

Fray Alonso de la Vera Cruz, O. S. A.

(1507-1584)

A Study of His Life and His Contribution to the Religious and Intellectual Affairs of Early Mexico

*(continuation *)*

CHAPTER IV

The Leadership of Alonso de la Vera Cruz in the Augustinian Order

The Office of Major Superior in Mexico

Alonso de la Vera Cruz was three times elected to the highest office in his order in Mexico, and on two other occasions he was chosen to fill unexpired terms, once when the major superior had died, and another time when the man in office was commissioned to go to Europe. The office of major superior would normally be that of provincial, but because the province in Mexico did not yet enjoy full status, the major superior was a vicar-provincial, that is, vicar of the provincial in Castile, to whom the friars in the New World were subject. When did the group in Mexico, formally known as the Province of the Most Holy Name of Jesus of New Spain, acquire full status and independence from Castile? That question has many answers, depending on the point of view of the various writers. It is a knotty and complicated problem, one in which many persons and powers had a hand. An answer must be given in order to know what was the competency of the major superior in Mexico, and in order to understand a

*) See *Augustiniana*, V (1955), 52-124.

grave internal disturbance among the Augustinian friars in the period roughly from 1560 to 1570, when there was a noticeable decline in the expansion of the Augustinian Order, probably an effect of this internal dissension.

The history of this question reveals two opposing points of view, and a struggle for control on the part of several high authorities. If one reads the account of the Augustinian chroniclers writing in New Spain, he is sure to get the impression that the friars in the New World sought independence, but that the authorities in Spain refused to recognize their rights. If, on the other hand, one reads the history of the same period in a Spanish account, the friars in America will be represented as usurping authority beyond their rights. Which is the true account? The facts will show that there was both truth and exaggeration on both sides ²¹⁵). The position of the general of the Augustinians, residing in Rome, was generally in favor of the friars in America, in the sense that he strove to have a full-fledged province established in Mexico, as well as in Peru, immediately subject to himself instead of to the provincial of Castile. This conflict of interests brought up a further question of who had the right to send a visitator to the New World, the provincial of Castile or the general? That question was the very center of the trouble.

Offsetting the influence of the general, however, was the King of Spain Philip II and the Council of the Indies. The aspirations of the Augustinian general were the opposite of the plans of Philip II, who sought to establish a system whereby the orders working in the Spanish missions would be immediately subject, not to their respective generals in Rome, but to commissary generals appointed to the royal court ²¹⁶). The efforts of the general in Rome were regarded in royal circles as foreign interference. There was some justification for this attitude of the Spanish King in view of the fact that he already possessed extensive powers in the ecclesiastical

²¹⁵) A recent study of this question appeared in *Analecta Augustiniana*, Vol. XXIII (Jan.-Dec., 1953), pp. 68-90. The author, David Gutiérrez, defends the authority of the Spanish provincials. His article appeared after this present chapter was written. The present writer hopes to take up this question in greater detail in a later study.

²¹⁶) Cf. the interesting study on the important Junta of 1568 by P. LETURIA, *Felipe II y el Pontificado en momento culminante de la historia hispanoamericana*, in *Estudios eclesiásticos*, 7 (Madrid, Sept., 1928, no. extraordinario), pp. 41-77.

sphere through concessions and privileges granted by the Holy See ; the mission endeavor in the New World was almost entirely his responsibility and, in great measure, it was financed by royal funds. If the King's plan, complete with a Patriarch who would be the Pope's delegate in Spain, had been acceptable to Rome, the ecclesiastical affairs of the missions would have run more smoothly. But such a masterplan, containing, as it did, the obvious danger of setting up a national church, was acceptable neither to the Pope nor to the generals of the religious orders²¹⁷). The result was that secular interference in ecclesiastical affairs increased, especially since all communications with Rome had to be cleared through the royal Council of the Indies. The interference of the King's ministers added greatly to the dissension amongst the Augustinians²¹⁸).

We have seen how the missions began in Mexico, and that the Augustinian Order there had a most remarkable growth in the space of sixty years. Once a new branch of the order had gained a certain number of houses and men and demonstrated that it could support itself, it was normal to establish a separate and independent province. It is understandable, however, that the Spanish Province of Castile wished to maintain some control over the groups in America, since it was exclusively a Spanish venture and most of the recruits had to come from Spain. More than that, as is indicated above, all affairs of any kind had to pass through the hands of the Spanish authorities, and the Spanish government was extremely reluctant to allow any non-Spanish power to exercise any influence within the empire. Thus, even if the Spanish provincial were willing to create a separate province in Mexico, subject to the general in Rome, the King would, and in fact, did, oppose.

In the beginning there was no trouble whatever. The ties to the home country were strong and the missionaries gladly received help and direction from the superiors in Spain. But as the number of friars increased in Mexico and the problems of administration naturally became more complicated, the missionaries began to feel

²¹⁷) Only the Franciscans had a commissary general.

²¹⁸) CUEVAS, *Historia de la Iglesia*, II, 192-194, points out how the restrictions placed on the religious by civil authority increased, and the viceroys, oydores and even minor officials interfered in the affairs of the orders.

the great inconvenience of referring all major decisions to Castile. Not only were communications extremely slow, they were also uncertain. Storms, piracy and warfare not infrequently took a toll of the Spanish merchant fleet, and one was never sure that his letters would arrive. For that reason letters were always written in duplicate or triplicate and dispatched on different vessels, but even so, one could not be certain of safe delivery. Before an answer could be obtained, frequently the matter referred to Castile would have resolved itself, either for better or for worse. This situation forced the superiors in Mexico to take matters in their own hands and sometimes make unauthorized decisions. That of course brought up the question of what was the moral and legal value of such decisions.

The original plan was indicated by Thomas of Villanova, then Provincial of Castile, when, in 1534, he appointed Juan Gallego his Vicar in the Indies and gave the friars in Mexico permission to hold a chapter in three years and elect a provincial for a three-year term ²¹⁹). The term provincial here is not especially significant because it is clear from subsequent documents that the major superior in Mexico had only the powers of vicar-provincial. The man elected to that office had to be confirmed by the provincial in Castile whom he represented. And here arises the problem of communication described above. The friars referred this problem to Spain and received a reply among the directives sent by the chapter held at Dueñas in 1540 ²²⁰).

It was first re-affirmed that each new Spanish provincial must confirm the office of his vicar in the New World. In order to be sure that the confirmation was not overlooked, the prior of Salamanca, at that time Francisco de Nieva, and all subsequent holders of that office, were commissioned to see that the provincial made the confirmation, and were further designated to fill the office of Procurator and Protector of the Indies. Furthermore, in the event that no word should reach Mexico, the vicar-provincial was to be considered as automatically confirmed. Any further doubts about authority were to be decided by the vicar in conjunction with his

²¹⁹) SANTIAGO VELA, *Santo Tomás de Villanueva. Fechas y datos*, in *AHHA*, XI (June, 1919), p. 360.

²²⁰) SANTIAGO VELA, *Acerca de observancias en la Provincia de México*, in *AHHA*, XIV (July-August, 1920), pp. 69-78, nos. 7 and 8.

definitors and the previous vicar-provincial, while appeal was being made to Spain.

This somewhat complicated solution did not satisfy the missionaries and they found an opportunity to bring their case to the Augustinian general who came on visitation to Spain the following year, 1541. The General at that time was the noted Jerome Seripando, soon to become a Cardinal and Papal Legate to the Council of Trent. Seripando called a chapter at Dueñas in November, even though another chapter was not due for two years, and he united the Provinces of Castile and Andalusia into one ²²¹). At that chapter the friars of Mexico were represented by Nicolás de Agreda who was Procurator for the Indies and had just come back from the New World ²²²). What, if anything, did the General do about the Mexican situation? From this point forward a constant struggle is carried on between the friars in New Spain and the Spanish authorities, each making conflicting claims. According to the Mexican chronicler Grijalva, the General decreed the separation of the Mexican province from that of Castile, although the decree, being lost in transit, never reached New Spain. Grijalva's account is based on a report brought by some friars newly arrived from Spain in 1543 ²²³). In the meantime, a chapter was held in New Spain and Juan de San Román was elected major superior. The four definitors chosen were Jorge de Avila, Alonso de la Vera Cruz, Juan Estacio and Juan Cruzat.

Father Santiago Vela, following the opinion of José Sicardo, a writer who consistently upheld the position of the Spanish provincials, maintains that Grijalva's account of the general's decree

²²¹) *Dd* 19, fol. 93. Cf. also HERRERA, *Historia de Salamanca*, p. 285.

²²²) *Ibid.* He was also elected as one of the scrutators for the chapter.

²²³) GRIJALVA, *op. cit.*, Edad I, chap. xxxvi.

Ricard, in his excellent study, *La « conquête spirituelle »*, apparently accepted the account of Grijalva, for he says simply, on page 95, that the separation took place in 1545. The chroniclers of the general history of the Augustinian Order apparently never heard of this decree of Seripando. For example, CRUSENIUS, *Monasticon Augustinianum* (Munich, 1623), speaks, on page 199, of the visit of Seripando to Spain, but says nothing of any such decree. On the contrary, when treating of the chapter in Mexico in 1545, he says Juan Staccio (sic) was chosen head of the *Vicariate* of the Indies. He says the same of Vera Cruz in 1548, on page 200. Similar testimony can be found in PAMPHILUS, *Chronica ordinis fratrum eremitarum S. Augustini* (Rome, 1581), fols. 115v-118.

is « far from the truth » ²²⁴). Father Santiago alleges that Grijalva's purpose was to establish the province of Mexico as the founder of the missions in the Philippines, whereas the honor really belongs to the Castilian Province. While we must agree that Grijalva's chronicle is false on this point, since no such decree by Jerome Seripando exists, we cannot be sure that Grijalva fabricated the events of 1541. It is true that the General did review the situation in Mexico and expressed great satisfaction at the success of the work there ²²⁵). A few years later he showed himself willing to consider the separation of the province of Mexico from Castile ²²⁶). During his visitation to Spain and to the other provinces of the Augustinian Order, Seripando's purpose was to consolidate and reform the order, and strengthen his central authority after the ravages of Lutheranism. Under the circumstances he would have favored the establishment of an independent province in New Spain, thus placing the Mexican friars directly under his own authority. This may have been the understanding of the missionaries who brought the false report to Mexico in 1543. If, as Grijalva claims, no official word reached the friars in the New World, they were unaware of the General's letter sent, not from the chapter at Dueñas, but from Pamplona, directing that the office of vicar-provincial should be exercised as before, « until the Spanish provincial should arrange otherwise » ²²⁷).

²²⁴) SANTIAGO VELA, p. vii, note 1, of his introduction to the already mentioned *Crónica* of Esteban García. Vela bases his criticism on the corrections of the *Crónica* made by José Sicardo and contained in this same edition by Santiago Vela. Cf. our Introduction for the relationship between García and Sicardo.

Previous to editing the above work, Santiago Vela himself had followed the account given by Grijalva. For example, cf. *BIA*, III, 125.

²²⁵) *Dd* 19, fol. 92v. Dueñas, Nov. 17, 1541.

²²⁶) *Dd* 21, fols. 174-174v. Seripando to the Spanish provincial. Trent, May 28, 1546. Seripando said he had instructed Juan de San Román and Jorge de Avila that the business of making a separate province in Mexico would have to be taken up at the next general chapter.

There is no record of Mexican representation at the general chapter of 1547. Cf. *Analecta Augustiniana*, IX, 141 ff. and 299 ff.

²²⁷) *Dd* 19, fol. 102 v. Pamplona, Nov. 27, 1541. Seripando wrote that the vicar-provincial « nostra auctoritate confirmatus, ex nunc pro ut ex tunc, officium suum exerceret, donec Ven. Provinciali Hispaniae aliter disponere visum esset ».

In this same letter Seripando instructed the friars in New Spain to hold their chapters at the same time as those of Spain. The next chapter year in Mexico, however, is not the same as that of Castile; perhaps this is an indication

The alleged reason for Grijalva's supposed fabrication, namely, to establish the Mexican province as founder of the Philippine missions, is not convincing. The first successful expedition to the Philippine Islands does not occur until 1564. By that time the friars in Mexico had a much better case for considering themselves independent from Castile; there was no need to refer to the events of 1541 ²²⁸). There is, however, one point on which Grijalva can be certainly censured. He wrote his chronicle nearly one hundred years after the events described above, but at no time does he indicate that the report of Seripando's decree of separation was false. It is not possible that the friars of New Spain could have long remained in ignorance of the facts ²²⁹).

The attitude assumed by Grijalva and certain other Augustinians in Mexico was that, after 1541, any interference by the Spanish provincials was unauthorized. Their attitude was justified in so far as the Augustinian generals made several efforts in the next fifty year to create an independent province in New Spain, efforts that were cancelled out by Philip II. We will not try to follow the confusing ramifications of the struggle here, except to point out some of the highlights and mention the part played by Alonso de la Vera Cruz.

The subsequent difficulties revolved around two things, namely, the efforts made by certain friars in Mexico to induce the Spanish superiors to send more recruits to the Mexican missions, and the question of the right of the provincial of Castile to send visitators to inspect and supervise affairs in Mexico. In all these matters the chief opponent of the Spanish provincial was Juan de San Román, the same friar who had been elected major superior of New Spain in 1543, around the time that these disputes began. He was a man

of the fact that this letter never reached its destination. The chapter years in Spain were 1540, 1541 and 1545; in Mexico they were 1540, 1543 and 1545.

²²⁸) The general chapter held at Milan in 1564 empowered the General, Christopher of Padua, to separate the province of Mexico from Castile. Cf. *Analecta Augustiniana*, IX, 428. The decree of separation, formulated in February of the following year, was later withdrawn at the intervention of Philip II. Cf. *Dd* 30, fol. 24, 44v-45.

²²⁹) There is, for example, a clear indication of the status of the Mexican mission in the 1551 edition of the Augustinian *Constitutiones* prepared by Seripando and published in Rome. Fol. lvi verso has a list of the provinces and contains the following: Provincia Hispaniae, Cui adiuncta sunt monasteria apud novas Indias extracta.

whose determination matched his great energy, one who allowed no obstacle to impede what he felt was right and necessary, even when the obstacle was the lawful authority of his superiors in Spain. Juan de San Román had come to the New World with the first band of Augustinian missionaries in 1533²³⁰). His name is revered in all the Mexican chronicles as the founder of the mission in Michoacán, and his memory is held in the highest esteem²³¹). He rose quickly to the post of leadership, for, as early as 1535, when Francisco de la Cruz returned to Spain to seek more recruits, Juan de San Román was chosen to fill the office of vicar-provincial. With the return of Francisco in the following year, Juan became master of novices in San Agustín in Mexico²³²). He had, therefore, the responsibility of training Alonso de la Vera Cruz who had just then entered the Augustinian Order. From this first contact, as well as from subsequent events, Juan de San Román had a high regard for Fray Alonso.

When the friars decided to push their missions into the territory of Michoacán in 1537, it was Fray Juan who was selected to found the first house at Tiripetío along with Diego de Chavez. These two outstanding religious guided the early years of that famous foundation. Recognizing the energy and ability of Juan de San Román, the friars elected him to the office of vicar-provincial in 1543. The following year the disturbing news came about the *New Laws* governing the holding of property in the Indies. After a conference of the civil and ecclesiastical officials, it was decided to send to Spain a commission made up of the superiors of the three mendicant orders. Accordingly, Juan de San Román, accompanied by Jorge de Avila, sent out for Europe in 1544. While in Spain, he also occupied himself with Augustinian affairs, doing his utmost to recruit more missionaries and to advance the province of Mexico to an independent status. In pursuing these matters, Fray Juan invoked the aid of the Augustinian general and Spanish civil authorities to overcome any reluctance or opposition on the part of the Spanish provincial. On this occasion he spent nine years in Spain, and a few years later he made a second journey for the same purpose.

²³⁰) A good biographical sketch is found in *BIA*, VII, 260-267.

²³¹) Cf., for example, the effusive phrases of Basalenque *op. cit.*, Bk. I, chap. vi. Also ESCOBAR, *op. cit.*, chaps xix-xxiii.

²³²) HERRERA, *Alphabetum Aug.*, II, 566.

Meanwhile there was developing in Mexico a crisis which, while it was not directly concerned with the matters we are here discussing, became a testing ground in the struggle among the several authorities claiming control over the missions. Word had reached the Augustinian general in Italy that certain abuses existed in New Spain, particularly with regard to the vow of poverty forbidding the holding of personal property ²³³). The abuses were being committed by two or three renegade religious who had departed from the high standard of conduct and ideals otherwise observed by the friars in Mexico.

In order to correct the misconduct, the general looked about for suitable persons who might be sent as visitators to investigate these unhappy reports. After some confusion and delay he selected the Spanish friar Pedro de Herrera, commissioning him as vicar-general with authority to use whatever discipline may be necessary ²³⁴). Herrera, a young man and fervent religious, set out for the New World shortly after his appointment in 1562, filled with a zeal to set everything in order. And whom should he find in the office of vicar-provincial, but Juan de San Román, an older and more experienced man, and one who had already shown considerable independence in his dealings with the Spanish provincial ²³⁵). A conflict was inevitable.

It did not take long for Pedro de Herrera to get at the heart of the matter, for he began his visitation at the principal monastery, San Agustín in Mexico City, where the trouble-makers were living. In his report written the same year and sent, not to the general, but to Philip II, he gave full details of the situation that confronted him ²³⁶). He found that the Prior, one Antonio de San Isidro, was the leader of a small group of rebellious and renegade religious, and the man himself was personally guilty of a number of serious offenses both in religious and civil life, especially through illegal business deals. Besides being Prior, Antonio de San Isidro was also one of the definitors of the vice-province, and Herrera charged that

²³³) Dd 29, fol. 164. Christopher of Padua to the friars in the Indies, March 9, 1561.

²³⁴) Dd 29, fols. 201v-202. Trent, Jan. 20, 1562. On Pedro de Herrera, cf. BIA, III, 584.

²³⁵) He had been chosen to fill the vacancy left by Agustín de Coruña, who, in 1562, went to Spain with Alonso de la Vera Cruz.

²³⁶) A. G. I., Mexico 280.

he had gained his position by bribery. But it is not hard to see how this unfortunate friar had attained a high position. Although little information can be found about him, for the Augustinian chroniclers have understandably tried to forget him, it is known that he was a man of outstanding ability. He was a Doctor of Theology and enjoyed the honorary titles of Palatine Count and Protonotary Apostolic ; he also held the office of Apostolic Preacher because of his forensic ability ²³⁷). He was probably also a man of pleasing personality for he had powerful friends.

At the very outset of the visitation, Antonio de San Isidro and one of his accomplices, Antonio de los Reyes, also a definitor, refused to recognize Pedro de Herrera ²³⁸). And what was worse, the Vicar-Provincial himself, Juan de San Román, would not recognize him. On the other hand, the other two definitors, the famous Andrés de Urdaneta and Juan de San Sebastián, accepted the Visitor and were happy to welcome him. In spite of the opposition, Pedro de Herrera went right to the core of the trouble ; he deposed the Prior and had him imprisoned. But Fray Antonio did not stay there long, for he was soon freed with the assistance of none less than the Viceroy, some members of the Audiencia, the Provisor of the Archbishop and the Vicar-Provincial. Then with the aid of a pass from the Viceroy Luis de Velasco, Fray Antonio embarked for Spain saying he was going to present his defense to the King. Taking a large sum of money with him, he disappeared and was not heard from again.

It is not difficult to imagine the scandal caused by this unfortunate incident, especially with so many public figures involved in it. And in spite of the weight of evidence against the renegade, Juan de San Román stubbornly continued to oppose the Visitor whom he looked upon as a meddler and trouble-maker. The visitation was, in his eyes, an unlawful interference within his own field of jurisdiction. Even though Pedro de Herrera was commis-

²³⁷) HERRERA, *Alphabetum Aug.*, I, 51, and *Historia de Salamanca*, p. 400. Also RICARD, *Un document inédit sur les Augustins*, in *Etudes et documents*, pp. 119-154, and esp. 123-131. He quotes Sicardo (MS 4349, Archivo Nacional, Madrid, fol. 68) as saying of Antonio de San Isidro, « predicador muy célebre y de yngenio más vivo de lo que convenía a su estado ».

²³⁸) The only information found about Antonio de los Reyes is that he was among the first ten Augustinian students to attend the University of Mexico in 1553. Cf. CUEVAS, *Historia de la Iglesia*, II, 308.

sioned by the general, San Román knew very well that he had come from Spain and really represented the King and the Spanish provincial. The majority of the friars, however, were shocked by the whole affair and gave no support to Juan de San Román. In November of that year eleven of them wrote to the King to explain their position ²³⁹). They claimed to speak for the majority and praised the Visitor as a wise and prudent man. The trouble, they said, was the work of a few, most of whom had fled to avoid punishment for their offenses. One of their number, his identity is not given, had gone to Spain with letters of credit from persons in high places to attack the Visitor and to attempt to have the Mexican province freed from Castile. In that event, wrote the eleven, they would prefer to return to Spain. The following January another group letter was sent, this time signed by thirty-three religious ²⁴⁰). Writing to the general, they spoke of the harm done to the good name of the Augustinians in the two years that Antonio de San Isidro was Prior of San Agustín. Among the signers were many of the more prominent friars of the Mexican missions ²⁴¹).

Juan de San Román, for his part, did not fail to make known his opinion. Already in October of 1562 he had written to the general to say the whole trouble was due to the independence of the Visitor and calumnies made against the character of San

²³⁹) A. G. I., Mexico 280. Nov. 26, 1562, from Mexico City.

²⁴⁰) HERRERA, *Alphabetum Aug.*, I, 51. Jan 21, 1563, from Totolapa.

²⁴¹) *Ibid.* The names of the friars are given as follows:

Jerónimo de San Esteban	Alonso Corona
Juan Adriano	Juan Pérez
Esteban de Salazar	Andrés de Guevara
Agustín Vanegas	Pedro de San Jerónimo
Diego de Herrera	Juan de San Cebrián
Pedro de Medellín	Pedro de Agurto
Baltasar de Sevilla	Juan de Sevilla
Juan de la Peña	Andrés de Aguirre
Francisco de Villafuerte	Diego Rengifo
Diego de San Martín	Juan de la Magdalena
Diego Rodríguez de Vertavillo	Juan Cather
Andréas de Urdaneta	Alonso de Alvarado
Nicolás de Witte	Antonio de Roa
Francisco de la Magdalena	Juan de Peñaranda
Juan de Carrión	Antonio de Aguilar
Alonso de San Martín	Nicolás de Perea
Juan de Tapia	

Isidro ²⁴²). Another letter, to the same effect, was dispatched to the general the following January by Juan Cruzat and Juan de Alva ²⁴³). These are the only two religious in good standing who are known to have taken the part of San Román at this point.

Pedro de Herrera, in the meantime, decided upon drastic measures and took a step for which he was to be blamed even by those inclined to sympathize with him. In January, 1563, he declared Juan de San Román deposed from office ²⁴⁴). And he went even further. At the chapter held the following May he declared San Román ineligible to hold any office whatever in the future ²⁴⁵). It was an extremely severe penalty to inflict upon one who had worked so hard right from the start of the missions in the New World. San Román was greatly incensed and two days later, on May 10, he penned his grievances to the general ²⁴⁶). He spoke of the fact that he had served the Augustinian Order well for fifty years, for thirty of which he had labored in a barbarous land. In view of the injustices with which the Visitor had repaid his pains, San Román urged the general to appoint another Visitor and to withdraw Pedro de Herrera. He then suggested six men whom he thought worthy of the office; the first mentioned was Alonso de la Vera Cruz, who was at the time in Spain. It is interesting to note that two of the other five, namely, Francisco de Villafuerte and Juan Pérez, were among the thirty-three who had condemned Antonio de San Isidro. Apparently, if San Román's faith in them was well founded, they did not go along with the Visitor in the deposition of the Vicar-Provincial.

The General, Christopher of Padua, meanwhile, had been receiving reports from both ecclesiastical and civil persons about the

²⁴²) RICARD, *Un document sur les Augustins*, in *Etudes et documents*, pp. 123-131. His source is the manuscript of Tomás de Herrera, MS 8435, Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid, pp. 1023-1024. San Román here puts the blame chiefly on Esteban de Salazar. Cf. the biography of Salazar in *BIA*, VII, 45-56, where Santiago Vela points out that he was a somewhat strange personality. Cf. also note in *Dd* 29, fol. 236.

²⁴³) *Ibid.* Again the source is MS 8435, p. 1026. Cf. also *BIA*, II, 189. The date is Jan. 22, 1563, from Tlayacapan.

²⁴⁴) *Ibid.* This took place at the junta of Totolapa. The letter of the 33 religious already mentioned was written at this time.

²⁴⁵) *Ibid.* May 8, 1563, at Pasayuca (or Epazayuca).

²⁴⁶) HERRERA, *Alphabetum Aug.*, I, 455. E. GARCÍA, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

turmoil caused by Pedro de Herrera. Among those who wrote urging him to take the matter in hand was the Viceroy Luis de Velasco who had himself helped to cause some of the trouble by interfering in the case of San Isidro ²⁴⁷). The General decided to withdraw Pedro de Herrera and appoint a new visitor. His choice fell upon Diego de Salamanca, and he was to be accompanied by Miguel de Alvarado. Fray Diego had just returned from the New World, recalled to Spain on the business of the defense of the privileges of religious. He had been present in Mexico at the meeting of January, 1563, when Juan de San Román was deposed. Shortly after arriving in Spain, he sent a report to the general from Madrid, on June 26, of that year ²⁴⁸). He too complained of the harm done by the Visitor and suggested that a substitute be sent. He listed the names of six friars who would be qualified for the job. Just as in the similar letter by San Román, the first name on the list was Alonso de la Vera Cruz. Evidently, Fray Alonso was considered the prudent and just kind of man who was needed in the situation, in the opinion of the men on the spot. The General, however, acting on the advice of the Fathers present for the Council of Trent, decided to send Fray Diego himself ²⁴⁹).

The General's decision met with steadfast opposition from the civil and religious authorities of Spain who favored Fray Pedro de Herrera. Christopher of Padua addressed a strongly-worded letter to the Spanish provincial, and two other letters to the Council

²⁴⁷) Dd 29, fols. 259-259v. One of the letters of Velasco can be seen in CUEVAS, *Documentos inéditos*, pp. 275-276. It is from Mexico City, Jan. 20, 1564. Introducing himself as the Viceroy « así en lo temporal como en lo espiritual », he reported that the good work of the Augustinians was being destroyed by Pedro de Herrera who did not understand the situation there. By following his own opinions he had caused grave damage. For the good of all, he urged the General to recall the Visitor and take the Province of Mexico under his direct obedience.

The other side is seen in a letter of Pedro de Herrera to Philip II, April 15, 1563, from Mexico City. It is found in A. G. I., Mexico 280. He begged the King to command the Viceroy and Audiencia to stop opposing him and give him the help he needed to accomplish his task, especially by withdrawing their support from Juan de San Román.

²⁴⁸) RICARD, *Un document sur les Augustins*, in *Etudes et documents*, pp. 135-151, no. 28. Fray Diego had gone to Mexico in 1547.

The letter is to be seen in part in HERRERA, *Alphabetum Aug.*, I, 455. Cf. also E. GARCÍA, *op. cit.*, chap. v.

²⁴⁹) Dd 29, fols. 259-259v. Trent, Sept. 20, 1563.

of the Indies and the king, requesting approval for Diego de Salamanca and Miguel de Alvarado ²⁵⁰). But events still did not work out according to his wishes, and, in March, 1564, we find the General sending an urgent mandate to the appointees, commanding them in virtue of the vow of obedience and under threat of excommunication to accept their office within three days and set out immediately without further delay or excuse of any kind ²⁵¹). The same letter commanded the superiors in Spain not to place any obstacles in the way and to recall any other visitators who may have been sent to Mexico.

At last the wishes of the Father General were carried out when later that year Diego de Salamanca and his companions arrived in Mexico and set about undoing the mistakes of Pedro de Herrera. Juan de San Román was restored to a position of honor and at the next chapter, in 1566, he was chosen first definitor. Further recognition was given to him by the subsequent chapter, 1569, when his confreres elected him Vicar-Provincial to assume again the position of leadership he had held before ²⁵²). With good order restored once more and the unworthy religious removed from the scene, a new period of peace and prosperity began for the Augustinian missions in Mexico. The period of dissension was ended; the former progress and expansion began anew. Juan de San Román continued to enjoy the honor and esteem of his confreres until his death in 1581, on the 31st of January ²⁵³).

²⁵⁰) *Ibid.* Miguel de Figueroa Alvarado. Also called Miguel de San Agustín. Born at Badajoz, he was the brother of Alonso de Badajoz, and was professed in Mexico in 1540. Cf. RICARD, *Un document sur les Augustins*, in *Etudes et documents*, pp. 135-151, no. 78.

²⁵¹) *Dd* 29, fols. 280v-281. Rome, March 19, 1564. And this in spite of the fact that Fray Diego is supposed to have accepted the office on Jan. 25, 1564. Cf. *BIA*, VII, 38, note 3, taken from the extracts of the *Regesta Generalium* by Tomás de Herrera, p. 1025 (MS 8435, Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid). This letter is not to be found in the extant *Regesta*.

²⁵²) E. GARCÍA, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

²⁵³) *BIA*, VII, p. 264. Cf. note 2 where Santiago Vela cites the already-mentioned extracts from the *Regesta Generalium* by Herrera. Oct. 28, 1570, the General confirmed San Román as Provincial. Nov. 6, 1576, he appointed San Román president of the chapter. These notes cannot be confirmed because the books of the *Regesta* for those years are not extant. There is, however, a very curious note in *Dd* 34, fol. 36v, March 3, 1573, where the General reprimands

In the final analysis, what is one to think of the affair between Juan de San Román and Pedro de Herrera? The Mexican chroniclers are clearly and unquestionably on the side of Juan de San Román, and if they mention the incident at all, full blame is placed on the impetuosity and bad judgment of Pedro de Herrera. The Spanish writers, on the other hand, defend the authority and justice of the Visitor Herrera, but they too are inclined to censure his lack of prudence ²⁵⁴). In the light of the evidence presented, it must be said that neither man was without fault. Doubtless Pedro de Herrera acted rightly in proceeding forcefully against the renegades, but he should not have used the same rough treatment against the Vicar-Provincial. San Román, on the other hand, had all along shown a spirit of excessive independence and it appears he was willing in this instance to sacrifice justice in order to maintain his authority. If both men had been less stubborn, the dissension and scandal might have been avoided. But more important than this clash of personalities is the conflict of the authorities behind the scenes. If the affair had been nothing more than a personal difference, it would not be worth recording at all, but behind this particular incident there was the interplay of three forces, the Augustinian General, Philip II, and the Provincial of Castile and Andalusia. We have seen that all three have played their part and, in fact, after the trouble was cleared up and forgotten, the struggle of the three forces was still going on.

Throughout the remainder of the sixteenth century the conflict over jurisdiction continued with the Augustinian general gradually strengthening his position in spite of resistance from the royal Council of the Indies. The legal conflict was at last concluded in 1592

one « Joannem de Romano » for his letters « parum modestas » in which he criticized the General before the Spanish Provincial. The name is not quite the same, but it would appear to be Juan de San Román, because the General refers to him as « olim Indiae Provincialem », and there is no other provincial of similar name.

²⁵⁴) RICARD, *Un document sur les Augustins*, in *Etudes et Documents*, pp. 123-131. Cf. p. 125, note 10, where he gives the opinion of Sicardo, MS 4349 of the Archivo Nacional, Madrid, fol. 67v. Sicardo, who was a severe critic of the Mexican chroniclers, says that Pedro de Herrera fulfilled his mission « no con el azierto que el Provincial de Castilla esperaba ».

Ricard, in this article, gives the first complete review of this incident that has ever been written, but he did not have the advantage of the materials provided by the *Dd* series, the *Regesta PP. Generalium*.

through the intervention of the Holy See, but before that settlement was realized, a new and interesting phase developed, one that concerned Alonso de la Vera Cruz. The new development followed shortly after the formation of plans for a complete patriarchate at the royal court in 1568. At the beginning of this chapter we have mentioned that those plans called for the establishing of a commissary general, with delegation from the pope, to handle the affairs of each of the religious orders in the New World. Vera Cruz was, at that time, in Spain directing important negotiations in which he came into contact with Philip II, perhaps even personally. The King decided that Fray Alonso would be the man to fill the office of Commissary General for the Augustinians at the royal court. Philip II wrote, therefore, to the General Thaddeus of Perugia, in 1571, to explain his plans ²⁵⁵). Saying that he wished to reorganize the mission set-up for the better administration of the orders and the good of the evangelization of the New World, he requested that the General appoint a procurator and commissary general to reside at the court with full powers to handle all affairs. He asked the General to appoint Alonso de la Vera Cruz, then Prior of San Felipe Real in Madrid, because of his « learning, capacity, goodness and reputation », and because of his long experience in the missions. The King dispatched an identical letter the same day to the provincial of Castile ²⁵⁶).

The reasons why these plans were not acceptable to either the pope or the generals have already been mentioned earlier in this chapter. There is no record of the Augustinian General's answer to the King, but there is no doubt that he responded in the negative. He wrote in 1575 to the Prior of Madrid (no longer Vera Cruz who had already returned to Mexico) and said that having a procurator general at the court was agreeable to him, but he would never grant a commissary ²⁵⁷). There had always been a procurator in Spain to manage the affairs of the missions, but a commissary would have been something different. He would have had powers equivalent to those of the general himself and would have, in effect, replaced the general. Thaddeus of Perugia said he had

²⁵⁵) Oct. 27, 1571. A. G. I., Indiferente general, Leg. 2869, Vol. I, fol. 23. The text has been published in BOLAÑO E ISLA, *op. cit.*, pp. 135-137.

²⁵⁶) *Ibid.*, fol. 23v.

²⁵⁷) Dd 36, fol. 46. Rome, Jan. 8, 1575.

also written to the Council of the Indies, refusing the appointment of a commissary, and had asked that no move be made in that direction without consulting him. What was Fray Alonso's reaction to this proposal? He was under special pressure to accept the office, if it is true, as Basalenque says, that he was the confessor to Juan de Ovando, for the latter was one of the architects of this plan and President of the Council of the Indies ²⁵⁸). He must have tried hard to persuade Vera Cruz to accede to the proposal. Grijalva relates that both the King and Ovando sought to persuade Fray Alonso to become commissary general at the Court, with immediate jurisdiction from the Pope over all the Augustinian provinces in America and the Philippines, and with a salary of 600 gold ducats a year ²⁵⁹). But Vera Cruz turned it down because he wanted to return to his work in the missions. Eguiara, in his account, says Alonso refused because he believed the office was not necessary ²⁶⁰). It is possible that he saw very well that such a plan would eventually undermine the whole organization of the Augustinian Order in the Spanish Empire. It is much to the credit of Vera Cruz that he refused this offer; he not only displayed humility and a selfless spirit in turning down what would have been a post of great honor with a good salary, but he also showed sound judgment because his refusal doubtless saved the general from much trouble and embarrassment ²⁶¹).

Negotiations which finally resulted in the legal separation of the province of Mexico from that of Castile were begun in 1588

²⁵⁸) BASALENQUE, *op. cit.*, Bk. I, chap. viii, p. 187.

Juan de Ovando became President in 1572; before that he had been royal visitator of the Council of the Indies.

²⁵⁹) GRIJALVA, *op. cit.*, Edad III, chap. xxvii.

²⁶⁰) EGUIARA Y EGUREN, *op. cit.*, paragraph 151.

²⁶¹) The only record we know of which indicates the mind of any of the friars in Mexico about the office of commissary general is a letter by Pedro Suarez de Escobar (de Medellín) to the King, Oct. 8, 1581 (A. G. I., Mexico 285). He was then Provincial and he recommended a commissary at court with « authority of His Holiness and of our General ». He suggested Pedro de Rojas for the job. We cannot tell to what extent he may have been expressing the opinion of the religious in Mexico, but no doubt there were advantages to having a commissary in Spain who could handle all affairs directly, and therefore, many of the friars probably favored the idea.

On Pedro de Rojas, cf. *BIA*, VI, 655-660.

On Suarez de Escobar, cf. *supra*, chap. ii, note 77.

by the General, Gregorio Petrocchini, while on visitation in Spain ²⁶²). With the urging and help of a Mexican-born Augustinian, Agustín de Carvajal, the General decided that the time had come to grant to the provinces in America the full status specified in the Augustinian Constitutions ²⁶³). After the completion of these preliminary steps, there remained only the securing of the approval of the next general chapter scheduled to be held four years later at Rome. Under the date of May 28, 1592, there is published in the *Regesta PP. Generalium* the decision of the Fathers of the general chapter ²⁶⁴). They confirmed all that was done by Gregorio Petrocchini in 1588 and declared the province of Mexico separate and independent from that of Castile. The provincial of Castile was thereafter forbidden to interfere in any way with the aforesaid province.

In order to make this decree inviolable, and perhaps foreseeing the trouble to come, the general applied to Pope Clement VIII for his approval. The supplication submitted to the Holy See is written in two languages. The first part in Italian recounted how Agustín de Carvajal had advocated the move made by Gregorio Petrocchini and the separation decreed by the general chapter of 1592. Carvajal requested a confirmation of this action by the Pope. The second part is written in Latin and signed by « Andreas Generalis ». The General seconded the request for confirmation and said that the Fathers in Mexico were worthy of this favor ²⁶⁵). Pope Clement VIII, accordingly, gave his approval to the General « viva voce », and then issued a Brief confirming the separation of Mexico from Castile ²⁶⁶). It was given at Rome, July 24, 1592 ²⁶⁷). Agustín de Carvajal immediately conveyed a copy of the brief to Mexico, while the General wrote to the friars there on August 1 to notify them that the separation had taken place by the unanimous de-

²⁶²) *Dd* 46, fols. 4-5v. Also, Archive of Spanish Embassy to the Holy See, Leg. 35, fol. 51.

²⁶³) On Agustín de Carvajal, cf. *supra*, note 24 of the Introduction. He is a controversial figure whose position will be taken up in a later study.

²⁶⁴) *Dd* 48, fol. 196. The decree of separation regarding Peru was also issued at this time. Cf. *Dd* 49, fols. 37v-40. Rome, Sept. 13, 1592.

²⁶⁵) Vatican, Archivium Brevium, Vol. 193, fol. 174. The Augustinian General at this time was Andrea Fivizzani.

²⁶⁶) *Dd* 50, fol. 18.

²⁶⁷) Vatican, Archivium Brevium, Vol. 193, fols. 173-173v and 175.

cision of the Fathers of the general chapter ²⁶⁸). He attributed the success of the work to Agustín de Carvajal and displayed his pleasure by awarding Carvajal the title of Doctor of Sacred Theology.

From this point forward, therefore, the Province of Mexico was legally and definitively independent, and subject only to the Father General in Rome. Although the struggle for jurisdiction was thus legally at an end, there still continued to be some serious litigation in the subsequent years. But, unlike the decree of 1564, this one of 1592 was never withdrawn; the General remained firm against both the King and the Spanish provincial. And since the Holy See had given its approval, there was no question but that the decree would stand despite the opposition. Without going into the subsequent history in detail, we will mention that the opposition of the King was based on the fact that the decree of separation and the Brief confirming it were not approved by the Council of the Indies. Encouraged by this support from the government, the Spanish provincials continued to claim the right to the title and jurisdiction of vicar-general over the American provinces, but they eventually capitulated under the imposition of censure by the general and pressure from the Holy See ²⁶⁹). This whole problem

²⁶⁸) *BIA*, III, 125. Santiago Vela says here that the Brief was obtained by Agustín de Carvajal, but we have seen that the General himself petitioned the Pope, although it was Carvajal who urged the General to do so.

Cf. also the account given by E. GARCÍA, *op. cit.*, pp. 39 ff. and the note by SICARDO, p. 40, note 1. Sicardo tries to defend the subsequent opposition of the Provincials of Castile. He also attributes the obtaining of the Brief to Carvajal. Sicardo seems to feel that Carvajal assumed the office that should have belonged to the Procurator at the court of Philip II, Cristóbal de la Fuente, and he points out that Grijalva, in speaking of the Brief, attributes it to Cristóbal. But the only just complaint that can be made against Carvajal is that he sent a copy of the Brief to Mexico without going through the Council of the Indies. That perhaps is the reason why Grijalva mentioned Cristóbal de la Fuente, to make it appear that the Brief had been sent through proper channels. The original decree of 1588, however, had been submitted to the Council.

The letter of the General can be seen in *Dd* 49, fols. 33-33v. The General also sent notice to Philip II, Aug. 26, 1592. Cf. *Dd* 49, fol. 35.

²⁶⁹) The sources for the history of the subsequent years are as follows: Royal order issued at Burgos, Sept. 14, 1592, suspending the acts of the general chapter sent to Mexico by Agustín de Carvajal, until they be approved by the Council of the Indies. Cf. E. GARCÍA, *op. cit.*, p. 40, note 1.

Letter of Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini to Camillo Caetano, Papal Nuncio to

arose out of the peculiar setup in the Spanish Empire. The King of Spain, by reason of the privileges granted by the Holy See, enjoyed extensive supervision over both the material and spiritual aspects of the missions. The efforts of the central authority of the Augustinian Order to exercise its rightful jurisdiction and control were regarded as outside interference, and the Spanish provincial was encouraged to maintain his authority in order to keep the missions completely within the control of the Empire. Without the interference of the royal power, no doubt this lengthy struggle could have been avoided and an earlier settlement reached.

Vera Cruz as Major Superior.

In the light of the foregoing study, it is clear that before 1592 the major superiors in Mexico enjoyed only the title of vicar-provincial. There was always some influence maintained by the provincial of Castile, and the authority of the Mexican superiors was usually limited by the presence of a visitor to whom they were subject. Vera Cruz, therefore, even in his last term of office, as late as 1575, did not enjoy the full authority of provincial. But, although the legal basis was lacking, circumstances were such that, in effect, the major superior exercised the office of provincial, since it was impossible for the Spanish superiors to maintain immediate control over the distant missions.

In the chapter of 1543, which has already been mentioned in connection with the supposed decree of separation by Seripando, Alonso de la Vera Cruz was chosen one of the four definitors.

Spain, Rome, Feb. 12, 1594. Sent at the request of the General, this letter threatens deposition of the Spanish Provincial if he continues to employ the title of Vicar-General. Cf. Vatican Library, Bib. Barberini, Reg. Lat. 5835, Part II, pp. 20-21.

Dd 50, fol. 18. Letter of the General to the Spanish Provincial Gabriel de Goldáraz, Aug. 1, 1595. Censures of excommunication and deposition were evoked against Goldáraz. Cf. *Dd* 49, fols. 121v-122, 129, 134-134v, 141.

Two letters of the General written in 1605 to the Spanish Provincial Ferdinando de Orozco, commanding him under threat of immediate excommunication to desist from exercising the office of vicar-general. Cf. E. GARCÍA, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-43. There is no volume in the *Regesta Generalium* for this year.

Cf. also the notices in *Dd* 49, fols. 82v, 83, 105; *Dd* 50, fol. 18, etc.

The Vicar-Provincial Juan de San Román, who was a member of the commission sent to the Emperor about the controversy of the *New Laws*, had to leave his office the year after his election. The man chosen to fill out his unexpired term was Fray Alonso, who had been professed in the Augustinian Order only seven years previously ²⁷⁰). He enjoyed the esteem of his confreres because of the excellent work he had already done as Master of novices, educator at Tiripetío, and vicar-general of the diocese of Michoacán ²⁷¹). Vera Cruz held the office of major superior for only one year because the next chapter met in 1545 and Juan Estacio became the new Vicar-Provincial ²⁷²).

At the following chapter three years later, recognition was again given to Fray Alonso when he was elected to serve his first full term as Vicar-Provincial, 1548 to 1551 ²⁷³). The vice-province was then in a movement of rapid expansion and Vera Cruz gave further impetus to that growth, founding a number of monasteries, some of them proving to be among the best foundations of the Augustinians. The majority of his foundations were made in Michoacán, the district that he knew and loved best, and where his friend, the outstanding Vasco de Quiroga, was Bishop ²⁷⁴). In 1550 he established the well-known monastery of Cuitzeo, about 130 miles northwest of Mexico City, one of the grandest and best-preserved Augustinian monasteries in Mexico today ²⁷⁵). In that same year a very large and strongly-built monastery was begun at Yuririapúndaro (Yuriria), about thirteen miles north of Cuitzeo, on the shores of Lake Yuriria ²⁷⁶). This massive structure, being on what was then the frontier, has almost the appearance of a large fortress. A smaller house further out on the frontier to the west was founded at Guango. At this same time Vera Cruz also

²⁷⁰) GRIJALVA, *op. cit.*, Edad II, chap. ii, p. 67.

²⁷¹) *Supra*, chap. iii.

²⁷²) GRIJALVA, *op. cit.*, Edad II, chap. ix. The chapter was held in 1545 in order to fall in with the chapter years in Castile.

²⁷³) GRIJALVA, *op. cit.*, Edad II, chap. x. In Edad II, chap. ix, p. 76, Grijalva mistakenly wrote 1549 as the year of the chapter.

²⁷⁴) BASALENQUE, *op. cit.*, Bk. I, chap. viii, p. 184.

²⁷⁵) The account of this and the other monasteries to follow is found in GRIJALVA, *op. cit.*, Edad II, chap. x.

²⁷⁶) Photos of this massive building and handsome church can be seen in ESCOBAR, *op. cit.*, chap. xl.

Karl Zink Buchhandlung

MÜNCHEN 34 · LUDWIGSTRASSE NEBEN 20

(gegenüber der Universität im Herzogl. Georgianum)

began a monastery at Santiago Cupándaro to the south in Tierras Calientes where he had received his initiation as a missionary. A fifth foundation was made at Charo, a cool and healthful spot a little to the south of Lake Cuitzeo, and a very flourishing mission. About six miles to the southwest of Charo was the city of Guayan-gareo or Valladolid (now known as Morelia), later the diocesan seat of Michoacán. Here Fray Alonso built a very large monastery to accommodate 30 or 40 friars, and to serve as the center of operations for the missions in Michoacán²⁷⁷). This foundation is still today the central house of that province.

But Vera Cruz did not neglect the other regions in which the Augustinians were also working. To the north of Mexico City, in the area of the Otomí Indians, he established a monastery at Actopan, a populous place on a high altitude. Grijalva adds an interesting topographical note where he says that there was little water to be had at Actopan, but a plentiful supply of aguamiel, the unfermented juice of Mexican aloes²⁷⁸). Somewhat further to the north and about fifty-nine miles from Mexico City, he founded a magnificent church and monastery at Ixmiquilpan, a fine location in rich fields, irrigated by a river, and yielding a good harvest of wheat and fruit.

Most of the foundations mentioned here were located in more or less ideal places where there was a guarantee of stable income and consequent continuity in the work of the missionaries. But that was not the only objective that Alonso de la Vera Cruz had in view; he did not forget or neglect the poorer Indians, and those living in remoter and less favorable areas. The monastery established by him in Tierras Calientes has already been mentioned. Another difficult spot where he established a mission was Xilitla, a lonely frontier point far to the north on the border of the land of the Chichimecas. These latter were a hostile and belligerent tribe who constituted a constant menace to the missions, and, in fact, once destroyed the house at Xilitla. In the opposite direction, about forty-five miles south of Mexico City, Vera Cruz built a mission at Chiantla, a dry and sterile place in a very hot climate. Grijalva adds that it afforded an opportunity for strictly

²⁷⁷) Photos of Morelia, *Ibid.*, chap. xxxi.

²⁷⁸) Aguamiel means honey-water. Cf. GRIJALVA, *op. cit.*, Edad II, chap. x.

unselfish and charitable work among the poor Indians of that region ²⁷⁹).

It may seem that this was an amazingly large number of monasteries to build in the short period of three years, but the plan followed by Vera Cruz was that which had already been established as the norm in the Spanish missions. The idea was to establish a strong mission center in some favorable spot and then work out from there in the evangelization of the surrounding region. It must be remembered that there was a constant and rapid influx of religious from Spain and from the Mexican population as well ; this large number of recruits made such an expansion possible. The success of Alonso's program is seen in the chronicle of Escobar, who, writing about one hundred and seventy-five years later, says that from the foundations made by Vera Cruz in Michoacán eight more monasteries later sprang up ²⁸⁰).

The question of the financing of this giant building program will be taken up in the next chapter, but it can be mentioned here that while most of the labor was contributed by the Indians, and subsidies were obtained from the Crown, it was not always easy sailing for the missionaries. Appeals had to be made constantly to the government for further assistance. Alonso de la Vera Cruz, shortly after becoming Vicar-Provincial in 1548, wrote to Philip II to speak of debts owed to the Augustinians by the recently-deceased Bishop Zumárraga ²⁸¹). He explained that Juan de Zumárraga, a truly great Bishop, had given so much to charities that after his death it was not possible to liquidate his debts. Vera Cruz requested a sum from the King to make up for the amount owed to the Augustinian Order.

Another contact that Fray Alonso had with the royal government at this time concerned the appointment of a new viceroy. Hearing of the proposed retirement of the Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza, Vera Cruz wrote in 1549 to Prince Maximilian to suggest

²⁷⁹) *Ibid.* The distances of these various foundations from Mexico City are based on the estimates of Grijalva given in leagues. A league equals 3.3 miles.

²⁸⁰) ESCOBAR, *op. cit.*, chap. xxvii, p. 323.

²⁸¹) Mexico City, July 30, 1548. A. G. I., Mexico 280. This letter can also be found in CUEVAS, *Historia de la Iglesia*, I, 251.

Juan de Zumárraga was a Franciscan and first Bishop of Mexico City.

that Antonio's son Francisco be appointed successor to his father²⁸²). He mentioned that Francisco had sufficient age and talent, and seven years experience under his father, plus understanding and sympathy for the country and its people. Alonso's motive for writing was his fear that the rumored appointee was not one who understood the situation in Mexico. His advice was not taken, however, for the next Viceroy was Luis de Velasco. We do not know if this was the appointment that Vera Cruz objected to, but the fact is that Velasco proved to be an excellent and benign ruler, and was later given the title of « Father of the Indians ».

When the new Viceroy was sent to Mexico, Antonio de Mendoza was transferred to Peru to be Viceroy there. At the same time the provincial of Castile wrote to Alonso de la Vera Cruz to say that he was sending a group of twelve friars to start a mission in Peru²⁸³). On the advice of the Emperor and the Council of the Indies, the provincial sought four friars from Mexico to assist the new missionaries in Peru, but knowing the great need for men in Mexico, he told Vera Cruz to send at least two. He preferred that Jerónimo de San Esteban head the mission, but if he was not available, then Juan Estacio. Accordingly, Vera Cruz sent two friars from Mexico; Juan Estacio was appointed confessor to Antonio de Mendoza, and he was accompanied by Juan de la Magdalena from Tiripetío. They arrived in Peru on Sept. 12, 1551²⁸⁴). Fray Alonso, therefore, was at least indirectly responsible for starting the Augustinian missions in Peru, from which the later missions in South America were to grow.

At the end of his term as Vicar-Provincial, Alonso became absorbed in the work of organizing the University of Mexico and fulfilling the duties of professor. But six years later, in 1557, he

²⁸²) Oct. 1, 1549. *Cartas de Indias* (Madrid, 1877), pp. 88-89.

Antonio de Mendoza was Viceroy from 1535 to 1550. He was transferred to Peru and died ten months later, 1552.

Luis de Velasco, called « el primero », to distinguish him from another Luis de Velasco who became Viceroy later in the century. « El primero » served from 1550 to 1564. Cf. CUEVAS, *Documentos inéditos*, pp. xxi and xxvii.

²⁸³) Medino del Campo, April, 14, 1550. Edited by SANTIAGO VELA, *AHHA*, XVI (Sept.-Oct., 1921), pp. 216-219. His source is MS 4349 of Sicardo, Archivo Nacional, Madrid.

²⁸⁴) *Ibid.*

was again elected to fill a term of three years as major superior ²⁸⁵). The chapter that year was held at Ocuituco. At the chapter the friars established the monastery of Our Lady of Montserrat, referred to by Grijalva as the Hermitage of Tzitzicaztlan. Located about 89 miles north of Mexico City, it was situated in rich terrain, but it lay open to attack by the Chichimecas who twice besieged the monasery in 1588 and 1589.

Vera Cruz, as before, continued the program of expansion, this time concentrating entirely on the northern region, the land of the Otomí Indians, where the missions were exclusively Augustinian in this period. He founded a monastery at Chapulhuacan, about 52 miles from the above-mentioned Hermitage. This mission had sprung from his previous foundation at Xilitla. The work there was fruitful in spite of the fact that it was the most difficult area in the whole vice-province. The land was barren, and the location dangerous because of its remote isolation and the proximity of the Chichimecas. The success of this mission is a tribute to the unlimited courage of the Augustinian friars. Penetration into such remote and harsh regions meant an arduous trek of a week or more on foot. The missionaries went unaccompanied on such journeys and had to rely upon the good will of the Indians to provide them with simple food and with protection from the hostile tribes whom they occasionally encountered.

Another monastery founded by Alonso de la Vera Cruz was that of Metlatepec (also called Tantoyuca) situated on the border of the land of the Huastec Indians, to the east of the Otomí. He also established a monastery at Tututepec, a mission which had grown out of that of Atotonilco, a mountainous but populous region. Lastly, he founded the mission at nearby Hueyacocotlan, but it was not permanent, for Grijalva says that it was later relinquished.

One of the tasks undertaken by Vera Cruz during this term as Vicar-Provincial was the revision of the *Constitutions*. On Nov. 1, 1559, he sent a circular letter to all the friars in Mexico to announce that he would shortly issue a supplement to the edition of the *Constitutions* published in Mexico in 1556 ²⁸⁶). A few weeks later

²⁸⁵) GRIJALVA, *op. cit.*, Edad II, chap. xvii. The following account of Vera Cruz' foundations is from Grijalva.

²⁸⁶) BIA, VII, 169. Here the date of the circular letter is given as Nov. 1, 1539, but that is clearly a misprint.

there appeared a twenty-eight page leaflet entitled *Additiones Constitutionum* which contained all the changes that had been made in the edition issued at Rome in 1551 under the direction of Jerome Seripando ²⁸⁷). Apparently the new Roman edition was very late in reaching Mexico, for it was not on hand when the first Mexican edition was printed in 1556. In the introduction to the *Additiones*, Vera Cruz said that his purpose was to bring the Mexican edition up to date with the one recently arrived from Rome. The changes, while numerous, are not of any special interest; they concern the regulation and discipline of the religious life. The edition of 1556 was probably also the work of Alonso, and at the same time he put out a copy of the Rule of St. Augustine and a copy of the Augustinian *Ordinarium*, a book of rubrics for ceremonies and the recitation of Office in choir ²⁸⁸). It is interesting to note that Vera Cruz, who had at first hesitated to become a religious, turned out to be a zealous and wholehearted Augustinian, one of the chief leaders in establishing and preserving the full observance of the religious life among the Augustinian missionaries. The Mexican Vice-Province was prospering under his careful and conscientious guidance and that of the other leaders of the same period. This fact was confirmed in a letter from the General, Christopher of

²⁸⁷) The only extant copy of this leaflet is found in the New York Public Library under the following title: Hermits of St. Augustine, *Additiones Constitutionum novae impressionis* (Mexico, Nov. 13, 1559). A short introduction by Vera Cruz explains its purpose. He refers to the Constitutions as having been printed four years previously, but it was actually only three years (1556).

²⁸⁸) *Regula P. N. Augustini* (Mexico, Aug. 9, 1556).

Cf. MEDINA, *La imprenta en México*, I, no. 30. He says that this is attributed to Vera Cruz by CATALINA GARCÍA, *Escritores de Guadalajara*, no. 448.

Ordinarium, etc. (Mexico, July 15, 1556). Cf. MEDINA, *op. cit.*, I, no. 29. He again cites García as above, *op. cit.*, no. 447.

Constitutiones, etc. (Mexico, 1556). Cf. MEDINA, *op. cit.*, I, no. 25. Also attributed to Vera Cruz.

WAGNER, *Nueva bibliografía mexicana del siglo XVI* (Mexico, 1940), p. 153, says all three of these works should be considered as one. That is probably true even though the dates of publication are not identical. All three are printed by Joannes Paulus Brissensis, and were probably intended to form one handbook. Wagner also mentions a later edition of the *Constitutions* in 1587; cf. p. 379.

Padua, who wrote in 1557 expressing his satisfaction with the reports coming from the New World ²⁸⁹).

Arthur ENNIS, O. S. A.

(To be continued).

²⁸⁹) Rome, Aug., 27, 1557. Dd 28, p. 94. The main purpose of the General's letter was to request consideration for an old friar, Alonso de Coruña, whom the General had heard was being overworked in his declining years. This complaint cannot be registered against Vera Cruz since he had just become Vicar-Provincial, and the report about Alonso de Coruña must have been sent to the General at least three or four months before the above date.