

The Augustinians wend their way Westward

Forty years elapsed after the return of Columbus before Fray Francisco de la Cruz, OSA, led the first seven Augustinian Friars into Mexico City on June 7, 1533. They had been preceded in their apostolic labors by the Franciscans and Dominicans in the great adventure destined to convert two continents and sweep across the broad Pacific to the distant Philippines, Japan and China itself. Upon their arrival they humbly and gratefully accepted during forty days the hospitality offered them by the Dominicans, until they were able to move to their own first modest home in the heart of the old Aztec Empire, located on Tacuba Street. Before long the Cabildo of Mexico City, with the approval of the Audiencia, granted them a piece of property for the erection of a monastery at Zoquipán, where an abundant spring made the surroundings a swampy marsh, a circumstance that did not discourage the pioneer missionaries in their pristine efforts.

It is not possible to trace in the few allotted pages of this volume dedicated to the history of the Sons of St. Augustine from the early days of the first institution of the Order to the present, the work they did in the Viceroyalty of New Spain that extended eventually across the Pacific to the Philippines. We will limit our sketch to the early beginnings of the Province of the Most Holy Name which they established in Mexico City and to the most outstanding contributions made to the propagation of the Faith and Christian culture. It was an Augustinian, Fray Andrés de Urdaneta, who discovered the long sought and desired return route from the Philippines that made possible the permanent occupation of the islands, the establishment of Manila, the conversion of the natives and the development of this distant eastern outpost of Christianity.

Forced by circumstances, we find ourselves even more con-

strained than Fray Juan de Grijalva, the remarkable chronicler of the Augustinians in Mexico, who declared in 1592, at a time when the tempo of life judged by our standards was much slower, that he had to encompass « in a brief space the narrative of heroic achievements » not because he desired to follow those « who place all their skill in being brief, thinking that the essence of all knowledge is in knowing how to say much briefly », but because he was afraid of the heedlessness of the century and feared that men « occupied by so many diverse things may have no time left to follow a single one through ». Even at that time, he declares that he found men had become weary of long books and long stories. He justified his brevity and the omission of significant incidents with the hope that the members of the Order would find « gratification in realizing that many well known things » had been left out for the sake of being brief. We make ours the wise and discreet words of the old chronicler as the only justification for many omissions in the heroic tale of the Augustinian efforts in the propagation of the Faith and the diffusion of culture in the New World.

Not until eight years after their arrival were they able to lay the cornerstone of their first permanent monastery in New Spain, made possible by the generous local and royal aid extended to them. It was a memorable occasion. The ceremony, which took place on August 28, 1541, was attended by Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza, Bishop Fray Juan de Zumárraga, the Audiencia and Cabildo of Mexico in a body, the Prior of Santo Domingo and the Guardian of the Convent of San Francisco El Grande. For years afterwards the patient friars labored faithfully through many vicissitudes, encouraged by friends and the unfailing assistance of the King, until they finally saw the monastery and chapel completed in 1587. It was a massive structure that cost well over a quarter million pesos, whose broad and deep laid foundations proved insecure in the fathomless mire of the old crater lake of Tenochtitlán and caused the heavy, thickwalled edifice to settle uneasily in the years that followed.

Although the Augustinians did not arrive in Mexico until the summer of 1533, Augustinians friars had begun to solicit permission to go to America from Emperor Charles V as early as 1527. Not for an instant did the warnings of their friends that the Indians ate human flesh, that to undertake their conversion the friars would have to abandon their country, their relatives and their friends and

journey across the sea at the risk of their lives deter them from their firm resolve to help carry the torch of Christianity to the countless hordes beyond the sea. Resolutely, Fray Francisco de la Cruz had set out from the old monastery in Toledo for Sevilla, finally embarked in Cadiz in the spring of 1533, and proceeded to America, accompanied by seven enthusiastic companions whose names deserve to be remembered. They were frays Gerónimo de San Esteban, Juan de San Román, Agustín de La Coruña, Juan de Oseguera, Jorge de Avila and Alonso de Borja, led by Fray Francisco de la Cruz as prior. Fray Juan Bautista, in his desire to persuade his brother to join the brave little band, had left the missionaries in Sevilla to go to Jaén, but he had returned too late to sail with the first pioneers. After a safe but painful voyage they arrived at San Juan de Ulúa on Ascension Day, May 22, 1533, rested for four days in Veracruz, and proceeded on foot, full of hopes, to Mexico City, stopping to preach on the way. A year later Fray Oseguera, OSA, preached in their humble temporary chapel on the Feast of the Eucharist with an eloquence that attracted attention throughout the city.

That first year was a busy one. Aided by the older missionaries in the Convent of Santo Domingo and a converted Indian that lived in the monastery, they diligently set themselves to learn the Mexican tongue, the most common language spoken in Central Mexico generally known as Nahuatl. At the same time they tried daily to arouse interest in their work and secure aid for their new foundation by preaching and conducting missions for the faithful in the established parishes. Providence led them to contact Isabel de Moctezuma, wife of Pedro Cano, a daughter of the former Aztec Emperor, who became the first benefactor of the Augustinians in Mexico City. She provided all the needs of the community during her lifetime and enabled the zealous Augustinians to care for thousands of the city's poor. They very early began their missionary work by helping out in the surrounding Indian pueblos where their services were most needed. They had tentatively been assigned work in the provinces of Chilapa and Tlapa.

The new Province founded in Mexico by the pioneer Augustinians was dependent at first on that of Castile. It held its first Provincial Council within one year after its temporary erection. All the friars came together on Corpus Christi Day, June 8, 1534, having left their newly established convents and houses in charge

of their most advanced Indian converts. Those who had been working in Chilapa, when they departed for the meeting in Ocuituco, left with difficulty because the converted Indians, who had become greatly attached to the missionaries, feared they would not return. The seven pioneers attended a Solemn Mass and spent the rest of the morning in prayer until the first session was opened at 2 P. M.

This first Council held by the Augustinians in New Spain is significant because of the resolutions adopted, which laid the foundations that were to rule the Order in the New World and guide the missionaries in their work with the Indians. It was ordered that the community read the Divine Office always in the choir, even if there was but one friar in the convent; that the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass be always celebrated in a decent and clean place; that if Mass was said in the pueblos of infidels, the altar set for the purpose be made worthy and that guards be stationed at the entrance to keep out those who were not Christians. Friars were to observe two hours of mental prayer daily, one after the antiphony and one after vespers. Assignments were made for the next year. Fray Francisco de la Cruz and Fray Juan de Oseguera would remain in Ocuituco to learn the natives' language and continue to administer the Sacraments to them; friars Gerónimo de San Esteban and Jorge de Avila were to go to the Convent of San Agustín in Mexico City; friars Juan de San Román and Agustín de la Coruña to the Convent of Chilapa; and Fray Alonso de Borja was to continue his work in the Convent of Santa Fe, the Utopian Indian settlement founded by Oidor Vasco de Quiroga two leagues from the City of Mexico.

The recommendations made in regard to the Indians are particularly worthy of notice. The Council recommended that Indians who served at Mass always be properly dressed and made to wear their surplices. Natives living in a mission pueblo should be daily gathered for prayers before Mass, which was to begin promptly at the conclusion of the prayers. When the Mass was over all the children were to gather in the patio or atrium and older Indians who were versed in the *Doctrina* assigned to instruct them in small groups and teach them the Catechism prepared by Fray Pedro de Gante, which was to remain in use until Fray Agustín de la Coruña, OSA, finished writing his. With regard to the administration of Baptism, this was to be done as provided by the Church whenever

conditions permitted it. Children could be baptized on Sunday, but adults only four times during the year: On Easter Sunday, Christmas, Pentecost and the Feast of St. Augustine. Those receiving the Sacrament must give evidence of having been profitably instructed in the *Doctrina*. This basic Sacrament was always to be administered with due solemnity to impress upon the natives its great significance.

No wonder that within a few years the chronicler of the Order could say with justifiable pride in speaking of the work of the early missionaries that:

They taught the Indians not only Christian doctrine, the chief goal of all their efforts, but instructed them in the ways of Christian living, teaching them not only to live well but holy. So well did they plan the pueblos they established that many of them are beautiful cities today. Although the number of houses was not large, the plan of the cities is as good as if they had been designed by master planners. They have well lined streets, public squares, entries and exits. The Indians have been taught moral customs and civil living, as well as all that is necessary for a Christian life. When the missionaries first went to their provinces the people were so uncultured that they did not even know how to eat decently, or dress, or talk to one another with courtesy and understanding... So well have all these things been taught that the natives can compete today in religion and civil living with all the peoples of Europe.

Allowing for understandable exaggeration on the part of the enthusiastic chronicler of the XVII century, the fact remains that in a few years the Augustinians had helped, together with the members of the other religious Orders who rendered such splendid yeoman service among the thousands of Indians in the ancient Empire of the Aztecs and beyond, changed the appearance of the whole countryside and the rhythm of barbaric life. The old temples to native gods that demanded daily human sacrifices, whose altars ran with human blood, had been replaced by temples erected to the true God. Spotless altars, white as snow, had been erected where the bloodless sacrifice of the Mass was performed daily. Christian Indians dressed in European garb not only knelt in the Churches but sang in the choir or played European musical instruments that had replaced the reed pipes and tom-toms of old. The Indians lived in houses, enjoyed a varied diet, dressed as civilized men, had learned to work with regularity, and plan in times of plenty for lean days, save in summer for the bitter cold of winter.

Around the tall spires that marked the countryside prosperous Indian pueblos had been founded, useless strife and human sacrifice had been replaced by the peace of Christian living.

When in 1535 the zealous Fray Francisco de la Cruz, OSA, was elected by the new Vice Province to be sent to Spain as its Procurator he carried with him a report from the Audiencia of Mexico City to the Emperor and the Council of the Indies, as well as for the Provincial of the Order in Spain, praising the fruitful work of the pioneer Augustinian missionaries and emphasizing the need for more workers in view of a new *entrada* being planned into the unexplored mountain beyond. He sailed from Veracruz on February 15, 1535, on Ash Wednesday, and after a painful voyage of over a month, arrived in Seville on Holy Saturday. An imposing figure, tall and spare of build, wearing a rough and heavy woolen habit next to the skin, barefooted, Fray Francisco de la Cruz presented himself to Santo Tomás de Villanueva, the Castilian Provincial. His grave appearance, his great composure, and his few but well chosen words made a deep impression. Encouraged by what he told them of conditions in America and the need for new workers, six friars soon volunteered and proceeded to San Lucar to embark for America, which was to them the promised land, regardless of the personal sacrifices it implied. By September 7 the six arrived safely in Ulúa, after a stormy and troublesome passage. On their way to Mexico, not yet recovered from the privations suffered, they all took sick and one, Fray Francisco Lucas de Pedrosa, died before they reached Mexico City and entered the monastery to learn the native tongue before they began their active missionary work among the natives. Fray Nicolás de Agreda, one of the surviving five, brought with him his appointment as Superior. With incredible humility, he did not bother to present it until a year later. « How insignificant », exclaims in amazement the chronicler of the Augustinians, « was personal ambition in those happy days of yore ! »

In the meantime Fray de la Cruz went on to Salamanca where, after an enthusiastic reception, he was allowed to recruit as many additional missionaries as the Council of the Indies permitted. In the months that followed he picked twelve remarkable men to accompany him back, two of whom attained undying fame. The twelve chosen were frays Juan Baptista, Gerónimo de Salazar, Francisco de Nieva, who after forty years in Mexico volunteered to go

to the Philippines where he still worked for several years more before he died, Antonio de Aguilar, Antonio de Roa, Juan de Sevilla, Diego de San Martín, Pedro Pareja, Agustín de Salamanca, Diego de la Cruz and Juan de San Martín.

Anxious to secure a teacher of theology and arts for his projected seminary in Mexico, a person capable of instructing his religious, Fray de la Cruz contacted a young Master of Arts, already known for his outstanding brilliance as an instructor in the faculty of the University of Salamanca, Alonso Gutiérrez, a cleric. He was not only known in the University, but he had been chosen to tutor the children of the Duke del Infantado, a ranking grandee of Spain. One cannot but wonder at the persuasive powers of Fray Francisco de la Cruz in making the famous young cleric abandon his prominent post in the University and his enviable position as tutor to the children of one of the most influential man in Spain to come with him to Mexico. As he travelled across the sea in the company of the young and enthusiastic missionaries Master Alonso Gutiérrez made up his mind to join the Order and shortly after his arrival in Mexico, personally signed his profession as the first to enter the Order in the New World ¹⁾.

Among the distinguished members of the Augustinian Order in the Province of the Most Holy Name in Mexico none surpassed Alonso Gutiérrez, better known by his religious name of Fray Alonso de la Vera Cruz, who served the Order in almost every capacity until the time of his death in July, 1584. He made his Bachelor studies in Alcalá de Henares, studied arts and theology in Salamanca, and received his Master degree from no less a person than the great internationalistic Francisco de Vitoria. After he joined the Order in Mexico, he served as Master of Novices in the Monastery of *San Agustín* in Mexico City, became proficient in the language of the Tarasca Indians; governed the Bishopric of Michoacán during nine months as substitute for Quiroga, was four times Provincial, and found time during his long and busy life to teach in the Royal and Pontifical, now National, University of Mexico, write several books, and ably defend the Indians from the payment of tithes. He was a man courageous in the defense of his convictions. When Fray Luis de León was arrested in Spain

¹⁾ The original manuscript book of professions of the Order of St. Augustine in Mexico is in the Latin American Collection of the University of Texas.

for having translated the Song of Songs, he declared calmly « in truth they may as well burn me, if they burn him, for I feel just as he thinks ». He loved books and accumulated during his long and busy life an extensive library of select and rare books, of which he gave sixty cases to the *Colegio de San Pablo* and as many to the library of the Convent of St. Augustine, which he loved dearly. He also gave some of his books to the *Colegio de Tiripitío* in Michoacán, reputed to have been organized as a university as early as 1540, thirteen years before the Royal and Pontifical University of New Spain first opened its doors. In the patio of the old *Colegio de Mascarones*, where the summer school of the National University for foreign students is held today, there stands a statue of Fray Alonso, distinguished member of the first faculty of the University in 1553.

But let us return to our narrative. At the second Provincial Council held in 1536, upon the death of Fray Francisco de la Cruz, OSA, who did not live long after his return from Spain, it was decided to give up the convent established in connection with the Utopian settlement of Santa Fe for a more active field among the infidels because of the scarcity of workers. At the same time it was agreed to undertake the conversion of the natives of the *Sierra Alta*, the High Mountain, which had not been penetrated before. Frays Juan de Villanueva and Antonio de Roa were assigned to the new enterprise. At the same time it was agreed to work among the Otomís. Frays Alonso de Borja, Gregorio de Salazar and Juan de San Martín were sent to Atotonilco, from where they made the first *entrada* into the *Sierra de Tuxtepec*. The three friars overcame an obstacle even greater than that of the high mountain of Tuxtepec in learning the Otomí language, one of the most difficult. These Indians had been neglected in part because no one knew the language well enough to preach to them in their own tongue. Before long Fray Alonso de Borja made a vocabulary, wrote a grammar and prepared a *Confesionario* which proved invaluable to all the other missionaries in the conversion of the Otomís. These Indians, it is said, now took to the Faith rapidly and showed great zeal. It was in the land of the Otomís that the great silver mine of Pachuca was discovered. Prosperity came to the land where before only sheep and goats were raised and where the tigers and lions in the mountains were said to be disguised witch-doctors or *Nahuales*.

that greedily watched to devour those who abandoned their ancient gods.

When the amazing Licenciado Vasco de Quiroga, member of the Second Audiencia of Mexico, later Bishop of Michoacán, inspired by the Utopian dream of St. Thomas Moore, bought lands two leagues from Mexico City to found the first Utopia in America, it was Fray Alonso de Borja who was assigned in 1533 to minister to the Indians gathered in the pueblo of Santa Fe, previously mentioned. He was the helper of Quiroga in the novel and noble experiment. The Christian Indians gathered in Santa Fe, the Utopian settlement of Quiroga, have been estimated by some at 30,000. The tillable fields which were held in common were worked for the benefit of all, the different tasks of communal life were likewise distributed. Some worked in the fields, others learned trades and still others helped build a convent and its chapel. Under the wise and tender direction of Fray Alonso de Borja the whole community led a semi-monastic life. Each dawn the bell rang and called the faithful to prayer, Mass was celebrated and instruction in Christian doctrine followed in the large atrium in front of the chapel. Here the program for the day was announced, the different tasks were assigned to old and young, and everybody then went home to breakfast and their work for the day. At eventide the entire community gathered once more around a large tall Cross erected in front of the monastery to sing vespers, recite the Rosary and receive instruction in the *Doctrina*. Each Friday they all fasted and attended the special religious exercises of the day with inspiring devotion.

The great Vasco de Quiroga was well pleased with the direction of Fray Alonso and his soul was gently inclined towards a religious life. « Although a layman he came to care more and more about ecclesiastical matters than those proper to his training in the law and related to his personal interests ». He built a residence in Utopian Santa Fe where, as he said, « The sky was always azure blue, the breeze gentle and pure and the waters of the murmuring spring cold and clear as crystal ». When he later went to Michoacán as Bishop he found there many other similar settlements. To this day he is remembered by the Indians of Michoacán, the Tarascas, as *Tata Vasco*, Grandpa Vasco, and many a village in the province preserves the tradition of the basic trades learned in the days of the kindly cleric. Travelers find today in that section of Mexico

that one village produces string instruments exclusively, another lacquered trays, and still another a certain type of woven baskets. Thus each community contributes something to the life of the province without competing with the other. Behind the lasting work of the revered bishop lay the inspiration of Fray Alonso de Borja.

Quiroga founded a hospital and an orphanage in connection with his remarkable Utopian experiment near Mexico City. Next to the hospital and asylum for children and adults he established a college where the youth were taught to read, write and sing *canto llano*, Gregorian chant, to read and play music, and to prepare themselves for service in the churches. Fray Alonso de Borja, OSA, had been the spiritual director of both the hospital and the college, before he was sent to the land of the Otomís to repeat his civilizing task.

The growth and expansion of the Province brought with it new problems. The Father Provincial of Castile ordered in 1537 that no less than four friars reside in each monastery. In order to comply, the Augustinians in Mexico had to abandon the less important establishments and concentrate in the others. This temporarily reduced the convents in operation to five. But the work continued to grow. A year later Fray Juan de Oseguera was sent to Spain. He was successful in convincing the new Provincial, who had been cool towards the American venture because he felt that the Province of Castile was scattering its efforts and energies over too wide a field, of the need of more missionaries. Eleven new workers were sent shortly afterwards. Before returning Fray Juan de Oseguera obtained a great boon from the Emperor, one which benefited not only the Augustinians but all the religious Orders, as well as the secular clergy in New Spain and the rest of the American dominions. Henceforth the Emperor agreed to furnish as royal alms all the oil necessary for sanctuary lamps throughout his possessions and the wine required for all Masses said. This amounted to approximately 12,000 pesos in the case of the Dominicans, 25,000 to 30,000 in that of the Franciscans, and about 12,000 for the Augustinians that year. This munificence was in addition to the payment of all expenses connected with the transportation of missionaries to the New World, the essential church ornaments, and other aid granted the Orders to enable them to build new convents and churches.

The Mexican Province of the Most Holy Name continued

dependent upon that of Castile until 1543, when it was separated and the Vicar Provincial was replaced by a Provincial independent from that of Spain. Its status was contested for a number of years. Subsequent Castilian Provincials attempted to resume jurisdiction. The matter was argued for years, but it was definitely settled by a decree issued in Madrid in October 19, 1588, by Gregorio Elparensis, Prior General of the Order of St. Augustine, which declared the Mexican Province independent. This was registered in the Council of the Indies on January 25, 1589 and confirmed by Clement VIII on July 23, 1592.

In discussing the beginnings of missionary work by the Augustinians in Mexico it is necessary to go back and examine the resolutions adopted by their first Provincial Council in 1534, which served to establish the basic policies of the missionaries in dealing with the Indians, and their subsequent modifications. At the end of the first year in New Spain it was agreed that Baptism should always be administered to the natives in strict accordance with the provisions of the Church. Infants and children could be baptized on any Sunday, but adults only four times during the year : Easter Sunday, Christmas, Pentecoste and the Feast of St. Augustine, as previously noted. The administration of this important Sacrament was always to be accompanied with proper solemnity to impress upon those receiving it the significance of the act. With the exception of infants and persons in *articulo mortis*, those to whom the Sacrament was to be administered had to give evidence of having received instruction in the Christian doctrine. Children living in mission pueblos, therefore, were to be gathered daily after Mass in the patio or atrium in front of the Church and instructed by older Indians versed in the *doctrina*, so that they could be taught individually in small groups, using the Catechism of Fray Pedro de Gante for this purpose until Fray Agustín de la Coruña, OSA, finished writing his. It was likewise agreed that Baptism was to be refused to adults who, although instructed in the Faith, persisted in continuing to live in sin by keeping several wives. They had to agree to live with their first wife and put the others away before they could be baptized. The task of deciding in each individual case which of the wives was the first and convincing them to abandon or put away all the others proved most difficult.

Since Baptism was the crowning event in the conversion of the natives the day of its administration was always marked with

great solemnity and much rejoicing. On each of the four days during the year on which Baptism could be administered to adults the entire Indian pueblo and the church were ornamented with flowers and greens. All the candidates who had satisfied the requirements by giving evidence of their knowledge of the Faith took their place early in the morning in the long line of candidates, each dressed in his best clothes. At the appointed time two friars headed the procession formed in the Indian pueblo opposite to the church, with acolytes in their surplices carrying the Cross, candlesticks and Holy Water sprinklers. The procession entered the vestibule of the church and the candidates were led to the Baptistry, where the old Christians — those already baptized — were waiting with garlands of flowers to welcome the neophytes. One of the two friars that accompanied the procession assisted in the ceremony by anointing with the oil of Chrism each man and woman in the line, and the other baptized each one individually with water at the fount. Once they had received the oil of the catechumens, the salt, the waters of Baptism and the Chrism oil each one returned to his place in the line where he was greeted by the old Christians who placed a garland of flowers around his or her neck. Each one had a candle in his hand and when the ceremony had been completed all the candles were lit, the church bells rang a joyous peal, and the choir played and sang a song of praise as they all went into the church to attend Mass.

A special sermon was then preached on the significance of the Sacrament just received. The preacher took occasion to explain once more what constituted a Christian life and usually closed the sermon by enjoining them to observe always the Ten Commandments and the Precepts of the Church. The ceremony ended with the Mass. The baptized neophytes went home and returned that evening to sing the Rosary and take part in a big celebration that generally took place in the church atrium in the evening. The whole Indian pueblo usually turned out on such days and it is recorded that on occasions as many as 3,000 were baptized in a day. It is only thus that the rapid spread of Christianity among the natives can be explained.

It is but natural that in the years immediately following the conquest the zealous missionaries, in their sanguine desire to save as many souls as possible in the shortest time, shortened the prescribed ceremony of Baptism in order to meet what they con-

sidered an urgent emergency. Surrounded by thousands who clamored for the waters of Baptism, many of whom had been instructed as well as circumstances permitted to prepare them for admission to the Faith, the missionaries frequently had to limit the ceremony to the sprinkling of the candidates with Holy Water. The validity of the ceremony under the circumstances began to be questioned by serious theologians and scrupulous Christians. The matter was finally brought to the attention of the Pope himself. Paul III, wishing to allay the fears of many and legalize the actions of the earliest missionaries, issued the Bull *Apud Santum Petrum* in 1537, declaring that the missionaries who had baptized natives with water only, without observing the other requisites for Baptism as provided by the Church for its administration had not sinned and that those so baptized, if they had since led a Christian life were to be considered legitimate Christians. The Holy Father took occasion, however, to warn that after the promulgation of the new Bull, Baptism was not to be administered with water alone, and that all the requisites of the Sacrament had to be observed since the emergency had passed. Exceptions were to be allowed in such cases as the bishops declared unpostponable.

When the Bull of Paul III reached Mexico in 1538 four of the five bishops met in consultation to decide under what conditions simple Baptism with water could be administered. After considerable discussion, it was decided that persons prepared to receive the Sacrament who could not wait for the set dates for its administration with due ceremony because of illness, or the need of having to leave for distant regions, or go into battle, or to enter unexplored hostile territory, could be legitimately baptized with water only. In all other cases baptism was to be administered in full accord with the ritual prescribed by the Church. This ruling was consistently observed throughout Mexico by all missionaries after 1538.

Much more complicated was the matter of Christian marriage. The Augustinian missionaries very early adopted the custom of legalizing the marital status of the new converts to the Faith at the time of baptism. The practice was to have those who were baptized on one of the four appointed days married by the Church immediately after the baptismal ceremony, just before they attended the first Mass for the faithful. Missionary records give eloquent evidence of the infinite patience required to convince the neophytes that they had to abandon all but one of their wives, and how

difficult it was to ascertain which of the wives was the legitimate one that should be kept by the prospective candidate as his lifelong companion, with whom he was thereafter to be bound « in sickness and in health, in poverty and in richness » until death. The matter inevitably presented most perplexing problems to which the memoirs and records of the early missionaries eloquently attest.

While discussing the matter of the administration of the Sacraments a word should be said concerning the stand taken by the Augustinians in regard to the Sacrament of Penance. All available contemporary accounts and records indicate that almost all the Indians upon receiving instruction and being baptized clamored for the Sacrament of Penance. Every *doctrina*, *confesionario*, and book of instructions prepared by the missionaries to help in the conversion of the natives, although written in various languages, all consistently have a large section devoted to the subject of how to hear confessions, what questions to ask, and how penance was to be imposed. It is likewise amazing how many begged to be allowed to receive Communion. The Augustinian chronicler cannot understand why so many objected. His opinion is that confession and penance are the specific medicine to cure the evil effects of sin, and that Communion is the food of the soul that gives it strength to recover from the results of the illness and power to resist temptation in the future through divine Grace. But there were many who held that the Indians should not be admitted to Communion, that they were like young children, incapable of understanding the divine mystery of the Consecrated Host ; that for the Indians the mere desire to receive the Blessed Sacrament was sufficient. Based on this reasoning Communion was denied to Christian Indians in Peru ²). In New Spain such was not the case, in spite of the serious objections of some. Generally speaking, all the missionaries agreed rather early to give Communion to the natives. Particularly was this true of the Augustinians, whose learned and saintly Fray Alonso de la Vera Cruz staunchly defended the right of Christian Indians that were well instructed, had been baptized, and had fulfilled the Sacrament of Penance, to be admitted to Communion.

In the Indian pueblos under the care of the Augustinians the season of Lent was the time for the Indians to receive Communion. Each Sunday in Lent large numbers of natives gathered in the pa-

²) The Provincial Council of Lima (Peru), 1558.

tios of the churches as early as seven in the morning, dressed in their best, some wearing wedding garments. There was no noisy rejoicing on these occasions, as on the days set aside for Baptism. While waiting to enter the church to hear Mass and receive Communion they maintained a respectful and solemn silence, meditating on the divine mystery, and spoke only in whispers. Before entering the church one of the missionaries would come out and ask them to kneel. They then repeated together out loud the prayer of St. Thomas Aquinas translated into the native tongue. Having completed the prayer, led by the missionary, they entered the church and during Mass listened to a sermon on the mystery of the Holy Eucharist. The altar was aglow, lighted with hundreds of candles. Four of the most prominent chiefs of the pueblo stood on either side of the altar with large candles of white wax in their hands. At the conclusion of the Mass they all said a prayer of thanks for the divine Grace received and remained in the church praying in silence, absorbed in meditation, for half an hour after the service. The communicants then went home quietly, still overcome by the solemnity of the Sacrament received. That day there was no fire lighted in the homes of the communicants and no food prepared. The neighbors brought the households of those who had received Communion all the food needed, and the communicants were the guests of honor at the table. In the afternoon many of them returned to the church to pray and give thanks separately, some visiting also all the churches and chapels in the city, sometimes making the Stations of the Cross.

As early as 1544, largely due to the initiative of the Augustinians, the Archbishop of Mexico and the Provincials of the various Orders met and formed the Holy Alliance or Union of all Religious — Franciscans, Dominicans and Augustinians — for the purpose of making the practices observed by the various missionaries in the administration of the Sacraments more uniform. A council was set up, which met regularly several times during the year in the different convents or monasteries indiscriminately to discuss mutual problems and matters of common interest. Fray Alonso de la Vera Cruz, OSA, became one of the chief advisors of the Union. Eventually the Bishop's residence in Mexico City became the official meeting place of the Union.

The fervent faith demonstrated by the neophytes and their almost monastic observance of religious feasts were not the result

of accident, nor of a miracle. Rather they were the result of the systematic and methodical application and diligence of the remarkable group of missionaries who came to America during the XVI century. As in the case of the Franciscans and the Dominicans, each church and chapel erected by the Augustinians for work among the natives had its school. From the beginning the children, as well as the adults, were given instruction in the Faith. With unerring good sense the friars realized the importance of teaching the young in particular. The missionary schools of the Augustinians were much more than our modern schools. The children were not only taught the fundamentals of religion but the practice of its teachings in everyday life. They learned how to read, write and count at the same time they were instructed in the *doctrina* and in the ways and customs of civilized men. The younger boys and girls were taught separately for two hours a day by elder Indians who had become well versed in the basic precepts of Christianity. The older students and adults were given manual training and the opportunity to learn different trades, being encouraged to practice them in the daily life of the community. They were taught to play music and how to make various string instruments, pipe organs and other wind instruments. Community singing was encouraged and the young and old joined every morning and evening in singing hymns and prayers. To encourage full participation Fray Alonso de la Vera Cruz translated many of the hymns into the native tongue. Boys were also taught how to serve Mass and help in the various religious ceremonies in which they delighted to participate as acolytes.

To all these things was due the splendor and fervor with which Sundays and Feast Days were observed generally in all the Indian pueblos, the devout processions with Cross bearers and carriers of images and standards, the devout demonstrations of public penance and the long candlelit lines on baptismal days. The entire Indian congregation joined in singing vespers, the *Salve Regina*, the Rosary and the *Te Deum Laudamus*. Every Indian parish had its confraternities, its Purgatory Society to pray for the dead and many other charitable organizations. The Augustinians taught the neophytes to celebrate with special splendor the feasts of Christmas, Corpus Christi, the Holy Cross and S. Augustine, besides a strict observance of Holy Week.

The accomplishment of the attainments described constituted no easy task. Many were the Indians and many the tongues spoken

in the various regions where the Augustinian missionaries labored so faithfully. An idea of the language difficulty alone may be gathered from the fact that those who worked with Indians in New Spain had to learn not less than ten languages: Nahuatl, Otomí, Tarasca, Tlapaneca, Huasteca, Ocuilteca, Matlazinca, Totonaca, Misteca and Chichimec. To this list, imposing as it is, need be added eight other languages which the Augustinian missionaries who went to the Philippines were obliged to learn in order to accomplish their goal.

Barely had the Province of the Most Holy Name asserted its independence from that of Castile in 1543 and begun to make its way unsteadily, as a child that begins to walk, than there came to New Spain the *New Laws* outlining the novel policy of the Crown with regard to the treatment of the Indians throughout the Spanish possessions overseas, which were issued in Barcelona on November 20, 1542 and revised in Valladolid on June 4, 1543. They demanded that the Indians be allowed absolute freedom of action, the reduction of the term of all current encomiendas to the lifetime of the holders, and the annulment of those given to viceroys, governors, other royal officials, prelates, houses of religious, hospitals and other similar organizations. The *New Laws* were largely the result of representations made by many close to the King, who, moved by the impassioned account of the non-critical Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, Bishop of Chiapas, in regard to the plight of the Indians, insisted on immediate and radical remedial measures.

The consternation which the idealistic and impractical restrictions of the *New Laws* caused throughout the Spanish Empire overseas is well known. The reaction to the proposed changes was most violent. In Peru they caused the death of the viceroy and a general uprising under the Pizarros; in Central America an outbreak was avoided by the suspension of their execution until the matter was reconsidered by the Court; and in Mexico the Dominican brothers of Las Casas themselves argued against the violence which the new dispositions inflicted upon the old settlers. When Tello de Sandoval, royal commissioner sent by the emperor to put the Laws into effect, arrived in New Spain a Junta was called and, as in Central America, the enforcement of the *New Laws* was temporarily suspended. Among other things it was agreed that the Provincials of the three religious Orders: the Franciscans, the Dominicans and the Augustinians go in person or send representatives

to discuss the matter with the emperor, who was then in Germany. The Augustinians sent their Provincial Fray Juan de San Román, accompanied by Fray Jorge de Avila, to join the others, leaving Fray Alonso de la Vera Cruz as Acting Provincial in Mexico.

Upon their arrival in the German States they found them convulsed by the throes of the Lutheran revolt and in order to reach the emperor they were forced to assume civilian garb. After listening to their well reasoned request for a modification of the original Laws, Charles V granted their entreaty and a major catastrophe was avoided. The Augustinians, in full sympathy with the object of the *New Laws*, and always in favor of the welfare of the Indians, contributed their share to the solution of the most serious problem faced by Spain in its colonies to that day, one which threatened the loss of the Kingdom of the Indies, by urging prudence.

The faithful chronicler of the Augustinians, Fray Juan de Grijalva, points out in his remarkable account of the early years that the middle 1540's were stormy and trying years indeed. Early in 1543 the volcano of Tlaxcala erupted, tinging the skies for miles with the red glow of its incandescent lava flow, Popocatepetl sent up an ominous cloud of dust and smoke, and a comet with its luminous tail appeared in the heavens. These omens of evil were followed the next year by the breaking out of the greatest epidemic known in the land of the Aztecs, the *Cocoliztli*, an illness that killed, according to contemporary accounts, more than half of the Indian population in New Spain, desolating the whole country and sweeping away entire families overnight. Augustinian missionaries worked night and day to ease the sufferings of the dying and furnish them all the comforts of religion. In the midst of all these troubles the Province of the Most Holy Name was born and the Friars of St. Augustine bravely carried on.

A few years later when the country had recovered from its trials and tribulations the Augustinians took a prominent part in the most significant episode in the cultural history of the Americas, the founding of the Royal and Pontifical University of New Spain. Acceding to the urgent and repeated requests of Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza, Bishop Fray Juan de Zumárraga and the Ayuntamiento of Mexico City Charles V issued a decree on September 21, 1551, which read:

In order to serve God and the public welfare of our kingdoms, it is convenient that our vassals and natural subjects have univer-

sities and centers of general studies where they may be instructed in all the sciences and faculties. We, therefore, because of our great love and our desire to favor and honor those who live in our Indies, and in order to banish the darkness of ignorance forever, hereby create, establish, and order to be founded in the City of Lima, of the Kingdom of Peru, and in the City of Mexico, of New Spain, a university or center of general studies in each respectively, and it is our will to grant to all those persons that may be graduated in the said universities the enjoyment of all the privileges and exemptions in our Indies, Islands, and Tierra Firme del Mar Oceano, now enjoyed by those who are graduated by the University of Salamanca³⁾.

One thousand pesos of gold annually were granted for its maintenance out of the royal treasury, in addition to the revenue derived from the stock ranches donated by Viceroy Mendoza for the purpose.

Not until January 25, 1553 on the Feast of St. Paul did the inauguration of the oldest university in North America take place. The Viceroy in gala dress, the entire Audiencia in full uniform, the highest officials and magistrates of the realm, and the Provincials of the three religious Orders, accompanied by many friars, went on that day to the Church of St. Paul of the Augustinians to hear a High Mass sung to the Holy Spirit that He might enlighten them in the election of a rector and a chancellor in accord with the royal order. It is worthy of note that the faculty was selected from men of letters residing in Mexico at the time. Not one was brought from Spain to fill a single chair. The first professor of scholastic theology elected was no other than Fray Alonso de la Vera Cruz, OSA, of whom Cervantes de Salazar said : « He is the most eminent master of arts and theology in the land... In him virtue competes with the most exquisite and admirable doctrine ». Three of his books were adopted as the first college texts used in America, his *Physica speculatio*, *Dialectica resolutio cum textu Aristotelis* and *Recognitio summularum*⁴⁾.

For the record it may be well to note the names of other Augustinians who served on the faculty of the first university during

³⁾ John Tate LANNING, ed., *Reales Cédulas de la Real y Pontificia Universidad de Mexico de 1551 a 1816* (Mexico Imprenta Universitaria, 1946), 293.

⁴⁾ Copies of the first editions, all printed first in Mexico, are in the University of Texas Library.

its first half century. Fray Martín de Perea, professor of theology ; Fray Melchor de Los Reyes, professor of Scripture and theology ; Fran José de Herrera, professor of theology, Hebrew and Greek ; Fray Juan Adriano, professor of theology ; Fray Juan de Mora, professor of theology, Hebrew and Greek ; Fray Pedro Suárez de Escobar ; Fray Francisco Martínez, theologian and linguist ; Fray Pedro de Agurto, who became Bishop of Cebú ; Fray Antonio Delgadillo, professor of Holy Scripture ; Fray Esteban de Salazar, who wrote an extensive discourse on the *Credo* and later became a Cartusian ; Fray Juan de Contreras, professor of arts ; Fray Diego de Contreras, professor of Holy Scripture, who later became Archbishop of Santo Domingo ; Fray Gonzalo de Hermosillo, who became Bishop of Guadiana ; and Fray Bartolomé Pachó, professor of theology in 1623.

Among the many achievements of the Augustinians in New Spain during that glorious XVI century of heroic attainments the greatest perhaps was their contribution to the discovery of the return route from the Philippines because of its far-reaching consequences. It made possible the permanent occupation of the islands, their conversion to Christianity, the establishment of trade and commerce with the Far East, and, in a way, realized for Spain the dream that had induced Queen Isabella to sponsor Columbus in his first voyage. Discovered by Magellan in 1521, the Philippines were visited by many others after his unfortunate death and the return of the survivors to Spain by completing the first circumnavigation of the globe, a feat which Magellan had not purposely set out to accomplish. Almost all were successful in reaching the islands by sailing west from New Spain but those who did were unable, try as they might, to return to the west coast of America. They were invariably forced to continue around the world, frequently falling into the hands of the Portuguese as they treaded their way through the Molucca Islands to continue across the Indian Ocean to reach Spain ultimately by way of the Cape of Good Hope.

With the years, Philip II had become increasingly anxious to occupy permanently the islands named in his honor. This was an impossibility, however, unless a way back to Mexico across the Pacific could be found. As long as the Portuguese held the Moluccas and East Indies they constituted a dangerous and embarrassing obstacle to free navigation back to Spain. It did not seem logical that the Spaniards should have to go all the way around the world

and face such a risk in order to return to Spain. If a route could be discovered to return from the Philippines to the west coast of Mexico, the road to the distant islands on the doorstep of the riches of the East would lay secure within Spanish-controlled lands and seas.

There lived in Mexico at the time a humble Augustinian friar, Andrés de Urdaneta, an experienced soldier, sailor and missionary. He had commanded men in days past on both sea and land and had attained recognition for his knowledge of navigation and his scientific curiosity. It is said that before he entered the Order of St. Augustine in Mexico he had worked out a theory concerning tropical hurricanes, having pointed out that the wind blew not from all sides but in a general counter-clockwise direction, forming a great circle ; that once the wind began to circle it steadily gained momentum as it advanced. In the Italian wars he had attained distinction as a soldier for his courage and bravery. He had sailed across the Pacific with García de Loaysa and had been to the Philippines, but like others he had been forced to return by way of India back to Spain after suffering captivity for a while among the Portuguese in the Moluccas. He had not wasted his time while in the distant area. He had learned the most common dialects of the Malayan Archipelago, he had observed the heavens and learned a good deal about cosmography as well as astrology and made many other observations that were to stand him in good stead when under oath of obedience from his Superior he abandoned his cell in 1564 to return to the Philippines for the express purpose of finding a way back to Mexico across the Pacific by sailing east from the islands.

After serving for a while with Pedro de Alvarado in Guatemala and later in Peru, he came to Mexico and helped to pacify the province of Nueva Galicia. He then turned down an offer to accompany an expedition to the Philippines organized by Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza under the command of Ruy López de Villalobos in 1542. It appears that it was at this time that he came in contact with the four zealous Augustinian missionaries: frays Gerónimo de San Esteban, Nicolás de Perea, Alonzo de Alvarado and Sebastián de Reyna that were appointed to accompany Villalobos. The seeds that were to fructify into his vocation were perhaps planted at this time. His friendship with the saintly Fray Juan de Zumárraga, Archbishop of Mexico, and his association with the Brotherhood of the

Most Holy Name of Jesus, then under the direction of the Augustinians, contributed no doubt to his changed outlook on life that cooled his martial and adventurous spirit. Be that as it may, the capable navigator, determined soldier and adventurous gentleman, Andrés de Urdaneta, finally decided to enter the Order of St. Augustine in 1552, his ardor for wealth and glory now gone. Little did he realize that his very renunciation of the world would bring him everlasting renown.

Don Luis de Velasco, the Elder, who followed Don Antonio de Mendoza as viceroy, became a personal friend of fray Urdaneta and frequently indulged in long conversations with him in regard to the Philippines and the Far East. Interested in expanding the viceroyalty and contributing to the spread of Christianity, it seems that the viceroy wrote a letter to Philip II calling attention to the possibility of making a new effort to reestablish contact with the Philippines and possibly discovering a return route through the services of the former sailor and soldier. Fray Urdaneta's vivid and enthusiastic accounts of his former visit and the splendors of the East had stimulated Viceroy Velasco.

Philip II welcomed the suggestion and before long on September 24, 1559 he wrote Viceroy Velasco: « I command you to send two vessels of the necessary size, with the crew you may deem advisable to undertake the discovery suggested », and he added, « I further order and command that Fray Andrés de Urdaneta go on this expedition and do whatever you may request in all of which he will be serving God, Our Lord, and pleasing me ». The wishes of the king were made known to the Provincial of the Augustinians, who ordered the reluctant Fray Urdaneta, under obedience, to give his assistance to the viceroy in planning the expedition, go along as consultant, and be in charge of the five other Augustinians who were to accompany him to begin the conversion and civilization of the natives in the Philippines. The other Augustinian named were: frays Martín de Rada, noted theologian who had some knowledge of astronomy and remained in the Islands as a missionary until his death; Diego de Herrera, who likewise remained as a missionary until 1576, when he was sent to report the progress made personally to the King in Spain and died at sea on the way back from Spain to Mexico; Andrés de Aguirre, who spent the rest of his life in the Philippines, twice circumnavigating the globe by returning to Spain and going back to the Philippines

by way of Mexico, a record for those days in sea travel ; Lorenzo Ximénez, who died at the port of La Navidad shortly before the expedition sailed ; and Pedro de Gamboa, noted missionary.

With characteristic humility Fray Urdaneta acknowledged the order of the King directly: « Your command I forthwith obey as coming from my King and Lord... My age, which is fifty two, my present broken state of health, and the many hardships I have undergone since my youth dictate that I should spend what little is left of my life in the quiet and calm of the convent, but mindful of the great zeal of Your Majesty in all that concerns the service of Our Lord and the spread of His Holy Catholic Faith, I have made ready for the journey ordered. May God, Our Lord, guard and keep Your Royal Person for the preservation and increase of His kingdoms and glory ». Thus, he resigned himself to his fate and made preparations to serve as best he could the wishes of his sovereign, convinced in his heart that they were directed to the spread of the Faith ⁵).

Five years elapsed before the orders of the King were carried out. Viceroy Velasco, who had made the preparations for its success so carefully, died on July 31, 1564, four months before the expedition set out under the command of Miguel López de Legaspi. At three in the morning, on November 21, 1564, it sailed with the tide from the port of La Navidad, located a few miles from the present port of Manzanillo. The crews of the two ships and the two smaller vessels sang the *Salve Regina* led by the Augustinian missionaries. Two hundred soldiers, one hundred and fifty sailors and some fifty servants, besides the five missionaries, set out on the great adventure, fervently invoking divine guidance. The sealed orders were not opened as per instructions until four days later when they were a hundred leagues out at sea. The captain was to proceed, weather permitting, directly to the Philippines. The course was set due west quarter southwest and thus they continued across the broad Pacific until they reached the island of Guam in the southern extremity of the Ladrones, now the Marianas, on February 3, 1565. Although Fray Urdaneta suggested that a temporary base for further exploration be established on the island, it

⁵) The letter dated Mexico, May 28, 1560, is cited by Mariano CUEVAS, SJ, in *Monje y Marino. La Vida y Los Tiempos de Fray Andrés de Urdaneta* (Mexico, Editorial Galatea, 1943), 186-187.

was decided to continue directly to the Philippines as ordered. Ten days later the expedition reached its goal and made its first landing on Samar Island in 13° north latitude.

The next day formal possession was taken and the exploration of the archipelago was begun. From the hostile natives, whom Legaspi and his companions treated with unusual kindness and patience in spite of their treacherous actions, they learned of the island of Mindanao where they were told there was much gold and cinnamon. After a month on Samar and Leyte the expedition followed the strait of Bohol and made its way to Cebu, having previously named the bay between Samar and Leyte San Pedro. By the end of Lent, it was decided to make a permanent settlement in Cebu. A council was held shortly afterwards in which it was decided that it was time for turning over a vessel to Fray Urdaneta that he might proceed to find a way back to New Spain as per instructions. The occupation had been effected, its permanency depended on the successful return of Father Urdaneta.

The old mariner and missionary immediately began preparations and personally supervised the caulking of the flagship of the expedition, the *San Pedro*. A supply of rice, oats, wheat, chickpeas, oil, vinegar and wine was put aboard sufficient for the return trip, besides 200 barrels of fresh water. The conscientious friar likewise gave his attention to the spiritual interests of the enterprise by designating Fray Diego de Herrera his successor as prior of the Augustinians in the Philippines. To find a person who could substitute for him as general interpreter, a capacity in which Urdaneta's knowledge of the Malayan dialects had proved invaluable, proved more difficult. A Mexican Indian, a native of Santiago de Tlaltelolco, who had accompanied Villalobos in 1543 and spent several years in the islands before he returned with other survivors by way of Spain was named interpreter because of his knowledge of some of the dialects of the natives. When everything was ready Legaspi and his principal captains accompanied to the seashore Fray Urdaneta and captain Felipe Salcedo, grandson of Legaspi, in command of the *San Pedro*. Fray Andrés de Aguirre, the inseparable companion of Urdaneta, accompanied the aging missionary. Before sailing they were given a sealed letter for the King.

We have manifested and made known to Your Majesty, with the faith and loyalty that has always governed us, the great need in which we are of the help which Your Majesty will deign to

provide shortly, considering the need of it for further activity, so much desired by us to serve God Our Lord and Your Majesty.

The great service which the venerable Fray Andrés de Urdaneta has rendered God, Our Lord, and Your Majesty is worthy of your mercy and reward. He has illumined both spiritually and temporally everything that has come up during this voyage, there being no person in this expedition to show us the light other than himself. Because of this we plead and beg with all humility of Your Majesty as loyal vassals and officers of this outpost that you reward him as his merits deserve.

Legaspi, all his officers, and the principal men of the expedition, unbeknown to Fray Urdaneta, paid him this spontaneous and genuine tribute.

The *San Pedro* set out on the return trip under full sail from the port of Cebu on June 1, 1565 and followed steadily a north-eastern course, treading its way out of the Philippines and entering the zone of the northeast tradewinds, which in July blow due north from the Philippines. They had now entered the Kuro Shiwo or Japanese current, which enabled them more easily to incline their course to the east as they proceeded. They went on north of the Marianas and continued to 36° north latitude, entering the belt of the Westerlies opposite Japan. Both wind and current combined now to push the daring Urdaneta and his crew slowly but surely eastward until on September 26, almost four months after they first set out from Cebu they came in sight of the west coast of North America in the vicinity of present San Francisco, somewhere between 36° and 38° north latitude. They now changed their course to the south-east and, following along the West Coast, they painfully made their way to the port of La Navidad. According to the Log, they had traveled 1,892 leagues from the port of Cebu to La Navidad. Urdaneta gave instructions to continue southeastward to Acapulco, where the ship arrived at last on Monday, October 8, 1565. Only eighteen men were capable of helping handle the ship as it entered the port, and Fray Urdaneta, weak from the illness that had almost decimated the crew by the time they reached the West Coast, helped to cast the anchor.

On the way back both the pilot and the captain died at sea before the West Coast was sighted, besides fourteen crewmen. Scurvy had incapacitated almost all the men. By the time the ship arrived in Acapulco, it seemed to be manned by ghosts that moved

eerily and uncertain as they let down the sails and dropped anchor. In spite of hardships and illness, Fray Urdaneta had kept a careful Log and drawn a detailed map and chart, distinctly marking the prevalent winds and currents, the point at which land was sighted, and the entire western coastline of North America. Capes and landfalls on the way down to Acapulco were all clearly indicated. Although most of the West Coast had been previously explored, the merit of the chart of Fray Urdaneta lies in the fact that it marked the course all the way from Cebu northeastward to the belt of the westerlies and east to the West Coast, following the Japanese current to the point where a part of it turns southward in the vicinity of San Francisco Bay and down to Acapulco. His chart was utilized by all mariners for over a century and many a Spanish galleon successfully made its way back to New Spain loaded with the riches of the East guided by the route so carefully and accurately laid down by the great Augustinian sailor and missionary.

It has been suggested that some day a bronze statue should be erected in the port of Acapulco, Mexico, to Fray Andrés de Urdaneta, missionary and mariner, facing the broad Pacific, with a Cross in his right hand held next to his breast, his eyes fixed imploringly upon Heaven, and his left hand resting on an anchor.

Frays Urdaneta and Aguirre set out for Mexico City immediately to report to the viceroy their successful return and were received everywhere with great rejoicing. After making his report to the viceregal officials, Fray Urdaneta rested in Mexico until December, at which time the distinguished Augustinian left for Spain. The numerous tributes and distinctions shown him while in Spain did not turn his mind. The humble Augustinian had no desire to obtain honors or distinctions. He only longed to return to Mexico, where he finally found rest in the old Convent of *San Agustín*. He was there by Lent of 1567. Too old and worn out at sixty to go back to the Philippines to renew his missionary endeavors, he chose to remain in Mexico, where for a whole year he rendered invaluable service as the confidential advisor of the new viceroy in fostering the evangelizaion and civilization of the countless natives in the distant Philippines. He could take his leisure now, comforted by the fact that in discovering through his daring and faith the route back to New Spain, he had made possible the conversion of countless natives on the front door of the fabled

East. He died in the Convent of *San Agustín* in the City of Mexico on June 3, 1568, sixteen years after he had professed in the Order.

The Augustinians, who first came to the great metropolis of the conquered Aztec Empire in 1533, had in half a century spread their missionary endeavors successfully from the Central Valley of Mexico south and west to the shores of the Pacific; they had contributed powerfully to the cultural life of New Spain in the founding of the first attempted college of major studies in Tlaxi-cotlan; they had cooperated effectively in the first Utopian experiments of Vasco de Quiroga; they had taken a most active part in the establishment of the Royal and Pontifical University of New Spain, the oldest in the Americas; and they had been instrumental in realizing at long last the dream of Columbus and of the Spanish Crown, the finding of a practical route to the Far East by discovering the return route. This great achievement of Fray Andrés de Urdaneta made possible the successful conversion of the Philippines and the carrying of the Faith to the Far East, as well as bringing back to New Spain and the West the fabled wealth of China and Japan. They had laid the foundations for the uninterrupted work of the Augustinians in the New World and across the Pacific that enabled them to erect permanent monuments to the Roman Catholic Faith and to Christian culture in their exquisite and imposing temples and their ivy covered colleges and universities that mark their path from Mexico to the Philippines.

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