

BARTOLOMÉ DE LAS CASAS AND THE QUESTION OF “EVANGELIZATION”

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ABSTRAK:

Dalam peringatan tentang “penemuan” benua Amerika Latin oleh Christopher Columbus, suara para korban kerap tidak cukup diperdengarkan dan didengarkan. Bartolomé de las Casas (1484-1566) sebagai “nabi” yang menyuarakan nasib mereka juga sering hanya dianggap sebagai tokoh yang melebihi-lebihkan penderitaan mereka karena dia dikenal sebagai pembela mereka. Tulisan berikut ini bermaksud menuturkan aneka upaya Las Casas, sosial-ekklesial, politik-teologis dan akademik-apologetik dalam bingkai kisah hidupnya yang panjang, termasuk proses “pertobatan”-nya yang bertahap dan visi imannya. Bahan-bahan yang digunakan dalam tulisan ini, kumpulan tulisan Las Casas, diperkaya dengan temuan manuskrip baru dan interpretasi keseluruhan yang lebih seimbang. Gagasan-gagasan Las Casas sangat penting untuk mengkritisi isu penyebaran iman (evangelisasi), hak asasi dan kebebasan hidup-beragama.

Keywords:

Evangelization, faith and justice, religious freedom, human rights, advocacy.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

In the quincentenary celebration of Christopher Columbus’ voyage and its aftermath in the year of 1992, the eye of memory was primarily on the discovery of the New World and the birth of Christian faith among its indigenous people. Issues of human rights and justice or especially the devastation of the New World were rarely mentioned, neither issues of religious freedom nor the advocacy on behalf of the Natives.

Bartolomé de las Casas was the most outspoken person about what he witnessed in the New World after the coming of Christopher Columbus, and the most prolific writer about what he thought on the exploitation of the people of the New World. Somehow, in the celebration when Las Casas was mentioned, often the focus was mainly on his passion and sometimes his exaggeration of the facts to justify his own view and concern, which was the life and freedom of the Natives.

The knowledge of the person, his gradual conversion, and his lifetime commitment to speak on behalf of the exploited people of the New World has not been discussed in such away that would help people to appreciate the historical question on evangelization in the sixteenth century particularly in the New World, Latin America as well as its method in the context of human rights and religious freedom. Based on that observation, the writer would like to make a brief analytical presentation to meet that purpose. Indeed, insights that spring from Las Casas’ writings have helped shape mission theory and practice throughout the world and challenged contemporary missiology as well.¹ The beginning of the Christian mission in Asia by Spanish missionaries such as in the Philippines was indebted to those challenging ideas of Las Casas specially on the rights and protection of the Natives wherever they are, even from any encounters in the name of evangelization.²

1.2 Focus

Bartolomé de las Casas demonstrated a singularity of purpose in evangelization which was bringing the Good News of Jesus Christ and its method should be no other than evangelical which is the way of Jesus Christ who was compassionate, peaceful and selfless. This article would like to discuss Las Casas' vision, transformative experience and prophetic commitment after his gradual conversion to deeply love the Suffering Messiah of the Christian Gospel that have informed his view on evangelization, its method and transformed profoundly his long life.

1.3 Aims

The first aim of this research is to reintroduce the most influential thinker of the sixteenth century discovery of America, which was Bartolomé de las Casas, a Dominican bishop, political activist and an ardent defender of the Indians of America. The second aim is to articulate the foundation of his theological view on evangelization which is his philosophical thought on our common human nature. In view of the reality of religious pluralism in Indonesia as well as in the Philippines and its missionary nature of each religion, the third aim is to share Las Casas' vision and personal commitment as a challenge for a true respect of others based on the "golden rule" to love of God and to love of our neighbor as one commandment.

1.4 Methodology

Methodology employed here is a critical reading on important writings of Las Casas which has been compiled in Bartolomé de las Casas, *Obras Completas*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1989-1990 and presented with very helpful notes by Francis Patrick Sullivan, *Indian Freedom and The Only Way* (1992) with an analytical introduction by Helen Rand Parish precisely to give a critical review on the quincentenary celebration of Christopher Columbus' voyage in the year of 1992. Analytical reflection should accompany the discussion of his life, tireless advocacy as well as academic works to promote justice on behalf of the indigenous people of America. Finally, this writing will survey some important articles and books to complete its

critical presentation of the person and advocacy message of Bartolomé de las Casas, while keeping a narrative style as employed powerfully by Las Casas himself.

2. DISCOVERING THE NEW WORLD

Returning admiral Christopher Columbus from his first voyage (1492-1493) joined the glorious procession of Palm Sunday of March 1493 in Seville, the birthcity of Bartolomé de las Casas, when he was only about 9 years old. As the young Las Casas continued his studies of Latin and Classics as well as Canon Law, later he wrote in *History of the Indies* (1527), that he began to hear the other side of the story that succesful voyage, which was cruelty of those conquistadors who "discovered" the America, while "covering-up" those unjust practices they committed.³ The questions are what does this "discovery" for and what had been discovered? Why should such cruelty happen if the mission was mandated by a religious authority, the pope and pursued under the command of King of Spain?

In May 4, 1493, pope Alexander VI issued a papal bull *Inter caetera* ("Among other works"). This bull granted to Spain all lands to the west and south. This was aimed to bring more peace to two superpowers Portugal and Spain which had been competing for many years for power and possession of colonial territories especially along the African coast. In 1488, as a matter of fact, Portugal had reached the southern tip of Africa. The new discovery by Christopher Columbus was presumably an Asiatic lands in the western Atlantic Ocean. *Inter caetera* reads:

"Among other works well pleasing to the Divine Majesty and cherished of our heart, this assuredly ranks highest, that in our times especially the Catholic faith and the Christian religion be exalted and be everywhere increased and spread, that the health of souls be cared for and that barbarous nations be overthrown and brought to the faith itself. ...we (the Papacy) command you (Spain) ... to instruct the aforesaid inhabitants and residents and dwellers therein in the Catholic faith, and train them in good morals."⁴

This papal bull, therefore, marked the beginning of Catholic missions in the New World which means also a Spanish colonization.

In 1502, out of admiration of the success of the discovery and curiosity of what had actually happened, Las Casas left his hometown, Seville for the New World. His father had previously went in the second voyage of Christopher Columbus for a great overseas enterprise. Now the sixteen years old Las Casas is to work for the family with holdings of land and Indians of the island of Hispaniola, in an *encomienda*.⁵ As an ordinary Spanish boy of that era, he came with a common understanding of his country's concern and religion.⁶ Later in his writings he articulated his reflection on his early awakening particularly after he saw with his own eyes the misery of Indian life on the island under the conquistadors and the useless waste of Indian spirit as he was getting along closer with them, though still as their owner, an *encomendero*.

3. CRISES AND SELF-EVANGELIZATION

Discussing about the turning points in the life of Las Casas, from an ordinary Spaniard of the "Old World" and soon to be an *encomendero* into a critical voice against the Spanish conquest and defender of the Indians of the "New World", Helen Rand Parish, an expert on Las Casas, framed his biography of Las Casas in three main crises to identify the process of his new birth or his conversion. This approach will guide the following narration.⁷

3.1. Ecclesiasticus 34: A Wake-up Call

In 1509, two years after his priestly ordination in Rome, Las Casas sailed back to the Indies. His studies in Canon Law at Salamanca had advanced his legal sensitivity. Still as *encomendero*, he took up his task as Indian catechist. Later he told of going often to confession to a Dominican priest with a troubled conscience. Fortunately he received a good supervision from Pedro de Córdoba.

The Dominicans begun their mission in 1511. Pedro de Córdoba was their superior and Anton de Montesino, the great preacher in the New World, was among them. Soon they preached against and shocked all Spaniards who held the Indians in their *encomienda*.⁸ The natives should be freed or their holders had no hope of salvation. Unlike most Spaniards reacting against them with

self defence and religious justification, Las Casas recalled his own experience and nightmares of the horror of conquest and forced labor. Later he told the tragic massacre of the wise Queen Anacaona and her leading chieftains of the island in 1503. On the following year he and his father witnessed the capture of chieftain Cotubanamá. Las Casas made friends with numerous Indian chieftains and interceded to prevent the cruel handling of the captured ones or just for a more "merciful" death by hanging.

Then Las Casas volunteered himself to join his old friend, a newly appointed governor of Cuba, Diego Velásquez, with orders that he would help him to reduce the island by peaceful means if possible. Indeed, soon this young priest was able to win the heart of the Natives who were peacefully following his supervision. Only two years after, the infamous massacre at the large town of Caonao occurred, where about 2000 unarmed men, women and children gathered in peace and yet attacked by his countrymen. The miseries of the Indians were repeated as they were dragged off by the conquistadors to work to death, digging and panning for gold.⁹

At this point, Las Casas was so disturbed. How could he tell his countrymen to be good *encomendero*? As he was preparing his homily for the feast of Pentecost, he came across Ecclesiasticus 34 that spoke deeply also to himself:

"Unclean is the offering sacrificed by an oppressor. Mockeries of the unjust are not pleasing to God. The Lord is pleased only by those who keep to the way of truth and justice. The Most High does not accept the gifts of unjust people. He does not look well upon their offerings. Their sins will not be expiated by repeat sacrifices. The one whose sacrifice come from the goods of the poor is like one who kills his neighbor. The one who sheds blood and the one who defrauds the laborers are kin and kind."

At this juncture of his life, Las Casas experienced an unparallel insight as well as an awakening that "everything the Spaniards had done in the Indies from the beginning – all that brutal exploitation and decimation of innocent Indians, with no heed for their welfare on their conversion – was completely wrong and mortal sins besides."¹⁰ This transformed the rest of his life to be a uncompromising prophet on behalf of the people of the New World, with his critical understanding of Christian mission.

3.2 Against Defamation of the Indians

In 1522, at the age of 38, Las Casas joined the Dominican order in Santo Domingo. He entered the order with fundamental questions: what had gone so wrong? Why his work has been marked with tragic failures? Had he been unwise or too cautious? Had he not sought gain or glory for himself? For the next 12 years, Las Casas was obediently pursuing his formation as a Dominican novice and afterward a student who needed to take courses in scripture, Patristic theology and philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas as well as to read Cajetan's *Commentary*. Later we know that Las Casas was taking this formation as an opportunity to review the wisdom of the "Old World" while rethinking the reality of the "New World" in all its beauty as well as its horror.

In 1534, Domingo de Betanzos who persuaded Las Casas to consider being a Dominican, was quite disoriented to go to Rome only to publish a shocking defamation of the Indians of the New World. Amidst prophetic voices of Pedro de Cordoba and Las Casas who spoke for the welfare of the Indians, some indeed quite successfully undermining them while quoting the defaming accusations of Domingo de Betanzos, and reaffirming the importance of keeping the *encomienda* system alive, and therefore maintaining their interest. On the other hand, the famous story of Enriquillo's rebellion and how Las Casas was able to convince him peacefully to come back into a settled place and for a peace agreement with the Spanish colonial power, was indeed mind-opening against such fool defamation of the Indians.¹¹

At this point, particularly in 1534 at the monastery of Santo Domingo, Las Casas has embarked into another mission which was to complete his theological reflection and writing of his famous *The Only Way to Draw All People to a Living Faith* which was Jesus Christ, the peaceful person and the selfless, gentle way of bringing goodness and proclaiming truth.

The Only Way was so convincing that even Pope Paul III was encouraged to issue a papal bull *Sublimis Deus* in 1537 which was adopting deliberately all principles of the *The Only Way*, not just for the Indians of the New World, but for all the peoples to be discovered in the future. Later Las Casas wrote *How the Kings of Spain Must Care for the Indies* while he was returning to court to continue advocating on the behalf of

the exploited. One of his greatest achievements was when the Spanish government issued what was called *The New Laws* (1542-1543) for the good government of the Indies and the preservation of the Indians.¹² Soon in the same year of 1543, Las Casas accepted the appointment to be bishop of Chiapa in Mexico as he was convinced that an ecclesiastical power could be made use to enforce the recently published "New Laws" at least to start in his own small diocese.

3.3 Bishop as *Pastor Pauperum*

Yet, ecclesiastical power as well as episcopal authority are not automatically effective in the absence of good faith, theological obedience and an evangelical commitment. In 1543, Las Casas became bishop of Chiapa, Mexico. His episcopal ordination was held in Spain. Soon he faced resistance and enmity even from among his own priests. It was reported that Las Casas at once became the most hated man in the Indies because of his advocacy that could cause abolition of the *encomienda*, yet on the other hand he was respected as "the sainted bishop", protector of the poor.¹³ Indeed, too many people particularly from among the conquistadors, lay people as well as clerics, had received such great advantages, though obviously at the expense of the peaceful life of people of the New World.

Las Casas went to Chiapa with 45 dominicans friars and five lay staff. That was the largest missionary ever assembled. Somehow the resisting group was also strong. The unruly clergy defied his authority for instance when Las Casas refused absolution to any slaveholders.¹⁴ Judges refused to implement the New Laws and the new High Court of Central America was not spared from corruption. By the end of 1545, out of fear and bribery from the conquistadors, emperor Charles V revoked the law of inheritance which actually could terminate *encomiendas* on the death of the *encomendero* and set free the Indians. Once the emperor listened to Las Casas and even he had a dream of creating a peaceful Europe, but instead he was involved in endless wars. As a result he was badly in need of gold from the Indies and this could only be provided by the conquistadors with their *encomienda* and forced labor in the New World.

Once again, in 1546 bishop Las Casas joined the ecclesiastical conference in Mexico city to promote a series of resolutions defending the

Indians. His resolutions received an approval as well as other resolutions dealing with their protection.¹⁵

At this point, we need to say that more significant than successes and failures that indeed marked deeply the long life of Las Casas, his story has been a demonstration of his inner power as human being and a believer, a man of principle and of good faith. Las Casas was consistent in articulating his view that everything had been stolen from the Indies due to illegality and immorality of the conquest and the *encomienda*. Consequently this called for a total restitution. Amidst all those advocacy efforts and political activities, Las Casas was a Catholic bishop. A bishop must be a true shepherd to safeguard his flock from all harm, protector of the poor.¹⁶ At times, a bishop or a pastor must defy the earthly power even if he has to risk his own life. As a bishop, Las Casas defended fearlessly what was left of the New Laws, continued watching all the rights of the Indians and made positive revision of the antislavery resolutions. After about 4 years of service as bishop, he realized that his place had to be more at court. Therefore, in 1547, Las Casas resigned his diocese and returned to Spain.

3.4 Representative of All the Indians

In Spain Las Casas was welcomed by the expected charge of treason against his own country and of heresy for challenging the authority of pope who issued bulls of Donation that partitioned the New World for Spain (and Portugal), such as *Inter Caetera* by Pope Alexander VI. Las Casas proceeded with his view though it remained contrary to the mainstream theological teachings of his contemporaries and of his Church. In Spain, a well-known philosopher such Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, an expert in Aristotelian philosophy explained openly that the Indians were barbarians, incompetent and servile by nature, and therefore should be ruled by superior beings, Spaniards. Accordingly, conquest was a necessary war to bring them to Christian faith. Las Casas had a long debate with him at Valladolid and took him at least five days to explain his first hand experience with the Indians of the New World and his critical teaching.¹⁷ The highest authorities, secular and ecclesiastical, could not make up their minds and left the case open. Las Casas continued his

advocacy like a voice of one calling in the desert. His inner conversion was also progressing.

In 1552, Las Casas began to re-write his *History of the Indies* systematically. While staying at the Dominican monastery of San Pablo, he was so happy to be able to make use of an excellent family library of the late Hernando Columbus, Christopher Columbus' second son (though illegitimate). On account of studying Portuguese history of colonialization of Africa, he came to realize his fatal misunderstanding and "blindness". How could one believe that African slaves were taken in just war? Why so far no one saw anything wrong about it?¹⁸ At this moment he came to believe that the enslavement of Africans, who had never seen or harmed any Christians, was equally wrong and contrary to the will of God as the enslavement of the Indians. He learned that African slaves in Spain had not come from the slave trade, but from the wars with the Moors.

Because of his consistent and lasting advocacy on behalf of all Natives of the New World, Las Casas was known as "Representative of All the Indians" to the Spanish Crown. At that time, the Council of the Indies reserved two hours a day to listen to him, and he received many correspondence from all over the Indies: officials, friars, conquistadors, rich and poor alike, etc. His academic work also continued and now with the help of more students to do a legal research, composing a major volume of *Defence of the Indian Civilization* according to Aristotelian categories to halt all possible defamation of the natives in the future, and the help of secretaries to copy his treatises.

Las Casas' struggle continued and surely, all kind of misunderstanding, ill-will and collective as well as individual aggressive selfishness kept on coming back. The powerful and many conquistadors kept on harrasing their victims. The Spanish inquisition had become nothing but an arm of King Philip's secular power. In his eightieth, Las Casas wrote *The Limits of Royal Power* to challenge the King's right to sell his vassals such as of Mexico and Peru, in perpetuity. The inquisitors seized his manuscript and harrassed Las Casas openly though did not dare to argue with or interrogate him. His last two books, *Who Owns the Treasures in the Inca Tomb* and *Twelve Doubts about the Conquest of Peru*, explained his final plan for the total

restoration of the Indies: freedom for the Indians and restoration of native rulers and native rule. Then the gift of faith could be offered as Christ commanded with gentleness, with love and with full of respect. *The Only Way* told us about Christ's kingdom of compassion and peace as a model for earthly rulers who must govern for the good of their people.

4. METHOD OF EVANGELIZATION

Out of personal experiences such as the rebellion of Enriquillo, Las Casas wrote *The Only Way to Draw All People to a Living Faith* (in short: *The Only Way*), his theology of mission or evangelization. He started to write in 1534 and kept on revising it as he was preparing his final draft to be available for school use (1552). It was obvious that he was fighting a fixed mindset that would perpetuate exploitation and violent evangelization.

4.1 Peaceful Model of Evangelization

The Only Way introduced an evangelical face of Jesus Christ and his way of bringing God to others. That is peaceful Jesus who peacefully inviting people to faith and summoning the disciples to follow his gentle way to find a divine truth and life. Las Casas wrote: "... sinning makes us earthly; virtue makes us heavenly. God rules in the heavenly. For this we say: the Kingdom of God is with you, etc." Then he quoted Matthew 10:7-12 "Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without pay, give without pay. Take no gold, nor silver, nor copper in your belts, no bag for your journey... As you enter the house, salute it saying, Peace to this house! Luke 10:5 hold the same wisdom: "First say, Peace to this house..." Following those verses, Las Casas concluded: "It all means: learn from me that you also may be meek and humble of heart."¹⁹ This is the way, the form of preaching Christian commandment of drawing people to a living faith. It was Christ himself who fashioned and prescribed for his disciples and their successors, a method he first used.

The ideal missionary according to Las Casas was no other than that. Christian missionaries should have the traits of Jesus Christ who wanted no wealth from them, moved by respect for others, by charity towards them, no power over

people, and who preached primarily by example. This would contradict a violent evangelization or a brutal missionary who opted for war and violence.

4.2 Winning the Mind and Will

In line of that understanding, the way of teaching people has to be a gentle, persuasive and gracious way. It shall win the will with graciousness. The only way of teaching a living faith to people of everywhere should be a way that would win the mind with reason and win the will with gentleness and invitation. Here Las Casas revealed his imagined Christian community: "It is so precious it makes people greet one another first, in the cities and towns and households they enter, before any other ritual. People are accustomed in their first words to each other, especially to strangers, to use polite greeting, so that the start of speech between them is a good wish..." He continued: "It was very winning to see the Apostles poor, humble, kind – not after gold, not after silver, not after coin, not after staff of anykind, not the least thing earthly or passing, not even asking for the meal they needed unless from people willing to provide it."²⁰

At this point Las Casas was speaking to both groups: the Dominicans who were denouncing the scandalous evangelization such as Pedro de Córdoba and Anton Montesinos, and those conquistadors who unscrupulously exercising a violent evangelization. On the other hand as he prepared *The Only Way* to be studied in schools, Las Casas was preparing the future generation of missionaries. For this he added more scriptural references, saying: "Christ did not give human beings the power to inflict earthly punishment on those who refused to welcome or want the preacher of that faith. He reserved to himself the punishment of both types. God did not send His Son to judge the world, God wanted to save the world through Him (John 3:17)".²¹

4.3 Christ's Kingdom of Compassion and Peace

How do we form a Christian community in such a way that Christ could reign? The answer of Las Casas would be to know Christ more deeply and to better understand his evangelical virtue.

Las Casas began with the following biblical portrait of Jesus: A just and saving king will come to you, meek and poor, seated upon a donkey with foal (Matthew 21:5). He left when the crowd wanted to take Him and made Him king (John 6:15).

Las Casas, following St. Thomas Aquinas, pointed out that *first* Christ wanted us to know the difference between His power and the power held by earthly princes. Christ's power is to save souls or to provide the unseen goods of the soul, though these imply the goods of the body on condition that they help the soul. *Second*, learning from saint Bernard, it is clear that Christ wanted to teach us as well as all princes of the world, about humility and compassion as signs of love and source of blessing. Humility and compassion are virtues that filled Christ, overflowed from Him. Christ himself, according to Las Casas, spoke emphatically that he had to learn humility and compassion from God. Therefore, saint Bernard argued, humility could be taught only by God due to the dignity and value of humility. *Third*, Las Casas argued that the way of humility, peace and rejection of worldliness fits with nature. Violence cannot persuade the human will into doing good. People can claim no reward from what they have done unwillingly. Christ understood our human condition. Therefore he fashioned a way of attracting people to himself and to a moral life, by attachment to Him, compliance with His laws. This was a respectful way, attractive, altruistic and germane to human kind.

Fourth, Christ's way would help one, his follower, to remove all suspicion from people's hearts that he or she was ambitious and greedy. *Fifth*, the fruitfulness of peace comes from Christ's way. People need peace and quiet to worship God. Panic, anxiety, unrest and alarm are conditions that go with war. *Sixth*, theory of war and subjugation is contradictory with the gentle character of Jesus Christ and His peaceful Kingdom. Christ was not violent. He was peaceable to all and coming to save the sinners.²²

Las Casas concluded that the weapons of war are physical things and their nature is not to conquer souls but bodies, buildings, material things they can reach. Therefore only through spiritual weapons e.g. the Gospel message, gentleness, kindness, by the sacraments, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, actual and habitual, that

Christian people need to be formed, gathered, settled and preserved.

The Only Way described also "False Evangelization" that comes with the brutal missionary and the exercise of violating the mind and will that opted wars for conversion. All of those were completely contradictory with Las Casas' vision above, on "True Evangelization" that was initiated by the peaceful Christ and safeguarded by "ideal missionary" preceded by the apostles who passed on the exemplary way of their master, Jesus Christ.

5. CONCLUSION

On July 18 of 1566, Bartolomé de las Casas died at the monastery of Atocha, Madrid in the age of 82. His long life had been a "voice of one calling in the desert" (Isaiah 40:3), pleading for the rights of the Natives. Once again at the end of his life, he was begging for now the new Dominican Pope Pius V (1566-1572) to condemn the conquest as a means of conversion. In his last will, he professed that he had kept his faith as an untiring response to God's call, which was for him, to plead for the safe life and restoration of the Natives of the New World. At the end of the day, more than fellow human beings (equal with the Spaniards), Las Casas considered the Indians as brothers and sisters to whom Christ has given his life to the point of identifying himself with them as they endured so much suffering. Through the poor of his time, he was moved to rediscover the radical Good News of Jesus Christ: "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10).

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ENDNOTES

- ¹ Helen Rand Parish indicates the influence of Las Casas' ideas for our contemporary as she helps discovering unpublished manuscripts of Las Casas. She even mentions particular countries which was influenced by his missiological vision: from

- Rome to Guatemala, to Florida, to Peru, to the Philippines, to Japan, to Paraguay, to California, and to much it present-day Latin America. Bartolomé De las Casas, 3.
- ² John N. Schumacher, *Readings in the Philippines Church History*, 7.
- ³ Las Casas wrote: "My one motive in dictating this book [*The History of the Indies*] was that I saw Spain had an urgent, a mortal need to have the truth...on Indian affairs...what huge calamities occurred out in the Indies, what violence, what slaughter of whole peoples, what losses of soul...what massive injustice!" Francis Patrick Sullivan, *Indian Freedom. The Cause of Bartolomé de las Casas*, 14.
- ⁴ See <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Alex06/index.htm>. Accessed in April 23, 2013
- ⁵ An *encomienda* refers to the right to collect tribute and to demand labor from the Natives within a certain territory. This privilege, granted by the king through the governor or viceroy, imposed certain obligations to be fulfilled by the *encomendero* in the name of the king. The *encomienda* system had been used in feudal Spain during the re-conquest and had survived in some form ever since. In the Americas, the first *encomiendas* were handed out by Christopher Columbus in the Caribbean. See John N. Schumacher, *Readings in the Philippines Church History*, 4 and Christopher Minster in Latinamericanhistory.about.com. Accessed in April 22, 2013.
- ⁶ On the Spanish church in the Indies, Schumacher explains: "One great source of the vitality of Spain in the 16th century was the Spanish church...a reformed Church." This was long before Luther and it gave a new vitality to different religious orders, to missionary zeal and various ecclesiastical as well as religious reform. John N. Schumacher, *Readings in the Philippines Church History*, 1-2.
- ⁷ Bartolomé de las Casas, *The Only Way*, 9-58.
- ⁸ Lewis Hanke, *Bartolomé de las Casas. An Interpretation of his Life and Writings*, 17.
- ⁹ Las Casas reported: "One time, the Indians came out to greet us with food and gifts, came ten leagues from their large village. Then, when we got there, they gave us fish in abundance, bread, food, to the limit of their larder. All of a sudden the devil got into the Christians. Right before my eyes, they put to the sword without provocation or cause more than three thousand souls who sat in front of us, men, women, children." Francis Patrick Sullivan, *Indian Freedom. The Cause of Bartolomé de las Casas*, 146.
- ¹⁰ Bartolomé de las Casas, *The Only Way*, 20.
- ¹¹ Las Casas wrote: "I saw with my own eyes how large the population was. Only the Indians with Enrique survived, and only because he knew how to win... I went to him to offer him peace, and I secured it with him, then brought him to the town of Azua on my own, and worked out an agreement with the folks there, then brought him to Santo Domingo, and there enlisted him on the side of his majesty." Francis Patrick Sullivan, *Indian Freedom. The Cause of Bartolomé de las Casas*, 198.
- ¹² Galméz, Lorenzo, 1982. *Bartolomé de las Casas. Defensor de los Derechos Humanos*, 121-137 explains *The New Laws* within the context of Las Casas' advocacy on human rights.
- ¹³ Bartolomé de las Casas, *The Only Way*, 42.
- ¹⁴ In "Rules for Confessors" Las Casas wrote on the 4th rule: "if penitent should hold any Indians enslaved, whatever the way or the title by which he got them or keeps them, he is to give them freedom instantaneously, and irrevocably, no ifs, ands, or buts. He is to beg pardon from them..." Francis Patrick Sullivan, *Indian Freedom. The Cause of Bartolomé de las Casas*, 283.
- ¹⁵ Helen Rand Parish and Weidman, Harold E., *Las Casas in México. Historia y Obra Desconocidas*, 57-62.
- ¹⁶ Helen Rand Parish and Weidman, Harold E., *Las Casas in México. Historia y Obra Desconocidas*, 65.
- ¹⁷ Bartolomé de las Casas, *In Defense of the Indians*, 42 wrote in chapter 4: "Now if we shall have shown that among our Indians...there important kingdoms, large numbers of people who live settled lives in a society, great cities, kings, judges and laws, persons who engage in commerce, buying, selling, lending, and the other contracts of the law of nations, will it not stand proved that the Reverend Doctor Sepúlveda has spoken wrongly and viciously against peoples like these, either out of malice or ignorance of Aristotle's teaching..."
- ¹⁸ Las Casas was not aware of the issue as he begun his reform. Indeed in those days most reformers had urged of bringing over African slaves as replacements of the disappearing Indians due to brutal mistreatments. Bartolomé de las Casas, *The Only Way*, 49.
- ¹⁹ Bartolomé de las Casas, *The Only Way*, 70-71.
- ²⁰ Bartolomé de las Casas, *The Only Way*, 73 and 75.
- ²¹ Bartolomé de las Casas, *The Only Way*, 78.
- ²² Bartolomé de las Casas, *The Only Way*, 97.

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