knowledge without tiring them. At El Escorial, the youth are kept apart from the dangers of the cities" (Claret, Antonio Ma, *Apuntes que para su uso personal y para el régimen de la Diócesis escribió el Arzobispo de Santiago de Cuba* . . . (Madrid, 1865), 220.

TEACHING, "OPOSICIONES," CARE OF SOULS

After finishing doctoral studies, Cardinal Garcia served as professor of philosophy and theology in the seminary of his diocese. Soon he was named Rector, a post he held from 1843 to 1847. He was quite dedicated to teaching and he once manifested a desire to spend his entire priestly life as a teacher and guide of seminarians, a role for which he felt he had a special vocation. After his stint at the seminary, he also taught Greek for four years at the state University before he became a professor of philosophy there. Later, as bishop of Jaen and as archbishop of Santiago, he interested himself in the seminaries, seeking to make them the best centers of training for future priests. Thus, one of his more important efforts as bishop of Jaen was the opening of a center of ecclesiastical studies, and, as prelate of Santiago de Compostela, it was through his initiative that the grandiose monastery of Saint Martin was transformed into a Seminary.⁸

After receiving his doctor's beret at Toledo, Monescillo became a professor at his alma mater, lecturing in several fields.

8. As a matter of fact, it is Cardinal Garcia who "petitioned and obtained from the government of Isabel II the grandiose Monastery of Saint Martin, the grand monument of art of this city, and who set aside huge sums for its repair, renovating it the way he did as the Conciliar Seminary, and showed the same zeal to raise and keep it at the level of the better institutions of this kind . . ." See Lavin, "Oración fúnebre," *La Cruz* (1873), 615. Several times, Cardinal Garcia travelled to Madrid and to Rome to obtain various privileges for his archdiocesan Seminary. No sooner was Monsignor Franchi named Nuntio in Madrid than he took the opportunity of including in his letter of congratulations to the prelate the question of a Brief authorizing the seminary to confer higher degrees in theology. The letter reads in part: "My venerable Brother and esteemed friend: I have seen in the papers that Your Excellency has come to succeed His Excellency Monsignor Barilli as the Apostolic Nuntio. Please accept my most sincere congratulations for this distinction and honor which His Holiness has bestowed on Your Excellency. On this occasion, Your Excellency will allow me to ask whether the Brief authorizing the Conciliar Seminary of Compostela to confer higher degrees in theology has arrived at the Secretariate, as I have requested. Rome has informed me that it should have already arrived and, since I have not received it, I suppose it must have been addressed to that Nuntiature. I am Your Excellency's most affectionate etc." The letter is dated 13 May 1868.

He must have been a naturally gifted teacher,⁹ although we do not know how much his academic lectures influenced his listeners. Possibly, we can presume that, given his fluency of speech, mental alertness and affectionate nature, he was not one of the worst. As bishop, he also was concerned with the seminaries of his diocese, especially the one at Logroño. He assigned it a good Rector, improved the faculty, and normalized the hitherto disturbed life of the institution, thereby providing for a much needed impulse to its academic activities.

After his doctoral studies, Monterola also served as professor at Salamanca from 1853 to 1856.

That our two prelates, as well as the Canon of Vitoria, were teachers exclusively of seminarians contributed in no small way to ossify in a greater or less degree the scholastic mould of their ideology and habits of thinking, as was current in the ecclesiastical centers of formation of that period. They repeated the same doctrines they had imbibed, initiated generations of future priests to the same plan of studies, using the same manuals they had studied at the seminaries of Salamanca, Toledo or Pamplona.

Besides this thorough formation in scholasticism, in its rigid methodology and opposition to contrary systems of thought, we must add another element, namely, the "*oposiciones*" or competitive examinations which they had to pass before they could assume various ecclesiastical posts or dignities.¹⁰ Because of the abundance of priests for both the care of souls and the professorial chairs in the seminaries or the prebendaries in the cathedral churches, the clergy who boasted qualifications similar to those of Garcia, Monescillo and Monterola exercised a somewhat different task from the parroquial ministry of the parish priests or assistant pastors. The former were administrators, the men who issued directives or made the decisions at the top,

9. Rico y Amat, J., *La Unidad católica. Biografías y discursos*. Rico tells us that Monescillo, "like most of the bishops of Spain, preferred the academic chair to the pulpit, teaching to the care of souls." (*Op. cit.*, 43)

10. The term "*oposiciones*" means the competitive examinations which have to be passed to qualify for academic or administrative posts in the government and the church in Spain. These appointments are usually for life.

priests with very little contact with the faithful. Their mental habits, acquired through years of teaching or holding office, were a step removed from the concrete problems of the simple people, and, if they preached to the public at large, it was usually on special occasions, like episcopal visitations or solemn novenas and feasts.

A NEED TO BE ON THE DEFENSIVE

Cardinal Garcia, like Bishop Monescillo and Canon Monterola, lived in a time when the Church in Spain was losing the habitual leadership and influence she had enjoyed in the past. The Church was under attack, and they themselves had suffered persecution for their faith.¹¹ For from the death of Ferdinand VII in 1833, the Spanish Church had been passing through a series of persecutions that naturally provoked an attitude of defensiveness against impositions, both just and unjust by the party in power. This feeling of being under siege continued until the Constituent Cortes of 1869, which was, for the Church, one more significant set-back. During the years of the most rabid anticlerical mania (1833-43, 1854-56, 1868),¹² there were

11. The hierarchy and the rest of the clergy in Spain considered that these attacks were totally unjust for they claimed that the privileges of the Church had been won by their own merits and no one had the right to withdraw them in one way or the other. A contemporary writer made this observation in 1869: "The Church was occupying an important position, the primary position in the State under the Spanish monarchy, which considered this to be its most glorious mark to be considered Catholic. But the Church had not usurped that position. She had won it legally and fairly." (Ortiz Urruela, José Antonio, *La Iglesia católica y la revolución de septiembre*. Madrid, 1869, 13). The author adds his reasons for the opinion: the conversion of the Visigothic Kings, the reconquest of the lands held by the Moors, the unity of the nation, the defense against Napoleon, the spread of Catholicism.

12. 1833-43 was the Liberal decade during which there was a reaction against the absolutist government of Ferdinand VII, who died in 1833. In this period, the strongest action taken against the Church was the desamortization and confiscation of the extensive properties of the Church. In the biennium of 1854-56, the Progressive Liberals won. In September 1868, the revolution occurred, in the wake of which elections were held for deputies to the Constituent Cortes. Our three ecclesiastics won, as we have indicated, in their respective electoral districts.

indeed some stillwaters of peace and concord between the Church and the State when the hierarchy won back their position of control; but these were periods when, even if the political power was in the hands of the Conservatives, the tendency was to hold on to advantages won by the State.¹³ The Church had no other option than to accept decisions offered by the liberal Right and lean on the strongest support on hand, the throne, to avoid worse evils.

It is common knowledge that in that preparatory era before the revolution of 1868, the Spanish episcopate did not have the personality to face the challenges that loomed before it. It offered no new ideas called for by the changes and progress in society. The bishops were nailed to the same theological inheritance deposited and guarded from ages past. Their attitude was one of intransigence or accomodation to maintain as much as possible the privileges being threatened by the adversary. They believed that the glorious past of the Spanish nation was due to religious values. This is shown, for example, in the enthusiasm they displayed during the African War of 1859–60.¹⁴

Such a position occasioned the anticlericalism of the Spanish intellectuals, as well as of the working class leadership, although still incipient and clandestine in the latter's case.¹⁵ The majority

13. This was noted by Archbishop Antonio Ma Claret in one of his letters to the Queen: "The Republican party digs the ditch, the Liberal covers it up with a trap, and then impales the Church; finally, the Conservatives, as the most merciful, caress her with feigned attractions." See *Iris de Paz* (Madrid, 1918), 432.

14. The African War was a military expedition against Morocco in 1859–60. Spain's victory was followed by occupation of several regions and the Atlantic side of the Moroccan coast.

15. Cuenca Toribio, J. M. has described this intellectual aridity of the clergy who, towards the end of 1858, were already "deprived either through death or old age of their most prestigious figures, of one person who could exercise the leadership, subject to the growing pressures from the directives of Rome, no tendency or current appeared among their ranks orienting the bases of their original program towards broader horizons that would include, at least as an ideal objective, realities in which to bring back the faith of Christ. See his *La iglesia española ante la revolución liberal* (Madrid, 1971), 94. Equal testimony on this lack of an outstanding figure both in the intellectual and in the more practical world

of the authentic liberal politicians either were indifferent to or felt alienated from the hierarchy whom they looked upon as the enemy of the reforms that the country needed. And so, feeling itself attacked, the hierarchy reacted by linking itself to the one figure who personified the Institution that could protect them best, the Throne.

Claiming the constitutional prerogatives guaranteed her, Isabel II never gave any indication that she would accept the possibility of entrusting political power to the progressives. Among other reasons, she feared (on the advice of her confessor, Archbishop Claret, and the pressure of the other Bishops) the repercussion on the Church with the rise of the liberal left. If on occasion, as when she recognized the Kingdom of Italy,¹⁶ she acted (with

of the second half of nineteenth-century Spain Monsignor Barilli, the Apostolic Nuncio in Madrid provides when he wrote: "... assiduous bishops, full of the Gospel; bishops completely loyal to the Holy See is the general definition of the actual episcopacy of Spain. It would be desirable if to these admirable characteristics others would also be added that could win for the Church greater respect and prestige from the persons who direct public affairs; that they excel or at least be on par with the more advanced in the depth and extent of their knowledge, their literary gifts and their eloquence; that they be, in one word, capable of exercising a powerful influence on Spanish society in order to preserve and even revive and equal their ancient splendour in Catholic Spain. (Quoted in Fernandez, Cristobal, *El Confesor de Isabel II y sus actividades*, Madrid, 1964, 312—313). Of the submission of the Spanish Episcopacy and clergy to the Pope Aubert writes, saying almost the same thing about the French as about the German: "The French clergy, despoiled of their privileges, soon realized that the best policy consisted at that moment in linking themselves firmly to the head of the Church. The prejudices against Rome were spreading, while the persecutions of the refractory clergy, punished for having obeyed the Holy See, strengthened their loyalty; at the same time, the violence of the Directorate and of Napoleon in their confrontation with Pius VI and Pius VII contributed to the popularity of these popes." See R. Aubert, *The Pontificate of Pius IX (1846—1878)* [Volume XXI of Fliche-Martin-Aubert, *Histoire de l'église*, Italian edition, Turin, 1946, 404].

16. The Kingdom of Italy, unified by King Victor Emmanuel II, posed grave risks for the Vatican. The recognition of this monarchy by various powers was seen with deep displeasure by the Holy See. Spain recognized it in 1865, much later than the other European nations. Rome was occupied by the troops of Victor Emmanuel II on 20 September 1870, and this consummated the unification of the Italian peninsula.

enormous scruples of conscience) against the dictates of the Episcopacy, it was because under the circumstances, she could not do otherwise. Thus, realizing the decisive role of the Queen in protecting them, the hierarchy always showed an unconditional loyalty to the Crown.¹⁷ As for our three ecclesiastics, Cardinal Garcia, Bishop Monescillo, and Canon Monterola will all reveal a similar personal adhesion to the Monarchy in their defense of their religious policy in the Cortes of 1869. Alas, their lack of vision tied to a power that had no real sociological base originated not only the anticlerical, but also the antireligious reaction during the September revolution of 1868.

SUBMISSION TO THE POPE

Another common characteristic of the three ecclesiastic deputies to the Cortes — quite important to understand their ideological immobilism — is their complete submission to the reigning Pontiff. This was especially the case of Pius IX who won the sympathy of his followers due to the special circumstances attending his pontificate. The loyalty shown him by the

17. The union of Altar and Throne was the defensive cry of an ideology which, unwilling to assimilate any of the modern advances, has been correctly considered as the motto of reactionaries. We find it in Spain all during the nineteenth century. *La apologia del altar y del trono* was the title of a book published in 1818 by Rafael de Vélez, a priest. The deputy to the Cortes of 1869 from Vizcaya, Vildósola y Mier, was editor of a review entitled *Altar y trono*. The objective of the famous periodical, *La Esperanza*, was "the defense of the interests of the Church and the Monarchy." One could cite an infinite number of testimonies proving this tie-up during all these years. Concretely, the good relations between Isabel II and the episcopacy transcended the mutual good will between the Queen and the Pope. The epistolary relations between both were only briefly interrupted during the scandal that was caused by disagreements between the Queen and her Consort. On this point, see Fernandez, Cristobal, *El Beato Padre Antonio Ma Claret*, 2 volumes, Madrid, 1946, and the same author's *El confesor de Isabel II y sus actividades en Madrid*, Madrid, 1964. The Queen's conduct and the obsequious attitude of the Pope towards her were openly insulted by the leftist press after the revolution of 1868 and by many orators, of the Republican Party especially, in the Constituent Cortes of 1869. For the correspondence between the Queen and the Pope, see Gorricho, Julio, *Epistolario de Pío IX con Isabel II* (Rome, 1966).

Spanish episcopacy was extreme, both in matters of doctrine and in their reverence and love for his person. The numerous pastorals of the Spanish bishops of this epoch are veritable hymns to his goodness, eulogies of his dignity, or regrets over the misfortunes he was suffering. Throughout the entire Peninsula, pious acts were performed to atone for the harm inflicted on his possessions and on his person. Garcia elaborated arguments defending the temporal sovereignty of the pope over the Papal States. And although by temperament the Cardinal was not given to effusive behavior, one can discern in his seemingly cold style of writing a love for the Supreme Pontiff.¹⁸

Monescillo is more explicit and anxiously scrupulous in his doctrinal fidelity to Rome. His immediate efforts to publicize throughout his diocese the encyclical *Quanta cura* and the *Syllabus* of Pius IX was typical of the way he exercised his pastoral zeal. He "not only gave himself unreservedly and promptly to the doctrine, letter and spirit of the papal document, publishing it with the usual formalities; but also, on 2 February 1865, he issued instructions on the significance, the reasons and the purpose of the Encyclical, which was printed in the first issues of the *Boletín* of that year."¹⁹ Nor was he content with mere ideological orthodoxy. Temperamentally he was quick to act, and for him the papal voice was a summons to battle. The

18. Garcia Cuesta, M., "As though the good Pius IX, for example, were not the meekest, and with his goodness and meekness, would not win the hearts of all those who hear and see him." (*Cartas a la Iberia*, 35). This loyalty of the bishops to the Roman Pontiff and the Holy See is seen in many circumstances of the relations between them and Rome. One of them is the congratulatory correspondence sent by the bishops to Monsignor Franchi when he was named Nuntio in Madrid. The bishops assure him of the most scrupulous fidelity and exact obedience to his missives. See the Secret Archives of the Vatican, "Nunziatura di Madrid," 464, Tit. VI, Rubr. Ia.

19. *La Cruz*, I (1895), Appendix, 64. In the literary style proper to the person about whom a pastoral letter was issued, the bishop of Jaen concludes: "God forbid that we should give a bad example, or that we should allow that one letter be removed or an accent be changed in what you have issued or issue for our instruction and teaching." See Monescillo, Antolín, "Carta pastoral para prevenir contra los errores modernos," *Documentos y Escritos doctrinales*, Volume II, 94.

pope, "formulating the propositions of the *Syllabus*, has set up a war plan, where each soldier has his post clearly defined. Either serve under this banner or be declared deserters. There is no middle way: God or Belial."²⁰

Monterola follows the same line. Similarly submissive and with a more effusive expression in his laudatory style, often quite emotional, he frequently speaks of the person of the Roman Pontiff. He founded the *Semanario católico vasconavarro* in 1866 which he dedicated to Pius IX in the following words:

... my pen trembles with delight recalling that the ancient town of Euskaro-Cántabro records in the brilliant annals of its religious history love without measure, loyalty without limits, obedience without vacillations, enthusiasm without example towards the Holy Apostolic See.²¹

On numerous occasions he praised the Pope's personality. He lamented over the persecutions and sufferings which Christ's Vicar had to suffer in Rome, although he had a certainty that Providence would watch over his fate and give him the victory over his adversaries:

The Herods are not immortal; the Vicar of the Omnipotent Babe will be saved. Hoary venerable, age! You are a child in your more than angelic candor, and in your innocence, you are the sublime model of Christian perfection ... in order to be able to enter the mansions of eternal bliss. How well you represent the Child of Bethlehem! How much and how vividly your fate concerns us. Not a day, not a single moment shall we cease from proclaiming enthusiastically: Death, rather than break away from Rome! Either Rome or death!²²

20. Monescillo, *Catecismo sobre la libertad de cultos*, 124.

21. *Semanario católico vasconavarro*, Number 1 (Friday, 7 September 1866), 1. Monterola adds: "I offer you, accordingly, Most Holy Father, half of the fruits that will issue from this holy and literary enterprise, and I commit myself to employ the other half in charitable works among my brothers, the poor of Jesus Christ."

22. *Semanario católico*, 11 January 1867, 22. Monterola collected his published articles in the *Semanario* and edited them in book form, with the title *El Apostolado de Roma. Su influencia benéfica desde el punto de vista político y social* (Vitoria, 1869). The subtitle indicates that it was an apologia for the extraordinary powers which the medieval popes had exercised. The work carried a preface on the moral personality of Pius IX, putting together the more salient traits of the Supreme Pontiff, using "the phrases which spontaneously issue from the lips of Pius IX." He is

REVELATION AND KNOWLEDGE OF TRUTH, CERTITUDE OF HAVING THE TRUTH²³

For our three ecclesiastics, truth was God and only God, the infinite God who possesses all things and to whom we must appeal to be able to solve any of the unknown problems that enter the orbit of human life. There is no other possible approach to truth than through knowing God, and the subsequent illumination from such knowledge of God. He is the one who communicates truth to man — through revelation, which is the nucleus of the Catholic religion.²⁴

By its very essence, truth cannot be attacked. "Against truth there is no right," the Cardinal declared in answer to the attacks on the clergy and religion by the press.²⁵ Truth, likewise, is naturally supreme. It cannot be criticized, much less be

described as a supernatural man, full of faith and hope before adversity. But this did not suffice to obviate the bitterness of the Pope. Monterola nonetheless pictures him as a capable and brave man, never losing the sweetness of his spiritual poetry, convinced that the Papacy of Rome would never be destroyed and that, since it possesses truth and justice, God would send His angels to save His Vicar from the danger which historical circumstances made to appear imminent.

23. So far, we have known the life and the fundamental attitudes of the three ecclesiastical deputies elected by universal suffrage to the Constituent Cortes of 1869. This helps us to understand what we are trying to do: find out the ideological background of these persons and, through them, of the entire Spanish clergy, especially the upper clergy. In this second part, we shall use mainly the writings of Cardinal Garcia, Bishop Monescillo and Canon Monterola, and their speeches in Cortes. We shall try to keep in mind the official Catholic ideology of the contemporary period. It is interesting to note that the same ideas are explicitly found and defended in numerous Catholic authors, like Donoso Cortes. The French writer, Monsieur de Segur, exercised a wide influence in Spain, and he also adheres to the same ideological pattern. For example, he discusses Truth and Error or Good and Evil in *Viva el Rey* (Madrid, 1871), pages 48–54, and *Veladas religiosas o instrucciones familiares sobre todas las verdades de la religión* (1872), 161–163.

24. Cardinal Garcia affirms this in his *Exposición dirigida a la Reina* (1862): "All the revolutionary forces of Europe have been unchained in our epoch and in a special manner against the Catholic religion, because it is the truth which is presented as the only bronze wall which they cannot break." See *La Cruz* (1862), 222.

25. Cardinal Garcia, *Op. cit.*, 221.

the subject of the opinions of those who do not love it because they do not accept its principles. To form an opinion on truth, one has to be within it, feel safe with its admirable principles, its coherence, its potential to provide man with a meaningfulness that transcends all the finite problems of this life.²⁶

These are the characteristics of truth because it is divine. Hence, nothing can oppose it. As such, truth embraces all things, contains all things. From its apex, which is God Himself, it comes down to the most trivial problems of human existence. Monescillo's words²⁷ are quite eloquent on this point:

Give me religion and I have everything: tradition, law, literature, right government, peace and prosperity. Remove yourselves from it and corruption, anarchy, depravity and immorality will come and swallow you in calamity and disaster.

Without the rational and fruitful interchange which religion promotes among peoples, without the support and strength it gives to governments; without its protecting hand to support fallen man; finally, without the aid with which it illumines the darkened minds of the sons of Adam — the law of nations would be unknown, there would be no sanction in international relations other than the firmness of walls and the impregnability of fortresses, men would rush into vice and chaos, victims of all kinds of errors and aberrations, and society would always be under a threat. A stranger to the true concepts of good and evil, of justice and injustice, of duties and rights, society would be open to a deluge of evil which Providence will have allowed to happen, revealing thereby and teaching what society ought to know or what is of concern to it.

The above quotation from the future bishop of Jaen is basic to understand what we are discussing. It is a resumé of what we have seen about the mind of the three clerical deputies to the Cortes of 1869, namely, that everything is founded on religion, its apex is truth — God — and at its base is peace, human progress. It is a neat system, inspired by the thomistic view of nature and society, in which the inferior is subject to the superior and ruled by it. That the world might be able to walk along the path of

26. The Cardinal also writes: "... when these periodicals speak of religious doctrines, or judge facts related to the Catholic Church, they are neither good teachers nor fair judges, because they start from principles diametrically opposed to Catholicism." See his *Pastoral del Metropolitano y de los Obispos sufragáneos de Santiago* (1854). The periodical *La Cruz* published it in its second issue for 1854.

27. Monescillo, Antolin, *Manual del Seminarista* (n.p.), 63.

righteousness and order, the world should be led by norms derived from a knowledge of God. All of this, according to Garcia, forms a most beautiful harmony.²⁸

Now then: where does human intelligence and reason enter in this scheme, or with what characteristics, since everything is deduced from one superior truth or key idea? Does the human mind have any validity in the exercise of its natural faculties and functions? If so, how far does man's intelligence reach? Let us leave the answers to these questions for a while; meanwhile, suffice it to have pointed out that, in this ideological frame, human reason has been relegated to quite a minor role.

DEMONSTRABILITY OF TRUTH? FAITH REASONABLE?

In the mind of the authors we are trying to analyze, truth has another important quality, which is that of being reasonably credible. This follows from the nature of truth. We have noted above that human reason has been shorn of much of its powers, we shall see, on the other hand, how it is greatly exalted and made much of in the first pastoral for the diocese of Santiago of Cardinal Garcia: "... our divine religion, in which everything is order and harmony, in which truths are wonderfully inter-related and the facts are as clear as the noonday light, and are prepared for one after the other, such that they are from all angles credible."²⁹

As in Monescillo's writings, the mystery of faith and religious assent seems to have been de-emphasized. Reason is everything, fully able, by itself, to explain the approach to faith:

We cannot understand, besides, how minds blessed from above can suffer the painful torments of having to seek an end to the vertigo of doubt or the self-contradictions and the chaotic affliction of negativity.³⁰

These characteristics of the demonstrability of truth

28. "Now admire with me the most beautiful order which the Lord wanted to shine in His work, the harmony and the concert of all the elements and of all its parts . . ." (*Pastoral de entrada en Santiago*, 1852).

29. *Op. cit.*, 13

30. Monescillo, *Pastoral de entrada en Calahorra* (n.p.), 11.

31. Monescillo, "Pastoral de Resurrección," *Documentos y pastorales*, I (n.p.), 234.

Monescillo will often repeat in his *Pastoral sobre la resurrección de Jesucristo*. The brilliance and clarity of the manifestation of divinity leaves no room for doubt. "God wanted," he wrote, "the fact of the Resurrection to be proven so clearly and in different ways that nothing would be able to obscure or interpret it except in its correct meaning."³¹

Faith, therefore, is "mostly a rational assent based on evidently credible testimony." This was also the current understanding of the theological virtue of faith, without, of course, denying its supernatural element. Its official statement can be found in the dogmatic constitution "*Dei Filius*" of the first Vatican Council.³²

THE DEPOSIT OF TRUTH GUARDED BY THE CHURCH

Confirming this monolithic and inflexible frame of mind with regards to truth that was characteristic of the Spanish clergy and which removed it from the cultural changes taking place, as well as disabling it from coming to grips with the problems of a different social atmosphere, was its literal adhesion

32. The Constitution *Dei Filius* says in part: "Since man entirely depends on God as his Creator and Lord, and created reason is fully subject to uncreated Truth, we are obliged to render the full homage of the intelligence and the will to the revealing God." (Text in Denzinger, No. 3008). At the second Vatican Council, however, faith has been described as a surrender of one who gives himself with confidence to God, together with the risks that such an act implies. The Constitution *Dei Verbum* of Vatican II speaks of the *obedience of faith* "by which man entrusts himself totally to God." (*Dei Verbum*, No. 5: *Concilio Vaticano II. Constituciones. Decretos. Declaraciones*. Madrid, 1865, 127). Thus, the rationality of faith is not as emphasized by Vatican II. This is due to the changed cultural situation today. A century before, Cardinal Garcia made this statement: "We have more certitude for the Christian truths than the geometrists of the theorems." (*Cartas a La Iberia*, n.p., 14). In the Cortes, the Cardinal said the same thing: "The only veritable religion in the world, as I shall demonstrate geometrically to anyone who bothers to come to my house for this purpose, because this honored place is not suited for this demonstration." (*Diario de las sesiones de las cortes constituyentes*, 1869, 27 April, Volume III, 1409). Monterola repeated the same idea: "God is proven, and natural reason has strong reasons, most convincing reasons, to prove to the last evidence the existence of God." (*Diario de las sesiones*, 1869, Volume II, 1041).

to the official church doctrine in those years of Pius IX and the *Syllabus*. Our three ecclesiastics knew — or wanted to know — only the official body of teachings inherited from the past and explicitated with the passage of time each time new doctrines considered heretical needed an answer. In his first pastoral letter as bishop of Calahorra-La Calzada, Monescillo affirmed that in the search for truth, "... the authority of the Holy Catholic Church has the first and final word, which all Christians should submit to and obey, and with all the heads and rulers of the Catholic nations giving an example of a more solemn submission and obedience."³³

The means God used so that men might reach truth was, after removing the differences, to found a divine institution — divine in its origin and characteristics — endowed with the needed authority to decide the exact center of truth without the least possibility of error. Let no one, then, claim the right to deviate from its decisions. This institution, which is the Church, was established to indicate both to the mind the object which the will should cling to, and to the will the good it was bound to follow. In the bishop's words, the "truth and the good are rich hidden treasures which cannot be found outside the field of the Church." All, but especially those who hold power in society, "ought to listen, not teach; submit and not impose one's self; believe and not argue; be docile and courteous, not sophists who argue and threaten."³⁴ The Church has to be infallible so that men might know, without any room for doubt, which was the truth. And at the head of this Institution is the Papacy, the firm column of certitude and safe guide of all men

33. Monescillo, "Pastoral de entrada en Calahorra," *Documentos y escritos doctrinales*, Volume I, 7. Cardinal Garcia expressed the same idea: "The corps of bishops with the Pope at the head is Holy Mother Church, whom we ought to obey. She is the true depositary of revealed truth; she is the only Teacher who has the right to teach it; she is the judge who decides in an infallible way the controversies of religion. The rest of the Church has a passive infallibility, if it is licit to say so, the infallibility of a disciple who accepts the teaching of an infallible teacher." (*Cartas a La Iberia*, 103)

34. Monescillo, *Loc. cit.*

who ought to seek the truth in that form, and only in that form, seeing that there are more than enough reasons supporting it.

It is therefore logical for the Church to be intolerant, since truth cannot compromise with error. As Monescillo wrote: We are going to speak once and for all the truth. We are intolerant, yes, a thousand times intolerant. Do you know why? Do you know in what matters we are intolerant? In the same way that truth is intolerant, and in all things that are true. At that hour when we should stop being intolerant, we shall have ceased to be intelligent beings. We believe with strong intolerance that there is only one God, that He is not many, that He cannot stop being one. We do not tolerate anyone who denies or multiplies God . . . we are intolerant, just like light, just like human judgment, just like numbers.³⁵

A CONCLUSION ABOUT TRUTH

From these excerpts from the writings of our three clergymen, as well as from their speeches at the Cortes which we have not included here, we can conclude that the whole movement of knowledge is from the top to the bottom. It is a process of deduction. Positive investigation and search is set aside, and it appears in none of their pastorals nor the textbooks and manuals of that epoch. Instead, they appeal to traditional ideas which they analyze to solve contemporary affairs and problems without taking into consideration their concrete situation. Speculation is centered in the lofty regions of the abstract world. Positive or experiential knowledge is hardly alluded to, and, at bottom, it is considered not only as inferior, distinctive of the merely human order, but also as inimical to the faith. It carries within it the danger of subverting the "right order" of things, which is the only system in which the real good of men can be attained.

Proudhon has quite succinctly summed up what we have been discussing:

35. Monescillo, *Ibid.* Garcia says the same thing: "Religious tolerance, which is confused with indifferentism, is absurd and impious, because it is absurd and impious to say that in religious matters there can be two contrary truths. Catholicism in this sense, we admit it, has always been intolerant to a high degree, as geometry is intolerant of assertions contrary to its theorems." (*Pastoral del Metropolitano de Santiago y Sufragáneos*, 13-14).

Christianity believes that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, sent to the earth and born of the womb of a Virgin, in order to teach men the truths necessary for the political order, domestic society, and the salvation of the soul.

It believes that Christ has transferred His powers to the Church and that He lives permanently in her through the presence of the Spirit He communicates to her. It believes that, in virtue of that continual revelation, the Church regulates, with infallible authority, her cult and her tradition.

Armed with this faith, the Christian has or believes he has, for all questions, not only of theology, but also of politics and morality, which are questions that do not depend directly on common sense; an instrument for verification, that dispenses him from reflecting and even from thinking, and which is very easy to apply. It is not a question only of controverted points, either of Christ's words in the Gospels or of the official interpretation by the Church for which the Christian does not give less value.

Every statement conformed by the Gospels or approved by the Church is true. Every statement disproven by the Gospels or condemned by the Church is false. Every statement about which neither the Gospels nor the Church has pronounced is indifferent.

The Messianic word and the canonical definition are for the Christian the absolute truth, from which flow all other truths. This consequently is the norm.³⁶

Our three ecclesiastics looked at human existence according to habits of reflection ingrained into them in the Seminaries, where they underwent a rigorous discipline since childhood, without actual contact with human problems. Perhaps, there is some truth in saying that rather than a *search*, the theological sciences they studied were a process of assimilating a series of "unshakable truths" to which the understanding had to cling by sheer logic, a heritage from the past, from those bygone societies when life was sacral and impregnated by religion in all its aspects. This heritage is the official patrimony of a teaching church convinced that she possesses truth exclusively and, therefore, prepared to fight all the errors which a given historical period presents. An analysis of the language and style of writing of our three churchmen would confirm this impression. Their vocabulary is characteristic of the desire to preserve something which the new age seeks to remove, but which will be preserved, ironically, only if it is adapted to the need of the times. But this is what later history teaches, and we today, almost

36. Proudhon, P. J., *Filosofía del progreso*. Span. transl. by F. Pi y Margall (Madrid, 1869).

a century after Cardinal Garcia, Bishop Monescillo and Canon Monterola, think is most obvious. But, in the meantime, the posture they had assumed in defense of Catholic unity and the support of the State for the Church, and the arguments they used to back up that position had become untenable.

MORAL VALUES, TRUTH, RELIGION

For Monterola and the two prelates, truth is not immobilized in a sphere of abstractions, without practical consequences for man. On the contrary, it serves as a norm for both man's individual conduct and social relations. Truth, that is, religion, is the foundation of morality. Knowledge and behavior are linked together. Such is the view of Monterola, when he says that people have forgotten that "in order to love, one must know, and in order to love well, one must know truly."³⁷ The good which the will seeks cannot be attained unless one clearly knows the truth sufficiently and exactly:

The dogmas have been attacked, but people have not reflected enough that morality is intimately linked with them, and that morality itself is a dogma.³⁸

Since the intellect is the basis of volition, one must be illumined by the truth to act well, and, since for Garcia, Monescillo and Monterola there is no truth outside of Christianity, it follows that

... wherever there is a salutary idea, something noble, dignified, of great honor and singular merits, there also will be, in all its power to sanctify all that it touches, the true, civilizing spirit of Christianity.³⁹

He who possesses the truth and obeys its commands and directives is the man who does good. To the ecclesiastics we have been discussing, this is a truth that has continued unchanged through the centuries, and they prove it by pointing to the history of the Church, the constant benefactor of good. The Church working in all the nations throughout the years is for them the sum total of exemplary deeds. And if some facts seem

37. Monterola, V. de, *Semanario católico*, IV, 342.

38. *Ibid.*

39. Monescillo, A., *Oración fúnebre por la muerte de Cervantes* (Madrid, 1862), 28.

to darken the picture, it is because people misinterpret them or tendentious writers and enemies of the Church have falsified them.

POLITICS AND THE SOCIAL GOOD

In this view of human conduct in general, it is clear that the narrower aspects of political or social life will be, in the minds of these clerics, conditioned by religious values. However, they do claim that they do not confuse politics with religion. But politics to them was considered only in its merely technical or external aspect, i.e., the political form adopted by a particular society. When it is a question, however, of denying obedience to constituted authority, they fall back on the same criterion of complete submission to the Church.

... if politics respects and defers to the divine authority of the Church, it will have deserved well of the Christian religion; if it is ungovernable and recalcitrant against the free and salutary action of the Church, reproved by all good men, weighed down by the weight of the general indignation, it will die, it will die forever, leaving behind a frightful recollection and a terrible memory.⁴⁰

The answer to the social problem consisted in the exercise of charity by the rich and the virtue of divine resignation by the poor. Monescillo's teaching is, briefly:

Both deserve well, the one in his charitable largesse, the other in grateful blessing and in bearing the sufferings which rather than embitter, purify and exalt him. And so, the relations between the rich and the poor cannot be the subject of discussion, but the wonderful link of unity is forged in the strong anvil of mutual charity.⁴¹

That is to say, the social doctrine of the modern Church today violates the harmonious relations and peaceful coexistence of the rich and the poor! In other words, the worldly reality of concrete human needs from day to day enjoys in their mind, quite a diminished value in itself or its autonomy. As Proudhon observed, it is limited to what is solved by common sense. Nor were the ecclesiastics unaware of this. Faced by the evolution of ideas, faced by a varying culture, they will apply the same

40. Monterola, *Op. cit.*

41. Monescillo, *Pastoral sobre el pauperismo* (n.p.), 278.

norm, nonetheless. The Gospels become the law, nay, are eminently the law. As Cardinal Garcia wrote: "... the evangelical law is the sovereign presiding over all laws."⁴² Even progress is a sacral concept, and in the same Cardinal's opinion, only spiritual and moral progress deserve attention:

... everyday, the Pope and I ask God's pardon because we do not progress in sanctity and perfection as much as He has a right to demand from us, and we regret that other men do not advance in greater knowledge of God, of religion, of morality, and in the practice of virtue. See if we are progressive in the only thing in which man needs to make progress.⁴³

Thus, the least sign of any desacralized idea, the slightest indication of any rationalization of life arouses a cry of protest from the bishop of Jaen:

It is not theology which invades the affairs of the world a thousand times illumined by it; it is the earth which provokes the heavens when it steals their names, since it can no longer withdraw from the power of providence.⁴⁴

The entire gamut of human living is thus unified in the sacralized mentality of the Spanish clergy of the nineteenth century. A sacral concept of being and life, founded on a few immutable general principles from which are deduced particular conclusions cannot but be a static and not a dynamic concept of human history and society. And since these general principles were made known to man at a given moment of history, that moment necessarily has become the most critical juncture in the pilgrimage of mankind. With Christ's coming to the earth, humanity reached the highest peak of its existence. "True progress, freedom, civilization was inaugurated with Christ."⁴⁵

CONCLUSION

In this essay, using the methodology of picking representative examples, we have briefly seen the mind, as well as the social elements that have formed the Spanish clergy, especially the

42. Garcia, *Catecismo para uso del pueblo acerca del protestantismo* (n.p.), 91.

43. Garcia, *Cartas a La Iberia*, 101.

44. Monescillo, "Segunda Pastoral sobre la autoridad de la Iglesia," *Documentos y escritos*, II, 270.

45. Garcia, *Cartas a La Iberia*, 20.

hierarchy in the nineteenth century. The summary biographical references included in the first part explain the ideological world of the three ecclesiastics elected to the Cortes of 1869. That ideology, including the basic concepts of truth, good, politics, common good or social welfare, was so rigidly understood, so unreal and even unjust, that they divorced the Church from the people who held distinct ideas, even within the fold of the Catholic Church itself. This separation has two distinct aspects: the alienation from the Church of the liberals, and the alienation from the Church of men whose conscience reacted to the existing social problems. The famous orator, Emilio Castelar, typified the respectful conduct which the liberals had observed towards the Church throughout the nineteenth century. But, he exclaimed: ". . . always in vain have we lived; we have matured, we have died under the anathemas of the Church."⁴⁶ And in another occasion, after having read the news of the death of 83 negroes in the Antilles because of hunger and thirst after they had been abandoned by a Spanish boat fleeing from an enemy cruiser — significantly, no bishop wrote about it nor expostulated before the Government — Castelar immediately protested: Where are those Prelates who are so zealous for the crown of an earthly king? How can it be, after so many letters, so many pastorals, so many sermons, so much defense of the temporal goods of the Pope, which are worth nothing, which mean nothing, that there is such a silence for the 83 souls which are the goods of heaven?⁴⁷

Castelar was at that moment one of the most acute critics that reproached the Church for her incapacity to relate with a style of culture or manner of life that did not explicitly flow from clericalism or a sacralization of attitudes. Alas, this was true, not only in connection with the cultural changes of the west, but also of the indigenous cultures in various areas around the world where the Church was present in her evangelical

46. Emilio Castelar was a famous orator of the Republican Party, as well as a prolific writer. Born in 1831, he became the President of the Council of State during the First Republic (1873–74). See *Diario de las sesiones de las Cortes Constituyentes de 1869* (7 April 1869), Volume II, 900.

47. Castelar, E., *Perfiles de personajes y bocetos de ideas* (Madrid, 1875), 270.

tasks of preaching the Gospel. And as is well known, the problem turned out to be, in the case of the Philippines, quite serious for the Church — which saw the rise of a native heretical sect for reasons which need not be detailed here. And the political repercussions of this rigidity are common to recent and contemporary Philippine historical writing.⁴⁸

After more than a century, with the second Vatican Council behind us, the words of Castelar — even without their rhetorical embellishment — are quite a sting to the conscience. A prolific and brilliant orator, he had an admirable gift for friendship and was on familiar terms with many people. He knew a great part of Europe and had lived the problems of his time. Tired of the leadership of Rome whose influence had disappeared, of a Spanish hierarchy that defended lifeless traditions which men had forgotten, he was one of those who spent themselves looking for something better and at the end found themselves cast out. Similarly to what Garibaldi bitterly discovered, Rome was to him a great contradiction. While the ideas of liberalism were penetrating all the nations and welcomed with joy by society, the capital of Catholicism had no room for them to germinate. And Castelar was just one of the influential minds of the age who were thinking the same thing. The abyss was deep between the intellectuals and the Church, between the progressives and the official Catholic teaching, between the clergy and the reformers who sought to end the unjust social situation in which nations were mired. For readers of Philippine history, it is extremely important to keep in mind, in order to understand properly the role of the Church in the years immediately preceding the revolution of 1896, that, even in Spain, the Church through her hierarchy had walled herself away from the real problems and needs of society.

48. See Miguel A. Bernad and Pedro S. de Achútegui, *Religious Revolution in the Philippines*, Volumes I — IV (Quezon City, 1961–1972).