INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

ProQuest Information and Learning
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
800-521-0600
THE CULTURAL POLITICS OF EPISCOPAL POWER:
JUAN DE PALAFOX Y MENDOZA AND TRIDENTINE CATHOLICISM IN
SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY PUEBLA DE LOS ANGELES, MEXICO

by

Michael Manuel Brescia

Copyright © Michael Manuel Brescia

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
In the Graduate College
THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

2002
As members of the Final Examination Committee, we certify that we have read the dissertation prepared by Michael Manuel Brescia entitled *The Cultural Politics of Episcopal Power: Juan de Palafox y Mendoza and Tridentine Catholicism in Seventeenth-Century Puebla de los Angeles, Mexico* and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Dr. Kevin Gosner

Dr. Helen Nader

Dr. Helen Nader

Final approval and acceptance of this dissertation is contingent upon the candidate's submission of the final copy of the dissertation to the Graduate College.

I hereby certify that I have read this dissertation prepared under my direction and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement.

Dissertation Director
Dr. Kevin Gosner
STATEMENT OF AUTHOR

This dissertation has been submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for an advanced degree at The University of Arizona and is deposited in the University Library to be made available to borrowers under rules of the Library.

Brief quotations from this dissertation are allowable without special permission, provided that accurate acknowledgement of source is made. Requests for permission for extended quotation from or reproduction of this manuscript in whole or in part may be granted by the copyright holder.

SIGNED: [Signature]
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to thank my friends in the graduate history program at the University of Arizona for their support: Sharon Bailey Glasco, Osvaldo Barreneche, Martha Few, Marie Francois, Jeff Glasco, and Phyllis Smith. Kevin Gosner remains more than a dissertation advisor. From my awkward "first steps" in graduate school, through prelims, the research and writing process, family crises, the birth of my daughter, as well as final revisions, he has provided good counsel and friendship. He truly became my "father-confessor." I am grateful to Donna J. Guy for her constant support and encouragement. She pushed me to ask different kinds of questions of my data. Helen Nader provided invaluable suggestions during my defense. Michael C. Meyer shaped me into a Mexicanist and encouraged me to pursue my interests in Spanish and Mexican water law. Richard A. Cosgrove secured funding for me during the last crucial stages of the dissertation. The E.J. Pierce Memorial Scholarship is an example of his support. I also want to thank William H. Beezley for facilitating a substantial writing grant from the William & Flora Hewlett Foundation. Research for the dissertation was funded in part by grants from the Summer Research Support Program of the Graduate College and the Social and Behavioral Sciences Research Institute at the University of Arizona. The John Carter Brown Library awarded me the Barbara S. Mosbacher Fellowship that funded a two-month visit in the spring of 1997. I want to thank the director, Norman Fiering, and his fine staff. In Madrid, Spain, the librarians at the Biblioteca Nacional facilitated access to important manuscripts. In Puebla, Mexico, many archivists and historians provided invaluable assistance: Fr. Manuel Martínez of the Archivo Catedralicio; Lic. Ana Rosa Freda Holguín, director of the Archivo General de Notarías, as well as her able assistant, Toñita Esquivel Torres; Dra. Estela Galicia Domínguez, director of the Biblioteca Palafoxiana, and her fine staff; Fr. Justino Cortés showed me the poblano countryside, introduced me to the ecclesiastical archives of Puebla, and more importantly, became a good friend; Lic. María Eugenia Cabrera Bruschetta, director of the Archivo del Ayuntamiento de Puebla, and especially the gifted archivist there, Lic. Jesús Joel Peña; and finally, Arturo Córdova, Celia Salazar, Rosalva Loreto, and Francisco Cervantes Bello shared their expertise in different dimensions of colonial poblano history. My parents, Louis and Amour Brescia, have supported my endeavors in every way imaginable. I would not be where I am today if they had not provided so much love and support. My brother, Keith, also deserves thanks for his encouragement over the years. My in-laws, Roberto Alducin and Nélyda Corro de Alducin, continue to shape my sense of mexicanidad. My wife, Alejandra Alducin, is the source of my happiness and mi razón de ser. She remains my pyramid of the sun. My daughter, Karina Inés, has put a smile on my face since the day she entered this world during the penultimate stages of the dissertation. May her tocaya, the Tenth Muse, Sor Juana Inés, inspire her to appreciate the intellectual and social benefits of living in a bicultural, bilingual world.
DEDICATION

To my beautiful wife, Alejandra, whose love is unconditional;

To my precious daughter – mi hija chula – Karina Inés, whose smile warms my heart... may she never know hombres necios;

To Mother and Father, Amour and Louis Brescia, whose support is so steadfast;

To my brother, Keith Brescia, may he have good health and happiness;

To the memory of Msgr. Joseph R. Brzozowski;

To Fr. Daniel Sloan, my friend of constant support and encouragement;

To Kevin Gosner, for shaping my sensibilities as a professor... and for listening.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 1</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 2</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 3</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 4</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 5</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 6</td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>351</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABSTRACT

My dissertation explores the episcopal dimensions of power as exercised by one of the more polemical figures in Mexico's colonial past, Juan de Palafox y Mendoza. Known to historians as the seventeenth-century bishop-viceroy who challenged the political, economic, and social standing of the Society of Jesus, Palafox also instituted broad ecclesiastical reforms that transformed the local spirituality of Indians and Spaniards into a new Tridentine Catholicism. While I examine the institutional sources of Palafox's episcopal power, namely the decrees of the Council of Trent, I conceive of my dissertation as a cultural history of Church power and authority in the daily lives of Indians and Spaniards in colonial Mexico. Bishop Palafox wielded his crozier, or shepherd's staff, to activate conciliar reforms in the Diocese of Puebla, an exercise that influenced the ways in which the laity experienced the sacramental and the profane. Moreover, I analyze the broad range of cultural changes that illuminate both the extraordinary and routine dimensions of Palafox's pastoral sentiment, such as daily prayer life, episcopal visitation, seminary education, overhauling the material conditions of parish churches, jurisdictional conflicts with the monastic orders and the Society of Jesus, as well as the bishop's efforts to harness the financial and human resources of the diocese to construct the material symbol of his office, the Cathedral of Puebla. Finally, I assess the bishop's capacity to structure the broader political and material contexts of Catholic culture in Mexico.
Introduction

On 5 and 6 September 1996, the city of Puebla, Mexico, commemorated the 350th anniversary of the founding of the Biblioteca Palafoxiana. On those same dates in 1646, the bishop of Puebla, Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, donated his personal library of 5000 volumes to the recently established Tridentine seminary colleges of Saint Peter and Saint John. As part of the anniversary festivities, the city council decided to rename a major street, Maximino Ávila Camacho Avenue, to Don Juan de Palafox y Mendoza Avenue as a way to acknowledge the prelate’s contributions to Puebla’s cultural patrimony. Often associated with the institutionalization of the Mexican Revolution in the State of Puebla, Ávila Camacho hailed from the poblano town of Teziutlán and had become state governor in the late 1930s. His brother, Manuel, was elected president of the Mexican Republic in 1940. Palafox, on the other hand, was a Spaniard who had lived in Puebla for nine years during the 1640s, a time when Mexico was a Spanish colony governed by the two majesties of Crown and Church. There were those, therefore, who objected to the city council’s decision to rename the street after a foreigner, a Spaniard, a gachupín. While it is difficult to identify precisely who was behind the subsequent protests, it is easy to imagine how the change might have offended any number of groups: anti-clerical intellectuals from the ruling political party, nationalists, neighborhood associations that advocate increases in social spending, and leftist political
parties. Moreover, these activities took place during the month of September when Mexicans celebrate their independence from Spain. When graffiti began to appear on buildings and walkways denouncing the name change and its accompanying festivities, it became apparent that the city council had offended someone's historical sensibilities. The graffiti read, "No to Palafox, Death to Spain, Long live Mexico."¹ The printed word soon replaced spray paint as the primary vehicle for dissent. Puebla's alternative press published several satirical accounts lampooning the way that city, state, and church officials spent so much time and money to commemorate Puebla's colonial past.² Meanwhile, the economic crisis that began in late 1994 continued to drive thousands of Mexicans into poverty with each passing week. How could a Spanish bishop—long dead—become the recipient of public funds and public celebration?

A few months later, in April 1997, the Spanish monarchs, Juan Carlos and Sofía, toured the city of Puebla during their state visit to Mexico. Upon entering the Cathedral of Puebla, the very building that Palafox consecrated in 1649, the king and queen approached the bishop's cenotaph and listened to the local historian explain why the bishop would have constructed a tomb in Puebla when he had died and was buried in Spain. Palafox had every intention of living his final years in the diocese that he called his "Rachel," an allusion to the

¹ In Spanish the graffiti read, "No a Palafox, Muera España, Viva México."
² See, for example, the editorial in Paralelo 19° 1, no. 2 (September, 1996), 2, or the article by Xavier Peña in the same issue, entitled "Sainetes palafoxianos," 7-8.
sacramental affinity that the bishop felt toward his seat of authority, but he was recalled to Spain in 1649. Palafox's tomb, therefore, became just a cenotaph, or empty sarcophagus. After hearing the story, the king remarked that Palafox's remains, which are buried in the Cathedral of Burgo de Osma, Spain, should be transferred to Puebla. The archbishop of Puebla, Rosendo Huesca Pacheco, responded that such a move required approval from the Vatican. Since Palafox's cause for beatification remained in flux, the archbishop considered it unlikely that Rome would approve such a transfer at the moment, although he held out hope that one day Bishop Palafox would return to his beloved Puebla. Finally, when the Spanish monarchs departed the cathedral to tour the Biblioteca Palafoxiana, they were greeted by throngs of poblanoos shouting "Long live Spain," "Long live the King," as well as the occasional "Long live Mexico."^3

These anecdotes indicate how Puebla's civil and ecclesiastical institutions have tried to shape the cultural dimensions of historical memory. Tourist guides extol, while the city chronicler records "the Puebla of Palafox y Mendoza, the protagonist in the cultural watershed of the colonial city; a creator of libraries, schools, altarpieces, churches, asylums, and hospitals, who also exalted the virtues of the native population."^4 Such language entices the tourist to explore the ways in which Palafox fashioned the material culture of Puebla's spiritual

^3 The Puebla newspaper, *El Universal*, reported these events in its 7 April 1997 edition.

geography. But the graffiti and satirical accounts demonstrate that Palafox continues to have his detractors even after 350 years. More poblanos attended the 350th anniversary festivities, however, than did those who used spray paint to demonstrate their opposition. Whether it was a concert in the cathedral, a series of public lectures near the Biblioteca Palafoxiana, or the renaming of a street, many citizens of Puebla, young and old, upper, middle, and working class, layman and priest, came out to recognize—or at least passively acknowledge—Palafox's role in shaping the city's cultural geography. The attempt by his modern detractors to tarnish the anniversary, however, mirrored that which developed in Puebla when Palafox began to implement the reforms of the Council of Trent, or more generally in New Spain when he tried to reform the administrative and economic practices that sustained the colonial enterprise.

Perhaps no other figure from Mexico's colonial past provoked as much heated polemic, ridicule, and disdain from opponents than Juan de Palafox y Mendoza. And perhaps no other figure elicited as much loyalty and admiration from supporters than Palafox. He arrived as both bishop of Puebla and visitor-general of New Spain at a time when the Habsburg court of Philip IV, under the direction of the Count-Duke of Olivares, was engaged in the reform of its vast empire amidst war and economic contraction. As the highest-ranking royal and ecclesiastical official—the archdiocese of Mexico was vacant in 1640—Palafox led the Habsburg effort in New Spain. In particular, he was eager to implement the reforms of the Council of Trent, reforms that had languished in the
ecclesiastical bureaucracy since the mid-sixteenth century. Such a project involved exercising the canonical power invested in his office to transform the political culture of the diocesan church. Palafox's royal duties, which are better known to us, included a review of the outgoing viceroy's tenure in office, a broad investigation into the internal dynamics of local governance and political economy, as well as reform of the *repartimiento de comercio*. The bishop also ejected the mendicant friars from their parishes, thus initiating a broad program of secularization that would not take place again in Mexico until the nineteenth century. Finally, Palafox demanded that the Jesuits exhibit their sacerdotal licenses to administer the sacraments within diocesan boundaries, and - despite their arguments to the contrary - he expected the order to pay the tithe on their agricultural and ranching activities. Such monumental tasks threatened the vested interests of powerful lay and clerical groups, thus paving the way for stiff resistance. The cast of offended characters included the Society of Jesus, the mendicant orders, the viceregal bureaucracy, the archbishop of Mexico City, the Inquisitor of New Spain, and the *alcaldes mayores*, or district magistrates. Those who supported the bishop included the cathedral chapter of Puebla, the city councils of Puebla and Mexico, most judges of the Audiencia, the secular clergy

---

in general, certain regular clerics, most convents of female religious, and many Indian communities. Who, then, was Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, and why did his tenure in office fragment colonial society into two uncompromising, hostile camps?

A short biographical sketch of Palafox illustrates his rapid rise in royal and ecclesiastical circles. Born on 24 June 1600, in Fitero, Navarre, he was the illegitimate son of the Marqués de Ariza, a leading figure of the Aragonese nobility in Spain, and of a young woman from a reputable family who was recently widowed. To redeem her transgression, Palafox's mother became a Carmelite nun, while the father recognized the boy as his own. Young Juan received the best education then available in Spain, studying canon law at the universities of Salamanca and Alcalá de Henares. In 1626, at the age of twenty-six, Palafox sat with the Aragonese nobility at the famous cortes of Monzón, which Philip IV and the Count-Duke of Olivares had convened to debate the Union of Arms and revise Aragon's contributions to the royal treasury in Castile. During the debates, Palafox defended the interests of the royal court with such zeal and sense of purpose that he naturally attracted the attention of Olivares, who invited Palafox to the royal court in Madrid. The Count-Duke welcomed Palafox's obsession with loyalty, which Jonathan Israel attributed to Palafox's illegitimacy, a serious stain in aristocratic circles at the time, as well as his "ardour" for great designs.⁶ Lacking a secure place in society and burdened by

---

⁶ Israel, Race, Class and Politics, p. 200.
the circumstance of his birth, Palafox was dependent entirely on royal favor for advancement.

Soon after his introduction to the royal court in Madrid, the young Palafox decided to study for the priesthood. He was ordained in 1629, and his first assignment found him as a chaplain in the Infanta María's bridal journey to Vienna. Palafox never fully explained his vocation in any of his writings. At some point in his twenties, he experienced a spiritual conversion and spent the next eight months engaged in constant prayer, self-flagellation, and intense reading of the mystics, particularly Saint Teresa of Ávila. The object of these ascetic practices was to inflict pain on the flesh in order to free the soul from material desire, paving the way to a quiet and very focused meditation and eventual union with God.\(^7\)

After discharging his duties as chaplain, he toured Europe for awhile before returning to Spain in 1631. During the next eight years, Palafox sat on both the Council of Aragón and the Royal Council of the Indies, where he experienced for the first time the bureaucratic affairs of Spain's empire in the Western Hemisphere. In 1639, at the age of only thirty-nine, and with the strong support of Olivares, Palafox received news that Philip IV was to going to send him to the New World as bishop of the Diocese of Puebla and visitor-general of New Spain. He received the holy oils of episcopal consecration in late December.

\(^7\) Brading, *First America*, p. 237.
1639. The new bishop departed from the port of Cádiz on Good Friday, 1640, and arrived in Mexico two months later on 24 June.

Much of the historical literature on Palafox reflects two genres: biography and polemic. Through the years, his most ardent and passionate supporters have produced sympathetic accounts of his life and times. Often employing purple, baroque language to express their affection, these authors emphasized Palafox's asceticism and spiritual sensibilities as bishop, his rapid rise in the royal and ecclesiastical power structures, and how he struggled to fight the forces of darkness that swirled around him, forces that included temptation and sin. Most biographers of the bishop avoided overt attacks on the Society of Jesus or the mendicant orders, however. Instead, they justified on pastoral grounds their subject's decision to challenge the corporate interests of the regular clergy, but they did so without the harshness of vitriolic writing that too often accompanied the second genre. Biography, therefore, became the primary literary vehicle used to defend the bishop from his enemies as well as promote his cause for canonization.

---

9 Often Palafox exhorted his priests to embrace the path of perfection, exclaiming "To conquer the passions of the flesh, what other arms does the spirit have but prayer and mortification? For prayer gives counsel and mortification executes." Quoted in Brading, _First America_, p. 236.

9 Antonio González de Rosende, _Vida i virtudes del ilustrísimo i excelentísimo señor don Juan de Palafox y Mendoza_ (Madrid: Gabriel Ramírez, 1762); Fray Guillermo Bartoli, _Historia de la vida del venerable señor don Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, obispo de Puebla y después de Osma_ (Madrid: Biblioteca Nacional, n/d); Genaro García, _Don Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, obispo de Puebla y Osma, visitador y virrey de la Nueva España_ (Puebla: Gobierno del Estado de
Palafox's detractors, on the other hand, facilitated the polemical dimensions of the literature. Most writers have been members of the Society of Jesus, or those closely allied with the order. Offended by what they perceived as direct and unwarranted attacks on the Society, many of these authors echo the opinions expressed by the eighteenth-century Jesuit, Francisco Javier Alegre, in his work, *Historia de la Provincia de la Compañía de Jesús de Nueva España*. According to Charles E.P. Simmons's assessment of the early twentieth-century literature, historians such as Mariano Picón-Salas and Víctor Rico González made little effort—much in the same manner as Alegre in the eighteenth century—to reconcile various conflicting aspects of the famed dispute between Palafox and the Society of Jesus. Alegre, for example, had neglected the economic implications of the controversy, while more contemporary scholars like Picón-Salas have glossed over the income and wealth generated by the order in the seventeenth century. Others created such a distorted view of the bishop and his actions while in New Spain that Simmons branded their work as "hysterical

---

Puebla and Secretaría de Cultura, reprinted 1991); Enrique Gómez Haro, *Biografía del venerable don Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, bienhechor de Puebla y de los indios* (Puebla: Editorial Ambrosio Nieto, 1939); Francisco Sánchez-Castañer, *Don Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, virrey de Nueva España* (Zaragoza: Editoriales del Hogar Pignatelli, 1964); and Sor Cristina de la Cruz de Arteaga, *Una mitra sobre dos mundos: La del venerable don Juan de Palafox y Mendoza* (Seville: Artes Gráficas Salesianas, S.A., 1985).

---

and unhistorical." Much of this twentieth-century polemic found its inspiration in the bitter eighteenth-century political struggles that emerged in Spain and Mexico when Charles III gave his royal support to Palafox's cause for canonization while, at the same time, suppressing the Society of Jesus in 1767. Those who allied themselves with the Jesuits initiated a sweeping campaign to undermine the attempt to declare Palafox a saint. That the bishop's supporters refer to him as "Venerable Juan de Palafox" instead of "Saint Juan de Palafox" reveals the degree to which his detractors have been successful in shaping the canonization process.

While the conflict between Palafox and the regular clergy has dominated the historical literature, we know little of the Tridentine reforms that Palafox championed during his nine-year stay in New Spain. Moreover, historians have yet to explore the process by which Palafox wielded the power of his office to effect profound changes in the way Indians and Spaniards experienced the sacramental life of a Catholicism renewed by the Tridentine spirit. I examine the intersection of cultural politics and episcopal power by tracing the material and social dimensions of Palafox's implementation of Tridentine reforms in the urban and rural environs of Puebla. My study combines political, cultural, and social

---

11 Simmons, "Palafox and His Critics," 399. Simmons was referring to James Brodrick's book, The Economic Morals of the Jesuits (London, 1934), particularly p. 85, and Thomas J. Campbell's The Jesuits, 1534-1921 (New York, 1921), especially pp. 223-224. Brodrick questioned Palafox's sanity, calling him "patently unbalanced," while Campbell wrote that the bishop was "mentally deranged."
history to identify the contours of power relations in the colony's second largest city. Since the publication of Robert Ricard's *The Spiritual Conquest* in 1933, the secondary literature has discussed the administrative and economic power of the Mexican Church. I integrate the recent historiographic turn to cultural theory in order to evaluate the cultural power and authority of the Church in the daily lives of Indians and Spaniards in seventeenth-century Puebla.

Inspired by the conciliar spirit of Trent, Palafox instituted broad reforms in the liturgy, seminary education, and the organization of sacred space. He also reordered the material conditions of local parishes, mandating that they contain certain sacramental and cultural paraphernalia vital to public worship in the new Tridentine Church. Moreover, the bishop redefined the relationship between priest and penitent by secularizing mendicant parishes within his jurisdiction. Catholic doctrine and ritual, therefore, were no longer sustained by monastic traditions and practices but by secular clergy socialized in the Tridentine milieu. As David Brading put it so well, "Palafox was always the [secular] priest, surrounded by the hierarchies of angels and saints, constantly engaged in formal acts of worship, always conscious of the figure he cut on the universal stage of heaven and earth."¹²

Palafox's staunch support of the secular clergy, of course, reflected his view of episcopal office. As a youth he had studied Canon Law at the Universities of Salamanca and Alcalá, and it was as a canonist that he

---

interpreted his rights as bishop, arguing that the three primary obligations of a prelate were “first, to exercise and defend his jurisdiction; second, to impart spiritual doctrine; and third, to provide material assistance.”

Bishops, Palafox declared, were “masters of true doctrine, doctors of the people, light and salt of the world… high priests and generals of God’s army.” Such an exalted view of the episcopacy was sure to spark opposition in certain quarters of the colonial Mexican Church, especially when Palafox began to assert the primacy of the secular clergy in matters related to the distribution of parishes (and the income that they generated) as well as the supervision of lay spirituality. Palafox reshaped and reordered the diocesan church by deploying the power and authority invested in his office, an office that had been renewed a century earlier by the reformers at the Council of Trent.

By the early sixteenth century, reformers within the institutional church argued that a new conception of episcopal office was needed to combat the excessive absenteeism and indifference that had marked the episcopacy during the course of the previous two centuries. Bishops were more concerned with maintaining their economic position and aristocratic privileges than attending to the spiritual needs of their flock. In the Italian peninsula, for example, most bishops entrusted the care of the faithful to a vicar but not before reaping the

---


14 Quoted in Brading, *First America*, p. 234.
financial and administrative benefits of being given a diocese. Most churchmen accepted their appointments, therefore, as a means of securing the revenues, power, and prestige that the bishopric brought with it for themselves and their families. Those who gathered at the Council of Trent (1545-1563) viewed the restoration of the episcopate, both moral and administrative, as crucial for the genuine renewal of the Church. According to these reformers, bishoprics should not be seen as titular honors bestowed on individuals as rewards or favors, but as pastoral offices with attention given to caring for the spiritual needs of their flock.

The pastoral dimensions of episcopal office reveal the subtle nuances and complexities of power in the early modern world. Most of the theoretical literature takes for granted the secular dimensions of power and authority because much of its subject matter reflects the scholarly preoccupation with the rise of the nation-state in Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment Europe. Scholars do locate and explain power relations in colonial settings, to be sure, but often it is a nineteenth or twentieth-century colonialism linked to industrialization and global capitalism. The early modern period, therefore, has been ripe for more nuanced interpretations of power, particularly in places like Latin America where power

---


was exercised by men fulfilling dual roles, that of royal official and high churchman.

Most recent assessments of power have included Michel Foucault's contributions to the theoretical debates. These often emphasize his work on prisons, mental illness, or sexuality. Few, if any, have treated his discussion of pastoral power or even acknowledge that Foucault integrated religion, specifically Christianity, into his archaeology of power relations. The Catholic Reformation, in particular, with its intimate links to Baroque culture, lends itself to a discussion of the pastoral dimensions of episcopal power. As Anthony Cescardi has argued, questions regarding early modern political and social control, not to mention the sources of cultural authority, must be addressed if we are to locate and evaluate the Catholic Reformation and the Baroque age as ongoing processes that had a shaping power over those who became subjects within it.17

Foucault argued that certain individuals, by virtue of ecclesiastical office and religious quality, i.e., an ordained clergyman, exercise power not as princes, magistrates, or benefactors, but rather as pastors.18 Pastoral power, he stated, was a very special form of power, and Foucault conceptualized it in four ways: as a form of power whose ultimate objective is to assure individual salvation in the


next world; as a form of power that must be prepared to sacrifice itself for the life and salvation of the flock; as a form of power that does not look after the whole community, but rather at each individual during his or her entire life; and finally, pastoral power cannot be exercised without knowing the inside of people’s minds, without exploring their souls, without making them reveal their innermost secrets. Simply put, to wield pastoral power implies an understanding of the conscience and an ability to direct it.19

Foucault’s conceptual framework for pastoral power encapsulates nicely the relationship between the juridical and sacramental dimensions of the priesthood. The Sacrament of Ordination imparts a new identity on men who are called to the life of priestly celibacy, and Canon Law defines the boundaries of that new identity. Diocesan clergy, or secular clergy, facilitate salvation for their parishioners by administering the sacraments, particularly baptism and reconciliation. By forgoing sexual intimacy in favor of abstinence, priests also sacrifice a part of themselves for the greater good of the community. Moreover, parish priests were (and still are) expected to shape the conscience, as well as tend to the spiritual welfare, of each parishioner, from the cradle to the grave. The Sacrament of Reconciliation, for example, provides for a context in which the parish priest came to know the innermost secrets of his flock. Once aware of these transgressions and iniquities, he was expected to direct the penitent in ways that ensured the good of the community as well as individual attainment of

---

the grace necessary for eternal life, i.e., salvation. Foucault's framework, however, hints at but reveals little of the episcopal dimensions of pastoral power.

Bishops also are priests, but their canonical and sacramental obligations are different after they receive the oils of episcopal consecration. They create these new canonical identities (the clergy) by administering the Sacrament of Ordination to young men. Palafox's own view of his office, which was discussed earlier, pushed him to exercise this power to create and sustain a diocesan priesthood that would, in turn, nurture a community of believers in Tridentine renewal, a renewal brought about by reforms designed to reassert the authority of the institutional church. As David Brading has suggested, Palafox was "anxious to define New Spain as an integral province of the Tridentine Church and as an overseas kingdom of the universal Catholic monarchy."^20

In Chapter One, I locate the process of secularization within material and cultural manifestations of the exercise of episcopal power. Palafox removed the mendicant friars from some of the wealthier parishes of the diocese, appointing secular clerics to administer the sacraments, collect fees for saying the Mass, and mediate the day-to-day affairs of local churches. In addition to discussing the early history of Puebla, I also analyze the episcopal entrada as a formal ritual designed to express quite publicly the cultural authority of Palafox's office.

Chapter Two illustrates Palafox's role in redrawing the liturgical landscape of daily Catholic practice, particularly his attempts to facilitate the proper

---

^20 Brading, First America, p. 251.
administration and reception of the sacraments, a vibrant prayer life, and appropriate conduct during the Mass. The Tridentine fathers were concerned with enforcing prescribed behavior through such normative means as prayers, sermons, and the promotion of religious shrines and pilgrimages.

In Chapter Three, I examine the establishment of seminary education in Puebla, the links between seminary formation and Palafox's donation of his library to the city, as well as the methods employed to instill Tridentine values in young men who desired the priesthood.

Chapters Four and Five explain the pastoral tours of inspection as vehicles for Palafox to survey the spiritual geography of the diocese, including Indian and Spanish participation in local political and economic matters, activities vital for the material and spiritual well-being of local parishes. These pastoral visits also afforded the bishop an opportunity to gauge the parish priest's fulfillment of his sacramental responsibilities and obligations.

In Chapter Six, I evaluate the conflict between Palafox and the Society of Jesus to illustrate the tensions between episcopal power and traditional corporate interests. When the bishop demanded that the Jesuits pay the diezmo, or tithe, as well as exhibit their licenses to preach and administer the sacraments, he disturbed the political and economic networks that the order had cultivated with local elites. That the Society of Jesus also educated and ministered to upper-class families helps to explain the discord that erupted when Palafox raised the threat of excommunication. Forced to flee the city and seek shelter in
a remote Indian parish, the bishop initiated a campaign to reassert his authority, hindered somewhat by the Spanish crown's response to events. After attaining a pyrrhic victory – Palafox reclaimed his episcopal office – he was recalled to Spain in 1649.

My conclusion assesses the cultural and political significance of Palafox's efforts to construct the material symbol of his office, the Cathedral of Puebla, before he departed Mexico. I evaluate the bishop's capacity to structure the broader political and materials contexts of Catholic culture in seventeenth-century Mexico, including limitations that defined the trajectory of Palafox's exercise of episcopal power. The ambiguity of the Habsburg response to the turmoil, for example, coupled with the broader political crisis of the seventeenth-century that witnessed a general decline in Spanish power, restricted the bishop's exercise of his office, particularly when the traditional corporate interests of colonial Mexican society were at stake.
Chapter 1
Episcopal Entrada, Viceregal Politics, and Secularization

Four days after the flotilla that carried news and official correspondence from Spain had set anchor in the port of San Juan de Ulúa, near Veracruz, the letters reached the cathedral chapter in Puebla on 16 January 1640. The documents, sealed with wax in Europe and bearing royal and ecclesiastical insignia, were now in the possession of the highest-ranking Church dignitary in the diocese, the dean, Juan de Vega. Acting in his capacity as president of the cathedral chapter, Vega had become accustomed to reciting royal and apostolic edicts, letters, and ordinances to the other members. A year earlier when Bishop Bernardo de Quiroz died, the Diocese of Puebla had become sede vacante (vacant seat), and Canon Law stipulated that the dean assumed administrative control of the chapter's weekly meetings whenever the local bishop was unable to discharge his responsibilities. Vega's position was about to change. In front of the chapter secretary and notary, Alonso Ostamendi Gamboa, the dean announced to his colleagues that Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, a member of both the Royal Council of Castile and the Royal Council of the Indies, had been named the new shepherd of Puebla, as well as visitor-general of New Spain. To demonstrate their collective happiness on receiving such good news, Vega and the rest of the chapter ordered the cathedral bells to peal for two hours. They also mandated that every parish, convent, monastery, and hospital within the
boundaries of the diocese follow suit.\(^1\) On the following day, a solemn procession took place in and around the Cathedral of Puebla, as both diocesan and regular clergy chanted a *Te Deum Laudamus* in thanksgiving of such a momentous occasion. The Mass of the Holy Trinity followed, complete with organ music and full choir. The *sacristán mayor*, Pedro Demontiel, organized a *fiesta* during the evening so the chapter could offer gratitude again for “the favors granted by Our Lord [to this diocese]...especially in sending us such a magnificent prelate.”\(^2\)

The festivities were far from over. In fact, they were just beginning. Four days later, on 21 January 1640, the cathedral chapter decided to construct decorative archways so the new bishop could enter the city in style. A lector from the local Jesuit College was entrusted with the task of putting together the bishop's genealogy, presumably to adorn one of the arches. The chapter assigned to the cantor, Alonso de Salazar, the job of preparing the episcopal palace for the bishop's arrival. If anything was in need of repair, Salazar was empowered to spend money from the cathedral treasury to fix it.\(^3\) A year had passed since anyone had occupied the episcopal residence, and the cathedral chapter wanted to ensure that Palafox's new home reflected the dignity and

---

\(^1\) Archivo Catedralicio de Puebla, Actas del cabildo eclesiástico (hereinafter ACP, ACE), Libro 11, 16 January 1640, f. 2v.-3.

\(^2\) ACP, ACE, Libro 11, 17 January 1640, fs. 3-3v.

\(^3\) ACP, ACE, Libro 11, 21 January 1640, f. 4.
respect that the Church ascribed to episcopal office. To do otherwise might have thwarted the development of any working relationship between the bishop and his advisory board.

As was custom in colonial Mexico, the cathedral chapter also appointed a delegation to meet Palafox in Veracruz as well as accompany him on his entrada, or entry, into Puebla. To that end, members of the chapter named the cantor Salazar and two racioneros, Alonso Rodríguez Montesinos and Ifígio de Fuentes y Leyva, to represent them. Sixteen hundred pesos were earmarked for expenses that included lodging, meals, and transportation by mule. Salazar, eager to spend as much money as possible in order to provide a lavish welcome, disbursed 250 pesos to refurbish the sala capitular, or the chapter’s official meeting room. The cantor eventually spent the monies on new chairs and stools that undoubtedly provided short-term employment for workers in the city’s carpenter and woodcrafts guilds. Palafox would preside over meetings held in the most lavishly decorated room in the yet unfinished cathedral. Salazar also expedited 100 pesos to the canon, Jacinto de Escobar, as first payment for the construction of the arches. In early June, however, Salazar became ill and withdrew himself from the commission appointed to meet Palafox in Veracruz. In his place, the chapter named the canon, Luis de Góngora, who was paid 400 pesos to pay expenses incurred during the journey. Monies also were set aside

---

4 ACP, ACE, Libro 11, 3 March 1640, fs. 16v-18.

5 ACP, ACE, Libro 11, 5 June 1640, f. 33v.
to contract the services of a notary and interpreter, the latter to facilitate contact
between the new bishop and the scores of Indians that were expected to arrive.

By late June, the chapter had received a letter from Palafox – who by this
time was aboard the flotilla anchored in the harbor – that contained the royal
order appointing him as bishop of Puebla. Salazar advised the cathedral chapter
that the new prelate had delegated to him the power to take possession of the
sede vacante in Palafox’s name, since the bishop found himself “very busy due
to the voyage and other things, [and therefore], I cannot personally take
possession of the seat.”\(^6\) Palafox provided no explanation as to why he decided
to take possession \textit{in absentia}; perhaps he wanted to wield immediately the
power of his office from the port city. Without taking formal possession, the
bishop’s actions and decisions – including those embedded in edicts and
pastoral letters – would have lacked canonical force, that is, the power and
authority invested in the office of bishop was predicated upon duly executed rites
and rituals defined by Canon Law and the Pontifical.

Salazar decided to convene the chapter again on the following day – June
28 – and formally take possession of the diocese by exercising Palafox’s transfer
of his canonical power of attorney. The bishop, for his part, stated unequivocally
in his letter that the act of possession went beyond the physical confines of his
formal seat, the cathedral building. Palafox, through Salazar, was taking

\(^6\) ACP, ACE, Libro 11, 27 and 28 June 1640, fs. 37-38.
"possession of the entire diocese, including church buildings, parishes, monasteries, and holy places...[within my] spiritual and temporal jurisdiction."^7

From the very outset, Palafox established his authority and jurisdiction. He wanted to remind his advisory board that the exercise of episcopal power effected changes throughout the diocese and was not limited to the cathedral parish. The fact that he included "monasteries" and "holy places" — the latter a nebulous term at best — presaged events to come. Not only would Palafox subject the regular clergy to his jurisdiction, particularly the Franciscans, he would refashion the spiritual geography of the diocese altogether. To initiate the process of transforming the spiritual life and cultural politics of Puebla, the bishop forwarded to the chapter the pertinent apostolic bulls and letters, as well as the royal cédula, which obliged the chapter to conduct the act of transfer. And perhaps as a sign of episcopal unity, Palafox asked the bishop of Yucatán, Juan Alonso Ocón, to serve as witness to this compilation of letters, bulls, and royal decrees, which was promptly certified by the public notary and scribe aboard the flotilla.®

Certainly, the prelate of that southern Mexican diocese understood the importance of stressing to the advisory board the full array of episcopal power.

Historians of the colonial Church have written little about the ceremonies and rites performed by bishops when they assumed episcopal office. Stafford Poole described the consecration of Pedro Moya de Contreras as archbishop of

^7 ACP, ACE, Libro 11, 28 June 1640, f. 38.

® ACP, ACE, Libro 11, 28 June 1640, f. 38v.-39.
Mexico City in the sixteenth century, although he emphasized its popular dimensions – street processions and parades, speeches and sermons delivered to the gathering crowds, skits and dramas – rather than the canonical rites that governed the formal act of taking possession. Poole illustrated the ways in which civil and ecclesiastical authorities cooperated when staging the public greeting of high-ranking royal and church officials. The ritual surrounding the act of possession, however, which activated the power endowed in the office of bishop, has received scant attention, indicating that the actas del cabildo eclesiástico (minutes from a meeting of the cathedral chapter), which describe the rites and ceremonies, remain elusive records for the historian. The inability to consult these documents, therefore, has prevented historians from linking the rites and rituals that activated episcopal power with the reordering of local political culture when new bishops arrived in colonial Latin America. My access to, and analysis of, the actas located in the Archivo Catedralicio de Puebla (Cathedral Archive of Puebla) adds a new dimension to the literature on the colonial episcopacy and its role in fashioning the political and cultural fabric of colonial society.

The chapter secretary recorded the ceremony in the minutes of 28 June 1640. His description demonstrates how the authority of the episcopacy was manifested in formal acts of obedience. The dean, Vega, read aloud the royal

---

céduela of 20 December 1639 that compelled the cathedral chapter to hand the
diocese over to Palafox, including the cuarta episcopal, or one-fourth of the tithe
guaranteed to the episcopal treasury. King Philip IV reminded the chapter that
such a transfer of jurisdiction and income was consistent with Chapter 3, Ley 13
of the Nueva Recopilación. The dean then took the collection of papal bulls,
letters, and royal edicts in his hands, kissed them, and placed them over his
head, reciting "I obey them and order them obeyed by this cathedral chapter." Each member followed suit, repeating the same gestures and formula.

Afterwards, the presidential chair – upon which Palafox would sit – was
carried to the center of the room. A crucifix was fastened on the wall behind the
chair, and soon the canons and racioneros knelt down in front of the chair and
crucifix, reciting the profession of faith while placing their right hands on a missal
held by the archdeacon. Each stood up after making their profession and sat
down in his respective seats. Salazar occupied the presidential chair and
proclaimed the following words: "I take possession of this diocese and seat… in
peaceful fashion and without contradiction of anyone." Such words recognized
that the Spanish monarch and pope had agreed upon the appointment without
the usual political jockeying and intrigue, and that this particular seat was indeed

10 ACP, ACE, Libro 11, 28 June 1640, f. 39. The king made reference to the
compilation of laws that would soon govern the New World, the Recopilación de
las leyes de las Indias, which was finally issued in 1681.

11 ACP, ACE, Libro 11, 28 June 1640, f. 41.

12 ACP, ACE, Libro 11, 28 June 1640, f. 41.
vacant upon the death of Palafox's predecessor, Bernardo de Quiroz. No one had lodged a competing claim to the office, nor was Puebla experiencing the internal strife that often rocked Church-State relations in Europe when others positioned themselves to exercise episcopal office.\textsuperscript{13}

After the formal transfer had taken place, members of the cathedral chapter rejoined the other clergy – diocesan and regular – as well as members of the city council, who had been waiting for them outside the sala capitular. They made their way to the episcopal chair located in the main sanctuary. There each canon sat briefly in the chair and recited the same formulaic rite, with Salazar leading the way. A symbolic representation of the see, the episcopal chair illuminated the bishop's predominant role in the various liturgical rituals and ceremonies that took place in the cathedral church.

Palafox revealed his canonical and public sensibilities when he directed the cathedral chapter to recite the act of possession in two places. In the sala capitular, a space reserved for planning diocesan policy and implementing episcopal decrees, as well as a place frequented by only a few churchmen, the act of possession was a private affair. In the body of the cathedral building, however, a space both sacred and public, other members of the institutional

church, as well as leading lay figures, provided public assent. Within the same edifice, therefore, a blending of the public and private was taking place. Palafox recognized the symbolic power of having ecclesiastical and secular representatives at the formal act of possession, especially since the power endowed in his office affected both segments of poblano society. After the brief ceremony in the sanctuary, the procession continued to the main door of the cathedral, where many of the faithful had gathered to participate.

Two days later, on 30 June 1640, the cathedral chapter convened again. This time, however, the issue was not ecclesiastical but rather secular. The city had been notified that the new viceroy, the Duke of Escalona, accompanied Bishop Palafox and, therefore, would make his own entrada into the city. The chapter quickly appointed three representatives to meet the incoming viceroy. The tone of the acta suggests that the chapter was quite keen to offer the Duke of Escalona a most satisfactory welcome. In conjunction with its secular counterpart, the city council, Puebla's cathedral chapter funded an elaborate civic ritual to display the city's cultural and political values.

The celebration of the viceregal entrada was the most lavish and costly civic ritual in seventeenth-century Puebla, as architectural historian Nancy Fee has demonstrated in her recent work. Staged by poblano elites to honor the viceroy, this ritual event was orchestrated to assert the religiosity and superiority

---

of Puebla. Fee argues that the viceregal entrada heightened the competitive
spirit of the poblano city council, as the entrada normally followed the path taken
by Hernán Cortés, who first passed through what is now Puebla before moving
on to Tenochtitlán, or Mexico City. Ephemeral, triumphal arches featuring
allegorical and political emblems — for example, royal insignia, figures from Greek
and Roman mythology, scriptural allusions to the Old Testament — framed and
gated the ritual entry into the city. As Fee has shown, members of the oldest
guilds in New Spain designed and fashioned these arches, some of which were
placed within the main portal of the Cathedral, marking its role as the holiest of
holy places in the city.

The viceregal entrada into Puebla stemmed from a rich historical tradition
in Spain. Public appearances were just as important tools of persuasion and
affirmations of power for a Spanish ruler as touring or conquering territory.¹⁵ It
also allowed cities and town to express public assent of that power. The city
council and the cathedral chapter demonstrated to the viceroy poblano customs
and traditions — and the civic pride and glory that accompanied them — as much
as the secular and religious authorities yielded to and heaped accolades
sprinkled with expectations of the new political ruler. Preparations and
proceedings for the entrada followed a general pattern. Upon receipt of the
viceroy’s arrival in Veracruz, the city council elected one of its own to coordinate
the various civic events and fiestas. In turn, the commissioner assigned various

¹⁵ Fee, "La Entrada Angelopolitana," 284.
tasks to his colleagues, including organizing fireworks, escorting the viceroy to local convents and religious sites, selecting a gift, establishing lodging (often in private homes), and securing provisions and transport for the viceroy and his entourage.\textsuperscript{16} Other important items that demanded immediate attention included the search for the finest procession horse complete with splendid bridle and spurs, the repair of buildings and streets that straddled the procession route, as well as the sponsoring of masked balls in the evening.

Though he was greeted on the outskirts of the city, the viceroy probably entered Puebla on the road from Tlaxcala and exited in the direction of Cholula or Mexico City. Nancy Fee posits that the descriptions of viceregal entries present Puebla not as "a transit point or gateway to Mexico City but rather as an independent, sanctimonious and singular place predestined for glory and magnificence."\textsuperscript{17} Two clerics and an appointed city councilman generally awaited the viceroy in Xalapa (in the modern state of Veracruz) to accompany him to Puebla. Two or more city councilmen traveled to the small town of Tepeyahualco to "kiss the hand of the viceroy in the name of the city," and greet his retinue.\textsuperscript{18}

The main plaza, or \textit{zócalo}, served as the primary stage for the procession and accompanying festivities that endured for several days or even weeks. The Duke of Escalona and Bishop Palafox would have witnessed religious services,


\textsuperscript{17} Fee, "La Entrada Angelopolitana," 285.

\textsuperscript{18} Fee, "La Entrada Angelopolitana," 285.
civic displays of city pride, as well as the secular and profane masquerades. Many of the activities were equestrian in nature, affording the poblano elite the opportunity to express their wealth through horses and their accoutrements. 

*Juegos de cañas*, a mock joust with long lances, were typically a part of the pageantry. Mock battles between Muslims and Christians also were staged with four of the squadrons dressed with turbans and Moorish robes, while four other squadrons dressed in brilliant Spanish costumes. Local politicians and priests enlisted the participation of Indians in these activities. In the entrada of 1640, for example, Indians built a castle and ramparts as part of the mock battle, an event that frequently started the festivities. To pay for such extravagance, however, the city council accumulated a large debt for the entrada celebrations. As Miguel Ángel Cuerna Mateos has documented, each year the poblano city council during the seventeenth century incurred expenses that exceeded the annual income of the city. The council owed nearly 30,000 pesos by the beginning of the eighteenth century, having borrowed on average 4000 to 10,000 pesos at five

---

19 In 1644, Palafox disapproved of the secular aspects of the Corpus Christi festival that the city council was planning (various masquerades, for example). If this was any indication of how he felt about satirical theater, we can assume, therefore, that he failed to enjoy the popular expressions of "bienvenida" during his entrada of 1640. See Armando de María y Campos, *Historia de los espectáculos en Puebla* (Mexico City: Talleres Gráficas del Instituto Politécnico Nacional, 1978), p. 205.

percent interest from the cathedral chapter.\textsuperscript{21} Money was always a concern and in short-supply relative to the aspirations of the council. City councilmen were often appointed to seek loans or secure credit; some even offered support from their own personal finances. Such monies were needed if the city council wanted to construct and erect — and they did — triumphal arches that cost approximately 1000 pesos each.

Historians have discussed the viceregal entry in Puebla and Mexico City as a cultural expression of local and regional politics. To date, few scholars have employed the actas of the cathedral chapter to reconstruct the imagery generated by an episcopal entraña. Irving Leonard's classic and brilliant study of Baroque culture in Mexico relied on printed rather than archival sources, and for good reason. These documents provide historians with 'thick description' of the event — to borrow a term coined by anthropologist Clifford Geertz. The minutes of the cathedral chapter, however, are often of a mundane nature, laden with generalizations such as "según la costumbre...según el Pontifical...según el ceremonial" (according to custom...according to the Pontifical...according to the ceremonial) that keep the historian wondering what exactly was done. The acta from Puebla's cathedral chapter, dated 22 July 1640, provides a mix of generalization and specificity regarding Palafox's entry into the city as the new

\textsuperscript{21} Fee, "La Entrada Angelopolitana," 288.
shepherd. Based on the extant archival record, the acta remains the only source that reveals the ecclesiastical expression of bienvenida.

On the Feast of Mary Magdalene, 22 July 1640, at 9:30 in the morning, Juan de Palafox y Mendoza entered the city of Puebla. The entire cathedral chapter went out to greet him at the outskirts of town. Other clergy, secular and regular, also were part of the entourage. Riding mules and horses and accompanied by a regiment of militiamen and local politicians, Palafox, his episcopal household, and some of the leading clergy of the city processed to the doors of the nearby Convent of the Holy Trinity. Why a convent was chosen remains unknown, although its ideal location offered the bishop time to prepare for his dramatic entrance into the final and most important destination, his seat of episcopal authority. Upon reaching the convent, Palafox dismounted his mule and entered the convent to vest in episcopal garb that included his miter and crozier. The lower clergy dressed in simple surplices and cassocks, setting them apart from the bishop’s elegant robes, episcopal headdress, and staff. Dress served to distinguish the various stages of sacramental priesthood, with episcopal attire reflecting its lofty place in the institutional hierarchy of the Catholic Church. During his tenure as bishop, as we will see, Palafox conducted his pastoral tours of inspection employing the full splendor and drama of episcopal office. Members of the cathedral chapter, other secular priests, as well

22 ACP, ACE, Libro 11, 22 July 1640, fs. 46v.-47. My discussion of the cathedral chapter’s bienvenida is based on this acta.
as those mendicants and Jesuits who accompanied Palafox on his entrada
gleaned a hint what was to come: a prelate who was comfortable with using the
material symbols and trappings of the episcopacy to manifest the cultural
authority of the Church. After vesting, Palafox then climbed aboard a litter that
was hoisted on the shoulders of several militiamen and taken to the zócalo.

Palafox and his retinue reached the Cathedral's main door. The partially
completed structure - very much a skeleton - languished in a material inertia.
Much remained to be done before it could become the architectural expression of
episcopal office. The king himself, Philip IV, had entrusted Palafox with the task
of finishing the cathedral as part of the bishop's service to the two majesties in
New Spain.\(^\text{23}\) Construction began in the mid-sixteenth century soon after the
diocesan seat was transferred from Tlaxcala to Puebla, but a lack of financial and
administrative support thwarted its completion. Palafox would dedicate himself to
finishing the baroque edifice in record time. Ironically, the cathedral became a
symbolic \textit{alpha} and \textit{omega} for Palafox, that is, his beginning and end. He started
his ecclesiastical duties in Puebla with the episcopal entrada to the cathedral,
and he would depart the city for Spain in 1649 just after its completion and
consecration.

\(^{23}\) Nancy Fee, "Proyecto de magnificencia trentina: Palafox y el patrocinio de la
Catedral de la Puebla de los Ángeles," in \textit{La catedral de Puebla en el arte y en la
historia}, ed. Montserrat Gali Boadella (Puebla: Secretaría de Cultura del Estado
de Puebla, Arzobispado de Puebla, and the Instituto de Ciencias Sociales y
The two majesties were the Spanish Crown and the Catholic Church.
At the door, the litter carrying Palafox was lowered, and the bishop began to recite the appropriate blessings and salutations prescribed by the Pontifical. Later, he escorted the growing crowds into the cathedral where he and members of the cathedral chapter continued to administer the welcoming rites. Afterwards, the clergy and laity accompanied the bishop to the Episcopal Palace, although he invited only the members of the cathedral chapter to share the fine repast prepared in his honor.24

On the following day, the bishop remained in his palace, sharing yet another meal with the cathedral chapter. That the bishop chose temporary seclusion within the confines of his residency suggests that he wanted to spend time with his advisory board. It was important for a bishop to become acquainted with what ultimately were his most trusted advisors, especially since the cathedral chapter was capable of promoting or undermining episcopal policy. Indeed, by the end of his stay in Puebla, Palafox could find among his most bitter enemies the dean, several canons, and racioneros. But he also relied on the strong and forceful support of the archdeacon, the vicar-general, and a few canons, whose allegiance facilitated their promotions within the colonial Church once the turmoil of 1647-1648 had subsided. Chapter Six assesses the bitter conflict that erupted among members of the cathedral chapter within the context

24 ACP, ACE, Libro 11, 22 July 1640, f. 46v.-47. The cathedral chapter paid for the fiesta and the accompanying meal that took place inside the episcopal palace. A local priest, Florian de Reynoso, prepared the meals by hand, and was paid 175 pesos for his efforts.
of Palafox's dispute with the Society of Jesus. For now, the bishop and his advisers huddled together to discuss the current state of events in the mother country, the colony, the city of Puebla, as well as the Diocese of Puebla.

Palafox's arrival in Mexico as bishop of Puebla and visitor-general of New Spain could not have occurred at a more disturbing time for the Habsburg dynasty that ruled Spain. The 'Golden Age' of Spain, the sixteenth century, was slowly being tarnished in the seventeenth century by economic contraction, fiscal mismanagement, the war with France, the loss of the Netherlands, as well as Spanish participation in the costly Thirty Years' War. With Spanish resources stretched thin, royal treasury officials had little time to enjoy the silver receipts from the New World. They had to service the debt that Spain owed to foreign and domestic bankers, while at the same time, replace lost revenue by raising taxes. In 1640, these new fiscal exactions prompted Portugal and Catalonia to rebel against the Spanish Crown. The king's most trusted adviser, the Count-Duke of Olivares, had initiated a series of bureaucratic and fiscal reforms hoping to lighten the administrative and economic burdens shouldered by Castile. His policies, however, facilitated the dissolution of the sixty year union of the Crowns of Portugal and Castile, which entailed the loss of Brazil and brought into

---

question the loyalty of numerous Portuguese merchants who were active throughout Spain's overseas colonies.26

A different economic picture emerges from seventeenth-century New Spain, however. Except in Chiapas and Guatemala, the colony experienced economic restructuring and reorganization – with a few short-term setbacks in the 1630s – rather than a protracted economic depression, as it retained more of its silver receipts. The ability to keep resources in Mexico facilitated the development of commercialized regional economies, especially when Iberian industries failed to meet colonial demand in the early part of the century.27 The early history of the Puebla region under Spanish rule illustrates how local markets developed and export markets within the colony opened up when the population expanded and levels of silver production remained steady. Palafox was entering a region of New Spain that had experienced rapid economic growth and demographic expansion throughout the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Diocesan income was linked to the productivity of the regional economy, particularly since the church's collection of the tithe came from agricultural and ranching activities. The early part of the century was a boon for

26 Brading, First America, p. 229.

the Diocese of Puebla, as the vibrant regional economy facilitated increases in ecclesiastical revenue and income.

Products of the poblano countryside were part of regional and international commerce. Farmers sold their wheat throughout Spanish America, while com was sold primarily in New Spain. The market for poblano sugar was small, with consumption located mainly in the city and its immediate environs. Indians marketed fruits and vegetables in the city as well as nearby towns and villages. The city of Puebla was home to cottage industries and small factories (obrajes) that transformed animal products – for example, pork fat, wool, and hides – into manufactured goods. In fact, most ranching and agricultural products of the poblano countryside passed through the city, which served as the major hub for regional commerce and industry. While poblano farmers and ranchers in the eighteenth century would lose certain markets because of increased competition from their counterparts in the Bajío and Michoacán, as well as the United States, they were the bulwarks of economic expansion in the seventeenth century. Poblano wheat, sugar, com, fruit, and livestock fueled an agrarian economy that enriched the coffers of the diocesan church.

The Puebla region was an important center for wheat production. Poblano farmers were the first to develop a form of commercial agriculture that serviced both local markets (Mexico City, Veracruz, Campeche, and Oaxaca) and New World destinations (Cuba, Florida, and Caracas). Wheat yields were so abundant in the region that farmers often sent their surplus to other regions.\textsuperscript{29} It was said that millers ground 270 cargas of flour daily in the fifteen mills located in the city for use in the ten bakeries. The Spanish-owned haciendas dominated the wheat sector from the late-sixteenth century, but their cultivation of the grain was not exclusive, for Indians also planted it. The Indians of Tochimilco, for example, began planting wheat in the sixteenth century, despite the prohibition against it, and bought corn from other villages at lower altitudes. As wheat became increasingly important in the agrarian economy, irrigation became paramount to its continued vitality. As Lipsett-Rivera has shown, wheat could not be grown over the dry winter months without adequate access to water. At critical moments during the year, therefore, farmers built or refurbished irrigation ditches, called acequias.\textsuperscript{30}

Sugar was the other major cash crop in the region, particularly in Izúcar and Tehuacán. In the sixteenth century, sugar plantations in the poblano countryside attracted considerable investment capital for a variety of reasons. In

\textsuperscript{29} Lipsett-Rivera, \textit{To Defend Our Water}, p. 65; and Aristides Medina Rubio, \textit{La iglesia y la producción agrícola en Puebla, 1540-1795} (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1983), pp. 122-125.

\textsuperscript{30} Lipsett-Rivera, \textit{To Defend Our Water}, p. 67.
contrast to wheat or corn, neither royal nor local authorities controlled the production of sugar through price controls. As a luxury good, sugar was quite profitable, and many hacendados began to replace other crops with sugar where conditions permitted. By the turn of the century, however, the Spanish Crown changed its policy and issued restrictions on its production. The authorities, for example, prohibited the use of repartimiento Indians as well as the construction of new sugar mills and processing plants. In 1631, Spanish officials stopped the export of Mexican sugar to South America. During this same period, however, the viceregal government in Mexico City granted thirty-five new licenses for sugar plantations. Overall, sugar was a much smaller part of the poblano agrarian economy than wheat because ecological conditions were right for it in only a few areas. While it was a very profitable crop, it required constant access to plentiful sources of water. Sugar production fostered intense competition for water, and its producers often left their neighbors downstream with reduced access.

Sugar and wheat production often displaced the cultivation of corn in the agrarian economy, although corn remained the mainstay of indigenous agriculture. Even Spanish farmers used the grain to feed workers and livestock, and the stalks for fuel. Small producers grew maize for their own consumption, but in some areas – Tepeaca, for example – such arrangements accounted for

---


twenty-percent of the crop sold in local markets. In contrast to sugar and wheat, corn could be grown within the annual period of rainfall. If the harvest was to be bountiful, however, the seeds required sowing before the rains. Irrigation, therefore, was vital for the seeds to germinate. An early start held the promise of ripened corn before the arrival of early frosts. The crop remained an important dimension of the poblano agrarian economy, especially for Indian communities and Spanish hacendados.

Fruit was a small yet important feature of the regional economy, especially for Indian communities. When Indians began to lose their village lands in the sixteenth century, some turned to the cultivation of fruit orchards and vegetable patches to support themselves. Olives, figs, apples, melons, limes, cucumbers, and pomegranates dotted the Atlixco region, for example. These products required a certain amount of irrigation, although the actual quantity remains unclear. Some communities complained that their fruit trees wilted during times of drought, leaving them without sufficient income.

The introduction of European livestock also shaped the rhythms of the poblano agrarian economy. Horses and oxen played an important role in the cultivation of sugar and wheat, as vehicles of transportation and plowing. In some areas of Puebla, however, animal products were even more important.

---


34 Lipsett-Rivera, To Defend Our Water, p. 72.
Spaniards consumed beef, pork, and lamb for protein, while also obtaining hides from their cattle, lard and soap from their pigs, and wool from their sheep. These animal products fostered the development of tanneries, obrajes, and cottage industries engaged in soap manufacturing. Livestock was an important variable in the regional economy, linking the countryside to regional networks of trade and light industry. Animals also competed with large and small-scale farmers for water during the dry season, and they caused problems by trampling acequias and fouling sources of potable water. Overall, however, livestock complemented wheat and sugar production, and they formed the basis of various light industries in the city of Puebla.

While the Puebla region in particular, and the viceroyalty in general, experienced economic growth and diversification, the years leading up to Palafox's arrival suggest a pessimism and sense of gloom in the viceregal capital, Mexico City. In 1633 and 1634, the Dutch had threatened the Spanish presence in the Caribbean basin. When a contingent of Dutch ships bombarded the ports of Trujillo and Curaçao, they disrupted trade and commerce, the results of which were higher prices of Caribbean goods in Mexico. In 1634, as a way to frustrate British, French, and Dutch piracy – as well as protect domestic merchants and industries – the Spanish crown prohibited trade between Mexico

---

and Peru. Supplies of mercury for the silver mines were in short supply. Moreover, Indian mortality, while not as high as it had been in the previous century, continued to delay efforts in some quarters to harness indigenous labor. The viceroy at the time, Lope Diez de Armendáriz, the Marqués of Cadereita, also implemented a royal order to confiscate French capital in the colony, a move designed to undermine the French military effort in the Thirty Years' War but one that ultimately hurt the Mexican business community. Finally, the royal court informed the viceroy that New Spain would be subject to a new tax to finance the projected Armada de Barlovento, a battle squadron of twelve heavily armed men-of-war whose sole purpose was to defend the Caribbean basin. Diez de Armendáriz calculated that an annual sum of 500,000 pesos would be required to maintain the fleet. The city council in the viceregal capital agreed to an annual expenditure of 200,000 pesos as its share of the burden, recognizing the utility of a strong defense to protect its borders from foreign attack.  

The Mexico City council, while accepting its financial responsibility toward the defense of the colony, also had decided to press the viceroy on matters of trade and commerce. The crown's prohibition of trade between New Spain and Peru was considered the primary reason for the colony's recent economic woes. The council wanted the viceroy to support its efforts to change royal trade policy; in particular, the council pushed for a policy that would allow Mexican merchants

---

36 The viceregal context is based on Israel's Race, Class and Politics in Colonial Mexico, pp. 190-194.
to export more silver to Manila as a means of exchange for Chinese silk. In fact, members of the city council embraced the idea that free trade was the panacea for the colony's poor economic showing. In addition to thorny trade issues, the city council also wanted the viceroy to reduce and then fix the term of office for *alcaldes mayores*, or district magistrates, to two years, in order to halt their egregious abuses and corrupt practices. Finally, in the area of church politics, the city council wanted the crown to curb the growth of the regular clergy in New Spain, complaining that the large number of mendicants was excessive in light of the Indian mortality rate in the Central Valley of Mexico. And the council criticized the Society of Jesus for its economic power, which seemed to increase each time the order bought another hacienda, estancia, or rancho.\(^{37}\)

For his part, the viceroy conceded little to the city council, although he seemed sympathetic to their demands. He responded that only the Spanish king and his Royal Council of the Indies could decide matters of trade and commerce. He did agree, however, to raise the issue with the royal court. Regarding the alcaldes mayores, the viceroy disagreed with the notion that the office was in need of reform, but again, he promised to share their concerns with the crown. He also sidestepped the ecclesiastical dimensions of their demands. The city council's efforts to effect changes in the Habsburg administration of New Spain received a considerable boost, however, when Philip IV acceded to the viceroy's wishes to return home to Spain. Frail and very ill, Viceroy Cadereita had wanted

to relinquish his post for some time but was rebuffed by the royal court. The king announced in 1639 that he would be sending a visitor-general, Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, to investigate the state of affairs in New Spain, as well as address the concerns of the city council. The king entrusted Palafox with a broad range of tasks in his role as visitor-general. Palafox was to conduct the residencia, or review, of the outgoing viceroy, as well as a general tour, or visita, of the colony, although for the latter he sent delegates to, and required written reports from, regions located far from Mexico City. Finally, Philip IV announced that Palafox would be accompanied by the new viceroy, the Duke of Escalona, Diego López Pacheco y Bobadilla.\textsuperscript{38}

For Palafox, however, the Duke of Escalona was a cause for alarm. The new viceroy was not merely the first grandee of Spain ever appointed to that office, but he also was cousin of the Duke of Braganza, who would become João IV, the new king of Portugal, in December 1640. Escalona’s enemies on the Mexico City council, as well as those on Audiencia, accused him of favoring the Portuguese merchants living in the viceregal capital. More importantly, however, as this chapter shows, the viceroy tried to interfere with Palafox’s secularization of mendicant doctrines. David Brading has argued that the result of these apprehensions was that Palafox – in his capacity as visitor-general – assembled a case against the viceroy, based largely on rumor and innuendo, and persuaded

\textsuperscript{38} Israel, \textit{Race, Class and Politics}, pp. 198-199.
the Spanish king to recall Escalona in 1642. In the interim, which lasted five months (June to November 1642), Palafox served as acting viceroy until his successor arrived from Spain. He also continued to wield the authority and power of visitor-general, captain-general, as well as bishop of Puebla.

Escalona's ouster demonstrated, however, that Palafox's exercise of secular power had the potential to restructure the political and social order of Spanish colonialism. In addition to the so-called Portuguese affair, Palafox also criticized Escalona for delaying his reform of the alcaldes mayores.

In the niche that he carved for himself in viceregal politics – as interim viceroy and visitor-general – Palafox sought to reform the practice of repartimiento de mercancía, which he saw as the primary abuse of colonial government. A system of exploitation designed and maintained by the alcaldes mayores, the repartimiento was the forced sale of one commodity in exchange for payment in another. As Kevin Gosner, Murdo MacLeod, and others have shown, the repartimiento was often combined with the derrama, whereby Indian communities were compelled to buy unprocessed raw materials and sell back a finished product at a price well below what private merchants would pay.

---

30 Brading, First America, p. 229.

Indian communities were forced to participate in these schemes for a number of reasons: the threat of force, intimidation, or the exacting demand that tribute payments be made in cash. Many alcaldes mayores used the monies that they collected to finance their own trading ventures, and they sought to circumvent payment of the sales tax, or alcabala, on their transactions. Since the office of alcalde was generally a five-year appointment, the incentive to pursue big profits at the expense of their Indian subjects was great. David Brading posits that the abuses inherent in the system were compounded by the powers vested in the viceroy to appoint these district magistrates, since the Spanish Crown only reserved a relatively small number of posts for nomination in Madrid. Viceroys, therefore, wanted to reward members of their own official family with appointments. At the same time, colonial law and custom dictated that all district magistrates were subject to an official review, also called a residencia, at the end of their five-year term of office. Most viceroys succored favor with the Audiencia by conferring alcaldías mayores on the sons and relatives of the judges who sat on this high court of justice. Finally, official complicity reached full circle with the participation of Mexico City merchants, usually peninsulares, who supplied the necessary hard cash and merchandise to district magistrates.

When Palafox assumed the office of viceroy in 1642, albeit for a limited time, he began to denounce swiftly the repartimiento system to the Royal Council of the Indies. In fact, he tackled the issue with such zeal and sense of purpose

---

41 Brading, First America, p. 230.
that he did not hesitate to provide the names of the sons and other relatives of the audiencia judges who had benefited from the system. He pushed to end the politics of the repartimiento, and in the process, Palafox made new enemies from among the leading peninsular families and colonial administrators in Mexico City who had profited from the system. In effect, as David Brading has demonstrated, Palafox supported the dismantling of a peculiarly colonial mode of exploitation, in which the entrenched mercantile and bureaucratic establishment, composed for the most part of peninsulares, dominated both viceregal and municipal government, as well as the colonial judiciary, for the sole purpose of personal profit. While he was ultimately unsuccessful in his attempt to abolish the repartimiento, Viceroy Palafox appointed several creoles as alcaldes mayores, and generally sought to cultivate the creole elite.

Within the institutional church, Bishop Palafox also promoted creole clergyman as canons and parish priests. Even within the regular clergy, he supported the election of creoles as provincials and priors. It was this policy that secured him the support of the Franciscan commissary-general, Father Buenaventura de Salinas, who eventually succeeded in procuring the election of the first creole to the descalced branch of the Franciscan order in Mexico City.

---

42 Brading, First America, p. 230.
In recent years, much attention has paid to the conflict between the secular and regular clergy.\(^{43}\) Such intraecclesiastical conflict and discord originated in the Middle Ages when the mendicant orders began to function as corporate entities. The men who joined these communities (Order of Saint Francis, Order of Saint Augustine, Order of Saint Dominic) lived according to a rule yet were not monks, that is, they were not bound to a single autonomous unit known as a monastery.\(^{44}\) Instead, the mendicants embraced preaching and evangelization as their primary duty, and theoretically supported themselves by begging for alms. From the very beginning of the Spanish enterprise in the New World, the mendicant orders and the episcopacy had clashed over a variety of issues. Most bishops refused to accept that the mendicants had received many privileges and exemptions from the papacy, the most galling of these exemptions being the freedom to organize and maintain their internal, communitarian life without episcopal interference. Poole has shown how these exemptions tended to make the mendicants independent and even arrogant in their dealings with the episcopacy. No wonder the bishops who gathered at Trent tried to restrict — or in


\(^{44}\) Poole, Moya de Contreras, p. 66.
some cases abolish – these privileges and exemptions, and reassert the power and authority of bishops within their dioceses.\textsuperscript{45}

In New Spain, the mendicant orders were the first to arrive in the colony, and they spread Christianity with the encouragement and support of the Spanish crown. During the years following the fall of Tenochtitlán, the mendicants evangelized Indian communities without accountability to any bishop, since the episcopacy was still some years away from its formal establishment in the colony. To make up for the lack of bishops the papacy granted extraordinary privileges to these orders, most notably Leo X's brief of 25 April 1521, and the bull, \textit{Exponi Nobis}, promulgated by Adrian VI on 10 May 1525. The papal brief gave the mendicants the power to confer the sacrament of Confirmation in areas that lacked bishops. The friars also could confer minor orders on their own, bless chapels, altars, chalices, and sacred furnishings – all functions ordinarily reserved to bishops. The papal bull went even further. In it the pope granted to the mendicant leadership – called provincials – "all manner of our authority [in universal jurisdiction]."\textsuperscript{46} On the face of it, as Poole has argued, this was a delegation of the pope's own authority and could be interpreted to include just about every act of which a bishop was capable, with the exception of ordination

\textsuperscript{45} Poole, \textit{Moya de Contreras}, pp. 66-67.

\textsuperscript{46} Poole, \textit{Moya de Contreras}, p. 67. The phrase reads "all manner of our authority in both fora." The phrase "both fora" was ecclesiastical terminology for universal jurisdiction.
As Robert Padden put it, the bull was "a very piece of the rock of Saint Peter." It became the most powerful weapon in the mendicant arsenal when they clashed with bishops in the sixteenth century.

When the first bishops arrived in New Spain, they encountered a vigorous and rapidly expanding ecclesiastical system – one based on monastic principles of organization and spirituality – that did not seem to have a place for them. And while the mendicant system may have functioned well, it remained outside the normal ecclesiastical hierarchy of the Catholic Church, that is, the regular administrative machinery of Catholicism. Bishops throughout the sixteenth century slowly established the foundations of episcopal administration in New Spain, but these foundations were superimposed on a preexisting structure. The bishops wanted to move from what was essentially improvisation to the accustomed order. For their part, the mendicants resisted by exhibiting the privileges that the various popes had granted to them.

From the perspective of the Spanish crown, the mendicants tended to operate outside its royal domain. By their very nature, the orders were supranational entities that were more dependent on the Vatican than on the royal court. Their papal privileges seemed to have made them independent not only of

---

47 Poole, Moya de Contreras, p. 67.


49 Poole, Moya de Contreras, pp. 67-68.
the episcopacy but also, to a certain extent, the Spanish monarch. This meant that the struggle between the regular clergy and the bishops — not to mention the conflict between the regular and secular clergy — would take place within the context of royal attempts to centralize and control the Church in the New World.

By the early years of the seventeenth century, Indian Christianity had obtained a certain degree of autonomy because of the conflict between the regular and secular clergy. Often Indians were shunted aside when the two branches of the clergy clashed. A key point of contention was that of competence in the ministry, which, in New Spain, was linked invariably to the mastery of indigenous languages. In 1555, the First Provincial Council decided to include native languages as tools of evangelization. The friars who best knew the languages, since they spent so much time in Indian towns and villages, would be the best prepared for the task. The bishops and diocesan clergy disagreed vehemently, although they offered little proof that they had the necessary linguistic skills to minister to Indian communities. The regular clergy, on the other hand, often retaliated by emphasizing the ignorance of the diocesan clergy in matters of Indian culture. Moreover, the mendicants claimed that the secular clergy did not have the best interests of the Indians at heart, because they were interested primarily in making a living.⁵⁰ In response, the bishops and diocesan clergy accused the regular orders of being more interested in the advancement of their orders than they were in the spiritual and physical well-being of their

---

⁵⁰ Poole, Moya de Contreras, p. 69.
Indian doctrinas. Some bishops even charged them with brutality toward Indians, and there were enough episodes of abuse to support the accusation.\textsuperscript{51}

The corporate "pride" of the mendicants also irked the diocesan clergy, not only because it was matched by a corresponding disdain for those who were not religious, but also because the secular clergy did not have any special founder, habit, or rule around which they could rally. In reaction, particularly during the time of the Third Provincial Council (1585), some diocesan cleric began to refer to themselves as wearing the "habit of Saint Peter," thus reiterating the fact that their foundation antedated that of any religious order. One of the more curious manifestations of this hostility, as Poole as documented, was a custom whereby some of the mendicant superiors would punish their delinquent subjects by depriving them of their religious habits and forcing them to dress like secular clergy. Many diocesan priests were furious, of course, over what they considered an insult to their sacramental state and identity, and they petitioned the Third Provincial Council to put an end to this local monastic practice.\textsuperscript{52}

Episcopal hostility toward the mendicant orders simmered throughout the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. While most bishops had neither the political will nor the institutional means to wage jurisdictional war on the regular clergy -- as evidenced by the fact that the regular clergy continued to expand far beyond the Central Valley of Mexico between 1540 and 1640, despite regular complaints against monastic expansion. Palafox's exercise of episcopal power in

\textsuperscript{51} Poole, \textit{Moya de Contreras}, pp. 69-70.
Puebla, however, would alter the ecclesiastical landscape of the diocesan church, not to mention its spiritual geography. In 1640, Palafox decided to do what other bishops throughout New Spain never could or would do: eject the mendicants from most of their doctrinas and install diocesan priests in their place. While the mendicant orders in general were the targets of his secularization program, the Franciscans bore the brunt of Palafox’s deployment of power.

By the middle of the sixteenth century, the spiritual care of the Indians in the Valley of Puebla was almost exclusively in the hands of the Franciscan friars. Even the Indian barrios within the city of Puebla and the town of Atlixco were under their care. Diocesan priests found themselves tending to the spiritual needs of just a few pueblos in the sparsely populated area east of Tepeaca and Tecamachalco. The order also administered schools in Cholula, Tlaxcala, and Puebla, as well as hospitals in the most important cabeceras. The Valley of Puebla was part of the Franciscan Province of the Holy Gospel, which comprised the doctrinas in the Dioceses of Mexico City and Puebla. The superior-general of the order resided in the viceregal capital. The order attained and exercised their ministry because of its pioneering efforts to convert Indians to Christianity. In fact, the ecclesiastical administration of both the valleys of Mexico and Puebla was initially in their hands. Soon, however, the friars shared power with other mendicant orders, particularly the Dominicans and Augustinians.

———. Poole, Moya de Contreras, p. 70.
The friars were influential advocates of dividing colonial society into two republics: la república de españoles (republic of Spaniards) and la república de indios (republic of Indians). Arriving in the New World with millenarian visions of the Apocalypse, the Franciscans wanted to separate their new charges from the more polluted and corrupt aspects of European society. Each population (Spanish and Indian) would get its own world, or república, and its own system of governance. In the Indian world, therefore, native leaders decided civil matters while indigenous spirituality fell under the purview of the Franciscans. It became apparent that Franciscan expectations were too lofty, and the friars had to accommodate themselves to a demographic reality: despite devastating population loss, indigenous communities continued to outnumber the Franciscans. In other words, the number of friars structurally fell short of being able to administer adequately all Indian towns. The Franciscan Provincial repeatedly urged the monarchy to send reinforcements, but his pleas fell on deaf ears. Therefore, in 1567, the Franciscan community was forced to abandon a number of remote doctrinas and concentrate on what it considered to be its core

areas, mainly the immediate rural environs around the cities of Puebla and Mexico.  

In 1583, in what appeared to be a severe setback for the Franciscans, the Third Mexican Provincial Council, convened by Archbishop Pedro Moya de Contreras, prohibited the mendicant orders from conducting parish work. According to the official view of the normal ecclesiastical hierarchy, the Indians had become sufficiently Christianized and, therefore, no longer required the services of the regular clergy. By the end of the sixteenth century, the advantages of having the mendicant friars spread the faith had disappeared, especially in light of Habsburg attempts to reform the administration of the colonies. The necessity to do so became more apparent to both the archbishop and Spanish crown when the Franciscans began to oppose attempts to reform the maintenance of Indian communities. From about 1560, the Spanish Crown, therefore, decided to strengthen the position of the secular clergy and support episcopal prerogative.

Initially, the episcopal campaign to curtail and eventually erode the power of the regular clergy faced limitations. For example, the Spanish monarchy weakened the final decrees of the Third Mexican Provincial Council, which, in effect, allowed the friars to remain in the doctrinas and function as parish priests. This royal decision reflected a Mexican reality: it was impossible to replace the regular clergy in the doctrinas with enough well-trained and competent diocesan

---

54 Hoekstra, Two Worlds Merging, p. 163.
priests. Moreover, the mendicant orders enjoyed the support of the viceregal government. Viceroyals in particular were generally engaged in a fierce competition for power with prelates, especially the archbishop of Mexico. By the late 1630s, it was apparent that the normal ecclesiastical hierarchy had failed to drive out the Franciscan order and their mendicant counterparts – a process known as secularization. This changed when Palafox arrived in 1640 as bishop of Puebla.

Few historians have studied Palafox’s secularization program. Jonathan Israel argued that it reflected how the political struggle for power between peninsulares and creoles also played out in the ecclesiastical arena. Palafox’s support of the predominantly creole secular clergy threatened the political interests of the peninsulares in Mexico City. V. Piho posits that the crucial factor in the decision to secularize the doctrinas was Palafox’s desire to find new sources of financial support for diocesan priests. He also was obliged to finish and consecrate the cathedral, which would require a considerable sum of money. Rik Hoekstra suggested that an important factor in the secularization process was “the person of Palafox, who did not find his match among the bishops of seventeenth-century Mexico.” David Brading has argued that Palafox’s hierarchical vision of the Church had no place for what he encountered in Puebla upon his arrival in 1640, that the greater part of his diocese was under the

---

55 Israel, Race, Class, and Politics, p. 206-207; V. Piho, La secularización de las parroquias en la Nueva España (Mexico City: Editorial Porrua, 1981), and Hoekstra, Two Worlds Merging, p.165.
monastic guardianship of the regular clergy. A staunch supporter of the Catholic monarchy, the bishop found little room for independent religious orders like that of the Franciscan order. He considered their position in the diocese to be an excess of power. For Palafox, the mendicant retention of parishes was an affront to the divine order of the Church, an order carefully delineated by the Council of Trent. To inject any corporation or alien authority between a bishop and his flock was to distort "that most beautiful and ineffable harmony of the hierarchies which unites Church Militant and Church Triumphant," since it divorced the 'path of jurisdiction' from the 'path of grace'.

Palafox employed a metaphor to underscore his opposition to the mendicant doctrines, a metaphor that illustrates quite nicely the bishop's view of the institutional Church's role in society. The human body has different parts, Palafox wrote, and each part has its own tasks and functions. The Church, too, comprises different parts, and each part has its appropriate task to perform. The secular world also has its constituent parts, with the Spanish monarch occupying the primary position on the body, that is, the head. Because of these parts, tranquility and peace should – in theory – govern people's lives and conserve the public faith in institutions. Simply put, hierarchy provided order and beauty. Within these corporate structures existed a diversity of occupations, offices, and responsibilities. In the Catholic Church, after the pope and cardinals, bishops occupied the highest step on the ecclesiastical ladder. Their duty was to govern

---

the souls of the faithful who resided within their jurisdiction. Diocesan priests
were entrusted with the administration of parishes and the day-to-day affairs of
liturgical life. The regular clergy, however, occupied the lowest rung, since their
primary task was to assist the secular clergy's efforts to sustain the faith, which
they achieved, according to Palafox, through a diligent prayer life within the walls
of their monasteries and convents.\footnote{\textsuperscript{57}}

The human body does not substitute one member for another, Palafox
wrote, only in times of urgent need. And even then, such substitutions went
against the natural order. Maintaining the natural order, of course, was part and
parcel of maintaining the peace and tranquility of the faithful. The bishop
provided concrete examples to illustrate his point. For example, the clergy can
assume the role of soldier when there are no soldiers to be found. The laity can
preach and baptize when there are no diocesan priests located in the parishes.
The diocesan clergy can administer convents and monasteries only when there
is an absence of regular clerics. Finally, the regular clergy can govern the people
of God when there are no secular priests available to do so, or as Palafox put it,
a person can walk on his hands only when he or she lacks feet.\footnote{\textsuperscript{58}}

\footnotetext{\textsuperscript{57}} Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, \textit{Alegaciones en favor del clero, estado
eclesiástico i secular, del obispado de la Puebla de los Angeles}, 1640, Biblioteca
José María Lafarguá, Benemérita Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Puebla,
Mexico [hereinafter BL], SL4, NV1, ET9, SC1, EP1, f. 2-2v.

\footnotetext{\textsuperscript{58}} Palafox y Mendoza, \textit{Alegaciones en favor del clero}, BL, SL4, NV1, ET9, SC1,
EP1, 1640, f. 3.
Palafox defended his hierarchical structuring of society by arguing that four distinct laws governed the world: divine law, canon law, natural law, and royal law. The Royal Council of the Indies, of which he was a leading member, had always defended the ordering of Spanish society along these lines. Conflict was ensured, the bishop argued, when this order was disturbed, distorted, or manipulated. He appealed to the Spanish Crown to remedy the situation and return balance to the natural order by supporting his secularization program. In fact, the laity expected the monarchy to maintain this order.  

Palafox’s insistence that monastic control of the doctrinas constituted disorder was part of a much broader – and cynical – view of the regular clergy. The mendicant friars conducted the daily affairs of their doctrinas in ways that enriched their respective orders, the bishop charged, while diocesan priests struggled to maintain minimum levels of subsistence. Despite their commitment to a life of evangelical poverty, the mendicants occupied many of the wealthiest parishes in Puebla. For proof of such extravagance, one simply gazed upon the magnificent monasteries and churches that graced their doctrinas. The secular clergy, on the other hand, whose numbers Palafox fixed at 700, lacked a regular benefice. Another 200 men were near the end of their training and were to receive major orders, that is, the sacrament of ordination, and so the number of

---

59 Palafox y Mendoza, Alegaciones en favor del clero, BL, SL4, NV1, ET9, SC1, EP1, 1640, f. 3v.

60 Palafox y Mendoza, Alegaciones en favor del clero, BL, SL4, NV1, ET9, SC1, EP1, 1640, f. 3v.
diocesan priests was closer to 900. He informed the Crown of his desire to found three seminary colleges that would ensure an abundance of well-trained priests, particularly in the field of Indian languages. To date, the survival of the secular clergy depended upon the occasional stipend to say Mass, the largesse of the poblano elite, or worse – hiring out their services to a group of mendicants that had spread themselves too thin. At the same time, the friars persisted in their customary opposition to episcopal visitation and the canonical installation of curas, Tridentine and royal decrees notwithstanding.\(^{61}\)

Exercising the power of his office, Palafox secularized thirty-six doctrinas within a six-month period starting in December 1640. He employed a dimension of conciliar law that allowed bishops to examine the qualifications of all ordained men who performed sacramental duties in their dioceses. Palafox informed the mendicant prior of each doctrina to submit their priests to episcopal examination or face the confiscation of their parishes. Caught off guard, the mendicant leadership responded clumsily, saying that it was impossible for them to comply with the stipulated time limit, since it was not in their power to act without first receiving permission from their superiors in Mexico City. Palafox replied that he would not permit the mendicant friars to use such a cumbersome and bureaucratic process to circumvent episcopal prerogative. The Franciscan order suffered the greatest loss: thirty-one doctrinas. The Dominicans were denied three doctrinas, and the Augustinians lost two. Only one mendicant doctrina, a

visita in Atlixco, escaped secularization because its pastor complied with Palafox's order.®

Since the rural doctrinas were considerably larger than urban parishes, Palafox multiplied the number of benefices, installing no less than 150 secular clerics to serve as pastors and vicars.® Palafox wrote that the Franciscans in particular resisted his efforts, despite royal decrees that were issued in support of the bishop's actions. For example, the friars used the bully pulpit to deliver scathing sermons denouncing Palafox as a usurper of monastic privileges that the pope himself had guaranteed. They appealed to Viceroy Escalona, hoping to counter the pledges of support that Palafox had received from the city councils of Mexico and Puebla. Initially, the viceroy stayed neutral. When other bishops in New Spain decided to follow Palafox's lead, albeit hesitantly, Escalona decided that Palafox was tearing apart the fabric of colonial society.® He denounced publicly Palafox's secularization of the doctrinas, declaring that he would prohibit any further attempts to eject the regular clergy. Moreover, he directed the

®®Brading, First America, p. 235.

®®Israel, Race, Class and Politics, p. 209. Palafox's lawyer in Madrid, Fernando Ortiz de Valdés, who defended him at the royal court, noted that the bishop of Nueva Vizcaya had seized a number of Franciscan doctrinas. In another incident, conflict erupted between the bishop of Oaxaca and the Dominicans. See his Defensa canónica por la dignidad del obispo de la Puebla de los Angeles, 1648, Biblioteca Palafoxiana, Puebla, Mexico [hereinafter BP], Piso 1, Casilla 285, Libro 33, f. 191v.
alcaldes mayores to undermine an order that Palafox had issued as visitor-general that sought to reform the draft of Indian labor.\(^65\)

Escalona's support of the mendicant cause pushed Palafox to assemble quickly his case against the viceroy regarding the Portuguese question. He accused Escalona of failing to take adequate measures to prevent a rebellion among the Portuguese living in the viceregal capital, even suggesting that the viceroy was sympathetic to his cousin's new position as king of Portugal.\(^66\) The results were predictable. The Count-Duke of Olivares and the royal court, anxious over the loss of Portugal and Catalonia, were in no mood for another disobedient aristocrat. Secret orders, dated 18 February 1642, empowered Palafox to dismiss Escalona as viceroy and assume the position himself.\(^67\)

For their part, the Franciscans eventually yielded to the bishop's power, especially when their viceregal support evaporated upon Escalona's exit from New Spain. And except for a few, sporadic episodes of violence directed at secularization, the vast majority of Indians who had been under the spiritual care of the Franciscan community voiced little protest. As Rik Hoekstra has argued, the Franciscan friars had become estranged and distant from their Indian charges, and their financial exactions on Indian communities further widened the gap between priest and penitent. During the course of the late sixteenth and

\(^{65}\) Israel, *Race, Class and Politics*, p. 209.

\(^{66}\) Israel, *Race, Class and Politics*, pp. 211-212.

\(^{67}\) Israel, *Race, Class and Politics*, p. 212.
early seventeenth centuries, Indian pueblos throughout the Diocese of Puebla began to forge a collective identity, looking more and more like well-defined units of social and political organization. By this time, the social position of caciques and principales, which had been undermined during the years immediately following the Spanish conquest, consolidated again. As a result, Indian towns and villages were becoming part of the colonial landscape, or as Hoekstra puts it, "the pueblos were settled firmer in the society of New Spain."68 Although the doctrinas had played an important role in Indian society during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the caciques' and principales' dependence on the Franciscan friars began to diminish.

Another factor that widened the gulf between the Franciscan and Indian communities was the heavy financial burden that the former placed on the latter. The Franciscans exacted large payments from their charges, much more so than the Augustinians or Dominicans.69 Since the regular clergy remained outside of the normal ecclesiastical hierarchy, they had no rights whatsoever to the tithe. They received an income from tribute that Indian pueblos paid to the Crown or encomendero, but these monies were supposed to be insufficient for their sustenance, considering that the mendicants pledged a life of poverty. The Franciscans, therefore, were dependent entirely on alms from the faithful, which

68 Hoekstra, Two Worlds Merging, p. 167.

69 Hoekstra, Two Worlds Merging, pp. 166-171.
was, of course, entirely in line with their mendicant ethic. These alms, however, soon assumed an institutionalized form, as the friars were included in the tribute system. Consequently, the alms were, in fact, tribute. In Tepeaca, for example, the Indian community there spent approximately 30% of its income, some 325 pesos, on their Franciscan doctrinero. The Indian leadership complained to the Audiencia in 1595 that the Franciscans demanded too many financial contributions from them, and soon the Indians of Acatzingo followed suit. Moreover, many indigenous towns and villages in the Valley of Puebla also complained of Franciscan interference in the labor draft, which, despite its abolishment in 1633, the order continued to rely upon.

The growing chasm between the Franciscan order and Indian communities caught the attention of a few Franciscan friars themselves. Torquemada and Vetancurt recognized that the initial bonds of friendship and mutual support had weakened considerably since the late sixteenth century. Both clerics attributed the increasing lack of understanding between caciques and doctrineros to the decline in moral standards within the Franciscan community. The idealism of those early days of spiritual conquest – when millennial images permeated the Franciscan evangelization program – gave way

---


to complacency and decadence.\textsuperscript{73} Palafox, sensing the time was right for a change in ecclesiastical leadership, wielded the power of his office to remove the Franciscans from their doctrinas. In contrast to what was to be the pattern of secularization during the era of the Bourbon Reforms in the eighteenth century, however, Bishop Palafox allowed the friars to retain their monasteries and churches. He was obliged to construct a considerable number of new churches for those parishes now administered by the secular clergy.\textsuperscript{74}

In other dioceses throughout the colony, the mendicants continued to administer a large percentage of parishes until the middle of the eighteenth century – up to 25\% of the total number in the Archdiocese of Mexico City and the Diocese of Michoacán, according to David Brading.\textsuperscript{75} In many ways, therefore, Palafox anticipated subsequent royal measures taken by the Bourbon dynasty to curtail the power and influence of the regular clergy. No wonder the Bourbon king, Charles III, actively supported the movement to canonize the bishop in 1763.

After secularizing so many doctrinas and installing the diocesan clergy into their new parishes, Palafox turned his attention to the spiritual welfare of his flock. With his 'magistrates of the sacred' now in the position to shape the contours of daily life, the bishop began to implement reforms in the liturgy and

\textsuperscript{73} Hoekstra, \textit{Two Worlds Merging}, p. 169.

\textsuperscript{74} Brading, \textit{First America}, p. 236.

\textsuperscript{75} Brading, \textit{First America}, p. 236.
prayer life. Indians were no longer subject to monastic customs and traditions of spirituality; rather, Tridentine spiritual and cultural practices were to inform their daily lives. To achieve a successful transformation, however, Palafox needed to redesign the liturgical landscape. He had to cultivate and sustain the spiritual vitality of his priests, as well as that of the laity.
Chapter 2

Inscribing the Solemnity in Liturgical Reform: Prayer, Gesture, and the Mass

When the Minister of Culture for the State of Puebla, Héctor Azar, organized the 350th anniversary festivities for the Biblioteca Palafoxiana in 1996, he included a concert of epigraphs and sonnets set to classical music in the city's cathedral. Employing an ancient form of the Church's liturgical psalmody, Azar replaced scriptural psalms with several lines taken from Palafox's poetry (he also added his own sonnets) to create *Salmodia Palafoxiana*. With a full accompaniment of string, percussion, woodwind, and brass instruments to provide music for the *Salmodia*, Azar and the Coro del Benemérito Instituto Normal del Estado transformed a few lines of the bishop's poetry into quasi-liturgy. Palafox most certainly would have disapproved of substituting his poetic metaphors for biblical verse, but this probably never crossed the minds of those poblanos and visitors who gathered around the bishop's cenotaph to attend the concert. The first antiphon, however, evokes quite nicely Palafox's liturgical sensibilities: today the sun of wounded love, the new shepherd comes to be.2

The new shepherd is the resurrected, triumphant Christ who gives light to his

---

1 A collection of psalms, taken from the Old Testament, set to music and sung as part of public worship or community prayer.

flock. And, to the shepherd of Puebla and his seventeenth-century flock, Christ's real presence in the bread and wine was instituted each time a priest celebrated the Mass.

Liturgy as a sacramental rite imbued with cultural meaning has escaped the scholarly purview of most historians of colonial Latin America. Deciphering discrete portions of ecclesiastical texts in Latin or italicized scriptural citations located in the margins of ceremonials appears more suited to the canon lawyer or theologian. Moreover, despite the historical centrality of the Mass, as well as the seven sacraments to Catholic culture, historians have examined almost every other dimension of the colonial Catholic experience except liturgy and prayer.³ Perhaps scholars view the Pater Noster, Ave Maria, or Hoc Est Enim Corpus Meum⁴ as official prayers of the institutional Church, whose significance remained hidden behind complicated Latin syntax that parishioners (and not a few clergyman too) failed to grasp. Even Bishop Palafox might have agreed in

³ Among historians of the colonial Church, William Taylor comes closest to evaluating the sacramental character of Catholic liturgy and everyday life. Even Professor Taylor's study, however, stresses the priest-parishioner relationship within the context of late colonial political culture. The actual rites of baptism, Holy Communion, penance, marriage, anointing of the sick, holy orders, and confirmation play a smaller role in his monumental work. Prayer as both a public and private extension of Catholic liturgy also remains outside the scope of Taylor's research. See his Magistrates of the Sacred: Priests and Parishioners in Eighteenth-Century Mexico (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), especially pp. 77-124, 239-264. Most historical studies produced in the last ten years examine a few liturgical expressions of Catholicism to emphasize the practical aspects of confession manuals, or other bilingual tools of evangelization such as doctrinas and grammar books, as well as sermons.

⁴ The 'Our Father,' 'Hail Mary', and 'This is My Body', respectively.
part with this view. Moreover, the mundane features of the Mass, rosary, and other liturgical rites and rituals, with their scripted formulas and responses, seem to demonstrate, on the surface, something less spectacular, less ideological than the extravagant religious and civic processions of Corpus Christi or Holy Week, for example.

Recent contributions to the new cultural history of Mexico provide theoretical and conceptual frameworks that interpret rituals and ceremonies within the context of power relations, popular culture, and resistance. In the introduction to their edited collection, Professors Beezley, Martin, and French argue that Spaniards used rituals to help establish their authority, legitimizing their rule through language and ceremony. Citing Clifford Geertz, in particular, the editors present ritual as the medium for rulers to act out the drama of their power. Beezley, Martin, and French, however, also posit that daily life itself is suffused with ritual performances that reinforce social hierarchies. Here they rely on the work of Rhys Isaac, who defined culture as a "multichanneled" system of

---

5 The edited volume by William H. Beezley, Cheryl English Martin, and William E. French serves as the best example of the "cultural turn" to power in Mexican studies. The editors of this collection, as well as the contributors, draw on Clifford Geertz, Michel Foucault, Antonio Gramsci, Dominick LaCapra, Rhys Isaac, Derek Sayer, and Philip Coorigan to explicate the nuances of public ritual and dramatizations of state power in Mexican history. See Rituals of Rule, Rituals of Resistance: Public Celebrations and Popular Culture in Mexico (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1994).


communication comprising language, gesture, demeanor, dress, and architecture.  

Linda Curcio-Nagy, one of the contributors to the volume, evaluated the festival of Corpus Christi in seventeenth-century Mexico City, where Indians and Spaniards, guilds and cofradías, parishioners and priests, participated in the festivities. While she directed some attention to the liturgical dimensions of Corpus Christi, the centrality of the Blessed Sacrament in Catholic worship is absent. Curcio-Nagy’s principal focus was ‘procession-as-spectacle’ and its uses as a tool of hegemonic control and institutional legitimation.  

She does illustrate, however, the deep resonance of the Eucharist among the laity. When, in 1692, the celebrations turned riotous, two Franciscan friars hoisted the Blessed Sacrament in the air, presumably in its sacred container, the monstrance, in an effort to calm passions and return tranquility to the city.  

We do know that cofradías and guilds throughout central Mexico regularly invoked the spiritual patronage of the Blessed Sacrament when naming their organizations. So while the feast day of Corpus Christi provided a clear and obvious reason to celebrate their spiritual benefactor, members and non-members alike experienced, at least once a week, the routine mysteries of the Mass that changed an ordinary wafer of unleavened bread into Corpus Christi.

---


In other words, the new cultural history of Mexico has yet to embrace the ordinary, everyday rituals that captured the attention, even if momentarily, of lay men and women and their local magistrates of the sacred. Historians need to locate and explain the discursive power of the routine and mundane dimensions of ritual.

Nicholas Dirks makes the argument that ritual is a term that sanctifies and marks off a space and a time of special significance. Ritual, he notes, is the principal site of cultural construction, and the study of culture is fundamentally about shared meanings and social values. The daily Mass, therefore, with its low-key yet dramatic moments, drew parishioners into churches, convents, shrines, and even the cathedral itself with the tolling of bells at prescribed times throughout the day. Ritual, he notes, is the principal site of cultural construction, and the study of culture is fundamentally about shared meanings and social values. The Mass drew parishioners into churches, convents, shrines, and even the cathedral itself with the tolling of bells at prescribed times throughout any given day. The Council of Trent had reconstituted the Mass as a series of profound words, statements, gestures, and hushed tones that indeed reflected shared meanings and the cultural values of the Catholic world. Again, while less dramatic than the rituals for Corpus Christi or Holy Week, daily and Sunday

---


liturgy provided critical moments for the assertion of the Catholic identity, as well as the articulation of rank and power located within the Tridentine regimen of daily liturgical practice. Conciliar prescriptions for the administration of the sacraments and for proper clerical and lay conduct during the rituals themselves, infused by a renewed sense of the pastoral dimensions of episcopal office, reinvigorated the exercise of ordinary power.

The everyday rites and rituals of Tridentine Catholicism, such as the Mass, formal veneration of the saints, or the rosary, consisted of overt and subtle gestures, murmurs, and changes in voice inflection that often have eluded historians of the colonial Mexican church. The oral recital of prayers, for example, as well as the aural and visual reception of the sermon, were effective means of impelling members of society toward cultural and spiritual integration. Those two Franciscan friars from Curcio-Nagy's work who exhibited the monstrance containing the Blessed Sacrament to quiet the rioting crowd employed the act of "raising Christ" for all to see, much like the way they would have done during any Mass or benediction to capture attention and incite awe.

---

13 Dirks, "Ritual and Resistance," p. 487. He examined the non-Christian festival of Aiynar in southern India. Dirks is concerned with teasing out how rituals restores social relations and uphold relations of authority, while at the same time serving as an important arena for the cultural construction of authority and the dramatic display of the "social lineaments" of power.

14 Anne J. Cruz and Mary Elizabeth Perry, eds., *Culture and Control in Counter-Reformation Spain* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), pp. x-xi. Gwendolyn Barnes-Karol's contribution to this volume, while focusing on preaching and praying in church, relies too heavily on the hazy concept of
As Anthony Cascardi has demonstrated in his research on Spain's Golden Age, culture as an ongoing process has the potential and ability to shape those who become subjects within it. The seemingly simple act of exposing an angry crowd to a potent sacramental symbol like the Body of Christ had been practiced over and over again in parish churches and convents during the days, weeks, and months before the actual feast day arrived. This suggests that the physical act of raising the Blessed Sacrament reminded the reveler, rioter, and silent witness of their "shared values," which had brought them to the zócalo in the first place. And by 1692, the clergy of central Mexico had come to revitalize the powerful imagery and symbolism of these rites and rituals as a result of the Tridentine reforms that Palafox had implemented some fifty years earlier.

If Curcio-Nagy's case study of the Corpus Christi festival illustrates the overlapping dimensions of extreme gesture, symbolic imagery, and the ritual of an annual event, it also directs our attention to the ordinary and simple gestures of sacramental rites and rituals that clerics and their parishioners made every day. The Concise Oxford Dictionary denotes gesture as "significant movement of limb or body" or "use of such movements as expression of feeling or rhetorical device," but as Sir Keith Thomas has pointed out in his introduction to an edited "psychological manipulation" to illustrate her point. See her "Religious Oratory in a Culture of Control," pp. 51-77.

15 Cascardi, Ideologies of Power, p. 12.
study of historical gesture, this narrow definition is a modern construct.\(^{17}\) Thomas argues persuasively that gesture is an inseparable accompaniment of any spoken language, amplifying, modifying, confirming, or subverting verbal utterance.\(^{18}\) While acknowledging that gesture as a subject of scholarly inquiry has received scant attention from historians, Thomas nevertheless demonstrates that gesture offers a prism into some of the fundamental values and assumptions underlying culture, including the capacity of gesture to differentiate and separate as well as unite. Moreover, he shows us that the body can transmit messages without any movement at all. In other words, to refrain from gesture by stifling symptoms of grief, for example, could be as demonstrative an act as bursting into tears.\(^{19}\) In many formal contexts, the liturgical in particular, the speaker’s posture, and in this case the bishop’s or priest’s, may be more important than the words uttered.\(^{20}\) Advocating the development of a “grammar of gesture,” Thomas explains the utility of such an exercise as being part of the larger task of

\(^{16}\) Here I rely on the editors of the *Rituals of Rule* volume, Beezley, Martin, and French, who state on page xxi that “revelers express shared values through ritual....”


\(^{19}\) Thomas, “Introduction,” p. 1.

reconstructing all the codes and conventions that create the context of meaningful behavior in the society under study.\textsuperscript{21}

Gesture constituted an important dimension within the daily rhythms of liturgical practice, and the Council of Trent established norms and procedures for its proper usage. Bishop Palafox issued a ceremonial so that priests and parishioners would know when to sit, stand, and kneel during the Mass according to the new Tridentine formula.\textsuperscript{22} The ceremonial even regulated the movement of the eyes, hands, arms, and head. Deference to the sanctity of the moment, in particular when the priest raised the paten and chalice that contained the consecrated host and wine, was exhibited by lowering one's head and eyes toward the ground. Clerics were expected to instruct the faithful in these practices, which the bishop recognized as vital to a pious and respectful disposition during the holiest of sacraments.

The introduction of the ceremonial into poblano catholic culture, with its prescriptions for proper behavior and correct gestures, serves as another example of Palafox's Tridentine sensibilities as bishop. And the ceremonial evokes Eric Van Young's interpretation of the commodification of culture. He argues that commodification occurred at various points in Mexican history, both in the sense that "signs were increasingly manufactured, consciously manipulated, and broadly diffused by powerholders to naturalize their

\textsuperscript{21} Thomas, "Introduction," p. 6.
authority."^ Certainly Palafox's enthusiastic support and funding of the first printing press in Puebla facilitated the process of cultural commodification, enabling him to direct his episcopal gaze to every corner of the diocese while inculcating the sacrality of conciliar reform into popular practice.^^ In theory, therefore, an elderly indigenous woman, attending the morning Mass on any given Sunday at her rural parish in Puebla's *sierra del norte*, raised her eyes toward heaven and knelt down during the consecration in the same manner and at the same time that a young Spaniard would while attending the mass in the Church of Santo Domingo in the city's downtown. While they may have understood and integrated the sacramental significance of the Eucharist in different ways, based on varying degrees of instruction and piety, the Indian woman of the countryside and the Spanish boy from downtown Puebla shared at least a formal sense of the sacred. Meanwhile, they both saw their priests sit, stand, kneel, bow, genuflect, and murmur words from afar. In fact, the Council of Trent obliged the clergy who presided at Mass to speak certain parts of the liturgy in soft tones, what was generally referred to as "en lo secreto." Bishop Palafox's ceremonial reinforced this Tridentine norm. Parishioners, therefore,

---


^ Beezley, Martin, and French, eds., *Rituals of Rule*, p. xix. The editors here argue that "invented traditions," and in the case of Palafox's ceremonial the tradition of prescribed gestures, can symbolize social cohesion, relations of authority, or systems of knowledge.
witnessed gestures and moving lips that allude to Eric Van Young’s notion that historians of culture should “avoid reading performances as mere texts for it is difficult to tease out...what is addressed to the audience or other actors sotto voce or whispered from the wings.” Both urban and rural priests had access to mysterious words that effected sacramental change in various material goods: unleavened bread, wine, water, oil, and salt, to name just a few. They also could utter statements that became blessings as soon as they were articulated, and in the process, for example, transform two ordinary tree branches into a holy object, the cross. These daily, routine dimensions of liturgy and prayer, blessings and benedictions, gestures and hushed voices permeated the contours of material life in Puebla. Bishop Palafox arrived in Puebla to rejuvenate and reshape those contours by employing the Tridentine letter and spirit of liturgical renewal.

The Third Mexican Provincial Council had initiated changes during the previous century to facilitate liturgical renewal, many of which, as we have seen, were inspired by Tridentine reform but languished as a result of indifference and local clerical disputes. Bishop Palafox, however, implemented more than the spirit of Trent, for he arrived in New Spain armed with the letter of the law and a profound sense of obligation to stimulate prayer life. His pastoral sensibilities transformed the liturgical dimensions of Mexican culture. In fact, the form and practice of Tridentine Catholicism that Palafox implemented both in Puebla and

---


26 See especially Poole, Moya de Contreras, pp. 163-203.
the greater Central Valley, including Mexico City, persisted in Mexico until Pope
John XXIII convened the Second Vatican Council in 1962.27

Tridentine decrees on the liturgy informed Palafox's understanding of his
canonical responsibilities as shepherd of a diocese. The decrees and reforms
also endowed his office with greater authority and power to effect sacramental
changes in the practice of Catholicism. As the previous chapter has
demonstrated, Palafox's exercise of episcopal power upset the delicate
arrangement that the regular clergy had established in the diocese. Liturgical
reforms, however, had less dramatic impact on the relationship between Palafox
and members of the regular orders, for he often drew upon the liturgical expertise
of the regulars to implement changes in the Mass and other sacramental rites.
The Franciscans and Jesuits, for example, were indeed necessary components
to a vibrant liturgical culture, even if Palafox often challenged the individual
behavior of certain members, or the collective behavior of certain orders. In this
respect, as Nicholas Dirks and others have argued so skillfully, culture, and in
this case the political culture of Tridentine Catholicism, was multiple discourse,
ocasionally coming together in large systemic configuration, but more often

27 Some aspects of Tridentine Catholicism continue to govern the Mexican liturgy
even today. For example, an acolyte rings a bell to summon the congregation to
kneel during the consecration, which lasts approximately five minutes, whereas
in other Catholic regions the faithful kneel during the entire liturgy of the
Eucharist. Of course, the spiritual context in which Catholics understand and
appreciate the Eucharist has changed because religious instruction and even
theology has evolved. But kneeling at a precise time during the liturgy in Mexico
remains constant.
coexisting within dynamic fields of integration and conflict.\textsuperscript{28} Even if local realities conditioned Palafox's reliance on the regular clergy for assistance, he always tried to define the relationship between himself and the regulars as one continuum in the exercise of ordinary power. And Tridentine reforms permeated the process to reinvigorate legitimacy in the exercise of episcopal power. As a result, liturgical practice was standardized.

European bishops who participated in the Council of Trent expended much energy to define precisely a bishop's role in liturgical development and implementation. The participants were well aware of the efficacy of the sacraments as divinely instituted rituals, as well as their deep resonance among ordinary lay Catholics. Chief among the sacraments was the Mass, the very core of late medieval devotion in Europe.\textsuperscript{29} Mass commemorated Christ's crucifixion, yet was far more than a memorial. Each mass was seen as being enriched with healing power to forgive sins and reconcile individuals to God. It did so because, by miracle, the bread and wine, while keeping their outward form, were transformed into the very body and blood of Christ.\textsuperscript{30} As one cardinal of the Church exclaimed in the early sixteenth century, "it [the Mass] invokes the sufferings of Our Lord and applies them to fallen man, bought at a great price

\textsuperscript{28} Dirks, Eley, and Ortner, \textit{Culture/Power/History}, p. 4.


\textsuperscript{30} Jones, \textit{Counter Reformation}, p. 11.
from the clutches of Satan, for healing and redemption. By it, He nourishes us
from his wounded breast.\textsuperscript{31}

Protestant reformers, however, challenged this Catholic idea of
transubstantiation a few years later by rejecting the real presence of Christ in the
bread and wine. Notions of a symbolic recreation of the Last Supper, in which
ordinary lay men participated, dominated Protestant discourse on the Eucharist.\textsuperscript{32}
Many Protestant reformers found little scriptural basis for the other sacraments
as well. The bishops who gathered at Trent, therefore, found it necessary to
ascibe strong canonical sentiment to liturgical reforms, in an attempt to counter
Protestant claims by clarifying and strengthening the bishop's role in the realm of
public prayer. The Mass, as well as the other sacraments, was, after all, a very
public expression of the intimate character of Catholic beliefs. It was the
commemoration of Christ's sacrifice for the salvation of humankind, and a priest
often said or sung the Mass in the public domain of parish churches. The Mass
was the most exalted expression of prayer in the Catholic world, even if the laity
and some clerics did not always understand the linguistics of it. Moreover, from
the perspective of the institutional Church, the link between prayer and the

\textsuperscript{31} Cardinal Cajetan in the year 1509, quoted in Jones, \textit{Counter Reformation}, p. 11.

\textsuperscript{32} Martin Luther, the Augustinian monk whose ninety-five theses precipitated the
Reformation, ultimately developed the concept of consubstantiation as a
theological counterpoint to Catholicism's embrace of transubstantiation.
Ironically, despite Luther's strong objections to various Catholic practices, his
consubstantiation mirrored the Catholic belief system on Holy Communion in
many important ways, especially the belief in the real presence of Christ.
celebration of the sacraments was neither abstract nor theoretical. In fact, the sacraments — and the rites and rituals that fashioned their material expressions — structured Catholic prayer life from the 'cradle to the grave.' From birth (baptism) to adolescence (confirmation), from adulthood (marriage or holy orders) to death (extreme unction), Catholics in the early modern world received Christ's grace when they celebrated the sacraments. Prayer was part and parcel of the sacramental experience.

Conciliar mandates regarding the liturgical dimensions of ordinary power are scattered throughout the decrees and reforms of Trent. Internal conflicts and political subterfuge often hindered the proceedings of the council, resulting in delays and postponement of discussion and agreement. But when the participants were able to define and decree the range and scope of ordinary authority, the episcopal dimensions of sacramental life crystallized. The most salient example of this comes from the fifth session of the council, which convened on 17 June 1546. The pastoral responsibility to preach the gospels and other sacred scripture during the Mass was defined explicitly: "But since the preaching of the gospel is no less necessary than instruction for a Christian state, and this is the chief task of the bishops [emphasis mine], the same holy council has decided and decreed that all bishops... who preside over the churches are personally bound... to preach the holy gospel of Jesus Christ [emphasis
The proclamation of the gospel during the Mass was one of two events where the bishop or priest addressed the congregation in the vernacular. In the case of seventeenth-century Puebla, this meant proclaiming the requisite passage from the New Testament in Spanish without the burden of complicated Latin formulas. Indian parish communities heard the gospel and sermon in their native tongue. Moreover, the homily, or sermon, which immediately followed the gospel reading, explicated the meaning or meanings of the biblical message in language generally understood by all. As a result, bishops wielded the power of interpretation to shape and influence the scriptural direction of Tridentine Catholicism. Obviously, the council hoped that ordinaries would employ this dimension of their power to instill and subsequently strengthen the teaching magisterium of the Church. In the Catholic world of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, bishops interpreted scripture, doctrine, and dogma for both the clergy and laity. More importantly, the pastoral obligation to instruct and interpret served as another vehicle for bishops to communicate directly with the faithful who gathered to celebrate Mass in the cathedral. The next decree on liturgy and episcopal authority highlights this point.

---


34 The sacrament of confirmation was another outlet; the pastoral visita was yet another, especially for those parishioners who attended mass in other parishes away from the cathedral. The latter will be discussed in detail in chapter four.
The council instructed bishops to use the homily during Mass to explain to the faithful "what is recited in the course of the Mass, and in addition to give some explanation of this mysterious and most holy sacrifice, especially on Sundays and feast days." Here the emphasis was not on the finer points of scripture or theology but the various segments of the Mass, e.g., *confiteor*, *gloria*, psalms, and the consecration of the host and wine itself. Since the bishops who gathered at Trent maintained the recitation of the Mass in Latin, this particular decree empowered bishops as interlocutors of sacred knowledge, "lest the sheep of Christ go hungry or the children ask for bread and there is no one to break for them." In theory, at least, bishops were now expected to explain the intrinsic and extrinsic value of the Mass so that lay men and women were one step closer to integrating into their lives the aura of Christ's ultimate sacrifice. The council considered this important enough to include it with the canons on the most holy sacrifice of the mass. Since the clergy were instructed to recite the words of institution in a "low voice," it became even more important for bishops to explain to the laity what was being uttered and why it mattered in their lives.

To inculcate a reverent and proper disposition during the liturgy, bishops were called upon to "keep out of churches the kind of music in which a base and

---

35 Council of Trent, Session 22, 17 September 1562, chapter eight on the teaching and canons on the most holy sacrifice of the mass, in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, p. 735.

36 Council of Trent, Session 22, in *Decrees*, p. 735.

37 Council of Trent, Session 22, in *Decrees*, p. 736.
suggestive element is introduced into the organ playing or singing, and similarly all worldly activities, empty and secular conversations, walking about, noises and cries, so that the house of God may truly be called and be seen to be a house of prayer." How could shepherds explain the efficacy of Christ's sacrifice if parishioners, or even other clerics, desecrated the "liturgical stage" with profane music, talk, and idle banter? Session twenty-four of the Council even stipulated that shepherds should preach "as often as possible for the salvation of the people...at least on every Sunday and solemn feast, and daily or at least three times a week during the seasons of fasting, namely Lent and Advent." What better way to discourage bad habits and foster piety and devotion than to have the shepherd himself celebrate the Mass regularly. The Council of Trent had reestablished the episcopacy as the institutional foundation of the faith, and bishops, therefore, became the primary builders of the new Tridentine edifice of Catholicism. The principal liturgical stage in any diocese was the cathedral, but any duly designated space, be it a parish church, hermitage, convent, or monastery could illuminate the new sacred rites and traditions of the conciliar faith.

Finally, the council ordered bishops to explain "in a way that those receiving can grasp...the power and benefits of the sacraments...so that the

38 Council of Trent, Session 22, in Decrees, p. 737.

39 Council of Trent, Session 24, 11 November 1563, Canon four of the decree on reform, in Decrees, p. 763.
faithful people may approach the reception of the sacraments with greater reverence and spiritual devotion." A fundamental cornerstone of Catholicism, the seven sacraments, which, as we have seen, structured the life cycle of Catholics from birth to death, was placed squarely in the hands of bishops. The council empowered them to translate into the vernacular and have printed for distribution a manual for the administration of the sacraments. Here the council was attempting to ensure that priests properly administered the sacraments "with devotion and wisdom." Far too often clerics remained ignorant of the correct procedures in ritual practices, such as when to pour water over an infant’s head during baptism or when to apply the sacred chrism, or holy oil. While seminary education, which will be discussed in the next chapter, offered a formal setting to educate and train priests in the art and craft of Tridentine Catholicism, those priests already ordained required an instructional manual to fulfill the obligations of their vocation. And administering the sacraments to their parishioners, including the celebration of the Mass, was part and parcel of their clerical duty. Since the average priest, be he secular or regular, had the most contact with the average parishioner, and thus was a local "magistrate of the sacred," bishops had to ensure that their point men were qualified sufficiently to engage in the salvation of souls. The liturgy and sacraments, as well as a healthy prayer life in general, were means to achieve that end.

40 Council of Trent, Session 24, in Decrees, p. 764.
41 Council of Trent, Session 24, in Decrees, p. 764.
Conciliar reform of the liturgy led to some radical changes in the way worship was managed. The invention of the printing press unleashed new possibilities for the Tridentine fathers to promulgate and disseminate decrees and reforms. The potential for liturgical uniformity encouraged bishops to develop, print, and distribute manuals, prayer books, ceremonials, breviaries, sermons, and pastoral letters. What better way to ensure that everyone, priest and penitent, was reading from the same page, or at least receiving the same critical information that bishops themselves had sanctioned. James White argues strongly that liturgical standardization was a new concept, radical in its implications but made possible by the technology of the printed book. By 1570, however, when a uniform Roman missal was issued, Catholic liturgical expressions of piety and faith drew upon a Roman Catechism (1556), a Tridentine profession of faith (1564), and a revised Roman breviary (1568).

Ironically, in early colonial Mexico, where evangelization of Indians dominated the sixteenth century, the work of the regular clergy likewise inspired regional usage, as Mendicant friars and Jesuits devised different bilingual

---

42 James F. White, *Roman Catholic Worship: Trent to Today* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1995), p. 9. White's study is the most comprehensive and useful description of the changes that the Council of Trent initiated in the liturgy.

43 White, *Roman Catholic Worship*, p. 10. He also posits that Lutheranism, by contrast, remained conservative in this fashion by continuing to rely on regional usage.

grammars, dictionaries, glosses, and psalmodies to spread Christianity. Dominican preachers in Chiapas evangelized the Maya with different printed, catechetical matter than that employed by the Jesuits in Sonora with the Tohono O'dham or the Franciscans in central Mexico with Nahua groups. The Third Mexican Provincial Council, however, did devote some time to formulating a number of books and manuals that were considered necessary for the proper functioning of the church in New Spain. Participants drew up a directory for confessors, a book of ceremonies, and two catechisms for the ecclesiastical province of Mexico. Of these liturgical texts, according to Stafford Poole, only one catechism was ever widely used, and that did not come about until the late colonial period. So while the Third Mexican Provincial Council provided some foundation upon which Bishop Palafox could redesign the liturgical landscape of Puebla and New Spain much of it was skeletal and unstable. And Palafox's ideas of liturgy, prayer, and the sacraments required something more concrete and tangible if the exercise of episcopal power was to effect changes in the daily lives of poblanos, be they clerics, women of the consecrated life, or lay men, women, and children.

Bishop Palafox's first pastoral letter as bishop of the Diocese of Puebla revealed a concern for prayer and pious devotion as vehicles for spiritual transformation of the mind and body, as well as extensions of formal liturgical

45 Poole, *Pedro Moya de Contreras*, p. 160.

46 Poole, *Pedro Moya de Contreras*, p. 162.
practice. Written in late 1640 while he was conducting the first phases of his residencia and visita of the viceroy in Mexico City, the letter clearly illustrated Palafox's desire to shape the hearts and minds of his priests to live the letter and spirit of Tridentine sanctity. He called them to prayer and mortification, those "wings of a spiritual life" by which the human soul travels to experience a higher level of divine experience.\(^{47}\) Palafox recommended thirty minutes of silent prayer everyday and, while he cautioned that this was no easy task, he assured his priests that these exercises made them true clerics.\(^{48}\)

At one point in his Manual del sacerdote, Palafox expressed a prayerful desire that his priests aspire "to be not only good, but perfect; not only perfect, but holy."\(^{49}\) He suggested two ways in which they could reach and sustain the sanctified state of their holy orders, and both involved aspects of a sound liturgical life, even if they seemed diametrically opposed to each other: silence and conversation. "Embrace silence," the bishop implored, "not only the kind which is to keep quiet, but the interior silence of passion, which is another deeper and difficult way of speaking."\(^{50}\) Here the bishop sought to foster a quiet intimacy

---

\(^{47}\) Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, Carta pastoral a la venerable congregación de San Pedro de la ciudad de Los Angeles y a los reverendos sacerdotes de todo el obispado, 12 November 1640, The John Carter Brown Library, Providence, Rhode Island [hereinafter JCB], BA640 P153c, fs. 19v.-20.

\(^{48}\) Palafox y Mendoza, Carta pastoral, JCB, BA640 P153c, fs. 19v-20.

\(^{49}\) Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, Manual del sacerdotes, 1664, JCB, BA664 P153c, f. 1v.

\(^{50}\) Palafox y Mendoza, Manual, JCB, BA664 P153c, f. 8.
within his priests so that they could confront each day renewed in spirit and ready to live out their vocations. He continued with his exhortation, saying "Never leave the temple of prayer; [while] in your own house, [or] on the street, in church, anywhere; listen to the apostle who says 'pray without intermission.'"^51 Prayer, it seems, was a *sine qua non* of sacerdotal life, and if secular or profane activities had marginalized prayer to the corners of priestly vocation, Palafox was determined to restore and renew it. Once an inward solitude was attained through prayerful meditation, clerics could then live out their faith so that others might see and emulate.

Conversation, on the other hand, was a dimension of preaching, or spreading the good news of God, but one outside the formal liturgical context of the Mass. A prayerful milieu would facilitate the task of speaking about God, of sharing "His glory" with the laity, which was one of the primary objectives of the priesthood.^52 Palafox advised his clerics to engage in discrete conversation with their parishioners about God, however, because far too often the secular world was accustomed to vulgar, profane chatter. As a result, parishioners might accuse their priests of hypocrisy when speaking to them of God.^53 One of the bishop's primary responsibilities was to foster a disciplined prayer life for the laity outside the confines of their parish churches.

---


Palafox began his tenure as bishop, therefore, by recommending a steady spiritual diet of prayer and self-flagellation, conjuring medieval notions of austere piety and zealous devotion normally associated with ascetic monks and hermits of the Middle Ages. But the letter and spirit of Trent made room for shepherds to tap into older Catholic practices, especially if they aided the implementation of reform.

Palafox expended much energy to cultivate a priesthood that reflected the Tridentine ideal of prayerful and devout clerics. The pastoral letter was one of several institutional devices that the bishop used quite frequently to foster that ideal. These letters often exposed both clergy and laity alike to scriptural, doctrinal, and sacramental matters that Palafox deemed necessary for the spiritual well being of his flock. One in particular, written in 1649, reiterated, the clerical obligation to a routine prayer life, which included the daily celebration of Mass with a spirit and demeanor that only the sacrament of penance could purify.\(^\text{54}\) Moreover, Palafox suggested that priests express their gratitude to God for being able to participate in such a “heavenly feast” by remaining in church to hear the next Mass. While he refrained from making the practice mandatory, the bishop reminded them that Judas had left the table without giving thanks, even

---

\(^{54}\) Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, *Puntos que el señor obispo de la Puebla de los Angeles, don Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, dexa encargados y encomendados a las almas de su cargo*, 29 April 1649 (Puebla: Gobierno del Estado), pp. 150-151.
though Christ had chosen to share his last meal with him. Here Palafox employed a powerful example from scripture, that of Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Christ when he left the Last Supper early to plot with Jesus' enemies, to illustrate a defective and empty “apostle” who had abandoned gratitude and thanksgiving for material goods. In some ways, the example of Judas contained a subtle message to clerics: temptation and the tendency toward dereliction of duty were located in profane, secular activities. They should show their gratitude to God, therefore, through constant prayer and liturgy for what He had bestowed on them. Once a bishop ordained a man with the sacred oils of the sacrament, he entered the sacramental state of the priesthood that set him apart from the rest of society in terms of vocation, mission, and responsibilities. As a result, Palafox reminded clerics of both their sacramental state and the privilege of being called to commemorate the Last Supper.

In his pastoral letters, Palafox spoke not only to men who had received holy orders, but also to women who had entered convents to wear the habit of their religious order. The fact that he addressed them after the clergy was yet another example of the hierarchy of the institutional Church as well as the gendered dynamics of the sacramental state within the Church. While nuns lived a consecrated life, the Church nevertheless forbade them to enter the

55 Palafox y Mendoza, Puntos, pp. 151-152.

56 William Taylor discusses the late colonial context of the sacramental state of priests in his work. See Magistrates of the Sacred, pp. 164-166.
sacramental state of the priesthood, which was reserved exclusively for men. Palafox used a phrase quite common to describe female vocation: “las esposas del Señor, las niñas de los ojos de Dios (the brides of Christ, children in the eyes of God).” Palafox reminded them of their duty to pray and meditate, “if they want to achieve the state of perfection.” It was possible, therefore, for women to experience the full glory of the divine but only within the context established by the male shepherd, Bishop Palafox. He told them to embrace a nightly regimen of self-examination of conscience, asking their “husband” and his mother, the Virgin, for assistance with the task. Critical assessment was part and parcel of a nun’s journey to Christ’s loving heart. And frequent reception of the sacraments, therefore, was even more important for religious women of the habit, for it illuminated the spiritual marriage between them and Christ, a reminder of the sanctity and perfection of sacramental efficacy itself. While the bishop implored nuns to adhere faithfully to the rules and constitutions that governed their respective orders, some of which he had written himself, his emphasis on routine prayer and liturgy revealed the pastoral sentiment of his office that permeated the exercise of ordinary power.

57 Palafox y Mendoza, Puntos, p. 175.
58 Palafox y Mendoza, Puntos, p. 177.
60 Palafox y Mendoza, Puntos, p. 181.
Nuns were indeed members of the community of believers who had integrated the mystical body of Christ, as defined by the Church, into the core of their belief system. And as the shepherd who nurtured the core, imbuing it with salvific purpose, Palafox breached the walls of convents to foster Tridentine sensibilities of obedience to ecclesiastical authority. Christ was not only their husband, the bishop wrote, but their father, creator, and redeemer. Bishops had the power, and canonical obligation, to inscribe the theological dimensions of Christ into the boundaries of female religious existence. Embracing and integrating these multifaceted dimensions through vigilant prayer, meditation, and frequent reception of the sacraments permitted nuns, according to Bishop Palafox, to serve Christ in dutiful fashion.

Priests and nuns were not the only members of the Catholic community in Puebla that the bishop addressed. Palafox also devoted a portion of the pastoral letter to the laity, entrusting them to take great care of their prayer life by avoiding work on feast days and observing the laws of the Church regarding the sacraments. He reminded them of their obligation as Christians to hear Mass and pray the rosary, even if they were in a state of sin. The God of mercy and his compassionate mother, assured the bishop, would take pity on their

61 Palafox y Mendoza, Puntos, p. 182.

62 Palafox y Mendoza, Puntos, pp. 181-182.

63 It should be noted that Palafox's exhortation to "hear mass" in this instance did not include the reception of the Eucharist. Formal confession was required before any Catholic in a state of mortal sin could receive Holy Communion.
weaknesses and forgive them, even if a state of grace was impossible to attain for unconfessed mortal sins. Here Palafox implored his flock to remain faithful to Catholic devotional practice even if sin had muddied the path to grace. It seems, though, that the bishop favored a daily routine of prayer and supplications over the frequent reception of the sacrament of confession. Perhaps he was being practical; not everyone rushed to the confessional before mass every week, so it was better to have the laity at least maintain vigilance in their prayer life. Besides, Trent only required formal penance and the reception of the Eucharist once a year during Eastertide.

Finally, Palafox outlined eight steps to a devout recitation of the rosary. He told the laity to gather in their homes as a family every evening to engage each of the prescribed steps. Close the doors, take a head count, and offer yourselves to God and his mother, Palafox wrote. Banish into the night those cursed acts committed during the day. Cleanse the air that had been poisoned by these cursed acts, flushing out spiritual enemies from within. Alleviate the soul and moderate passion. Open the door to spiritual light by praising God and his mother. Call upon the Virgin Mary to intercede on your behalf so that her Eternal Son may enter. Here Palafox devised a spiritual journey for poblano families, one that encouraged a disciplined routine of shared prayer, thanksgiving, and cleansing of the mind and body. But the journey also

---

64 Palafox y Mendoza, Puntos, pp. 191-192.
65 Palafox y Mendoza, Puntos, p. 194.
illustrates the pastoral dimensions of episcopal power, for Palafox the shepherd was wielding his crozier to endow the personal space of the laity, the home, with a structured prayer life. Here, too, the bishop crossed the threshold of familial space to give an institutional, as well as a public dimension, to private devotion. To Palafox, the public and private were not two distinct, unrelated manifestations of temporal space; rather, they comprised overlapping dimensions of material existence that sustained the rhythms of daily life. And certainly the Council of Trent empowered the office of bishop to define and inscribe the sacramental attributes of those rhythms.

Bishop Palafox demonstrated for the laity the liturgical blending of the public and private through the visita pastoral. While the visita will be examined in chapter five for its reflection of power relations, for now it provides yet another example of sacred rites and rituals. In conducting the visita of each parish within his jurisdiction, Palafox exercised an important dimension of his power, that of personally attending to the spiritual and material well being of his flock, which included the celebration of the Mass and the administration of the sacrament of confirmation. The rationale offered by the council revealed the preoccupation with absentee bishops, a problem widespread in Europe during the fifteenth and

66 The council decreed in unequivocal fashion that bishops “had to attend to their flock.” See Council of Trent, Session 6, 13 January 1547, Chapter Two of the decree on the residence of bishops and others of lower rank, in Decrees, p. 682. Session 24, which was convened on 11 November 1563, ordered bishops to personally visit their dioceses once a year, or at least every two years if his jurisdiction encompassed a large area. See Canon 3 of the decree on reform, in Decrees, pp. 761-762.
sixteenth centuries. How could the ‘people of God’ be renewed in their faith or rejoice in the Lord if their shepherd did not visit them regularly?\(^{67}\) Renewal and praise, as we have seen, were located in liturgy and prayer, both of the routine and spectacular kind. The pastoral visita itself was a ritual but not a liturgical one in the strict sense; rather, liturgy and prayer were sacramental rites that the bishop performed and administered during the visita. The visita generally reflected the power of a bishop to inspect, modify, transform, and invade the intimate space of parish priests and parishioners. In fact, the pastoral visita made the parish church the locus of contact between the shepherd and his flock. And by engaging in liturgical acts, both of a public and private kind, Palafox demonstrated episcopal support for a disciplined and vigilant sacramental life.

Palafox organized a series of liturgical acts that placed him in the center of parish life, even if only for a few days. Vested in his episcopal garb and carrying the crozier (shepherd’s staff), symbol of his office, he was greeted by the parishioners and escorted inside. If Palafox visited a rural parish, the laity met him on the outskirts of town; when visiting parishes within the city of Puebla the faithful greeted him at the main entrance of their church building. There the local pastor welcomed him and together they entered the church, the laity behind them in procession.\(^{68}\) In dramatic and pious fashion, the shepherd knelt down on the

\(^{67}\) Council of Trent, Session 23, 15 July 1563, Canon 1 of the decree on reform, in Decrees, pp. 744-746.

\(^{68}\) Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita eclesiástica que hizo de una parte de su obispado, el altísimo y excelentísimo señor don Juan de Palafox y
steps of the main altar to lead the faithful in prayer. The altar was the principal stage for celebrating the Mass, and here the bishop showed his humility and respect for such a holy place by kneeling down. After a few moments of guided prayer and solemn silence, Palafox proceeded to the altar to bless the parishioners who had gathered to receive his episcopal graces. Standing alone in the sanctuary, surrounded by the tabernacle, candles, ornate retablos, and wearing the official vestments of his office, Palafox certainly demonstrated the full spectacle of the episcopacy. And according to his own account, the faithful, the people of God arrived in large numbers to receive him. But imparting episcopal blessings was not enough for Palafox, or other bishops for that matter. Liturgy, prayer, and other sacraments were important elements of the visita too.

Even before conducting the visita, Palafox had sent a memorandum to the various pastors, ordering them to prepare lay candidates for the sacrament of confirmation. The Council of Trent had addressed confirmation in its proceedings as a response to those Protestant reformers who balked at its efficacy as a sacrament. The Tridentine fathers decreed that it was not an empty ceremony, and it was indeed capable of imparting the gifts of the Holy Spirit, as the Catholic Church had declared for centuries. Moreover, the council clarified existing practice by placing the administration of the sacrament in the hands of

---

Mendoza, año 1643, Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid, Spain, Manuscript 4476 [hereinafter BNM, ms.], f. 3.

60 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BNM, ms. 4476, f. 3.
To formally receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit, therefore, parishioners could not rely on their parish priests, as was the custom in some areas of Mexico before Trent; rather, the shepherd himself would have to administer the sacrament when he passed through their towns to conduct the visita. But Palafox had to rely on the local clergy to explain the “virtues, effects, and properties” of the sacrament to those about to receive, especially in those communities where the dominant language was Náhuatl or Otomi. The bishop mandated that candidates confess their sins before receiving the sacrament, and he prohibited men from acting as padrinos for women, and women for men during the ceremony. Whether the latter reflected local custom or Church-sanctioned gender segregation is not clear from the extant documentary record. Moreover, Palafox provided no description of the actual ceremony, only to say

---

70 Council of Trent, Session 7, 3 March 1547, Canons on the sacrament of confirmation, in Decrees, p. 686. The third paragraph of the canon is quite explicit regarding the proper minister: “If anyone says that the ordinary minister of holy confirmation is not a bishop only but any simple priest: let him be anathema.”

71 The gifts of the Holy Spirit, as defined by the Catholic Church, were, and still are: counsel, fortitude, fear of the Lord, knowledge, piety, understanding, and wisdom. The newly revised Catechism of the Roman Church cites Tridentine practice as authority on the issue: “...Confirmation is only given once, for it too imprints on the soul an indelible mark, the “character” which is the sign that Jesus Christ has marked a Christian with the seal of his Spirit by clothing him with power from on high so that he may be his witness.” See Catechism of the Catholic Church (New York: Doubleday, 1995), p. 364.

72 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BNM, ms. 4476, f. 3v.

73 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BNM, ms. 4476, f. 4.
that he administered the sacrament according to the prescribed rites. The number of lay Catholics, both Indian and Spanish, who received the sacrament from the bishop will be discussed in chapter four.

After Palafox fulfilled his pastoral responsibility to administer the sacrament of confirmation, he drew the faithful together yet again — this time to facilitate a devotion to the Virgin of the Rosary, a manifestation of Christ's mother. The bishop included in his itinerary this kind of communal prayer and veneration to Mary each day of the visita. As we have seen earlier, the bishop included veneration of the Virgin Mary, 'Mother of God,' in his pastoral letters to the laity, even developing eight steps to a meditative recitation of the rosary. Palafox left little record of which manifestation of Mary he preferred. In the pastoral visita he advocated devotion to the Virgin of the Rosary. In his *Manual del sacerdotes*, Palafox concluded his pastoral advice to the clergy by telling them that they should locate a devotion to “la Reyna de los Angeles, Maria,...en medio del corazon.” Perhaps the bishop was alluding to the full name of his diocese, Puebla de los Angeles. In another instance, this time the donation of his personal library to the city in 1646, Palafox included a retablo that contained an image of the Virgin of Trapana, a popular manifestation of Mary in the European Alps. On still another occasion, when the bishop consecrated the cathedral in 1649, he did so in the name of the Immaculate Conception. Finally, Stafford Poole notes that Palafox ordered the image of the Virgin of Remedios to

---

be brought into Mexico City, probably to stave off drought. What is clear, however, is that Palafox integrated Marian devotion into his own spiritual life, and he shared his liturgical enthusiasm for Mary with his priests and lay flock. William Christian sheds light on the nature of Marian devotion in early modern Spain, giving us an idea of how Palafox and his flock might have approached veneration: "Mary's intercession was more emotional, desperate, and vulnerable, less stately, queenlike and dignified. It represented the ultimate humanization of her figure...."

Palafox also fulfilled another Tridentine liturgical mandate when he celebrated the Mass every day for parishioners during his pastoral visita. Before he commenced the liturgy, however, the bishop made himself available to administer the sacrament of penance or reconciliation to those who wanted to take advantage of confessing their sins, although he did not make it mandatory. But those parishioners who did confess their sins could receive the Body of Christ "de mano de su excelentísimo (from his most Excellency's hand)." Whether the act of receiving the consecrated host from the shepherd himself served as an incentive to confess remains unclear. While language certainly

---


77 Palafox y Mendoza, *Relación de la visita*, BNM, ms. 4476, f. 4.
hindered effective and meaningful interaction between shepherd and penitent in Indian parishes, Palafox noted his attempts to learn the rudiments of Náhuatl.78

The bishop took great care, or so he wrote in his relación, to say mass and preach to the people. A platform was constructed high enough, and a chair placed on the dais, so that he could preach and be heard by all. The platform was raised even higher when parishioners packed the church "to hear the voice of their shepherd," which, according to Palafox, was quite often.79 On the last day of his visita, Palafox preached especially to local Spaniards who either resided in town or nearby haciendas. That Indians were strictly forbidden to attend this particular liturgy seems unlikely because Palafox himself noted that Indians attended the Mass, and he claimed that many of them had a strong grasp of Spanish.80

Palafox left no record of what type of mass he celebrated, e.g., High Mass or Low Mass, nor did he provide the contents of his sermons. The raised platforms, high chair, overflowing crowds, full episcopal garb, and an entourage of clerics suggest that the bishop took advantage of every opportunity to demonstrate "dignidad episcopal" (episcopal dignity) in the celebration of the sacraments and public prayer. While "transforming" bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, for example, Palafox was clearly set apart from those

78 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BNM, ms. 4476, f. 4.
79 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BNM, ms. 4476, f. 4v.
80 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BNM, ms. 4476, f. 4v.
priests who gathered to concelebrate the mass. Liturgical dress served as one marker, because concelebrants wore the simple cassock (black) and surplice (white), if available. Perhaps they also donned a stole that reflected the color of the liturgical season (green for ordinary time, for example). More often than not, however, parish priests and their parishes lacked the basic liturgical vestments and sacred objects that the institutional church required of them.\textsuperscript{81}

With his crozier (staff), mitre (episcopal headdress), and episcopal vestments, Palafox stood out. The faithful witnessed an extraordinary display of ecclesiastical authority and episcopal majesty that Palafox orchestrated at every turn. But below the surface of liturgical pomp and circumstance, and often overlooked by historians, resided the efficacy of the sacraments, the salvation of souls, and the merits of a disciplined prayer life, all of which infused Palafox's exercise of ordinary power. While he may have raised the paten and chalice dressed in splendid vestments, Palafox wanted to demonstrate both the intrinsic and extrinsic value of routine liturgical participation and reception of the sacraments. As one Tridentine decree put it, "no doubt...the faithful are more readily aroused to the practice of religion and innocence of life if they see bishops and priests absorbed in the salvation of souls."\textsuperscript{82} Palafox appreciated the letter and spirit of this decree. He employed the extraordinary to illuminate

\textsuperscript{81} See Chapters Four and Five.

\textsuperscript{82} Council of Trent, Session 25, 3-4 December 1563, Chapter 1 of the decree on general reform," in Decrees, p. 784.
the ordinary. Put another way, Palafox imbued a routine Mass with all the trappings of his office to illuminate the centrality of the Eucharist in the lives of Tridentine Catholics. Moreover, those in attendance also saw the bishop perform acts and gestures, as well as utter statements sotto voce, often in the same manner that their parish priests had done every Sunday at mass. Palafox was both an ordained priest and a duly consecrated bishop. In most circumstances, he followed the same rubrics that his priests followed when saying the Mass. And the bishop knew them well, considering that he ordered them printed for distribution so that every cleric within the diocese followed a uniform code of proper liturgical conduct.

Published in 1647 with Palafox's episcopal imprimatur, the Ceremonial de la misa conformed to the rite of the new Roman Ceremonial issued by the Congregation of Sacred Rites with the approval of Pope Urban VIII. Although popular usage conflates the ceremonial and the ritual, they are, in fact, distinct. The ceremonial consists of the formal actions that constitute the liturgy (for example, when to make the sign of the cross, when to genuflect, etc). The ritual, on the other hand, reveals the form of words that accompany the ceremonial (for example, the words of institution that turn the wafer and wine into the Body and

---

83 Regarding the role and function of the Congregation, James White argues that the "innovation of being constituted a body to pass judgment on the propriety of worship practices around the world did not inhibit the Congregation from exercising its power with diligence." See his Roman Catholic Worship, p. 30.
Blood of Christ). Both are patterned forms of behavior, generally communal and consisting of prescribed words and actions; a special kind of language is evident, both verbal and non-verbal. Bishop Palafox assigned to Pedro Salmerón, a diocesan priest who had earned a licentiate, the task of composing the ceremonial for the diocese. While the bishop entrusted a secular cleric with the responsibility, he also knew that few secular priests possessed the requisite training in formal liturgy that was needed to examine the ceremonial and provide it with a theological stamp of approval. After Salmerón fulfilled his duty, therefore, the ceremonial angelopolitano passed through the hands of Father Andrés Pérez, rector of the local Jesuit college, and Fray Luis de Santiago, definidor of the Carmelite Order. Both of these regular clerics approved the ceremonial, ordering it "to be kept and observed in the diocese...[in order] to have uniformity in the various ceremonies of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass." Another Jesuit priest in Mexico City, Esteban de Aguilar, provided the necessary censura to print the book, thus illustrating that regular clerics and a secular bishop could indeed work together to advance the Tridentine cause. The Jesuits

---


were not as “anti-Trent” as the bishop would have the Spanish king believe. Even with a particular set of rules and regulations that governed the internal workings of their order, Jesuit clerics still celebrated mass for public consumption in much the same manner and form as that of diocesan priests. Interestingly enough, Father Aguilar issued the printing license in the same year (1647) when the Society of Jesus and Bishop Palafox had declared “jurisdictional war” on each other. So despite conflict and heated polemic, the liturgy continued.

Once the license to print was in hand, Palafox ordered all priests within his jurisdiction to have a copy of the ceremonial under penalty of twenty pesos, should they choose to ignore the mandate. Any money collected as a result of sacerdotal negligence, Palafox wrote, would be used for pious works. How the bishop enforced the edict remains unknown, especially since he received the censura to print the book in late 1647, well after he completed his last pastoral visita. But the fact that he found it necessary to raise a penalty in the first place demonstrates that the exercise of episcopal power constituted material as well as pastoral dimensions. Threats of financial harm must have resonated with the clergy, considering that so many of them lived at the subsistence level.

Father Salmerón’s prologue to the ceremonial mirrors quite nicely Palafox’s own sensibilities regarding proper liturgical conduct. He spoke of priests as “public ministers” of the Church, whose vocation required a “high level

---

87 Palafox y Mendoza, Ceremonial, BL, SL4 NV1 ET11 SC2 EP4, f. ii vuelta. Despite his zeal for obras pias, Palafox would have been delighted, we can assume, if he never had to impose and collect the fine.
of sanctity and evangelic perfection...in the administration and exercise of the holy sacrifice [of the mass]." Without regulations and guidance, Salmerón wrote, priests commit "inexcusable errors" during the mass, and in the process, they violate their vow of obedience and commit sin. He also implored his brother priests to take the time to learn the prescriptions of the ceremonial and to avoid any reliance of memorization. Salmerón equated memorization with haste, preferring that priests understand the significance of what they were doing instead of relying on rote learning, which ultimately set a bad example for the laity. Finally, Salmerón acknowledged three "priests" who either encouraged him during the process or drafted ceremonials that served as a basis for his own: Fray Alonso de Jesús María, prior of the Convent of Discalced Carmelites in Puebla and a "great teacher of ceremony"; Father Bartolomé Gavanto, professor and a consultant with the Congregation of Sacred Rites in Rome; and Pope Urban VIII, whose own ceremonials Salmerón used in the construction of his own text. The ceremonial, therefore, was not peculiar to the Diocese of Puebla;

---

85 Palafox y Mendoza, Ceremonial, BL, SL4 NV1 ET11 SC2, f. v. Here the cleric feared that the "bad example" would serve as a vehicle for the laity to mock and ridicule the priesthood. Salmerón must have thought that there had been plenty of "bad examples" in the past to justify such a statement. Palafox's goal, therefore, was to set the "right example" through the ceremonial.

86 Palafox y Mendoza, Ceremonial, BL, SL4 NV1 ET11 SC2, EP4, fs. v-v vuelta. Salmerón went on to state that the transgression was a venial sin, although it could become mortal.


rather, it reflected a Tridentine desire to establish norms and procedures
governing the celebration of the Mass, and Salmerón used fragments of other
liturgical guides to comply with Palafox’s mandate.

The ceremonial consists of thirty chapters, a series of prayers and
indulgences, and last minute additions and reminders. With its scriptural and
scholarly citations in the margins, as well as Latin and Greek sprinkled
throughout the text, the ceremonial directed the body language, speech, and
conscience of those priests authorized to celebrate liturgy. Its author and
patrons assumed several things: that priests could read Latin and Spanish, as
well as the occasional Greek; and that the clergy understood the citations located
in the margins to be authoritative proof of the veracity of each gesture and
utterance. If priests lacked strong linguistic skills, the establishment of the new
Tridentine seminary would provide them with formal training. And if their
knowledge of scripture and dogma had faltered, the seminary also would address
the problem by offering the necessary courses. As chapter three will
demonstrate, Palafox founded seminaries not only to instruct young men in the
Tridentine practice of Mexican Catholicism but also to “rejuvenate” the art and
craft of priestly vocation in those men who had already received holy orders.

As this chapter has demonstrated, a dimension of this art and craft
consisted of celebrating mass, to which end Palafox directed the ceremonial. But
what did priests do before they entered the sanctuary to begin the liturgy? It is
not too difficult to imagine parishioners in colonial Puebla asking the very same
question. Behind the closed door of the sacristy, how did clerics prepare for Mass? Here the ceremonial opened a window into the very private and intimate nature of liturgical preparation. While pacing back and forth as he tried to find the right words for his sermon, the priest also was required to recite prayers from the breviary, specifically the Matins and Lauds, which constituted the night and morning hours of the divine office. Designated the public prayer of the Church and recited or sung in monasteries, convents, and cathedrals, the divine office structured, at least in theory, the prayer life of priests, nuns, and the laity. Scriptural psalms and proverbs made up a large part of the divine office, and as a result it was given the title "psalter." While the ceremonial provided few clues as to the efficacy of such an exercise, it certainly illustrated the Tridentine preoccupation with fostering a daily regimen of prayer and meditation.

The ceremonial angelopolitano added to the regimen by including Pope Gregory XIII's indulgence of fifty years to any priest who recited the prayer that the Supreme Pontiff himself had devised. Bishop Palafox offered his own indulgence of forty days (not quite as generous as the Successor of Peter) to clerics who recited his supplications for the living and dead. The bishop gave them two options to earn their indulgences: they could recite his prayers in

---

92 It must be stressed, however, that the ceremonial, as is the case with any book of assigned prescriptions and regulations, reflects ideal behavior and not what necessarily happens.


silence at any time during the day, or if they chose to say them aloud, the spiritual exercises would have to be finished before the priest celebrated mass. The options revealed once again Palafox’s support for quiet contemplation and formal prayer among his priests. And indulgences were part of the “spiritual and material arsenal” at his disposal to encourage prayer. He used indulgences, for example, in his pastoral letter to the clergy and laity in 1649, as a way to influence the spiritual direction of his flock so that they maintained sacramental diligence in their daily lives.\textsuperscript{95} If the clergy or laity wanted to relieve the punishment owed to them in purgatory for their sins they could use one of many devices, such as duly constituted prayers, to expiate their transgression. Indulgences, therefore, acted as spiritual incentives to “wipe out” the material punishments that awaited sinners in purgatory. After earning their indulgences through quiet meditation or verbal prayer, the priest was now prepared spiritually to commence the Mass.

The ceremonial evokes images of the Mass as liturgical theater in seven acts.\textsuperscript{96} Each act contained a script with words to be uttered or sung and gestures

\textsuperscript{95} Palafox y Mendoza, \textit{Puntos}, p. 147. The faithful, including the clergy, received forty days of indulgence if they fulfilled the sacramental obligations that Palafox had entrusted to them, namely the prayers and other liturgical expressions of the Church discussed earlier in this chapter. Interestingly enough, Palafox also asked for their prayers. Even bishops needed people to pray for them.

\textsuperscript{96} The ceremonial assigned seven parts to the Tridentine mass: the opening act consisted of the Sign of the Cross, the \textit{confiteor} (“I confess”), the introit (psalm), and the \textit{kyrie eleison}, the Greek for “Lord have mercy.” The second part comprised the \textit{Gloria in excelsis Deo}, or “Glory to God in the Highest.” Part three was the gradual and tract, two preparatory exclamations for the liturgy of the
to be made. Historically the Church recognized two manifestations of the Mass: High Mass, or *missa solennis*, and Low Mass, or *missa orate*. The former displayed the full liturgical splendor of Church ritual, with its music, choir, incense, candles, and host of ecclesiastical dignitaries, including the principal celebrant (bishop or priest), concelebrants (other clergy), deacons, and subdeacons. Moreover, most of the High Mass was sung by the presiding cleric, or celebrant. The latter, Low Mass, consisted of a priest, who recited the words, an acolyte, and two candles placed on the main altar. Due to the shortage of priests in many parts of Catholic Europe, however, a compromise was struck, allowing for the *missa cantata* to be celebrated in lieu of High Mass when parishes lacked the requisite ecclesiastical personnel. It was still a sung Mass, but it did not require the participation of deacons, subdeacons, or the use of incense, an array of candles, and procession. Called the *misa cantada* in Spanish, it was employed more often in the rural parishes of the Diocese of Puebla, owing to the shortage of clerical manpower. Since many rural parishes also lacked a church organ or choir, local pastors had to rely on the Low Mass to...
expose the faithful to Christ’s sacrifice. Each manifestation of the Mass, however, disclosed the public and private gestures, prayers, and utterances of liturgy. While the High Mass certainly illuminated the liturgical capacity of the Tridentine Church to inspire and kindle holiness among the faithful, the Low Mass also achieved the desired effect, although its subtlety can be elusive.

During Low Mass on any given day of week, including Sundays, the faithful saw their priest leave the sacristy bowing as he approached the steps the altar. According to the ceremonial, the cleric should contort his body into a "profunde inclinatus," a profound, reverent bow, even suggesting how he should do it: "Estas inclinaciones profundas se haze en la postura, que está el cuerpo llegando con los dedos a las rodillas...." ([the priest] bows forward until the fingers [clasped in prayer] meet the knees). The laity witnessed this reverent bow several times during the Mass, including each time the priest passed the main altar, during the confiteor, and at the conclusion of the liturgy when the priest exited the sanctuary. The ceremonial also designed a series of short, minor bows and nods for the priest to perform, especially during the Agnus Dei (Lamb of God), and every time he uttered the name of Christ, whether in a hush or loud tone. While bowing represented a sign of respect and reverence for various dimensions of the liturgy, the act of genuflecting demonstrated humility, submission, and deference. But the two gestures were often done in sequence, with the bow coming first followed by genuflection. Thus the ceremonial

97 Much of my discussion draws on MacGregor, Dictionary, pp. 402, 417.
developed a hierarchy of gesture to demonstrate the sanctity of certain liturgical moments. Swaying certain parts of the body, like nodding one’s head, for example, served to infuse the Mass with physical movement. When priests fell to their knees and genuflected before the Blessed Sacrament they demonstrated to those in the pews that the human body served the needs of liturgical expression. The physical act revealed humility and veneration. In one respect, the ceremonial facilitated a parallel unity of gesture, even if momentarily, as both priest and parishioner dropped to their knees during the consecration. But this unity of gesture was fleeting, because the ritual context of the Mass called for the priest to guide, direct, and lead the people. Moreover, the ceremonial required him to utter certain statements so softly, en secreto, that the faithful grasped little of their significance. Since the priest’s back was turned to them the faithful relied on his gestures and movements to find meaning in the moment.

The ceremonial prohibited the celebrant from saying certain words and phrases “en voz clara (in a clear voice).” Only the celebrant himself was allowed to hear “las cosas que le dizen con secreto…que solo el Sacerdote las oyga, y no los circunstantes, aunque esten muy cerca, pero con cuidado, y espacio, porque no se dexen algunas palabras….” (things said in secret…that only the priest hears and not those in attendance, even if they should be nearby, but with care and enough distance because no words should be left out).99 As the priest washed his hands during the offertory, for example, in preparation for the Liturgy

---

98 Palafox y Mendoza, Ceremonial, BL, SL4 NV1 ET11 SC2 EP4, fs. 4v.–5.
of the Eucharist, he asked God to purify his heart and cleanse him of sin. The laity did not hear his request. Only the priest had access to these secret words, words that contained elements of the mystery of the paschal sacrifice. And the ceremonial reminded the clergy of their responsibility to preserve the veil of secrecy, or face anathema: "porque el secreto en la Missa tiene grandes mysterios, y el Santo Concilio anathematiza al que dixere...." (because the secret of the Mass has great mysteries, the Holy Council [of Trent] curses whoever shall speak of them [in a loud voice]). The routine of a daily Mass, therefore, reflected a curious blend of sacramental rites, public affair, shared responses, and hidden meanings that fostered a liturgical intimacy between priest and communicant. But it was an intimacy conditioned by the ceremonial of the institutional Church.

Palafox's reform of the liturgy and his prescriptions for a healthy prayer life expressed the pastoral sensibilities of episcopal office. He employed the various liturgical dimensions of the pastoral visita to act out the drama of his authority in very public fashion. Moreover, in his efforts to define the cultural boundaries of Tridentine reform in Puebla, Palafox used rituals, rites, and prayer to assert a revitalized Catholic identity. The bishop approached daily prayer, for example, as a vehicle to fashion spiritual and cultural integration. His Tridentine vision for

---

100 Palafox y Mendoza, Ceremonial, BL, SL4 NV1 ET11 SC2 EP4, f. 34.
101 Palafox y Mendoza, Ceremonial, BL, SL4 NV1 ET11 SC2 EP4, f. 34v.
Puebla suggests that he saw uniformity and standardization as a means to promote and sustain the faith, as well as strengthen the 'spiritual fabric' of catholic identity and community solidarity. Moreover, the clergy were expected to conform to Tridentine prescriptions for liturgical uniformity and a routine prayer life. Bishop Palafox wanted to fashion a new diocesan priest who would be better prepared to meet the spiritual needs of the people as well as serve the interests of episcopal authority. The establishment of seminary education would provide Palafox with the institutional framework to shape young men into Tridentine priests.
Chapter 3
Defining the Pedagogy of the Sacred: Material and Cultural Dimensions of Seminary Education

Organizers of the Third General Conference of the Latin American Episcopate (CELAM), which was held in Puebla during the latter part of January 1979, selected the Pontificio Seminario Palafoxiano Angelopolitano as the principal meeting site for the gathering of bishops, theologians, and laity. Moises Sandoval, editor of the progressive Catholic magazine *Maryknoll*, suggested that the organizers, whose conservative credentials were well established, chose the locale for specific reasons. Set within an eighty acre campus surrounded by a stone wall over ten feet high and located on the northeast outskirts of the Puebla, the Seminario Palafoxiano provided an ideal location, according to Sandoval, for those conservative bishops who wanted to isolate themselves from “troublesome elements and unwanted participants.” One unexpected participant, however, was the new Bishop of Rome, Karol Wojtyla, who had assumed the Chair of Peter a few months earlier as John Paul II. The new pontiff decided to convene

1 Moises Sandoval, “Report from the Conference,” in *Puebla and Beyond*, eds. John Eagleson and Philip Scharper (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1979), p. 29. During the colonial period, the seminary, named for the apostle Saint Peter, was located in downtown Puebla, across the street from the cathedral and in-between the episcopal residence and Saint John's Seminary College. The seminary was moved to its present location after World War II. Sandoval’s reference to “troublesome elements and unwanted participants” alludes to proponents of liberation theology, Marxism, and feminism.
the conference in person, and as a result Mexico, and by extension Puebla, became the first overseas destination of his pontificate. That the seminary itself symbolized the first contact between the pope, Latin American bishops, and the Mexican faithful was evident in John Paul II's opening address on 28 January 1979, when he implored bishops to foster priestly and religious vocations and lay communities to respond to the call of service.²

Upon entering the grounds of the seminary, the pope, no doubt, also saw the imposing statue erected to honor the seminary's founder, Bishop Palafox. Quite often visitors can see seminarians studying their theology texts, reciting the divine office, or fraternizing near the statue during recess, a contemporary echo of William Taylor's assertion for the colonial period, that solid academic credentials coupled with bonds of friendship must have been important for future priests.³ In seventeenth and eighteenth-century Mexico, where most seminary students would have known one another, either as family members or neighbors, and where few left their home diocese when they began their pastoral work, academic success and kinship networks were quite necessary for upward mobility in ecclesiastical circles.⁴ Palafox's establishment of the first formal Tridentine seminary in New Spain illustrated another exercise in the pastoral

² Pope John Paul II, "Opening Address at the Puebla Conference," in Puebla and Beyond, p. 70.
³ Taylor, Magistrates of the Sacred, p. 88.
⁴ Taylor, Magistrates of the Sacred, pp. 88-90.
dimensions of episcopal power, whereby he created an institutional framework from which to foster these priestly networks, instill Tridentine values, and overhaul the religious and spiritual formation of young men who desired priesthood.

The bishop's exercise of episcopal power, however, went beyond the material foundations of a new seminary. Palafox exercised the power endowed in his office to shape, order, and direct the lives of boys and young men who entered the seminary. By mandating rules and regulations for proper conduct and a regimented course of studies, the bishop imbued seminary life with Tridentine sensibilities of the sacerdotal ideal. From dawn till dusk, students experienced the routine nature of their vocation, which included formal academic training, spiritual exercises, and the art and craft of the priesthood, as envisioned by the Council of Trent and implemented by Palafox. The bishop's exercise of his authority, specifically here in the realm of seminary education and sacerdotal conformity, illuminates the political culture of Tridentine reform as an ongoing process that had a shaping power over those who became subjects within it.5 Conciliar mandates regarding seminary formation, especially their emphasis on discipline, academic study, and daily spirituality, informed Palafox's exercise of episcopal power, the effects of which governed seminary life in the Diocese of

---

5 Cascardi, *Ideologies of History*, p. 12. Cascardi was referring to the Baroque dimensions of the Counter-Reformation, but since his conceptual framework mirrors my discussion of culture as a continuous process, I have drawn on it here to augment my analysis.
Puebla throughout the colonial period and beyond. Palafox arrived in 1640, however, both the colony and diocese lacked a concrete foundation on which to construct the Tridentine edifice of seminary education, because previous attempts to do so, specifically those made by the Third Mexican Provincial Council in the sixteenth century, failed to generate the necessary administrative and fiscal support required for the exercise.

In his study of the Third Mexican Provincial Council, Stafford Poole examined the memorials or reports submitted to the bishops for their consideration, one of which concerned the Tridentine decree on seminaries. This memorial, written and submitted in 1585 by the visitor and provincial of the Jesuit order in New Spain, Juan de la Plaza, addressed the state of seminary education in New Spain. There was at that time no systematic structure for the education and preparation of priests, and neither were there any educational prerequisites. A man could earn a degree at a university and then present himself to a bishop for ordination; he could be ordained without ever having studied theology. As Poole has shown, preparation took no other form than that of simple apprenticeship to a priest or bishop. The Jesuit author of the memorial

---

6 Nicanor Quiroz y Gutiérrez examined the longevity of Palafox's contributions to poblano seminary life, demonstrating that the spirit of his rules and regulations for the institution survived well into the twentieth century. See Historia del Seminario Palafoxiano de Puebla, 1644-1944 (Puebla: Ediciones “Palafox,” 1947).

7 My discussion of pre-Tridentine priestly formation follows Poole's conceptual framework. See Poole, Moya de Contreras, pp. 130-132.
began his discussion by citing the colony’s lack of adequate training and preparation for priests as a task that demanded the council’s immediate attention. The temple of Solomon provided an appropriate metaphor for de la Plaza’s argument: good priests were the stones with which the new temple – that is, the Church – would be rebuilt. In support of this, he quoted in its entirety the Tridentine decree on seminaries and also gave a brief historical summary of how priests had been trained up to this time. From the time of Saint Augustine on, the common method had been to have the candidates live in the homes of bishops to learn from them. The Jesuit encouraged the bishops who had gathered in Mexico City for the provincial council to continue this practice as a means of personally inspiring their future priests.

This method, however, had not always proved practical because of a lack of space and money, and so, de la Plaza wrote, the Council of Trent had decreed the erection of seminaries. The biggest obstacle to implementing this decree remained the lack of funds, which was the principal reason why seminaries had not succeeded up to that time. Still, he considered New Spain ripe for such a seminary and suggested that the college of San Juan Letrán would be suitable for conversion into one. As it turned out, however, the bishops at the council did not accept his suggestion and continued to depend on the university as a source of priests. Poole goes on to state that the Tridentine form of seminary never became general in the Mexican church, precisely for the reasons cited by de la Plaza. The first seminary in Mexico City, called “conciliar” even though it did not
conform exactly to the Tridentine model, was founded in the 1690s. Perhaps Poole was referring specifically to the Archdiocese of Mexico City, because Palafox's establishment of a diocesan seminary in the Diocese of Puebla in 1644, as this chapter will demonstrate, conformed to both the letter and spirit of the Tridentine decree.

While seminaries and seminary life have only recently attracted the attention of historians, a body of cultural theory exists that can shed light on the institution as another dimension of what Foucault called "a new economy of power relations." Since the Council of Trent sought to transform both the institutional and spiritual life of the Church, the participating bishops had to orchestrate an unending project of moral regulation and rule by defining, or in some cases redefining, canonical identities. Seminarians became a new

---

8 Poole, Moya de Contreras, p. 261 n. 14.

identity within the Church and society, and the office of bishop helped to shape, locate, and develop their identities as a stage between the lay and clerical states. Power, and in this case the exercise of episcopal power to found seminaries and foster seminarian identity, established routine procedures that both nurtured vocations and governed the daily practice and application of the sacramental life. And since local bishops drew on local families to cultivate vocations and enroll their children in diocesan seminaries, they linked civil society to the well being of the institutional church.

Michel Foucault argued, however, that the Tridentine decrees on education directed power in a vertical trajectory, that is, top-down, and while this was certainly true in the general sense, he failed to note that the episcopal responsibility to locate and ignite vocations within boys and young men also depended on a series of spiritual, political, and economic factors that local families, and even local communities influenced. Erratic and unreliable sources of family income, one's social standing in a community, a devout parent, or the

---

10 Beezley, Martin, and French, "Introduction," in Rituals of Rule, p. xix. By canonical identities, I mean the juridical and social status of men and women who entered the sacramental state of life through ordination or vows. Canon law defined and governed the obligations, duties, and responsibilities of each canonical identity.


encouragement of a local priest all played roles in a child’s decision to ‘answer the Spirit’s call to service.’

Once male youth heeded the call to service, they engaged in what can be called a “commerce of power and knowledge,” whereby rigorous study and routine practical experience, as defined and directed under episcopal auspice, fashioned an experience of the sacramental life that was directed and acted out within the institutional framework of the diocesan family. In fact, seminary life comprised multiple and often overlapping experiences that reflected the complexities of attaining priesthood. Because seminary life structured and organized time and space for its students, a young man’s experience in class at one point in the day complemented and sustained previous as well as subsequent experiences in other parts of the day. Concretely, the practice of ritual and ceremony during morning class clarified theological principles taught the previous evening, while at the same time prepared students for an afternoon session of homily, or sermon techniques.

In many ways, the Tridentine predilection toward a series of carefully delineated experiences designed to nurture and sustain vocations in students explains how the organization of time and space embodied the assumptions of age, gender, and social hierarchy upon which the seminary way of life was

---

13 Here I borrow from the introduction by Dirks, Eley, and Ortner, who cite Donna Haraway’s theoretical framework for a “commerce of power and knowledge” as useful in reconstructing socially constructed identities and their links to power relations. See the editors’ “Introduction,” pp. 10-13.
built. As seminarians grew up and matured within these spatial and temporal forms, they came to embody those assumptions, or put another way, seminarians naturalized the sacramental order that had directed their lives for so many years. The routine exercises of daily ritual, prayer, study, and meditation, all variables within institutional experiences, kindled in students the sacramental character of the priesthood, as well as the pastoral dimensions of ecclesiastical hierarchy. As such, bishops were nurturers of this order, shaping and imparting new canonical identities on students, who in turn, through daily practice, naturalized the boundaries of their priestly aspirations. As a result, seminary culture, in theory, was a shared experience between teacher and student, bishop and teacher, and ultimately bishop and student, although the ecclesiastical leadership defined its sacramental and canonical dimensions. The Tridentine decrees on seminary education, therefore, sought to create a durable and coherent system of ecclesiastical socialization. The Tridentine fathers did not decree any single act of association as requisite for canonical identity but rather manifested the sacramental order of the priesthood on each and every occasion during the students' course of studies. In seminary life, therefore, social and cultural acts became acts of self-constitution, but the pastoral hand and episcopal gaze of the local bishop was ever present.

---

Bishops who participated in the Council of Trent recognized that any reform of the abuses, complacency, and lethargy of the institutional church had to include a 'structural renewal' from within if the council's agenda was to have a profound impact on the faithful. The seminary became the linchpin of clerical formation and reformation. The bishops also took steps to ensure that, once ordained, priests would continue to 'fine-tune' their sacerdotal ministry through continuing education programs. As one historian of the Catholic Reformation put it: "it would not be an exaggeration to say that, if the Council of Trent had done nothing else for the renewal of the Church but initiate the setting up of diocesan seminaries for priests, it would have done a great deal."  

Understanding Tridentine definitions of the priesthood and sacerdotal life helps to explain conciliar reforms in education and training. The bishops convened session twenty-three on 15 July 1563 to clarify canonical responsibilities and obligations of priests, and in the process, constructed the conciliar ideal of the priesthood. Ultimately, the council's definition influenced the establishment and trajectory of seminary education, for it explicitly linked the

---


17 Jones, The Counter Reformation, p. 96.

18 Jedin, quoted in Olin, Catholic Reformation, p. 32.
priesthood to the "visible sacrifice of the Eucharist from the Lord's institution."\textsuperscript{19} According to the council, both sacred scripture and tradition had always taught that Christ instituted the sacrament of Holy Communion, and that "power [to institute] was given to the apostles and their successors in the priesthood to consecrate, offer, and administer his body and blood...."\textsuperscript{20} Since the sacerdotal ministry was a "godly service" that instituted and administered the sacrament(s), the bishops who gathered at Trent sought "to ensure its exercise in a more worthy and reverent manner..."\textsuperscript{21} Moreover, the Tridentine fathers reiterated the sacramental nature of holy orders, whose efficacy was found in the "grace" conferred "by words and external signs."\textsuperscript{22} Finally, the council decreed that only duly appointed and consecrated bishops could ordain men to the priesthood, an obvious counterpoint to those Protestant reformers who argued that secular power or even the laity had a role to play in conferring ordination.\textsuperscript{23}

The sacramental character of ordination revealed the hierarchical nature of Church authority and the council's attempts to refurbish and defend that

\textsuperscript{19} Council of Trent, session 23, 15 July 1563, The true and catholic doctrine of the sacrament of order, to condemn the errors of our time, chapter 1, in Decrees, p. 742.

\textsuperscript{20} Council of Trent, session 23, chapter 1, in Decrees, p. 742.

\textsuperscript{21} Council of Trent, session 23, chapter 2, in Decrees, p. 742.

\textsuperscript{22} Council of Trent, session 23, chapter 3, in Decrees, p. 742.

\textsuperscript{23} Council of Trent, session 23, chapter 4, in Decrees, p. 743. And following the course of their logic, the bishops held in anathema anyone who argued that bishops did not have the power to ordain, or that orders had to be conferred with
authority. Here the council’s juridical interpretation of the sacrament’s efficacy endowed the priesthood with canonical power, with the jurisdiction, office, and authority of bishops, priests, deacons, and subdeacons being carefully delineated. Since the Holy Spirit called but a few to orders, the council declared anathema the assumption that “all Christians without distinction are priests of the new covenant, or that all are equally endowed with the same spiritual power.”

A clear distinction was made between the laity and the priesthood, between canonical power inherent in the various offices of the Church and other dimensions of power conferred by social status, birth, or secular entities. And when the bishops crystallized the institutional structure of the Church, they took special care to set apart their own office as belonging “in particular...to this hierarchical order...and [we the bishops] have been made by the Holy Spirit rulers of the church of God [emphasis theirs].” As such, bishops had the responsibility to foster vocations and provide sufficient training and preparation to candidates who were called by God to receive the indelible mark of the sacrament of ordination.

the consent of the people. See Council of Trent, session 23, canons on the sacrament of order, in Decrees, p. 744.

24 Council of Trent, session 23, chapter 4, in Decrees, p. 743. The bishops went on to declare in the same chapter that anyone holding such an opinion “appears to be openly overthrowing the church’s hierarchy, which is drawn up as a battle line....”

25 Council of Trent, session 23, in Decrees, pp. 742-743.
Young boys and men who were called 'by the Spirit to the priesthood' passed through two ecclesiastical offices before becoming official priests. Thus, the sacrament of ordination was conferred three times: once for each of the two orders of subdeacon and deacon, and a third time for the major order of priest. The council decreed that those to be ordained subdeacons and deacons "should be of good repute... well educated, trained in all that belongs to the exercise of their order..."^26 If the local bishop deemed it useful or necessary for the spiritual life of his flock to advance the deacon to the priesthood, the council empowered him to administer major orders on the candidate. At the same time, the church fathers also declared that the candidate should have served at least one year in the minor office and conducted himself "devoutly and faithful in the ministry."^27

The council exhorted bishops to examine personally each candidate to the priesthood. This was to ensure that candidates possessed the necessary faculties and training so that they could "teach the people what all need to know for their salvation and to administer the sacraments, and to be so outstanding in devotion and chaste conduct that they can be expected to give a fine example of good works and holy living."^26 The seminary became the vehicle for bishops to comply with this Tridentine mandate, and they fashioned, in canon eighteen, the

---

26 Council of Trent, session 23, Decree on reform, canon 13, in Decrees, p. 748. Canon 12 stipulated that no candidate was to advance to the subdiaconate before his twenty-second birthday, or to the diaconate before his twenty-third, or to the priesthood before his twenty-fourth.

27 Council of Trent, session 23, canons 14 and 16, in Decrees, pp. 748-749.
contours of episcopal power regarding seminary formation. While the conciliar decree reflected the episcopal response to a sixteenth-century critique of a lax, uneducated, and unresponsive clergy, it also provided the episcopal heirs to Trent, and in this case Bishop Palafox, with additional responsibilities and jurisdiction. In a strict canonical sense, therefore, the decree on seminaries endowed the office of bishop with more power to exercise.

The Council of Trent obliged every diocese "to provide for, to educate in religion and to train in ecclesiastical studies a set number of boys, according to its resources and size." Bishops were expected not only to cultivate vocations among the faithful within their jurisdiction but also to nurture those vocations through seminary formation. The conciliar decree on seminaries reflected the Church's concern that too many boys and young men had embraced "worldly pleasures" at the expense of the holy call to service. And, "unless trained to religious practice from an early age before habits of vice take firm hold on so many, they never keep to an orderly church life in an exemplary way...." But the council injected a class dimension into the decree, for it urged bishops to chose "the sons of poor people" for admission. Trent did not exclude children of wealthy families from seminary education and the priesthood, however; rather, upper-class families had to pay the costs of tuition, room and board, and other

---

28 Council of Trent, session 23, canon 14, in Decrees, p. 749.
29 Council of Trent, session 23, canon 18, in Decrees, p. 750.
30 Council of Trent, session 23, canon 18, in Decrees, p. 750.
expenses for their children. On the other hand, the local church would pay all expenses for poor children who enrolled in the seminary. It is not entirely clear from the documentary record if the Council of Trent wanted to shift the emphasis away from encouraging vocations among the elite toward civil society's poorest members as a mechanism of social control in the wake of political and religious upheaval, or if the Tridentine fathers decided that a sizeable pool of potential vocations had been neglected for too long. As will be discussed later in this chapter, Palafox targeted for seminary education youth from both wealthy and poor families, because he believed too many of them were "anxious and restless," contributing little to the well being of civil society.

In canon eighteen, bishops sketched a blueprint for organizing seminaries and seminary education. Shepherds were to cull vocations from the city and diocese, and those admitted to the seminary had to be at least twelve years of age, of legitimate birth, literate, and with the necessary "character and disposition" that would enable them to serve the Church throughout their natural lives. In theory, at least, illegitimate children or those with inadequate basic skills were excluded, as were children whose character and disposition the local shepherd considered unworthy of vocation. In colonial Mexico, therefore, hijos naturales, regardless of their educational background, and children of the working poor, whose reading and writing skills were limited, could be excluded from seminary education. Since 'hijo natural' conveyed juridical status in

---

31 Council of Trent, session 23, in Decrees, p. 750.
Spanish colonial law—and many hijos naturales were offspring of racially mixed marriages or unions—children of color were those most likely to be passed over for consideration. More research is needed to determine, however, when bishops halted the practice of excluding third or fourth-generation mestizo children from seminary education. During his pastoral visits, which the next two chapters will explore, Palafox seems to have favored creole boys and young men for a seminary education, although the documentary record is vague enough to suggest that some children of mixed ancestry might have been included.

Bishops divided the candidates into different classes, according to their number, age, and academic progress. Once the bishop considered the candidate to be sufficiently prepared, he could ordain the student and assign him to pastoral service in the diocese. The decree stipulated that bishops should replace those ordained with a new group of students, thus ensuring that “the college becomes a perpetual seminary of ministers of God.”

The council outlined the contours of daily life for seminarians. They were to have the tonsure\(^{32}\) and wear clerical dress from the outset, thus setting them apart from the rest of civil society. Their course of studies included ritual, theological, as well as practical training: Latin, singing, holy scripture, church history, sermon preparation, or what is now called homiletics, the rites and

\(^{32}\) Council of Trent, session 23, in Decrees, pp. 750-751.

\(^{33}\) As a sign of their clerical state, priests wore a small shaven area on the back of the head, which in Spanish is called a corona.
ceremonies of the liturgy and the administration of the sacraments, ecclesiastical accounting procedures and "other useful skills."\textsuperscript{34} The local bishop had to ensure that the students attended mass each day, confessed their sins at least once a month, and received the Eucharist as often as their confessor judged proper. Moreover, seminarians gained practical experience in their vocation by serving the cathedral and other parishes, often as acolytes, doorkeepers, and porters. The council urged bishops to maintain vigilance over his seminarians to ensure compliance with the Tridentine letter and spirit of priestly formation. Local bishops had the power to "punish the difficult and incorrigible and those who spread bad habits with severity, and expel them if need be...."\textsuperscript{35} The omission of specific types of punishment and censure gave local bishops wide discretion in deciding which kind of penalty was to be meted out, although it is clear that the Church's first foray into formal, institutionalized education included punishment as part and parcel of ordinary power.

The Council of Trent also addressed in canon eighteen the material and financial dimensions of establishing seminary education. Participating bishops recognized that "steady revenues" would be needed – over and above those already allotted in some cathedral parishes to the education of boys – for the construction of seminaries, salaries for teachers, assistants and servants, tuition

\textsuperscript{34} Council of Trent, session 23, canon 18, in Decrees, p. 751.

\textsuperscript{35} Council of Trent, session 23, in Decrees, p. 751.
for students, as well as their room and board. Bishops were to establish a council, comprised of two members from the cathedral chapter and two priests from local parishes, to administer seminary finances. The council's primary task was to subtract a portion or share from the revenues of every major and minor ecclesiastical entity and corporation within the jurisdiction of the local bishop. In the hope of avoiding confusion and strengthening ordinary power, canon eighteen even listed those entities recognized as canonical corporations under Tridentine law, and as such, they were obliged to contribute to the support of the local diocesan seminary. The governing council could garnish a share from the following sources of income: the bishop's income (mesa episcopal, or sometimes called cuarta episcopal); income of the cathedral chapter (mesa capitular); all major and minor dignities, benefices, prebends, offices, abbbacies, priorates, and religious orders (regular clergy); hospitals, pious and charitable institutions, local parishes, confraternities and associations; the military orders and even monasteries, although the formula to calculate their share must have been complicated since the council exempted Mendicant monasteries that did not derive any portion of their income from lay tithing.

Unlike the ambiguity surrounding Tridentine definitions of punishment for errant seminarians, the council decreed in explicit fashion that bishops “shall use ecclesiastical censures”, including excommunication, to compel canonical

---

36 Council of Trent, session 23, in Decrees, p. 751.

37 Council of Trent, session 23, in Decrees, pp. 751-752.
corporations to pay their share for the maintenance of local seminary education. Of all the ecclesiastical censures at a bishop's disposal, in theory, excommunication remained the most threatening, for once raised, the offending party was removed from the spiritual and sacramental life of the Church and lost the juridical protection that the Church often afforded from civil authorities. That the council included this weapon in the episcopal arsenal reveals a certain sense of urgency on the part of bishops to implement Tridentine educational mandates by preempting undue canonical opposition from any ecclesiastical quarter. As chapter five will demonstrate both Palafox and his ecclesiastical detractors wielded the threat and even raised the censure of excommunication but under different circumstances than that of seminary funding. While the context for such 'ecclesiastical dueling' warrants separate analysis, suffice it to say excommunication could lose its sharp edge and become an ineffective tool for exacting compliance. Often it engendered jurisdictional confusion and facilitated benign responses on the part of those church groups and their lay supporters who found themselves at the margins of the dispute. For those in the center of the conflict, however, local political and material circumstances, coupled with the strengths and weaknesses of the parties involved, as well as the durability of alliances, often indicated its potential effectiveness, or lack thereof.

The threat of ecclesiastical penalty existed, nevertheless, and, while hinting little of raising censures when he founded Saint Peter's Seminary, Palafox

---

38 Council of Trent, session 23, in Decrees, p. 752.
included the censure of excommunication when he donated to the college his personal library, thereby expressing the power-laden discourse intrinsic in the exercise of episcopal office. Power moved around different kinds of social space, constituting and then locating itself within relations between official agents of ‘canonical production’ and its recipients. Palafox’s establishment of a first-level seminary for boys, his promulgation of rules and regulations for a second-tier facility for young men, as well as the donation of his library to ensure scholarly activity illuminate the nuances of canonical production and the daily regimen that shaped students’ lives within the process.

On 5 and 6 September 1646, Palafox donated his personal library of five-thousand volumes to the city. The act of donation reveals certain material and cultural dimensions of the bishop’s exercise of episcopal power in seventeenth-century Puebla. The donation was not merely a philanthropic expression of

---

39 Dirks, Eley, and Ortner, “Introduction,” p. 5. The editors of the volume refer specifically to cultural production and unofficial agents of social control. For purposes of my discussion, I have substituted specific terms that indicate more precisely the historical context of my topic.

40 The provenance of the instrument of donation is Archivo General de Notarías del Estado de Puebla, Notario #2, Nicolás de Valdivia [tenured clerk], caja 2, años 1644-1646. The original document housed in Puebla was removed from its caja so that it could be transcribed and included in the program to commemorate the 350th anniversary of the library in 1996. For this transcription, see Secretaría de Cultura del Estado Puebla, “CCCL aniversario de la muy ilustre Biblioteca Palafoxiana de Puebla,” Fojas Culturais 52 (1996): 1-64. The document has not yet been returned to the Notary Archive. A microfilm copy of the original document, which I have examined and will cite in this chapter, can be found in Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, Autos y diligencias tocantes a la fundación del colegio de los niños, advocación del glorioso príncipe de los Apóstoles San Pedro, que á fundado, en la ciudad de los Angeles, el ilustrísimo y excelentísimo
aristocratic sensibilities but was part and parcel of the institutionalization of Tridentine Catholicism in colonial Mexico. Employing juridical language in the act of donation that demonstrated pastoral sentiment, Palafox again wielded his crozier to activate the reforms of the Council of Trent, specifically the educational mandates concerning seminaries. The donation, therefore, represented yet another concrete manifestation of his responsibilities as shepherd of a diocese.

The act of donation also reflects the bishop's appreciation of urban spiritual geography. The public nature of the library and its intimate links to other Tridentine practices show that Palafox deployed power to structure the social life of the city of Puebla. As Chapter Two has demonstrated, the boundaries between public and private spheres were not distinct, semi-autonomous entities to the bishop. Prayer, religious education, frequent reception of the sacraments, adherence to the precepts of the Church, as well as the proper disposition during these activities, overlapped the public and private. Public worship and personal prayer at home, for example, were not separate activities that were then excerpted from everyday life as isolated, static variables. They complemented and sustained each other. Moreover, Palafox expected the clergy, who were

---

41 As this section of the chapter will demonstrate, Palafox's donation was not simply an act of *noblesse oblige*, that is, he was not moved by any contemporary sense of aristocratic responsibility or duty to the masses. Although Palafox was far from being a parish priest of humble origins or modest means, he donated the library as an exercise of episcopal power. Modern notions of philanthropy
drawn from the lay populations of the city and rural towns of the diocese, to supervise and mediate this intersection of the public and private spheres.

If Tridentine values were to permeate the public and private lives of the faithful, Palafox first had to nurture them in his priests. The library, therefore, assisted Palafox in his endeavors and became closely linked to the establishment of the Tridentine seminaries. The donation of his library reveals episcopal authority as well as the cultural ordering of an urban landscape in colonial New Spain.

During Palafox's general tour of the colony as visitor-general (1640-1642) and his subsequent pastoral visits (1643, 1644, and 1646) to his diocese as bishop, he encountered few books and other reading materials. As someone who received a good education in Spain's leading schools, Palafox had a special affinity for books and was an avid book collector. Before, during, and after his stay in New Spain, he had authored many treatises himself that contributed to the literary, theological, and political debates of his time. So important were books to the cultural well-being of society that Palafox once wrote, "he who finds himself in an activity without books finds himself in solitude without consolation, on a mountain without company, on a road without direction, in darkness without obscure rather than illuminate the power-laden discourse of this seventeenth-century episcopal donation."
a guide." While Palafox brought his personal library with him to New Spain, the scarcity of books in the colony moved him to donate the collection to the city.

A previous bishop, Juan de Zumárraga, had introduced the printing press in the viceregal capital in 1539, but local printers were unable to satisfy the needs of local scholars seeking to disseminate their works nor the demands of the general literate creole public. Moreover, the ecclesiastical seat of Palafox’s authority, Puebla, which also was the second largest city in the colony, did not even have a printing press. As one of his first tasks when he returned to the city after his tenure as interim viceroy had ended, Palafox established a printing press there in 1642. Almost immediately printed matter inundated the city as Palafox ordered the publication and distribution of Tridentine reforms, spiritual ephemera, theological treatises, and sermons. The high cost of paper and ink, however, hindered the systematic publication of books. Founding a library would soon follow, because the bishop recognized that the new printing press could not make up for years of dearth. His personal collection of approximately five

---

42 Quoted in Secretaría de Cultura, "CCCL aniversario de la muy ilustre Biblioteca Palafoxiana de Puebla," Fojas Culturalis 52 (1996), 1. The original Spanish reads "...el que se halle en un beneficio sin libros se halla en una soledad sin consuelo, en un monte sin compañía, en un camino sin báculo, en unas tinieblas sin guía...."


thousand volumes contributed to the intellectual vitality of literate culture in Puebla. More importantly, however, it provided Tridentine seminary education with the requisite scholarly apparatus to conduct course preparation and instruction.

In the first paragraph of the instrument of donation, Palafox stated that both New Spain and the city of Puebla needed a public library. He attributed the need for books and reading materials to the high costs of printing, the scarcity of paper, and the distances involved in shipping books from Spain to Mexico. The number of books printed overseas surpassed that of those locally printed in Mexican bookstores and private libraries. Furthermore, everyone was to enjoy access to the library, that is, it was not limited to clerics. The library was probably the first of its kind to be designated as a public institution in Latin America. While convents, monasteries, and schools had their own private libraries, and a few wealthy colonists also collected books, none of them were placed in the public domain. At the time of the donation, Palafox's collection

---

45 Palafox y Mendoza, *Autos y diligencias*, BN, ms. 3838, f. 31. The original Spanish reads "resolvimos... ser muy útil y conveniente hubiese en esta ciudad una biblioteca pública... ."


47 Chocano Mena, "Colonial Printing and Metropolitan Books," 70.

48 For a good discussion of the first academic library in the Americas that served Spanish evangelization efforts, see W. Michael Mathes, *The Americas First Academic Library: Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco* (Sacramento: California State Library Foundation, 1985). Irving Leonard's classic study of the Baroque details Melchor Pérez de Soto's personal collection of 1,663 volumes. See Irving A. Leonard,
was perhaps the largest personal library in Latin America, if not the New World. But he emphasized the public character of his donation throughout the document, using such expressions as "everyone" and reiterating that "all ecclesiastical and lay persons of this city and diocese" should have access to the library. As a practical matter, however, we can assume that 'lay persons' meant young men without the tonsure, and perhaps wealthy patrons of the poblano Church who supported scholarship and the arts in the city.

The kind of public library that Palafox envisioned was not the municipal library so common today in North America. Puebla's city council did not maintain nor support the library through taxes and subsidies. In fact, the library remained in the care of the Church until 1858, when the Reform laws obliged the Church to hand over the library and seminaries to the state. Palafox stipulated that the donation was a contract between him and the recently established Seminary College of Saint Peter. The administrator of the seminary, a priest and licenciado, Francisco Moreno, took possession of the library on behalf of the city.

---


Palafox y Mendoza, Autos y diligencias, BN, ms. 3838, fs. 31-32v.

For a brief yet useful discussion of the library during the Reform period of Mexican history, see Pedro A. Palou, Breve noticia histórico de la Biblioteca
of Puebla, illustrating once again the close ties between Church and State during the Habsburg period. But Palafox used the term “public” because he wanted the library to serve another public good, namely the education of boys and young men in the recently established Tridentine Seminaries of Saints Peter and John. Without books and reading materials, a rigorous education was impossible, and without a proper education, future candidates for the priesthood could not fulfill the obligations and responsibilities that the Sacrament of Ordination conferred. Since the student body consisted of young men from families within the diocese, the library was indeed serving the public good and therefore had social value. Students who successfully completed the required course of studies would then receive holy orders, thus enabling them to contribute to the community by way of the priesthood.

Palafox had founded Saint Peter’s seminary for boys on 22 August 1644, and he issued norms and regulations a few months earlier for the Seminary College of Saint John the Evangelist, which was established during the last years of the sixteenth century for young men. He founded a third seminary, Saint Paul’s College, a few years later, and all three constituted the Tridentine Seminaries for Puebla and were located on the same street, next to the

---

_Palafloxiana y de su fundador Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, 4th ed. (Puebla: Gobierno del Estado de Puebla, 1995)._  

^51_ Palafox y Mendoza, _Autos y diligencias_, BN, ms. 3838, f. 33v._
episcopal palace. The cathedral, with its large atrium, was located across from them. Palafox situated the library and seminaries near the seat of episcopal authority and his own living quarters. The library, in effect, allowed the colleges to hold classes by providing the necessary scholarly apparatus, while Palafox's episcopal gaze ensured compliance with the letter and spirit of Trent.

Palafox made an explicit linkage between the library and seminaries in the second paragraph of the instrument of donation. Following the general guidelines of the Council of Trent, Palafox established Saint Peter's seminary as the first of three levels or classes. He also decided that the library would be located in this new seminary. The seminary was open to children of wealthy

---

52 The act of foundation for Saint Peter's Seminary College is found in Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, Acta de la fundación del Glorioso Apóstol San Pedro en la Puebla de los Ángeles, 22 August 1644, Archivo Histórico Diocesano de la Arquidiócesis de Puebla de los Ángeles (hereinafter AHDP), fs. 1-9. Another copy of the original, which I also examined, can be found in Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, Autos y diligencias tocantes a la fundación del colegio de los niños, BN, ms. 3838, fs. 8-12. In the act of foundation, Palafox made reference to establishing Saint Paul's College as the final level of his three-tier system of seminary education. I have been unable to locate the instrument of foundation for Saint Paul's College. For the rules and regulations that governed Saint John the Evangelist Seminary College, a second-tier facility, Palafox issued Constituciones y ordenanzas del colegio de San Juan Evangelista desta ciudad de los Ángeles, que fundó el bachiller Juan Larios, beneficiado de Acatlán, hechas por el ilustrísimo y reverendíssimo señor don Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, obispo de la Puebla de los Ángeles, 4 February 1644, JCB, BA644 P977c, fs. 1-22v.

53 Palafox's successors added new bookshelves to accommodate additions to the library. In late 1767, for example, following the expulsion of the Society of Jesus, Bishop Francisco Fabián y Fuero expropriated Jesuit libraries within the diocese and ordered the construction of a special room in Saint John's College to hold the expanded collection. The library remains there, although today the building is home to the city's Casa de la Cultura.
and poor families alike, although in the act of foundation, Palafox expressed a sentiment quite common among the bishops of New Spain. Cities and towns had too many young males who were susceptible to the more profane aspects of the world around them. Some children of prominent families, in particular, failed to find gainful and respectable employment, or they did not even work at all, thus contributing little to their communities. Of course, education in seventeenth-century New Spain was largely a private affair devoid of institutional support. Those well-to-do families that placed a high value on learning could hire a private tutor – often a priest from the cathedral or local parish – to provide instruction. The regular clergy in the city of Puebla, particularly the Society of Jesus, also offered instruction to the children of the elite, although the curriculum was geared toward training them to become Jesuits. The cathedral was another ecclesiastical entity that provided children with some schooling – even to those of more humble backgrounds – and like the Society of Jesus, the cathedral school tried to foster and sustain vocations in young boys.

Despite these efforts, or because of them, Palafox worried that the diocese’s male youth, rich and poor, would grow up without any formal education and without a healthy dose of Tridentine values. The moral norms that Palafox championed included, as we have seen, a vibrant prayer life, veneration of the saints, solemn administration of the sacraments (or, for the laity, proper reception of the sacraments), obedience to ecclesiastical authorities, and appropriate

---

54 Palafox y Mendoza, Acta de fundación, 22 August 1644, AHDP, f. 2.
conduct during mass. The Tridentine seminaries would foster these values through coordinated instruction and training. A seminary education was the first step to curbing the anxieties and uncertainties of youth. By the time they left the seminary, these young men were to be well-trained in the art and craft of Tridentine Catholicism.

Saint Peter's curriculum consisted of teaching Latin and rhetoric to a class of thirty boys between the ages of eleven and seventeen who lived within the boundaries of the Diocese of Puebla. Children from poor families received scholarships and paid no tuition. Wealthy families that wanted to enroll their sons in the new school had to pay an annual fee of 120 pesos, which covered the costs of tuition and room and board. Children who demonstrated linguistic abilities in any of the several indigenous tongues of the diocese were given preferential treatment, however, regardless of their socioeconomic background. This reflected the bishop's desire to train secular clerics for parish work in Indian communities, something that had been the purview of the regular clergy since the aftermath of the Spanish conquest. Besides sharpening language skills, the rudiments of liturgical music, reading the divine office, and assisting at mass during holy days were other activities designed to impart an effective study regimen and introduce the ritual component of the priesthood. To pay for the

---

55 Palafox y Mendoza, Acta de fundación, AHDP, f. 4. While Náhuatl was the dominant tongue in the central Mexico, Palafox recognized that in Puebla several other indigenous languages were spoken, such as Totonaco, Otomi, Chocho, Mixtec, and Tlahuaneco. The bishop singled out candidates who knew some of these languages over those who could speak Náhuatl.
costs of what we would call today minor seminary education – or junior high school and high school-level preparation – Palafox ordered an annual payment of 10,000 pesos for maintenance, salaries, scholarships, and daily expenses. Citing the Tridentine mandate that all canonical entities were obliged to support seminary education, the bishop ordered secular and regular clergy alike, as well as the cathedral chapter, hospitals, convents, chantries, benefices, and prebends to contribute a portion of their income to sustain the new school. Palafox stated in the act of foundation that his episcopal table would contribute 600 pesos a year, while diocesan accountants would devise a formula to calculate the fair share of each canonical corporation.\(^5\)

If the student earned high marks, passed a final exam, and received episcopal approval, he graduated from Saint Peter's and then proceeded to the next stage of seminary education. This second level of priestly formation took place in the College of Saint John the Evangelist, where, at the age of eighteen the student would study moral theology, canon law, and arts and letters. There students also received the minor order of acolyte and, to better prepare for the daily activities of the priesthood, they reviewed in systematic fashion the ritual and ceremony of the mass, the appropriate ways to administer the sacraments, and learned other forms of church music.\(^5\) While the extant documentary record reveals little of the daily routine of seminary life for boys who enrolled in Saint Peter's minor seminary, Palafox's promulgation of rules and ordinances for Saint

John's College illustrates the episcopal ideal of how young men should have conducted themselves from day-to-day. But the constituciones y ordenanzas also demonstrate the nuances of ordinary power, specifically the pastoral dimensions of episcopal office. Palafox's rules and regulations structured time, space, person, and conduct, and they reveal how ordinary power ordered and shaped the lives of students who obeyed them, and in the process, these rules and regulations fashioned new canonical identities. It was in the Seminary College of Saint John the Evangelist where the new Tridentine priest was born.

Palafox acknowledged in the prologue to the ordenanzas that one of the most important responsibilities of pastoral office, as well as the most effective, was to foster a spiritual and learned environment for the clergy so that they could serve the people of God in the mysteries of the faith. The College of Saint John the Evangelist offered such an environment. Although the seminary's founder, Licenciado Juan Larios, a diocesan priest from Acatlan, had used his own income to establish Saint John's College in 1595, which Palafox gratefully acknowledged, the lack of subsequent funding after his death prevented the school from fulfilling its benefactor's goals. Moreover, the bishop at the time of the foundation, Diego Romano (1578-1606), died before drafting rules and regulations for the seminary. His successor, Bishop Alonso de la Mota (1606-
1626), devised a few rules but these were never implemented. Bishop Palafox, armed with the Tridentine decrees on seminary education, moved to fill the void.

Palafox set maximum and minimum enrollments for the seminary. While thirty seats may have been set aside for the minor seminary, the bishop established a maximum enrollment of twenty-four students and a minimum of twelve for the major seminary. Perhaps this was an implicit acknowledgement on the part of Palafox that some students would be deemed unworthy of the priestly vocation, or perhaps a few would decide to forgo advanced studies, or even that some students would fail the final exam. Regardless of the reasons, Palafox established strict guidelines for those twenty-four students who desired admission: the bishop and the rector would examine them in Latin, basic liturgical chant and ceremony. If they passed the Latin exam but grasped little of chants and ritual, the students might still be accepted if competition in any given year was less than expected and if the bishop found the students to be virtuous. Latin remained the minimum requirement, however.

The best candidates for admission, according to Palafox, were those young men, rich or poor, who hailed from Puebla or other parts of New Spain, were of legitimate birth, and who understood an indigenous language. But even

---

59 Palafox y Mendoza, Constituciones, JCB, BA644 P977c, f. 2v. For a discussion of the early years of the school, especially its lack of formal organization and financial support, see Ernesto de la Torre Villar, Historia de la educación en Puebla, época colonial (Puebla: Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, 1988), pp. 109-110.

60 Palafox y Mendoza, Constituciones, JCB, BA644 P977c, f. 3v-4.
if a young man was born and raised in Puebla and spoke Mixtec, for example, he was not guaranteed a seat in the new class, for the bishop listed social and political variables that could disqualify candidates: sons or grandsons of criminals, heretics, or conversos and moriscos. The last two ‘conditions’ reflected the seventeenth-century Spanish concern for purity of blood, or *limpieza de sangre*. Students from poor families were given preferential treatment, as were orphans, if they showed academic promise. Moreover, Palafox added physical characteristics to these political and social variables. Young men who suffered from physical deformities, or who were handicapped, failed to gain admission. The bishop provided a set of physical conditions that served as debilitating factors for enrollment: if the student was “hunchbacked, crippled, lame, blind, or had the gout.” Even a category as relative as that of physical beauty and appearance could hinder a student’s application. As a result, Palafox ascribed value to the physical features of the perfect candidate, whereby his new Tridentine priests would exhibit and embody purity of soul, mind, and body.

Coupled with physical characteristics was appropriate clothing. During the course of a typical day in the seminary, Palafox ordered seminarians to wear a brown cassock with black sleeves, a white collar that designated their civil status.

---

61 Palafox y Mendoza, *Constituciones*, JCB, BA644 P977c, f. 4–4v. The original Spanish reads: No sean elegidos por Collegiales...el que fuere hijo, o nieto de hombre infame, o afrentado por la justicia, ni de mal linaje, como decendiente conocidamente de Hebreo, Moro, o Hereje, ni el que fuere coxo, contrahecho, valrado, ciego, o tuviere gota coral; o otra enfermedad, o fealdad notable....
as an ordinand, a good, clean pair of shoes, and a biretta, or the small ecclesiastical headdress for priests. Fine and luxurious fabric such as silk was prohibited, especially as undergarments, although the bishop made an exception for socks made of silk, perhaps to ensure some level of comfort during the long, meditative walks the seminarians were expected to conduct. Moreover, Palafox mandated dark-colors for students’ undergarments. If a student arrived at the seminary with a mixture of light and soft-colored interior clothing, the bishop gave him one year to acquire the preferred dark-colored apparel. And finally, Palafox expected all seminarians to be clean-shaven with short hair.\(^{62}\)

Palafox ordered students to carefully dress themselves so as to avoid scandal, even within the confines of the seminary. Neatness, fully buttoned shirts and cassocks held together by a surplice, as well as clean shoes reflected decency and piety. Palafox stipulated that any seminarian who left his room without being fully dressed committed a grave offense. While he did not elaborate on why the offense was so grave, the sexual mores of the institutional Church equated suggestive appearances as unbecoming of a priest, and more importantly, suggestive appearances invited public scrutiny and fanned the flames of scandal. The bishop implored students to approach seminary education as if they had chosen the cloistered life. Here Palafox was referring not to the regular clergy of New Spain, who had permission to breach the walls of their religious communities to administer to the faithful, but rather to the

\(^{62}\) Palafox y Mendoza, Constituciones, JCB, BA644 P977c, fs. 5-6v.
monasteries and convents of Spain and Europe, where the cloistered life of silence and austerity remained common. If the student received permission, however, to leave the grounds of the seminary, he was expected to wear his cassock under a cape and biretta, with black ankle boots. Moreover, Palafox forbade students to leave the seminary without a duly appointed companion, whom the rector appointed to accompany the student on his excursion. For visits that took more than three days the student's request was forwarded to the bishop for approval. If approved, the bishop expected the seminarian to conduct himself accordingly and avoid scandal. Failure to obey these rules resulted in the loss of the student's scholarship.  

Bishop Palafox regulated the daily activities of his seminarians by organizing time in an efficient manner. The constant tolling of the bells located in the chapel best reflected his structuring of seminary life. From the morning peal to the evening toll, the bells reminded students of their responsibilities and obligations to seminary life. Palafox even told his students that they should equate the tolling of the bells with the voice of God. The bells woke them up in the morning, directed them to the refectory for meals, notified them of class and study periods, when to attend mass and community prayer, and finally when to retire to their quarters for rest and contemplation. During the winter months, the bells began to toll at 5:00 A.M. (during the summer, the bells started one hour

---

63 Palafox y Mendoza, Constituciones, JCB, BA644 P977c, fs. 6-8.

64 Palafox y Mendoza, Constituciones, JCB, BA644 P977c, f. 8.
later at 6:00 A.M.). A second tolling soon followed to inform students that they had fifteen minutes to proceed to the chapel for morning prayer. Once in the chapel, students knelt down to chant in low tones the responses of a litany to the Virgin Mary directed by the priest. After fifteen minutes of this particular prayer, the students attended mass, offering special prayers to the seminary's patron, Saint John the Evangelist. During the feast day of Saint John, a solemn mass was sung in the chapel as a liturgical form of veneration, with prayers being offered for the souls of the faithfully departed. After mass, the students returned to their rooms and prepared for breakfast, which normally consisted of freshly baked bread and fruit.\footnote{Palafox y Mendoza, \textit{Constituciones}, JCB, BA644 P977c, f. 8v-9.} That Palafox would even list the foodstuffs that seminarians were to eat for breakfast reveals the extent to which he shaped their lives.

The bells rang again at 8:00 A.M. to notify students that the academic dimensions of seminary life were about to start, and they had to proceed to their respective classrooms in pairs. Formal classroom education lasted for three hours, until 11:00 A.M., when students received a thirty-minute lesson in proper liturgical chants and music. At Noon, the bells tolled once again, directing them to the refectory for mealtime. After giving thanks to God for the repast, the seminarians walked to the chapel to recite the appropriate psalm from the Divine Office and to pray for the bishop. As chapter two has shown, Palafox shied little
from asking the laity to include him in their prayers.\textsuperscript{66} That he directed future priests to pray for him daily, however, suggests an attempt to naturalize the centrality of episcopal office in their lives by carving a niche for bishops in their public and private prayers. The routine character of these day-to-day spiritual exercises linked, or attempted to link, the intimacy of prayer to a very public acknowledgement of the important role that bishops played in their lives.

Following afternoon prayer, Palafox allowed students thirty-minutes of recess and recreation. While he sanctioned no specific activities during leisure time, Palafox provided for an hourglass to measure the recess, and students were expected to closely follow the falling sand so as to avoid being tardy for the thirty-minutes of silence that followed. He did order them, however, to compose themselves in a manner befitting future priests. Students were to avoid idle chatter and such topics as family lineage, social status, or birthplace, suggesting that Palafox wanted to ensure a semblance of equality in the production stages of these new canonical identities. How successful he was is difficult to ascertain, considering that most students must have known something of their classmates since many of them came from the same family and neighborhood networks. Moreover, the bishop prohibited visitors during recess, even priests from outside the seminary but especially women, under the pain of excommunication. This period of quiet meditation ended at 2:00 P.M., when the second half of their academic course work began. For three hours students listened to lectures on

\textsuperscript{66} Palafox y Mendoza, \textit{Constituciones}, JCB, BA644 P877c, f. 9.
moral theology, canon law, and philosophy. Afterwards, at 5:00 P.M., Palafox directed his students to devote one hour to "honest work," which usually involved maintenance tasks such as sweeping the courtyard and cleaning the chapel. Between 6:00 P.M. and 8:00 P.M., students worked on their assignments and prepared for exams in silence. If they had to speak to someone for whatever reason they were to do so in a low voice so as not to disturb the tranquility of the early evening. Moreover, if seminarians wished to study together, Palafox made provisions for them to do so as long as they received the rector's permission, who designated a time and place for such an activity.\footnote{Palafox y Mendoza, Constituciones, JCB, BA644 P977c, f. 9v.}

The bell tower would sound off again at 8:00 P.M., calling the students to the chapel to pray the rosary. In one loud, harmonious voice, seminarians recited the third part of the Marian prayer. By doing so, according to Palafox, they earned an indulgence, much like the seminarians of Spain and Italy. Afterwards students returned to the refectory for supper until 9:00 P.M. The bishop suggested no dietary habits for the evening meal. Following the cena, students were given another half-hour of recreation time but one that was filled with debate and disputation, suggesting that Bishop Palafox expected students to sharpen the knowledge that they had acquired during the day through lively exchanges. At 9:30 P.M., students underwent an examination of conscience for fifteen minutes and offered an act of contrition for any impure thoughts or deeds that they may have committed during the course of the day. Additional prayers to
Saint John the Evangelist, the seminary’s patron, soon followed, and Palafox again directed the students to include him in their spiritual appeals. A final peal of the bells at 10:00 P.M. informed students that the day had ended, and they returned to their respective rooms to sleep.\footnote{Palafox y Mendoza, Constituciones, JCB, BA644 P977c, f. 9v.}

Bishop Palafox also structured the daily lives of his seminarians by fostering an environment where punishments and penalties were meted out to those who breached the proper rules of conduct. He established three levels of offenses: 

- \textit{la culpa leve},
- \textit{la culpa grave},
- and \textit{la culpa gravísima}.

The first consisted of arriving late for meals, class, mass, or community prayer, thus demonstrating a lack of respect for the tolling of the bells that structured time for the seminary. Other first-level offenses included breaking silence during periods of contemplation, rude behavior during mass or community prayer, or berating fellow students. Palafox gave the rector of the seminary wide discretion in deciding the appropriate punishment, although he recommended withholding appetizers, dessert, or even supper from the guilty party.\footnote{Palafox y Mendoza, Constituciones, JCB, BA644 P977c, f. 22v.} In lieu of dietary punishment, however, the bishop also suggested that these incorrigible students kneel down in prayer while their classmates and professors gathered around them.\footnote{Palafox y Mendoza, Constituciones, JCB, BA644 P977c, f. 22v.} Palafox attached much value to public shame as a strong deterrent against potential transgressors.
Second-level offenses consisted of failing to procure explicit permission to leave the grounds of the seminary, speaking to women in church or on the street, and showing disrespect toward ecclesiastical authority. As punishment, Palafox ordered these students to stay in their rooms for two to three days, with only bread and fruit as repast. While in isolation, the offenders were expected to examine and reexamine what they had done and why it was so disruptive and harmful to the community. Conversing with women, for example, opened the door to potential scandal, for the laity would see a future priest interacting with the opposite sex outside the accepted boundaries of sacred space.

The third and final level of offenses, the culpas gravisímas, consisted of several forbidden practices, such as leaving the seminary at night for whatever reason; allowing women to enter the seminary, or worse, seeking out female companionship; engaging in illicit activities with women; visiting a convent of nuns without permission; disobeying the rector under any circumstances; leaving the city without permission; and general obstinate behavior. While these offenses were considered the most excessive that a seminarian could commit, he was not immediately expelled from the seminary. Bishop Palafox gave students four or five chances to reform their errant ways. Isolated from the rest of the community for an indeterminate number of days – at the rector’s discretion – the student could lose his scholarship and face expulsion from school after the fifth offense. If so many rules and regulations prohibited seminarians from effectively
keeping them, the bishop ordered that the ordinances be read six times a year, or every two months.\(^71\)

At the age of twenty-four, after seven years of study and preparation in the Seminary College of Saint John the Evangelist, the candidate received major orders, that is, the Sacrament of Ordination, and earned a \textit{bachiller en artes} (bachelor's degree). Until the newly ordained could find a benefice, he was expected to reside in the newly established College of Saint Paul to begin the third and final course of studies. Palafox placed a time limit of two years, at a cost of 200 pesos a year, on those priests who decided to stay and take advantage of additional instruction and training. How these priests bore the financial cost of two additional years of tuition and board, especially since they had no benefice or prebend from which to draw income, remains unclear, although family support, the occasional mass stipend, and the candidate's \textit{congrua} probably served to offset expenses. During his stay at Saint Paul's College, the young priest would recite or sing the divine office in the cathedral with other members of the choir, review his moral theology, and perfect the art and craft of being a priest.\(^72\) The imposition of a two-year time limit, however,

\footnote{71 Palafox y Mendoza, \textit{Constituciones}, JCB, BA644 P977c, f. 22v-23.}

\footnote{72 Palafox y Mendoza, \textit{Acta de fundación}, AHDP, fs. 6-7. The art and craft of the priesthood refers to the administration of the sacraments, proper conduct during mass, refining one's approach to preaching, and reviewing the catechism so that the priest would be prepared to instruct the laity in the faith.}
probably reflected episcopal pressure on newly ordained priests to search for parish work, a prebend, or chantry.

Palafox's Tridentine Seminaries required students and newly ordained priests to study certain subjects and topics that were determined by their level of preparation. To successfully complete their course of instruction, therefore, these students needed books and reading materials, and Bishop Palafox's donation of his library provided the necessary tools to attain graduation and eventually ordination. Although an inventory of the initial book collection is not found in the instrument of donation, the broad subject headings that Palafox assigned his library reflect this course of seminary education: Sacred Theology, Canon Law, Civil Law, Philosophy, and Arts and Letters. These subjects reflected both the reading tastes of elite culture and the knowledge now required by institutional Catholicism of those who wanted to devote their lives to the people of God in the age of Baroque. Moreover, students in all three seminaries could consult books and manuscripts during the designated periods of study and instruction (up to five hours a day).

Two other items in Palafox's donation illustrate the intellectual and spiritual milieu of the bishop's world. He included in the donation an altarpiece and several navigational instruments. The altarpiece contained images of the Virgin

---

73 Palafox y Mendoza, Autos y diligencias, BN, ms. 3838, f. 31.

74 Palafox y Mendoza, Autos y diligencias, BN, ms. 3838, f. 32.
Mary, the Holy Spirit, and Saint Thomas Aquinas. As shown in the previous chapter, Palafox had a special devotion to Mary, and the altarpiece revealed a specific veneration of the Virgin Mary of Trapania, a popular manifestation of Christ's mother in the European Alps. He often reminded his priests and flock of the central role the Blessed Mother played in salvation history. The Holy Spirit, on the other hand, provided the bishop with the strength and courage to exercise his office with prudence, firmness, and tenderness. Palafox probably invoked the consoler or paraclete, as the Holy Spirit was often called, to guide him in his role as shepherd. Veneration of Saint Thomas Aquinas, patron saint of scholars, best reflected the scholarly elements within Tridentine Catholicism. A recent interpretation of colonial altarpieces locates this public art form within the reforms of the Council of Trent, which promoted the special importance of saints and images. And the altarpiece did indeed become an esteemed public art form in seventeenth-century New Spain. Such altarpieces were meant to evoke feelings of awe and devotion and to invite contemplation. Altarpieces could be quite costly since they were usually large gilded ensembles much in the spirit of Tridentine Catholicism. 

75 Palafox y Mendoza, *Autos y diligencias*, BN, ms. 3838, f. 31v.-32. These navigational instruments included a lodestone, two globes, compasses and astrolabes, pantometers, a forestaff, maps and charts, as well as a three-hour ebony sand clock.

The navigational instruments that Palafox included as part of his donation evoke images of the late seventeenth-century savant, Carlos Sigüenza y Góngora. As Irving Leonard pointed out, Sigüenza's scientific writings distinguished him from other Baroque contemporaries. He often separated secular concerns from the spiritual and theological traditions of academic learning. Palafox's writings suggest, on the other hand, that the bishop did not have any permanent interest in the maritime sciences. Moreover, it would have been uncharacteristic of him to divorce the sacred and profane. If anything, science served the interests of Church and Crown. Palafox probably acquired the instruments during the early stages of his career, when he accompanied the royal court during the European bridal journey of the Infanta María. Perhaps during these visits, which included Vienna, Germany, Flanders, and Italy, he acquired compasses and astrolabes as a hobby. The secular nature of the navigational instruments, however, indicates that the bishop was not adverse to worldly things; he recognized them as temporal elements of daily life.

Spanish civil law required Palafox to employ other secular components of public life. City clerks and notaries were absolutely essential for all legal transactions and affairs. Last wills and testaments, powers of attorney, buying and selling of property, and formal financial transactions were invalid without a notary's certification. These public servants provided their services for royal, ecclesiastical, and municipal transactions. Palafox used the services of Nicolás

---

de Valdivia, who was a tenured clerk for the city of Puebla, which means he had passed an exam and, in theory, his appointment was permanent. Valdivia also served the Crown and Inquisition.\(^7^8\) The notarial dimensions of the donation reveal the legal and social mechanisms that Palafox employed to exercise the power of his office. Moreover, notarial assent of his actions showed the intimate links between the exercise of ordinary power and the more routine, mundane aspects of public law.

Valdivia certified that the bishop made the donation as a pious work, and therefore Palafox was able to circumvent the civil law requirement that donations worth more than a set amount had to be registered before a judge. The books were Palafox's personal property that he had acquired over the years as an employee of the Church and Crown.\(^7^9\) Pious works, or obras pías, were quite common during the colonial period. They expressed in material terms a person's piety or devotion to the faith and also gave the Church an almost unlimited

---

\(^7^8\) Palafox y Mendoza, *Autos y diligencias*, BN, ms. 3838, fs. 31-35v.

\(^7^9\) Palafox y Mendoza, *Autos y diligencias*, BN, ms. 3838, f. 33v. In the act of donation, Palafox employed the juridical concept casi castrenses (or cuasi castrenses in its modern spelling) to describe his book collection. With roots in Roman Law, casi castrenses refers to the material goods, items, and property acquired by the sons of leading families during their years of military and/or royal service, especially when they held and exercised certain public offices. In the case of Bishop Palafox, the books and manuscripts that he collected during his years of service to the Church and Crown (as priest and bishop, as chaplain in the royal court, as a member of both the Royal Council of the Indies and the Council of Castile, and finally as visitor-general, captain-general, and interim viceroy of New Spain). The Real Academia Española provides the historical and legal contexts for the term in its *Diccionario de autoridades* (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1990), 1:605.
supply of operating capital. Pious works usually took three forms: chantries, funds to provide dowries, and the founding of convents, monasteries, or hospitals. While they achieved different material ends the three kinds of pious works shared one common element: regardless of their outward manifestations, pious works relied on invested capital to supply the income necessary to fulfill the patron's or benefactor's wishes.\(^{80}\) This material and spiritual device was linked to the Church's doctrine of good works, whereby graces and merits reserved in heaven by Christ and his saints could relieve punishment owed to sinners if they performed "pious works" on earth. As a rule, the laity participated in good works and the Church received the material benefits; at the same time, the Church, acting in its capacity as Christ's temporal institution, imparted spiritual benefits to the lay benefactor. Pious works, therefore, dulled the sharp edge associated with punishment in the afterlife.

Palafox, a bishop, identified his donation as a pious work for different reasons, however. The donation did not fit nicely into any of the three traditional forms that a pious work could take. He was not providing funds to establish a library nor was the bishop offering real property (real estate) or even an annuity to found one. The building that would hold the library already existed. Moreover, the donation provided neither hard cash nor credit to the city or diocese; it did not consist of money to be loaned out and then invested in the local economy. While

Palafox assessed the fair value of the entire donation at 15,000 pesos, he did so only to demonstrate that he could circumvent the civil requirement of public registry by designating his donation as a pious work.\(^8^1\) In other words, Palafox was exercising the power of his office through the act of donation, whereby he fulfilled the educational reforms of Trent while forgoing the civil law that defined the boundaries of public donation.

On the other hand, Palafox declared that the donation would not undermine the material and spiritual dignity of his office. Bishops could not expect to wield the authority nor implement the pastoral dimensions of their office without sufficient income. In the New World, bishops personally received one quarter of the *diezmo*, or tithe, collected within their jurisdictions. The tithe was a tax on most ranching and agricultural activities, such as wheat, corn, honey, cattle, and sheep. The cathedral chapter also received another quarter of the tithe to pay for the salaries of its members. Since the bishop was a member of the cathedral chapter by virtue of his office, his salary, as well as the administrative costs of his office and residence, were paid out of the cathedral chapter’s portion. Thus, bishops could spend their own portion as they wanted without worrying about the maintenance of their household and office.\(^8^2\) Since the library was Palafox’s personal property, acquired during his years of service, there was no danger of depleting episcopal or municipal coffers. Moreover, if

\(^8^1\) Palafox y Mendoza, *Autos y diligencias*, BN, ms. 3838, f. 33. Royal officials often worried that large public donations would drain funds from municipal coffers. The civil law of donation reflected their concerns.
there were any doubts as to the bishop's sincerity or intentions, especially if fiscal conditions turned poor and warranted an abrogation of the donation, Palafox promised the city, in writing, that he would not revoke the donation even though the law permitted it. He waived and renounced those laws that prohibited large donations and rejected other laws that allowed him to change his mind and take back the library. By handing over the library's keys to the administrator of Saint Peter's seminary college, Palafox relinquished possession of his books and established the library as yet another dimension of Puebla's material culture.83

The legal act of transfer and possession, according to the civil law of property, was nearly absolute. Save for a few laws that favored the royal household and high clergy, once correct procedures were followed and any stipulated obligations fulfilled, there was little room, if any, to legally nullify a property transaction, unless both parties agreed to do so. Palafox had waived those laws that favored his episcopal office but he also attached several conditions and obligations to the instrument of donation. The administrator of Saint Peter's seminary college returned the library's keys to him.84 The bishop, therefore, could define the parameters of access. While he expected professors and their students to take advantage of the library so that course preparation and instruction would be effective, Palafox still maintained the right to deny other

82 Schwallcr, Origins of Church Wealth, p. 56.
83 Palafox y Mendoza, Autos y diligencias, BN, ms. 3838, f. 33.
84 Palafox y Mendoza, Autos y diligencias, BN, ms. 3838, fs. 33-33v.
parties access to the collection. The bishop reserved for himself the right to define the "public" in public library during his lifetime. Palafox's understanding of his episcopal authority prevented him from making a complete and total donation, however, because such an act might have restricted or undermined subsequent episcopal policy. How could Palafox restrict his own access to the library? The exercise of power anticipated and allowed for changes in the way that Palafox directed Tridentine reform. Moreover, he also planned to define more clearly in a separate document the library's functions as well as devise rules and regulations for its use.  

Bishop Palafox also prohibited anyone, including future bishops or the cathedral chapter, from selling or alienating the library. He went so far as to prohibit anyone from borrowing a book, even if the person received permission from a bishop, who was likewise prohibited from taking or borrowing them. Books and manuscripts could only be consulted within the confines of the library. Palafox eventually secured from the papacy the penalty of excommunication for anyone who disobeyed his prohibition.

This particular aspect of the bishop's donation reveals yet another dimension of Palafox's public consciousness. He wanted to prevent future

\[85\] Palafox never issued the guidelines. The Chilean bibliophile, José Toribio Medina, located a copy of a 1773 reglamento in the Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid, Spain, written by Bishop Francisco Fabián y Fuero. See José Toribio Medina, La imprenta en la Puebla de los Ángeles, 1640-1821 (Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México), pp. 444-445.

\[86\] Palafox y Mendoza, Autos y diligencias, BN, ms. 3838, f. 33v-34.
bishops from making his donation their own private library. Books and manuscripts were not donated so that they could become the personal prerogative of episcopal office. Only the donor, Bishop Palafox, enjoyed unfettered access to the books. Palafox stated that there was no need for future bishops to borrow or take books from the library since their residence occupied the same building. They only had to walk a few paces to consult whatever text they desired. In effect, Palafox exercised the power of his office to restrict future bishops from alienating the library, thereby restraining their own exercise of episcopal office. These restrictions were necessary to preserve the public character of the library, as well as to guarantee a scholarly apparatus for seminary education. Palafox even called upon the vigilance of the city council and cathedral chapter to ensure that his successors, or any potential transgressor, obeyed the prohibition. By assigning a quasi-enforcement role to the two bodies, Palafox harnessed the strength of two public branches of urban authority to ensure compliance. In the process, he knowingly situated two sets of watchful eyes upon future bishops. This suggests that Palafox favored one Tridentine reform, the education of youth, over the council’s definition of ordinary authority in another. But he made sure that his actions did not impede his own ability to exercise the power of episcopal office. Moreover, the threat of

---

67 Palafox y Mendoza, Autos y diligencias, BN, ms. 3838, f. 34.
68 Palafox y Mendoza, Autos y diligencias, BN, ms. 3838, f. 34.
excommunication served to deter those who considered disturbing the contents of the donation and thus breaching the public trust.\(^{89}\)

The instrument of donation concludes with the administrator of Saint Peter's seminary college taking possession of the library on behalf of the seminaries. Father Moreno acknowledged that Palafox's donation served a public good for the city and diocese. The education of urban youth had genuine social value, especially in light of the Tridentine concern that too many children of prominent families were not maintaining the dignity of the social status given to them by their parents.\(^{90}\) Four other priests attested to this public good by serving as witnesses. The clerk identified them as "citizens and residents" of Puebla. Two of the witnesses were members of the cathedral chapter and hence secular clergy; the other two were regular clergy, or members of religious orders.\(^{91}\)

The presence of clergy as witnesses intimates an ecclesiastical character to the donation, but it also suggests public assent of the donation's goals and ideals. Moreover, two of the four witnesses identified themselves as educators.

---

\(^{89}\) Pope Innocent X approved the donation in a papal brief on 17 February 1648. In it he granted Palafox the authority to raise the ecclesiastical censure of excommunication on those who disobeyed the prohibition. While the word censure in English suggests a mild rebuke or criticism, it conveys an entirely different sentiment in everyday ecclesiastical usage. Canon Law designated several different kind of censures, or punishments, that either could be incurred automatically by a person who disobeyed a specific prohibition or could be raised by appropriate authority. Reference to the papal brief is found in Quiroz y Gutiérrez, Historia del Seminario Palafoxiano, p. 30.

\(^{90}\) Palafox y Mendoza, Autos y diligencias, BN, ms. 3838, f. 33v-34.

\(^{91}\) Palafox y Mendoza, Autos y diligencias, BN, ms. 3838, f. 34v.
Since the clergy did not operate in a social vacuum, they were as much a part of the urban landscape as city councilmen, merchants, and blacksmiths. The fact that two witnesses were members of religious orders is significant. Chapter one illustrated how and why Palafox secularized many parishes in the poblano diocese that were under the auspices of regular clerics. The Franciscans were deeply affected by the bishop's move, while the Mercerdarians less so. Chapter five will analyze the polemic that ensued between Palafox and the Society of Jesus over episcopal jurisdiction and the tithe, which prompted several priests of the Dominican order to side with the Jesuits and oppose the bishop. Palafox's exercise of episcopal power had shifted the material and spiritual balance of power in favor of the secular clergy. And the regular orders often formed alliances when bishops attempted to strip them of their parishes and restrict their priestly ministry. Their presence at the act of donation, however, indicates that Palafox worked to accommodate and co-opt those who did not resist episcopal authority. He knew that the regular orders operated in the public sphere and had fostered strong relations with civil officials and leading families. Palafox maintained good relations with individual members of certain orders, a few Franciscans and Mercerdarians in particular, despite his mistrust of their corporate interests. The implementation of the Tridentine reforms on seminary education would have been much more difficult without the support of some regular clerics. Palafox appreciated many of their contributions to the spiritual well-being of poblano society.
The clerk's designation of these priests as citizens and residents of Puebla deserves some attention. Citizenship defined the civil status of lay persons who were not nobles. For a great majority of Spaniards in the Habsburg period, legal rights, political participation, and economic benefits derived from citizenship, which was acquired by birthright or marriage. But nobles and priests did not need citizenship because their civil status gave them legal privileges (fueros) and tax exemptions not available to the ordinary lay person. Then why did the clerk, Nicolás de Valdivia, identify those priests as citizens of Puebla? Perhaps it was a seventeenth-century legal innovation that had developed in New Spain. More likely, however, the clerk employed the term citizen (vecino) to indicate that these witnesses were born in Puebla, and he used the term resident (estante) to show that they still inhabited the city, that is, they did not live in Mexico City or Veracruz but in Puebla.

The witnesses had invested their energies and devoted themselves to the spiritual development of the city and its diocese. They were not outsiders unfamiliar with the strengths and weaknesses of this particular urban society. The four witnesses certainly knew many of the city's laity; they administered the sacraments to them, heard their confessions, counseled them, blessed their marriages, instructed their children, and buried their loved ones. The public clerk chose to identify these priests as citizens because they did indeed constitute

---

important threads in Puebla’s urban fabric. The establishment of formal
Tridentine seminary education, as well as the donation of the bishop’s library,
illustrated one dimension in the process of spiritual ordering of material culture.
Palafox’s exercise of episcopal power permeated the process and in turn shaped
Puebla’s landscape to mirror his Tridentine vision of society.

During his pastoral visits, the bishop encountered clergy and laity who
shared his vision of society as well as those whose vision differed from the
episcopal ideal. As chapter four will demonstrate, the voice of the people, or the
vox populi, often found its way into the material and cultural dimensions of
ordinary power, for Palafox exercised his office to direct and shape their lives.
To do so, however, he had to meet and come to know the faithful.

---

93 Palafox y Mendoza, *Autos y diligencias*, BN, ms. 3838, f. 34v.
Chapter 4

Hearing the Vox Populi in the Pastoral Visitas: The Spiritual Geography and Human Dimensions of Episcopal Power

In 1925, amidst political uncertainty and rising tensions between the Mexican Church and post-revolutionary governments, the archbishop of Puebla, Pedro Vera y Zuria, drafted a series of letters to his seminarians a few months before the outbreak of the Cristero Rebellion. One particular letter, written in July during the archbishop’s first pastoral visit to the Sanctuary of San Miguel del Milagro, reflects Vera y Zuria’s episcopal sensibilities at a time of profound and often violent change for the Church in Mexico. Writing from the same desk that Bishop Palafox had used during his own pastoral visit to the Sanctuary, and sleeping in the same bed that the seventeenth-century prelate had rested upon, Vera y Zuria evoked the virtues of austerity, devotion, humility, and perseverance as part and parcel of sacerdotal life.

While the contents of the letter hint little at the violence and bloodshed that would engulf major areas of west-central Mexico following the battle cry, “Viva Cristo Rey,” they do reveal Vera y Zuria’s pastoral concern for the future of the poblano priesthood. The anti-clerical dimensions of the Mexican Revolution had eroded the material and political power of the institutional church, and the archbishop of Puebla was trying to shape a new post-revolutionary priesthood that could blunt the more debilitating aspects of various anti-clerical projects. At
one point in the letter, while admiring the portrait of Bishop Palafox that graced
the wall of his guestroom, the archbishop discovered a sheet of paper tucked
inside the picture frame with the words, “Si a Dios tenemos, ¿qué tememos?”
Although the person who wrote these words chose anonymity and therefore left
no signature or rubric, Vera y Zuria nevertheless located the rhetorical question
in the perfect model of priestly virtue. Had Palafox not endured the turmoil and
conflicts of his time by relying on the depth and breadth of his faith in God? In
another point in the letter, the archbishop intimated that Palafox’s decision to
conduct the pastoral visits without burdening local parishes with added expense
illustrated the kind of material poverty and asceticism that seminarians living in
1925 should embrace. The revolutionary regime in Mexico City certainly viewed
the Church as the antithesis of such virtues.

Here was a twentieth-century bishop of Puebla, on the verge of conflict
with the vested interests of the new revolutionary polity, invoking the historical
memory of his seventeenth-century predecessor, who also had his share of
conflicts with the vested interests of a powerful colonial entity, the regular clergy.
Although the contexts of each episode were quite distinct, Vera y Zuria found
solace and comfort in his colonial predecessor’s enduring confidence in God.
Moreover, the archbishop’s pastoral visit provided a good opportunity for him to

1 Pedro Vera y Zuria, “Carta LXXIII a los seminaristas de Puebla,” 14 July 1925,
in Cartas a mis seminaristas en la primera visita pastoral de la arquidiócesis
(Barcelona: Librería Católica Internacional, 1929), p. 286. In English, the
sentence reads, “If we have God, what do we fear?”
exercise the power of his office to ensure that the ‘people of God’ remained steadfast in their devotion to the Mexican Church, notwithstanding the political salvos of the Mexican government. Pastoral visits facilitated a spiritual intimacy between shepherds and their flock, between prelates and their priests. Perhaps at no other time during a bishop’s tenure as shepherd of a diocese was there as much episcopal-clerical-lay interaction in local parishes than when bishops inspected the physical plant of diocesan churches within their jurisdictions as well as gauged the spiritual well-being of parishioners. That Vera y Zuria’s letter suggested an episcopal unity with Palafox’s seventeenth-century pastoral visitation illustrates the vitality of an apostolic esprit de corps within the institutional church that remained strong despite the different political contexts that had informed each other’s pastoral responsibilities.

The archbishop of Puebla encountered a diocese, however, that had experienced the great technological advances of the early twentieth century. Cars and railroads provided at least some comfort and ease during his treks across rugged terrain that marks the broad expanse of the poblano plains. Bishop Palafox, on the other hand, endured the pastoral visits of 1643, 1644, and 1646 on foot, horse, mule, canoe, and the occasional horse-drawn carriage, often sleeping under a straw-thatched jacal or in a damp cave to avoid inclement weather, humidity, and mosquitoes. Palafox’s descriptions of ‘poblano topography’ are littered with such physical features as rocky terrain, muddy

\[\text{\footnotesize Vera y Zuria, "Carta LXXIII a los seminaristas," pp. 285-287.}\]
roads, washed-out streams, steep caverns, and wide gorges, thus illustrating the challenges, as well as the dangers, of travel in seventeenth-century Mexico. Moreover, the poblano diocese in 1643 comprised a much larger swath of territory than that delineated in 1925. Despite these vast differences, however, both ordinaries conducted their visitations within an institutional context whose canonical boundaries were defined by the Council of Trent.

Chapter Two demonstrated the liturgical dimensions of Bishop Palafox's diocesan visitations, where the Mass, homily, public prayer, solemn blessings, and the administration of the sacraments demonstrated to the laity and clergy an extensive range of episcopal splendor and pastoral obligation. The ritual aspects of the pastoral visit expressed in very public terms the institutional foundations of Tridentine practice, specifically the cultural trajectory of public and private religiosity that Palafox sought to instill in the lives of colonial Mexican Catholics. Whether singing a High Mass, explaining the gospel, reciting the rosary, or anointing foreheads with holy chrism, Palafox exercised the power vested in the office of bishop to sow and nurture the seeds of Tridentine Catholicism.

When the church fathers convened the twenty-fourth session of the Council of Trent on 11 November 1563, they decided to crystallize the role of bishops within the customary practice of pastoral visitation. Since many prelates in Europe had shirked the responsibility of attending to their flock, the council mandated that every bishop "must without fail visit their diocese personally or, if
legitimately impeded, through their vicar-general or visitor. The Council endowed the office of bishop with the full thrust of canonical leverage to "ensure sound and orthodox teaching and the removal of heresies, to safeguard good practices and correct evil ones, to encourage the people by exhortation and warning to the practice of religion, peace and blameless life, and to make any dispositions for the benefit of the people that place, time and opportunity may suggest to the wisdom of the visitors." Moreover, in an attempt to curb the many abuses that prelates had committed when they did visit their jurisdictions, the Council ordered that bishops "take care they are not a burden to anyone through unnecessary expenses, and that neither they nor any of their party accept anything for expenses during the visitation... neither money nor gift of any kind or however offered, notwithstanding any custom however immemorial." Too many bishops in Europe had warped the letter and spirit of pastoral visitation into a material exercise fueled by self-enrichment. This was far from maintaining the conciliar spirit that bishops should "embrace all [during the visitation] with fatherly love and Christian zeal." The church fathers even counseled that "bishops be

---

3 Council of Trent, Session 24, 11 November 1563, Canon 3 of the decree on reform, in Decrees, p. 761. The same canon also stipulated that if bishops could not visit their dioceses every year, they should then "cover the greater part of it, so that it is covered every two years by them." The ideal, however, was for bishops to conduct annual visits.

4 Council of Trent, Session 24, in Decrees, p. 762.

5 Council of Trent, Session 24, in Decrees, p. 762.

6 Council of Trent, Session 24, in Decrees, p. 762.
content with modest transport and services...[and that they] endeavor to complete the visitation with all speed, though with due thoroughness." Perhaps it was this particular stipulation that guided Palafox's decision to forgo Indian tamemes (Indian carriers) and the comfort of icpallis (sedan chairs) when, on the morning of 22 August 1643, after saying mass in the cathedral, he began his pastoral inspection of the Diocese of Puebla by walking to the first parish outside the immediate boundaries of the city, El Alto de San Francisco.

Our knowledge of pastoral visitations during the early colonial period of Mexican history suggests that some bishops followed the letter and spirit of Tridentine law while others openly disregarded it. The case of Bishop Juan de Zumárraga, who used the visitation as a means to extirpate idolatry, is well known to historians. While showing little restraint when confronted with evidence against the cacique of Texcoco, Zumárraga also exhibited charity and pastoral sentiment on other occasions. For example, he established a school and library for the children of the Indian nobility. His approach to the pastoral visitation certainly indicates that the process was more than just a simple preoccupation with heresy and backsliding. Examining sacred space, the conduct of clergymen, and the laity's grasp of Christian doctrine also were important elements of the visitation.

Stafford Poole has reviewed the

---

7 Council of Trent, Session 24, in Decrees, p. 762.

documentary evidence from Pedro Moya de Contreras' visitas of the Central Valley of Mexico in the sixteenth century and concluded that the archbishop conducted them “without fanfare and without added expense to the places he visited.” The visitations of Zumárraga and Moya de Contreras illustrated the early church's concern for ecclesiastical organization and indigenous conversion, concerns tempered by the political, economic, and social realities of Nahua-Spanish relations in sixteenth-century central Mexico. In southern Mexico, however, specifically the highlands and lowlands of Chiapas, where Spanish conquest and colonization proceeded at a different pace over the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, historians have employed the pastoral visitation as a vehicle to measure the material demands of the Church on Maya peoples.

Kevin Gosner has shown how provincial bishops in Chiapas tapped native resources directly by charging fees and soliciting alms during their periodic

---

9 Poole, *Pedro Moya de Contreras*, p. 51.


visitas. Like the visits of the alcaldes mayores, the pastoral tours of inspection were undertaken more regularly late in the seventeenth century. Fray Marcos Bravo de la Sema and Fray Francisco Núñez de la Vega completed ten pastoral visits between the two of them from 1677 to 1709, and they both collected derechos por la visita, fees to underwrite their tours, exacting fourteen tostones from cofradías in each pueblo. These bishops also required alms for requiem masses devoted to deceased members of the cofradías. As Gosner has suggested, presumably the bishop-friars also received food and services during their stays, though the value of these is unknown. Bishop Palafox, on the other hand, left no record of the fees charged to Indians and Spaniards during his pastoral visitations. And the cofradía records that Gosner used to calculate expenditures for the Indian communities of Chiapas are not available for Puebla. The only record uncovered thus far that provides some clue as to the manner in which Palafox handled the fiscal dimensions of the pastoral visita is the first page of his Relación de la visita eclesiástica. In it he recognized that pastoral tours of inspection often burdened parishioners and priests with many expenses, so he dispatched an edict to each parish on his itinerary, ordering them not to spend nor prepare lavishly for his arrival or lodging. Palafox also mentioned, however, that he expected all the towns and parishes to comply with the order that he had

---

12 Gosner, Soldiers of the Virgin, p. 64.

13 Monetary unit valued at four reales, or one-half peso.

14 Gosner, Soldiers of the Virgin, p. 64.
dispatched several months earlier, which had listed the minimal expenses and modest lodging that he would require for his visit.\footnote{Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 2. I have yet to find the first edict in the archives.} As this chapter will show, Palafox often slept in the house of the beneficiado or, when invited to do so, in the residences of sugar-mill owners and alcaldes mayores. If he departed one parish in the evening and was not scheduled to appear in the next town until the following day, Palafox and his chaplains slept in huts and caves. From what the historical record suggests, the bishop avoided being an undue burden on the local populace. Of course, when he dined and slept in the houses of beneficiados, alcaldes mayores, and sugar-mill owners, no doubt these hosts prepared hearty meals and comfortable bedrooms for him and his chaplains. Not every contemporary of Bishop Palafox, however, approached his pastoral visitations in the same manner.

The pastoral visitation of Fray Bautista Alvarez de Toledo deserves some attention here, for it illustrates an episcopal disregard for the letter and spirit of Tridentine law governing tours of inspection. Conducted in 1709 in Chiapas, Alvarez de Toledo exacted such heavy material demands on Maya pueblos that one Franciscan friar accused the bishop of "demedida codicia," or limitless greed.\footnote{Fray Ximénez, quoted in Gosner, Soldiers of the Virgin, pp. 64-65.} Alvarez de Toledo forced indigenous communities to have their children confirmed at three reales per child, thus "bringing such scandal and ruin upon the
Indians that those who could not pay were put in jail." Moreover, the bishop's critic also denounced the fact that Alvarez de Toledo conducted his visitations every year and a half, "whereas earlier bishops had visited every three years." Gosner's research uncovered treasury records of Maya cofradías that show monies typically diminished by half after Alvarez de Toledo's pastoral tours of inspection. Gosner concluded that the bishop's use of the visita as a means for self-enrichment eroded the material conditions of so many Maya towns that the visitas in effect became one of the factors that contributed to the Tzeltal Revolt of 1712.

More recently, Amos Megged has explored the linkages between pastoral visitas and local religion in Chiapas. He cautions historians against analyzing post-Tridentine visitations in Mexico as rituals that strictly imposed homogenous beliefs and practices on the "still lingering fusion between Catholicism and indigenous traditions." Megged used the reports and correspondence generated by late seventeenth-century pastoral visitations to paint a general view

---

17 Fray Ximénez, quoted in Gosner, Soldiers of the Virgin, p. 65.

18 Fray Ximénez, quoted in Gosner, Soldiers of the Virgin, p. 65.


of the state of faith in those Maya parishes inspected by bishops. He views the
text of the visitation ritual as an act designed to strip away all signs and insignia
of pre-Columbian identity and religious sentiment, but since the ritual was
performed so often in Chiapas, it merged with the indigenous cyclical concept of
cosmic time and ritual feasts.\(^\text{21}\) Megged even argues that the language used by
prelates in their episcopal reports suggests a Church that could be located on the
periphery of Europe rather than in the New World.\(^\text{22}\) Rather than describe the
indigenous dimensions of local Catholicism, these bishops chose instead to
express a generic conformity and homogeneity on the part of Maya Indians,
rarely referring to any signs or qualities of "Indian-ness" in Catholic rituals or daily
life.\(^\text{23}\)

Megged's recent contribution to the historical literature warrants special
attention, for he posits a series of arguments about the pastoral visitation that
both illuminate and obfuscate the centrality of the process within the canonical
and cultural frameworks of the institutional church. For example, he rightly
locates the Tridentine vision of a properly conducted visitation within the
European church's belief that only an efficiently administered bishopric could be
turned into a properly reformed diocese, and therefore, European bishops

\(^{21}\) Megged, *Exporting the Catholic Reformation*, p. 33.

\(^{22}\) Megged, *Exporting the Catholic Reformation*, p. 33.

\(^{23}\) Megged, *Exporting the Catholic Reformation*, p. 33.
manifested the need for regular pastoral visits. Megged's work provides a useful summary of a bishop's duties and obligations during the pastoral visita: to ensure the parish priests' fulfillment of their pastoral duties; to examine the suitability of the priests; to inspect the holy chrism, oils, and baptismal fonts, as well as ascertain that the Blessed Sacrament was not desecrated. A bishop's foremost duty was to confer the sacrament of confirmation and suppress heresies and superstitions, with the latter being linked to the degree of effective instruction and catechism in Maya parishes. Megged notes, however, that the reports produced during the visitations reflect their authors' determination to "whitewash" apparent setbacks in the work of conversion, thereby erasing clear signs of persistent resistance to religious change in Indian parishes. Certainly, the reports generated during a pastoral visita reflected the political, social, and material circumstances of both author and locale.

Often bishops performed a kind of ecclesiastical juggling act, whereby they sought to inculcate Tridentine values and practices within local parish communities while at the same time correcting, and if necessary, punishing, those who transgressed the canonical and liturgical sensibilities of the prelate conducting the visitation. In other words, if historians evaluate pastoral visitas without complementing their analyses with other documentation produced

---

24 Megged, *Exporting the Catholic Reformation*, p. 35.

25 Megged, *Exporting the Catholic Reformation*, p. 35.

26 Megged, *Exporting the Catholic Reformation*, p. 35.
sometime afterwards, especially documents intimately related to the episcopal visitation, then a one-dimensional picture emerges of a process that was, in fact, much more complex. And while some bishops "whitewashed" indigenous practices when drafting their visitation reports, they also recognized, and often feared, the native attempt to blend pre-Columbian and Tridentine practices. Bishop Núñez de la Vega initiated a new campaign against idolatry and witchcraft after he conducted at least one official visitation of Maya parishes within his diocese. His Constituciones diocesanas exhorted parish priests to be more vigilant in their efforts to identify and halt activities with pre-Columbian antecedents. Moreover, Gosner's work on the Maya, as well as research conducted by Susan Deeds, Ronald Spores, and William Taylor, also demonstrate a relationship between depleted material resources, cultural revitalization, and the acknowledgement by some quarters of the Church that indigenous communities resisted only when bishops and priests attached burdensome financial terms to the sacramental and spiritual changes that they sought to enact. It was not a question of Maya peoples seeking to preserve a romanticized, pre-Tridentine village parish as a barrier against the full implementation of Tridentine Catholicism, as Megged has argued; rather, Indian


communities tried to maintain a material base sufficient enough so that they could support their families, meet the obligations of Spanish colonialism, as well as sponsor the plethora of Trinitarian-inspired fias and ceremonies that provided cultural and spiritual meaning to their daily lives. When the pastoral visita, or in the case of the far northern frontier, Jesuit inspections, undermined the political autonomy of local priests and Indian principales to maintain that delicate balance between the material and the cultural, Maya parishes resisted. In other words, Megged neglects both the material and ritual dimensions of local political culture that bishops often stumbled upon when they conducted their pastoral visitations.

Despite the recent historiographic turn to culture theory and power relations, historians of the Church have yet to locate the pastoral visitation as a cultural and juridical dimension of the exercise of power, not to mention the complex range of spatial understandings that accompany the exercise of episcopal power. As mentioned earlier, chapter two illustrated the ritual component of the pastoral visita, as Bishop Palafox employed the liturgy, public prayer, and solemn blessings as a media to act out the drama of his ordinary power. The bishop imbued existing space, the sacred space of local parishes, with episcopal representations of Trinitarian political culture. In the process, he attempted to impart some sense and understanding of the episcopal application of Trinitarian Catholicism. In many ways, the visitations that he conducted in 1643, 1644, and 1646 reveal a power-laden tapestry of human, spatial, and
cultural relationships that often have been neglected in the historical literature.

While the bishop's report is much more descriptive, and thus fits within the genre of the traditional pastoral visitation, it also provides enough data to construct the geographical, material, and human dimensions of daily life in the Diocese of Puebla during the seventeenth century. And Palafox's pastoral visits also show how canonically defined space — and the canonically defined actors who operated within those sacred spaces — constituted, and in turn were constitutive of, the routine intersection of religious experience and material life.²⁹

When Palafox conducted his tours of inspection, he drew upon a range of pastoral sensibilities that were shaped by his understanding of conciliar reform. The bishop wanted to evaluate the extent to which 'local' creations of sacred space — and the clerical and lay participants who operate within those spaces — needed to conform to the Tridentine ideal. Conciliar decrees on episcopal visitations informed many of his actions and reactions to parish priests, parishioners, the material conditions of church buildings and hermitages, as well the sacramental state of the parish in general. In this sense, Palafox's pastoral visitas reveal the degree to which parish life was or was not embedded in the broader political culture of the Tridentine church. As Nicholas Blomely has

²⁹ Here I borrow from a body of theory that seeks to place the intersection of law and geography within the context of power relations. Nicholas K. Blomley, in particular, makes the argument that "legal representations of space must be seen as constituted by —and, in turn, constitutive of— complex, normatively charged and often competing visions of social and political life under law." See his Law, Space, and the Geographies of Power (New York: The Guilford Press, 1994), p. xi.
argued skillfully, space, and in this case, the sacred grounds of parish life, is not an empty or objective category, but has direct meaning on the way power is deployed, and cultural life structured.\(^30\) Blomely posits that the 'geographies of law,' or the representations of law and space, shape consciousness, such that everyday language, here, the Tridentine discourse on the vitality of parish life as articulated by Palafox, becomes endowed with the vocabulary of parishioners' rights and obligations, sacerdotal responsibilities, and the material conditions required to fulfill both.\(^31\) To that extent, Blomely argues, the "geographies" of law may serve to shape as well as constrain the cultural imaginary and popular readings of spatial dimensions of social life.\(^32\) Moreover, he posits that legal projects, far from constituting an autonomous sphere, are necessarily social and political projects. In other words, law is cast as relational, that is, as acquiring meaning through social action.\(^33\) Bishop Palafox, therefore, conducted his tours of inspection with an eye toward exercising the authority and power of his office to suffuse Tridentine understandings of pastoral action in the daily lives of parishioners.

In this regard, conciliar decrees that defined the role of pastoral visitations in the universal church structured the very manner in which the bishop

\(^{30}\) Blomely, Law, Space, and the Geographies of Power, p. xii.

\(^{31}\) Blomely, Law, Space, and the Geographies of Power, p. xii.

\(^{32}\) Blomely, Law, Space, and the Geographies of Power, p. xii.

\(^{33}\) Blomely, Law, Space, and the Geographies of Power, p. 11.
experienced and understood local parish life.\textsuperscript{34} Palafox's sense of what constituted the cultural and material rhythms of daily life revealed a Tridentine concern for linking local parishes to the broader Catholic world, especially the institutional framework of episcopal power and influence. He deployed the power of episcopal office during the pastoral visitas to redefine, command, empower, and reconstitute local parishes within his jurisdiction. As Foucault argued, the "capillary forms" of power reach into the "very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives."\textsuperscript{35}

Anthony Giddens also has asked questions of the relationship between law, space, and social vision. He writes that power is not simply a constraining force that "grinds out our bodies;" it is also facilitative. The exercise of power involves the deployment of social resources – both allocable and authoritative. Space is vital to the deployment of both sets of resources given what he calls "the stretching of society in time and space."\textsuperscript{36} Palafox issued several mandates and orders, both during and after his tours of inspection, that pushed local parishes to refurbish, renovate, or in some cases relocate sacred space. As this chapter will show, Palafox ordered several parishes to speed up construction of

\textsuperscript{34} Blomely, \textit{Law, Space, and the Geographies of Power}, p. 12.

\textsuperscript{35} Foucault, \textit{Power/Knowledge}, p. 39.

church buildings and rectories, to knock down walls and gates, to repaint retablos, add silver to sacramental vessels, and rebuild altars. B. Santos has written that the production and deployment of space, as well as the reconstruction of space, promotes the expression of certain types of interests and agendas while suppressing that of alternative discourses. To achieve this, however, Palafox balanced the structural dimensions of episcopal power with its more tactical dimensions.

In his analysis of Eric Wolf’s contribution to the body of theory on power relations, Ashraf Ghani argues that people in communities are not mere objects to be acted upon from the outside but active in the production and reproduction of their communities. The Indians, Spaniards, mestizos, and Africans who lived in seventeenth-century Puebla were certainly active participants in shaping the kind of parish that could serve their spiritual and materials needs. What makes Palafox’s pastoral tours of inspection so important to our understanding of the episcopal imprimatur of parish life is the various ways he tried to cast the material and cultural dimensions of local churches into a mirror image of the new Tridentine Church. In some cases, as this chapter will show, he exercised the structural dimensions of ordinary power to shape “the social field of action,

---


[rendering] some kinds of behavior possible, while making others less possible or impossible. In other instances, the bishop deployed tactical power to circumscribe the actions of others within determinate settings. Analyzing the dialectical interplay between cultural forms and human maneuver allows us to understand the intersection of modes of structural and tactical power, especially since structural power shapes the form of tactical power.

When Palafox approached the outskirts of the parish of Saint Joseph in Amozoc, located on a plain two leagues from the city, he was starting a pastoral visita that would take him to twenty-six beneficios (parishes), eight of which he had secularized in 1640 and 1641, four ingenios (mills) owned and operated by some of the leading Spanish families of the diocese, three hospitals, and nine hermitas (hermitages). This first pastoral tour of inspection included ninety estancias (ranches), forty hacienadas (farms), twenty-three ranchos (small ranches), nineteen trapiches (processing plants), two molinos (water mills), six ventas (inns), and scores of smaller Indian visitas (neighborhoods or small towns) and pueblos. Extreme differences in climate and elevation also characterized the first pastoral visita: from broad, semi-arid plains nestled in

39 Here I borrow again from Ghani’s conceptualization of Eric Wolf’s theories on power to explain the episcopal process, as Palafox defined it, of reordering parish life. See Ghani, “Writing a History of Power,” p. 39.


41 The first pastoral visitation is found in Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, fs. 4v-33v.
valleys surrounded by snow-capped volcanoes, where a series of droughts and cold evenings often disturbed wheat and corn production and small livestock grazing, to the intense humidity of vast stretches of the Gulf Coast of Mexico, where mosquitoes and scorpions shared the landscape with Indians, Spaniards, and Blacks on sugar plantations. During his visit to the twenty-six parishes, Palafox also encountered forty-nine cofradías, one of which he founded during his stay, four hermandades (sodalities), and three conventos (convents). The material and geographical features of the pastoral visitation are much easier to calculate than the number of parishioners that Palafox encountered. Calculating the number of clergyman proved relatively easy, however, since one requirement of the visitation was to examine the conduct and preparation of each beneficiado (pastor) and his assistants. The bishop met fifty-eight secular priests, eleven regular clerics, and one sacristán (sacristan). Population statistics for parishioners, on the other hand, are difficult to ascertain from the pastoral visita, because Palafox and his scribe were far from consistent in their use of precise terminology to calculate the number of faithful in each parish. For example, in one parish Palafox used such terms as indios vecinos casados (male Indian heads of household who were married), while in another he mentioned that the parish consisted of indios casados y solteros (married and single Indians), while still in another parish he simply wrote that the area had either muchos indios or

---

42 Unfortunately, Palafox's report fails to describe the ritual and institutional context of his role in the founding of the cofradía. He provided no information on the confraternity's constitution, accounting procedures, or liturgical calendar.
pocos indios. While the legal terminology was slightly different throughout Spanish America, most colonial institutions specified indios casados as tributarios (heads of the household in terms of calculating tribute payments). Other members of the household, therefore, especially children and elderly parents, were often excluded from Palafox's count, although on a few occasions he provided statistics on the number of viudos y niños (widows and children) in a particular parish or pueblo. Based solely on the actual numbers that Palafox quoted during his first tour of inspection, he covered an area that encompassed, in human terms, 919 Spaniards, 7,595 Indians, 2,365 mestizos and castas, eighty black slaves, and 205 free blacks, for a total population of 11,164 souls. Of the major indigenous languages that shaped the linguistic geography of the diocese, Palafox encountered communities that spoke Náhuatl, Totonac, Chocha, Mixtec, and Otomi. Perhaps the number of those who received the sacrament of confirmation from Bishop Palafox provides a fuller description of the human geography of the poblano diocese. Between 22 August 1643 and 11 November 1643, when Palafox returned to the cathedral, he anointed 20,720 foreheads with the sacred oils of the sacrament.

In just over two months, the bishop administered the sacrament to children and adults, many of whom had not seen a prelate since the days of Bishop Diego Romano, who held the poblano crozier and miter between 1578-1606. At first glance, the numbers seem inflated, evoking Megged's warning that prelates often "whitewashed" statistics to gild the episcopal lily, especially since Palafox spent
an average of only two days in each parish. The logistics of arranging so many people – the 1200 parishioners who gathered to receive confirmation in the beneficio of Tecali serve as a good example – also seem to suggest exaggeration on the part of Palafox and his episcopal entourage. Whether Palafox delegated to his chaplains the pastoral responsibility to administer the sacrament remains unknown. From what the documentary record suggests about Palafox's sacramental sensibilities, however, it was unlikely that he delegated such an important dimension of episcopal office.\textsuperscript{43} Using such expressions as \textit{hizo las confirmaciones} (I administered confirmation), or when his scribe took notes, \textit{su excelentísimo hizo el sacramento de confirmación al pueblo} (His Excellency administered the sacrament to the people), Palafox clearly set himself apart from his chaplains and the parish priest. From the moment that he received episcopal consecration in 1639, a year before his arrival in New Spain, Palafox was neither a simple priest nor one of many chaplains to the royal court. Episcopal consecration conferred new powers and responsibilities, especially the sacramental power to impart the gifts of the Holy Spirit on the faithful.

The bishop included other clerics, however, in the administration of two other sacraments, thus expressing the shared responsibility and obligation between ordained men. Hearing confessions and saying mass, as well as

\textsuperscript{43} As Chapter Two has shown, the Council of Trent endowed the office of bishop with this specific responsibility, even holding in anathema those who argued that the ordinary minister of confirmation could be any "simple priest." See Session 7, 3 March 1547, Canons on the sacrament of confirmation, in Decrees, p. 686.
proclaiming the gospel and preaching, were sacramental acts shared by bishops and priests. But confirmation was not among them. Palafox or his scribe often wrote that “dije la misa con su familia (I said the Mass with my family),” or “su excelentísimo oyó la misa (His Excellency heard the Mass),” or “el pueblo se confesó a su excelentísimo y al beneficiado (the people confessed their sins to His Excellency and the pastor),” or “distribuyó comunión al pueblo con mi familia y el beneficiado (I distributed communion to the people with my family and the pastor).” So while chaplains and local pastors assisted the bishop in distributing Holy Communion to, and hearing the confessions of, Indians and Spaniards, Tridentine law, as well as Palafox’s appreciation of the canonical stipulation for administering the sacraments, suggest strongly that confirmation remained solely within his purview.

When the parishioners of Tzoncoliuhcan received news that Palafox was visiting nearby Tequila, another cabecera (head town) within the beneficio, they sent a messenger to plead with the bishop to make haste. Too many elderly parishioners, including children and young adults, had not received the sacrament in years, and considering their large numbers, it was not convenient for them to travel to Tequila. According to the pastoral report, Palafox quickly

---

44 See, for example, Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, fs. 20, 22v-23, and 33. The expression “mi familia” refers to Palafox’s capellanes, or chaplains, who accompanied him on the pastoral visitas. It was quite common in Latin America and Europe for bishops to have two, three, or sometimes four priests to assist them at the Mass.

45 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, fs. 19.
set out for Tzoncoliuhcan, agreeing to return to Tequila when he was finished with his episcopal duties there. And to avoid burdening both parishes with additional expenditures, Palafox ordered several of his chaplains to make their way to the much larger town of Orizaba and await his arrival. He stated that the parishioners and priests of Tequila and Tzoncoliuhcan were not financially equipped to handle such a large contingent of clergy.46

The parish of Tzoncoliuhcan was one of the few local parishes to have a secular cleric in residence since the founding of the diocese in 1526. The town had no resident Spaniards, but the beneficiado administered to ten Indian pueblos. Before conferring the sacrament, Palafox was introduced to an elderly Indian man who wanted to show him an ancient calendar that he had maintained for the community. The bishop described it as an "old-style calendar with various drawings and characters that spoke of the past."47 The old Indian pointed out several symbols in particular, explaining to Palafox that they represented the dates of previous episcopal tours of inspection. The ritual almanac informed the bishop that he was only the second prelate to visit Tzoncoliuhcan since the establishment of the diocese. And since the Indian claimed to be over 100 years old, the last pastoral visita was probably conducted during the early years of the diocese. Instead of reacting to the Indian chronicler in a manner consistent with Bishop Núñez de la Vega’s reflex when confronted with ritual almanacs in

46 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 18v.-19.

47 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, fs. 19v.
Oxchuc, Chiapas, Palafox noted that the old man was a good Christian who remembered with great fondness the day the secular clergy arrived to secure the beneficio. Bishop Palafox remained in Tzoncoliuhcan until 6 October 1643, where he confirmed 724 Indians, inspected the physical plant of the church, as well as its ornaments, and celebrated the feast day of Saint Francis of Assisi with a solemn High Mass. Afterwards he returned to Tequila as he had promised the Indians. There the bishop, vested in his episcopal garb and carrying his crozier, administered the burial rites for an Indian who had passed away during his stay. He wrote that he personally attended to the body and oversaw its burial, accompanied by his chaplains who were vested in the simple surplice.

In other parishes, according to Palafox, the Indians came out to greet him with palms, reeds, and red sarapes, a scene reminiscent of Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem. The Indians of San Juan Quezcomatepec, having lost a portion of their parish church to a fire some years ago, nevertheless gathered to pray with Palafox. While the bishop seemed moved by their show of affection, he also commented that not a few of them caused problems for the twelve Spanish vecinos who also lived in town, although he failed to specify the origins or nature of those problems. In San Juan Quimichtlán, Palafox experienced yet

---

48 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 19v.

49 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 19v-20.

50 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 23-23v.

51 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 23v.
another joyful reception. Children gathered around him and tossed sarapes on
the ground so that he would not have to walk on the dirty path to the church.
Afterwards, however, the Indians complained about the parish priest. The bishop
listed no specifics, only to say that their complaints seemed petty and that the
dispute was settled in amicable fashion. In the town of Ixhuacán, six leagues
from San Juan Quimichtlán, the Indians offered the bishop the comfort of an
icpallis, since it had been raining hard enough that the road was washed away.
Palafox refused the gesture, commenting that such a rocky and muddy road was
unfit for even a beast of burden.

These episodes suggest that, from Palafox's view, many Indians were
pleased with the visitation of their shepherd. He also seemed quite content with
the manner in which his Indian flock welcomed him. But in one particular telling
episode, the bishop scolded the Indians for their arrogance. In the town of
Zapotitlán, Palafox encountered Indians who wore Spanish dress and allowed
their hair to grow in the European style, something uncharacteristic of Indians, or
so the bishop wrote. He chastised them for their lack of respect, especially those
Indians who served the local parish, ordering them to cut their hair if they wanted
to continue serving the church. Whether or not the Indians obeyed the bishop
remains unknown, although the local pastor must have redoubled his efforts to

52 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 27.
53 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 27v.
54 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 17.
ensure compliance. Preaching the gospel message and spreading Tridentine reform were meant to facilitate a spiritual blueprint for living a decent life so that eternal salvation might be attained. Indians who imitated Spanish fashion and hair-style offended both Palafox's sense of 'Indian-ness' and the proper etiquette that Spanish colonialism attached to it. Here the Tridentine spirit of a 'people of God,' a catholicity of beliefs and traditions, failed to transcend the social prejudices of Bishop Palafox, who clearly demonstrated in this incident the harsher realities of Spanish colonialism. If the Indians not directly involved in daily liturgical preparation failed to heed the bishop's admonition, Palafox probably left the parish reassured that those who assisted the priest would obey. Failure to comply with the bishop's order could have jeopardized the political and cultural legitimacy that they worked so hard to achieve within their community.

What role the local beneficiado played in encouraging or inhibiting this legitimacy is unclear. Palafox noted that the beneficiario had been in the hands of the secular clergy since the early days of the diocese. The historical literature on early contact and colonization suggests, at least initially, that the regular clergy fostered a hispanizing Christianity. This vision quickly gave way to an accommodation and acceptance of Indian customs and traditions, as the millenarian spirit of conversion and salvation, which had influenced so many religious orders, subsided.55 That some diocesan priests accepted cultural

55 The historical literature is vast. See, for example, Charles Gibson, The Aztecs Under Spanish Rule (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964); Sabine
adaptations, as well as transgressions, for so long indicates some form of negotiation with their Indian parishioners during the early seventeenth century. The material conditions of parish life in the Diocese of Puebla provides a key to understanding the relationship between local parish priests and their Indian charges, as this chapter will demonstrate. Moreover, at first glance, the episode seems to reflect a contradiction in Palafox’s social vision for the Tridentine Church in Mexico. The canonical hierarchy that Palafox embraced had carved niches for the clergy and laity, but while the former was, in theory, predicated upon the multi-layered sacrament of holy orders, Spanish notions of citizenship and social status defined the latter’s place in civil society. The range of Spanish colonial social hierarchies, therefore, weighed heavily on the bishop’s Tridentine vision. As David Brading has argued so persuasively, this apparent contradiction was, in fact, Palafox’s interpretation of colonial realities from the perspective of seventeenth-century Europe, where the upper-classes and royal authority sustained rural society, local governments, and parishes.56

Palafox’s first encounter with poblano rural society began in the beneficio of Amozoc. It serves as a good example of a medium-sized parish within the diocese. Administered by the Franciscans since the mid-sixteenth century, it was one of the first doctrinas that the bishop secularized in 1640-1641, as chapter

---


56 Brading, First America, p. 233.
one has shown. The region was home to thirty estancias, several haciendas, five
Spanish and two Indian cofradías, two hermitas where Indians worshipped, and
one visita. Two of the estancias were of such considerable size that their owners
had built chapels on the premises, where two secular clergymen were assigned
to say mass, thus easing the burden of the beneficiado, Father Antonio González
Lasso. Although the bishop failed to describe the political economy of Amozoc,
most likely wheat, corn, and small livestock, the Franciscans' frosty reception
hints at the great material loss suffered by their convent when he secularized the
parish. Palafox made special note of the silence emanating from the convent, as
the Franciscans refused to peal the bells announcing his arrival. While lay
Spaniards and Indians greeted the bishop at the outskirts of town, including the
beneficiado, the religious remained inside their convent. Chapter one
described the material conditions of Franciscan and Augustinian territory within
the poblano diocese, so it comes as no surprise that the regular clergy failed to
toss palms, reeds, and blankets in the bishop's path. A parish such as Amozoc
provided a constant source of income for its priests, not to mention a
considerable agricultural base that met their subsistence needs.

In the benefici of Acatzinco, for example, only four religious occupied the
fortress-like Franciscan convent there. Secularized in 1640, the parish was
home to seventy Spaniards and over 1000 Indians, forty haciendas, three visitas,
and four hermitas. Palafox called the parish one of best in the diocese, despite

\[57\] Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 5v.
its recent problems with poor harvests. The town was founded on an open plain, with wide streets and a respectable plaza mayor (main plaza). The almost empty convent stood as a silent reminder of the glory days for the Franciscan order in rural Puebla. In fact, its baptismal font, made of primitive stone, contains the year of its foundation, Four Rabbit, or 1532. The Spanish vecinos, however, were more concerned about the ecclesiastical penalties that they had incurred for non-payment of the tithe than the isolation of their former ministers. Palafox sensed their trepidation when they greeted him. They asked that he remove the censures raised on the parish, and according to the bishop, "he was moved with mercy... promising to make it easier for them to meet their obligations [to the poblano Church]. Whether he reduced their tithe permanently or temporarily remains unclear, however, since the diezmo records for the jurisdiction of Tepeaca, of which Acatzinco was part, are incomplete for the years 1640-1652.

There in Acatzinco, dressed in episcopal vestments and carrying the miter, Palafox lead a procession to one of the hermitas, where he blessed the land and called upon God to send rain. The material conditions of the dry poblano plains fashioned an intimacy between the public and private spheres of

---

58 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 10.


60 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 10v.
daily life, as bishop and parishioners linked subsistence and agricultural
production to prayer and blessings. The rhythms of parish life—material,
spiritual, cultural, and political—guided the trajectory of Palafox's visitations.
While Tridentine law established minimum levels of pastoral responsibility that
bishops were expected to meet during their visitas, the community of believers in
rural Puebla shaped the contours of Palafox's pastoral visitas, for poor harvests
and intense droughts undermined the material needs of both priest and
parishioner. How could the laity be expected to meet the tithe obligation or pay
the scheduled fees for sacraments, processions, and other religious feasts if
erratic rainfall and barren fields harmed the parish's material base?

Acatzinco, like its cabecera Tepeaca, had experienced several years of
drought and poor harvests. The bishop wrote that there were "so many large
estancias and haciendas, fertile only a few years ago, which have experienced
poor harvests." Perhaps the town's poor agricultural showing contributed to its
inability to pay the tithe, although, again, the diezmo records contain few
statistics to support the generalization. But perhaps the presence of their
spiritual shepherd, dressed in his episcopal vestments and reciting prayers in
Latin while sprinkling holy water on the land, offered some hope and
encouragement to the Spaniards and Indians of Acatzinco. Moreover, the scene
evokes Eric Wolf's argument that "religious ceremonies were held to further the
tasks of cultivation... they gear the life-cycle of the individual to the recurrent
rituals of society, and they synchronize this social time with the march of cosmic
time." When Palafox traveled to the cabecera of Tepeaca, yet another former Franciscan doctrina secularized by the bishop, he revealed the full drama of episcopal ritual and the power of pastoral supplication, inspiring awe and wonder among the faithful who had gathered to pray with him for rain.

Even by Palafox's own account, Tepeaca was one of the most populated parishes in the region before Spanish conquest and colonization. Several ruins there provided the bishop with a glimpse of its pre-Columbian days. He had removed the Franciscans from their doctrina in 1640, whereby the religious order lost one of its greatest spiritual and material assets in the diocese. Tepeaca comprised seventy Spanish vecinos and their families, twenty-six Indian pueblos, four Indian and four Spanish cofradías, as well as another organized by the local black population, and a large church with an atrium. Palafox wrote that he confirmed 1300 Indians during his visit. The faithful from nearby haciendas and estancias also came out to hear mass and confess their sins to the bishop. For several years the harvests had been poor, so perhaps attending Mass celebrated by the bishop would offer some respite and comfort. Palafox did more than recite the liturgy, however. He escorted them in procession to the hermita dedicated to the Blessed Sacrament, located outside the town's limits. The bishop began to pray to 'Our Lord' to send the rains, particularly since the past year had been so

---


62 Palafox y Mendoza, *Relación de la visita*, BN, ms. 4476, f. 9v.
dry, and it being August, the rainy season, the crops were almost certain to be lost if the rains did not come soon. After imparting the blessing, the bishop and his flock began their return to the parish church. According to Palafox, a great storm suddenly poured down from the heavens, halting the procession. While they had prayed for relief from the drought, the thunderstorm that followed must have scared the bishop and his flock, for he began to recite an exorcism to ward off the torrential downpour. He called upon a powerful wind to push the storm away from the procession. Palafox reported that a gust of wind appeared around mid-day, blowing the rains back to where they originated and cleansing everything in its path.

The significance of this episcopal exercise must have resonated deeply with the parishioners. Pierre Bourdieu argues that institutionalized forms of power, such as edicts, decrees, official pronouncements, and the law in general, symbolically consecrate power relations between groups and classes of people by recording it in a manner that renders power both eternal and universal. In this incident, the people of Tepeaca received the much needed rain for which they had prayed, but they also saw Bishop Palafox, who was vested in episcopal garb, command the heavens to shelter them from the storm. Understanding little of the Latin phrases that the bishop uttered, standing in front of them as he did

---

63 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, fs. 9-9v.
64 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, fs. 9-9v.
while his chaplain held the manual for exorcisms, the parishioners of Tepeaca—Spaniards, Indians, and Blacks—witnessed more than simple ecclesiastical drama. By invoking the scripted formulas of the institutional Church to ward off the storm, the bishop revealed another dimension of how the Tridentine church sanctified the structure of power relations between canonically different groups of people, that is, bishops, priests, deacons, and the laity. How often had the parish priest recited prayers, imparted blessings, and celebrated the Mass remains unknown, but the utterances and supplications of a bishop, the people's shepherd, must have illuminated the qualitative differences between the sacramental states of a simple parish priest and Bishop Palafox. By employing the *Pontifical*, or episcopal ceremonial, as well as the manual for exorcisms, Palafox demonstrated the linkages between episcopal office and the ordinary power vested in it. By early evening, the rain had subsided, and the road leading back to the church was stable enough for the procession to return.66

The jurisdiction of Tepeaca straddles the volcanic divide running from the peak of Malinche (Matlacuéyatl) to the snow-capped Pico de Orizaba (Citlaltépetl).67 The climate is generally very dry and cold, with most of the area elevated at 2000-2500 meters. Two other beneficios located within the Valley of

66 Palafox y Mendoza, *Relación de la visita*, f. 9v.

Tepeaca likewise had experienced drought and poor harvests when Palafox passed through their towns. The Franciscan order had administered Quecholoc and Tecamachalco since the late sixteenth century before Palafox transferred them to diocesan clerics in 1641. Quecholoc consisted of 1000 Indians, five pueblos, twenty-eight estancias, and three cofradías. Known for their strong agricultural output during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the twenty-eight estancias had suffered from drought for several years. When he departed Quecholoc for Tecamachalco, the Indians began to weep, following him for some distance before Palafox ordered them to return.68

Tecamachalco had thirty estancias whose owners also had experienced the crippling drought that was so common in the arid region of Tepeaca. The estancieros also asked Palafox to bless their fields.69 Palafox took note of the small fees that the three Indian cofradías paid to the beneficiado – small enough to hinder the regular celebration of the Mass for each cofradía.70 The encomendero of the region, the Conde del Valle, paid the beneficiado an annual salary of 400 pesos and 200 fanegas of corn. The salary and ración obliged the priest to say Sunday Mass for the thirty Spanish parishioners of the Church of San Sebastián and the 400 Indian parishioners who lived in five nearby

---

68 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 11-12.

69 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 12.

70 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 12v.
Perhaps the obligation to render tribute to the Conde del Valle — and the debilitating effects of the drought — prevented Indian cofradías from raising the necessary funds to sponsor additional feasts and celebrations. As for beneficiado’s qualifications, Father Diego Antonio de Aranda graduated with a licenciatura in theology and was a candidate for one of the canongías in the cathedral. Palafox described him as “bright, poor, and with many obligations.”

Juan de Buiza, who held a bachelor’s degree, assisted Father de Aranda in the administration of the sacraments. Both had a sufficient grasp of Náhuatl that allowed them to serve the Indian pueblos. Ironically, despite the Conde’s material demands, without his financial assistance, poor economic conditions would have sapped the liturgical vitality of daily life in rural Tecamachalco. The local context here illustrates the contradictions of the Spanish colonial enterprise as well as its hegemonic presence in the New World. The Indians of Tecamachalco might have contributed more funds to support liturgical celebrations had they not been forced to pay tribute to the Conde. On the other hand, the Conde’s ability to pay for a resident pastor — based in part on the tribute that he collected from Indians — ensured the celebration of some feast days as well as the administration of the sacraments.

---

71 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 12v.
72 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 12v.
73 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, fs. 12v-13.
In other parishes that had been secularized, Palafox took great care to describe the priests' linguistic abilities and material conditions. His first pastoral tour of inspection reflects little of a historiographic tradition that has painted the secular clergy as lacking the basic language skills and educational background necessary to administer to Indian parishes. Of the twenty-eight beneficiados that Palafox examined, eighteen held a licenciatura, while ten had earned a bachelor's degree (bachiller). Among the licenciados, ten were approved to teach Náhuatl and three others spoke at least two indigenous languages (usually Náhuatl and Totonac or Chocha, although Palafox noted a few priests also had a linguistic grasp of Mixtec). The inconsistent manner in which the bishop identified the beneficiados' areas of specialization hinders a more thorough examination of their qualifications and educational backgrounds. According to Palafox's relación, three of the licenciados specialized in theology, two in sacred scripture, and one was a former professor of rhetoric at the Royal and Pontifical University of Mexico. Of the bachillers, Palafox wrote that five of them were

---

74 See, for example, Robert Ricard's classic study, *The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966), and John Frederick Schwaller, *The Church and Clergy in Sixteenth-Century Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1985).

75 William B. Taylor, however, enjoyed access to the kinds of records that revealed areas of specialization, and he used them to bolster his argument that the diocesan clergy's educational background warrants a reexamination in light of what appears to be much better trained clergy. While Taylor covered the Bourbon period quite effectively, the earlier Habsburg period demands further research and analysis. See Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred*, pp. 77-97.
versed in theology, seven in Náhuatl, and three priests knew at least two indigenous languages.

Palafox listed twenty clerics who assisted the beneficiados, ten of whom had earned a bachelor’s degree, six a licenciatura, and four had no specific degree attached to their names. Of the six licenciados, three were approved to preach in Náhuatl, one was characterized as “very bright,” and two had no areas of specialization listed. Of the ten bachillers, four spoke Náhuatl, while three others had a firm grasp of at least two indigenous languages. One bachiller had studied theology and two priests had nothing listed after their names. Finally, five priests served as capellanes to several estancias and ingenios. Three held the bachelor’s degree and two the licenciatura. Palafox characterized one as “very learned” and another as well-versed in Náhuatl.

The salaries and fees that these priests earned varied from parish to parish. During the first pastoral visita, Palafox often noted in general terms the limosnas, obvenciones, and salarios (alms, fees, and salaries) of the beneficiados and capellanes, although he did so in irregular fashion, making it difficult to calculate precise comparisons between parishes over time. One thing remains clear, however, from Palafox’s pastoral report: the material rewards of a capellanía provided greater financial stability than those offered by a beneficiado. Owners of sugar mills, estancias, haciendas, or agostaderos, who desired a resident chaplain to celebrate mass and administer the sacraments to their families and laborers, often paid twice as much as the typical beneficiado could
earn in a parish. For example, Captain Diego de Orduña owned a sugar mill in the jurisdiction of Xalapa (present-day State of Veracruz). While larger ingenios had dotted the landscape of the Gulf slope, as Palafox noted in his report, Captain de Orduña paid a handsome sum of 200 pesos annually to the chaplain, Francisco Pérez de Salazar. Moreover, the captain met the priest's nutritional needs by providing him with daily meals. Finally, the chaplain also received fees for administering the sacraments and celebrating feast days, though the monetary value of these remains unknown.76 The chaplain administered to seven Spaniards, twenty-six Indians, and eighty Blacks. Captain de Orduña also had built a nice church that contained four altars, all the necessary liturgical items that Palafox considered appropriate for celebrating the sacraments, as well as a tile roof. The bishop rested in the captain's big home after confirming 407 persons.77

Afterwards, Palafox visited the sugar mills owned by Don Sebastián de la Higuera Matamoros, who had built a sumptuous residence for him and his family near the smaller of the two sugar mills. Palafox first visited the larger mill, commenting that the church attached to it was even more impressive than the owner's house.78 Consecrated to the Holy Trinity, the church enjoyed four altars, many vessels made of silver, and several beautiful decorations and adornments.

76 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 29.
77 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 29.
78 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 29.
Palafox claimed that the church was of such size and beauty that it could have been located in a city.\textsuperscript{79} The chaplain, Juan Fernández de la Higuera, was also teniente de los curas de Xalapa\textsuperscript{80} and probably related to the ingeniero. Don Sebastián paid him an annual salary of 400 pesos plus a portion of his agricultural produce. The priest administered to 300 persons who worked in the larger mill.\textsuperscript{81} The smaller of the two mills also maintained a chaplain, however, since it too had 300 laborers. Palafox claimed that the mill resembled a small town, and its church, dedicated to the Immaculate Conception, was even greater than the one near the larger mill. It had five altars, the largest enjoying a sizeable retablo consisting of sculptures and paintings. The other four retablos, though smaller, contained silver, various ornaments, jewels, and several lamps to provide illumination. The chaplain had earned a licenciatura and received an annual salary of 200 pesos. Moreover, the mill also had a hospital that offered medical care to its workers as well as those traveling from Veracruz who became ill after the long Atlantic voyage aboard the biannual flotilla.\textsuperscript{82}

There are several distinctions here worthy of further examination. The first chaplain, who shared the same last name as the ingeniero and, therefore, was probably a relative, earned more than twice as much as his colleague who

\textsuperscript{79} Palafox y Mendoza, \textit{Relación de la visita}, BN, ms. 4476, f. 29.

\textsuperscript{80} Assistant or “lieutenant” to the cura (pastor) of the beneficio of Xalapa; sometimes specifically the chief vicar of a parish.

\textsuperscript{81} Palafox y Mendoza, \textit{Relación de la visita}, BN, ms. 4476, f. 29-30.
worked in the smaller mill, although they each administered to the spiritual needs of 300 people. The second chaplain, however, celebrated the Mass and other sacraments in a sacred space that was, according to Bishop Palafox, more spectacular and opulent than the first church building. Whether or not the distinction resonated with the chaplains is difficult to discern. It would appear that familial ties determined Father Juan Fernández de la Higuera's annual salary but not necessarily the choice of sacred space prominent and lavish enough to administer the sacraments.

In other sugar mills, haciendas, and estancias throughout the region owners offered attractive salaries. Increases in wheat and sugar production in the early part of the seventeenth century, as well as an expanding regional market and better access to water sources, had bolstered the economic fortunes of many Spanish mill owners and hacendados. The sugar mill owners and encomenderos that Palafox met during the first tour of inspection had the necessary capital to invest in the local spiritual economy. Crown policy obliged the latter group to tend to the spiritual needs of their Indian tributaries, which often meant that the encomendero contracted the services of a priest and constructed a church or chapel to hold Catholic services.

Hacendados and ingenieros, on the other hand, were not contractually bound to provide for Catholic rites and rituals, although many spent large sums of money to build churches and chapels, sponsor cofradías, support a make-shift
hospital, as well as supply the necessary material goods — retablos (altarpieces), chalices, patens, and candles — essential to the visual dimensions of the Catholic ceremonial. And since many hacendados and ingenieros built lavish homes on their estates, the chaplain who administered the sacraments to Indian laborers and black slaves also dispensed Catholic rites and ritual to the patrón’s family. If the clergyman lacked formal blood ties to his benefactor, other important variables, such as the spiritual and economic ties of compadrazgo, sealed their relationship. As we have seen, ingenieros and hacendados spared little expense in constructing a micro-parish within the geographical confines of their estates. Bishop Palafox expressed awe when he entered Don Sebastián’s and Don Diego de Orduña’s personal residences and estate churches, and through the vehicle of a pastoral visitation, he imparted episcopal legitimacy on the sacred spaces and sacred grounds in which those regional elites had invested so much revenue. While the regional economy of the diocese, which almost stretched from coast to coast, linked ingenios, estancias, and haciendas to urban markets, the spiritual dimensions of rural life reflected, in part, the urban Catholicism of local elites. Often they maintained at least two homes, shuttling back and forth from the city to the countryside. And what better way to manifest their Catholic sensibilities than to construct and nurture a micro-parish near the same rural epicenters that had facilitated their wealth and social status. Palafox’s personal visits to their estates and chapels provided an episcopal imprimatur of their material attempts to sow and cultivate Catholic traditions. In many ways, elite
largesse liberated bishops from the pastoral obligation to ensure that rural sacred space complied with the minimal standards of sacramental life outlined by the Council of Trent. Rural pastors and parishioners, on the other hand, especially those with limited or erratic income, were subject to pastoral inspection and inventory of their physical plant and sacramental paraphernalia.

The Conde de Orizaba paid 200 pesos a year to his chaplain, the bachiller Diego del Castillo Verastegui, whom Palafox had personally appointed to the position, to cultivate the spiritual needs of 150 workers and eighty slaves.83 During his visit there, Palafox anointed 590 persons with the holy oils of confirmation; the bishop also recited the rosary with the Conde inside the church. When the bishop invited the encomendero to share in the Marian devotion, he demonstrated how pastoral sentiment could be imparted to reinforce and sanctify the social status of rural elites. Here was a leading figure of the valley’s sugar district, with rosary beads in hand, kneeling next to the highest-ranking member of the diocesan Church. Moreover, the Conde was reciting the same prayer that the mill’s cofradía had accepted as its patron (Cofradía del Rosario), while members of that confraternity, the Indian and black labor force, watched from the pews.84 The sugar mill’s personal chaplain must have been pleased to see the bishop accord such prestige to his rural benefactor.

In comparison to the relative security of the capellanes (chaplains), parish priests in the region relied on fees that they received both for saying mass and

83 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 18.
administering the sacraments to Indian pueblos and Indian and Spanish cofradías. The bishop's pastoral report provides a few examples of the material foundations of parish life for his magistrates of the sacred. In the beneficio of Orizaba, for example, the pastor and his assistant received two pesos for singing the mass on Saturdays for the Spanish cofradía dedicated to Nuestra Señora. The confraternity also offered two pesos to the priest to sing the Mass on feast days that commemorated their spiritual benefactor, the Virgin Mary. The other Spanish cofradía, Las Ánimas (All Souls) paid one peso and four tomines for a Low Mass each Monday. Several Indian pueblos also organized a confraternity to honor Las Ánimas, and it offered two pesos a month for one mass. For annual fees totaling 206 pesos, from which the parish priest and his assistant had to share, eighty Spanish vecinos (200 Spaniards total) and 1000 Indian vecinos casados (1300 Indians total) celebrated the Catholic liturgy. These clerics administered to twice as many laity, at roughly the same salary, as those chaplains who lived on the sugar estates of Don Sebastián. They had to perform more masses, direct more processions, and administer the sacraments to greater numbers of laity to earn an annual salary of 200 pesos.

The former professor of rhetoric who administered to the beneficio of San Juan Quezcomatepec received an annual salary of 123 pesos, seventy-five of which came from the community caja and forty-eight from the encomendero. Licenciado Joseph de Isla Briseno and his assistant, Antonio de Beristaín, who

---

84 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 18-18v.
also held the licenciatura, received obvenciones and limosnas from the Spanish and two Indian cofradías of the parish to augment their income. If the beneficiado shared a portion of his salary with the assistant, Palafox did not say. The priests received from the Spanish confraternity two pesos for saying mass every other month. The Indian cofradía of the Immaculate Conception paid two pesos a month for one mass, while the confraternity of the Purification provided two pesos every other month for the liturgy. Total annual clerical income, therefore, was 171 pesos. Palafox described the parish as one that enjoyed fertile lands, abundant water sources, fish, fruit, and chickens, although he made no mention of these resources constituting part of a ración.

In the temperate region of the Xamapa River, in present day State of Veracruz, the beneficio of San Antonio Otlaquiztlan offered its priest 250 pesos that was paid out of the Royal Caja. With royal financial support, plus the fees offered by the confraternities, the priests earned a stable income. The parish was one of the few that Palafox visited that had hermandades instead of full-fledged cofradías, which indicates that the parish was once a doctrina under the supervision of the regular clergy. In the years following the Spanish Conquest, when the regular clergy began the process of evangelization in Indian towns throughout central Mexico, they employed European-style confraternities as tools.

---

85 These funds constituted the sinodo, or royal stipend. Taylor cites the seventeenth-century Spanish jurist, Juan de Solórzano Pereira, whose monumental Política indiana defined the sinodo as a "salary or stipend judged sufficient for curas. See Taylor, Magistrates of the Sacred, p. 535.
of conversion. Often these early confraternities took the form of a hermandad, a
community sodality in its infancy that over time matured into a full-fledged
cofradía. In theory, at least, when Indians became sufficiently christianized and
passed over to the jurisdiction of the secular clergy, their community sodalities
also transformed into official confraternities. In the Diocese of Puebla, cofradías
outnumbered hermandades from the outset, thus illustrating once more the gap
between the theory and practice of evangelization. As a practical matter, the
diocesan priest who had been entrusted with the parish after the regular clergy
had left the area would have been responsible for initiating the change in the
sodality's corporate status. While the documentary record is silent as to why the
change never took place, it does reveal the material conditions of the parish.

Here in Otlaquitzlan, members of the hermandad paid the beneficiado
three pesos every two months to celebrate Sunday mass and three pesos for a
requiem mass when someone passed away. Over 200 Spaniards and castas, as
well as 400 Indians living in four pueblos, engaged in some form of commerce
with the port city of Veracruz, exporting bananas, corn, and chickens.

Palafox's description of the parish suggests that any priest looking for a benefice here
faced a dilemma. Palm trees and flowers lined the streets of the town,
generating the sweet smell of local flora. And the climate was ideal, according to
the bishop. Most houses had a garden plot devoted to banana cultivation.
Moreover, the salary and fee schedules were competitive with, if not better than,

^6 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 24-25.
neighboring towns. The parish church enjoyed two altars and a retablo, not to mention a nice chapel, although it lacked a stable roof. But despite Otlaquiztlan's scenic views and healthy economy, its Indian parishioners could become "unpleasant" and "disobedient."

Palafox briefly recounted a story to illustrate the point: he was told that years ago the Indians had hanged the regular cleric who administered to the pueblo when it was still a doctrina. Since the current pastor had been serving the parish for twenty-four years, the episode, if true, happened during the late sixteenth or early seventeenth centuries. That Palafox chose to include the story in his pastoral report may suggest an attempt to bolster the image of the secular cleric, who, after all, had served the parish for a quarter century without serious attempts to undermine his authority. Disobedient and unpleasant at times, to be sure, but the Indians never attempted to resist the diocesan priest to the point of murder. Put another way, this may have been a subtle attempt on the part of the bishop to foster a negative image of the parish when the Franciscans administered it as a doctrina. A plausible alternative exists, however, for the bishop also noted that there had been no principales among the four Indian pueblos. Perhaps the lack of a strong interlocutor, who could have

---

87 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 25.
88 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 25v.
89 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 25v.
articulated the pueblos’ needs while negotiating with the resident pastor, undermined attempts at peaceful coexistence.

Regardless of the origins of the dispute, Palafox thought it necessary to speak to the Indians outside the formal boundaries of a sermon. Speaking to them “as one of their servants of peace, quietude, and other virtues,” and avoiding any mention of their obstinacy, the bishop implored the Indians to construct a roof over the church so that their sacred space would be complete. Whether the Indians followed Palafox’s exhortation remains unknown, but the episode reveals another occasion in which he employed the pastoral dimensions of his office to facilitate Tridentine definitions of properly constituted sacred space. A church without a roof was antithetical to Palafox’s episcopal, as well as urban, sensibilities. This time, however, Palafox chose to gather the Indian parishioners away from canonically defined time and space, that is, outside the Sunday mass and the parish church. As noted earlier, episcopal power moves around social space, inserting itself and acquiring meaning through pastoral action. The exercise of episcopal authority and power required neither the physical confines of a church nor the liturgical parameters of a Sunday mass.

The beneficio of Ixhuacán was home to the Franciscan order until Palafox secularized it in 1640. Palafox considered it quite comfortable for the new pastor, Francisco de Vera, and his associate, Alonso de Toro. With a river nearby filled with trout and other species of fish, the Indians of the parish gave a

\[90\] Palafox y Mendoza, *Relación de la visita*, BN, ms. 4476, f. 25v.
sizeable catch to the priests each year, a custom that dated to the days when the Franciscans administered it as a doctrina. Each of the two hermandades paid ten pesos to have the mass celebrated once a week, while an Indian barrio offered two pesos and four reales for weekly mass. The beneficiado and his assistant, therefore, shared a salary of 270 pesos, not including the yearly ración of fish. Palafox also noted that two Indian lugares (inhabited places) were required to provide the clerics with an annual ración of fifty fanegas of corn but that they had neglected the obligation for years.

The last secularized parish that Palafox visited in his pastoral tour of inspection was the beneficio of Xalapa. The towering Cofre de Perote, with an elevation of 4280 meters, overlooks a broad expanse of plains and rolling hills. There is year-round precipitation, though temperatures vary considerably according to altitude. With fifty Spanish vecinos and 300 Indians (casados y solteros), the parish was home to three Spanish cofradías, three barrios, three pueblos (where an additional 200 Indian casados y solteros lived), four sugar mills, ten ranchos, and a hospital. One of the confraternities paid fees in the amount of one peso and four tomines per week, while the other provided one peso and four tomines for a monthly mass. Palafox failed to list the fees offered

---

91 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 28.
92 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 28.
93 Gerhard, Historical Geography, p. 373.
94 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 30.
by the third cofradía. The three Indian barrios collectively paid two pesos to hear the mass once a month. And each of the three pueblos celebrated the Mass on Sunday, though the fees for these liturgies are unknown. The Indians worked primarily as muleteers in the service of local Spaniards, but a few also cultivated milpas. The parish at Xalapa had two beneficiados and a sacristán, the latter being the first mention of a cleric with minor orders who served in some capacity at the parish level. The three clerics had to share an estimated income of 200 pesos, while they administered to approximately 600 people. Palafox also described the Franciscan convent there, yet another reminder of that religious community’s service to the Mexican Church, as very capable and efficient. During his pastoral visitas, Palafox inspected and described the physical plants and sacramental paraphernalia of local parishes and convents. And he hesitated little to reconstitute and reshape the physical boundaries of parish life, illustrating the intersections of the material and the cultural as well as the trajectory of Palafox’s crozier as he exercised ordinary power at the local level.

Upon entering the Church of the Holy Cross, part of the beneficio of Tlacotepec, for example, Palafox immediately noticed that the primary chapel, its small nave, and sacristy, were in order. Construction on the rest of the church had begun a few months earlier, however, and was not yet finished. Palafox

55 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 30v.

56 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 30.

57 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 13.
refrained from saying much else about it, save that the parish enjoyed nice ornaments, jewels, and sacred vessels.\textsuperscript{96} Since the parish complied with the canonical stipulation that all churches possess certain material goods necessary for public worship – and the parish at least had a chapel in which to celebrate the Mass – the bishop wrote nothing of the public or private pressure that he may have exerted on the local beneficiado. In the parish of Zapotitlán, for example, where the Indian parishioners had adapted Spanish fashion, the church had burned down. Four walls remained standing, however, a testament to its former “sumptuous” design and architecture.\textsuperscript{99} The pastor had fashioned a jacal into a temporary chapel to say mass and administer the sacraments. This parish also had the necessary sacramental goods that facilitated public worship, but Palafox ordered the beneficiado to rebuild the church, regardless of the difficulty of the task. For one, the parish had few parishioners in comparison to its neighbors, and to complicate matters further, the wood needed to reconstruct the edifice was located in a forest some distance away.\textsuperscript{100} With few Indian laborers and readily available building materials, the beneficiado faced a monumental task.

The church located in the beneficio of San Juan Quezcomatepec, where the former professor of rhetoric administered, also experienced a fire. A jacal served as the principal chapel while the church underwent construction. As

\textsuperscript{96} Palafox y Mendoza, \textit{Relación de la visita}, BN, ms. 4476, f. 13.

\textsuperscript{99} Palafox y Mendoza, \textit{Relación de la visita}, BN, ms. 4476, f. 16v.

\textsuperscript{100} Palafox y Mendoza, \textit{Relación de la visita}, BN, ms. 4476, f. 17.
previously discussed, the parish was also home to a few “disgruntled and inflexible” Indians who had caused problems for the pastor. While the situation was similar to the one the bishop witnessed in Zapotitlán, he reacted quite differently during the course of the visitation here. He noted that, despite the ravages of fire, the beneficiado and parishioners had built both a sacristy and rectory offices. When decorating the temporary place of worship, the faithful used lots of silver ornaments and jewels to illuminate the visual dimensions of their Catholic beliefs. And finally, when he entered the parish boundaries, the Indians greeted him with palms and reeds, not to mention that they had gathered in prayer to welcome the shepherd. San Juan Quezcomatepec also was located in a sierra that enjoyed an abundance of fertile lands and fields, trees and plants. Locating the timber necessary to rebuild the parish church would not prove difficult.

In the beneficio of Xicochimilco, which was also located in the sierra and part of the jurisdiction of Xalapa, Palafox encountered a big church with three altars, two of which, however, lacked fine decoration and adornment.\textsuperscript{101} Thatched straw provided a roof for the building. When the bishop saw that a corner of the roof was damaged, he ordered the principales to assist the pastor in making the necessary repairs. According to the pastoral report, the Indian leadership agreed to do so, but whether or not they followed through on their

\textsuperscript{101} Palafox y Mendoza, \textit{Relación de la visita}, BN, ms. 4476, f. 28v.
promise is unknown. Perhaps questions of political and cultural legitimacy came into play again, as the principales may have decided that their status as interlocutors depended upon some form of accommodation with episcopal demands.

Palafox’s visits to the Villas of Orizaba and Córdoba provide more clues to the Tridentine sentiment concerning the intersection of the material and the sacramental in local parish life. In the long stretch between Veracruz and Puebla, both towns reflected a close approximation of the Spanish vision of urban society. Orizaba had more than 200 Spaniards (vecinos and their families) and a large indigenous population. The Spanish king sustained, in part, the local pastor by paying him 100 pesos de minas, while the encomendero offered sixty-two pesos ordinarios. Both the monarchy and local elite, therefore, supported and maintained the institutional dimensions of spiritual life, that is, the annual income of the local magistrate of the sacred. Nevertheless, Orizaba’s principal church, under the patronage of Saint Michael, failed to capture Palafox’s episcopal imagination. It had a straw-thatched roof, something that smaller pueblos and visitas normally used to provide protection from the elements. The beneficiado told the bishop that he had wanted to use tile instead of straw, and Palafox responded by ordering him to replace the straw with tile.

---

102 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 28v.
103 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 21.
reflected the finest materials available. Although the town of Orizaba shared neither the spatial nor the human dimensions of cities such as Puebla or Cholula, Palafox considered its urban environment sufficient to support an expensive roof made of tile. If Orizaba's hospital shared many similarities with its urban counterparts, then the primary sacred space of the parish certainly deserved the same consideration. Administered by the Brothers of Saint John of God, the hospital had the requisite tabernacle, chrismera (vessel that contains the holy oils used to confer the Sacrament of Healing, or extreme unction), and a proper sick room where priests attended to the sick and infirm.  

The Villa of Córdoba was divided into two cabeceras: Córdoba proper and Santiago Guatusco. The former comprised 50 Spanish vecinos (300 Spaniards total), 40 Indian vecinos (110 Indians total), two Indian pueblos, and another pueblo organized by the Black community. Palafox described the town's church as well decorated; the principal chapel was made of stone and its nice retablo made of cedar wood. The body of the church, however, was not fully finished when Palafox arrived, so he ordered the local pastor to complete the task as soon as possible. Perhaps the wood and stone rubble that once made up the Mercedarian convent aided the beneficiado in his efforts to finish construction. The bishop noted that the convent was built without episcopal or royal license, and when the king received news of the illegal action, he ordered its

---

104 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 21v.
105 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 22.
Despite the Mercedarians' contributions to the evangelization of Indian communities, their attempts to circumvent royal and ecclesiastical regulations proved detrimental to their presence in the area.

The second cabecera, Santiago Guatusco, located seven leagues from Córdoba, was home to 250 Spaniards and muchos indios and enjoyed an abundance of fruit trees, ponds and streams filled with fish, and fertile fields of corn, chile peppers, cotton, and legumes. The bishop was most impressed with the Indian parishioners, whom he described as very devout and free from the evils of alcohol. They visited the church every day, enjoying its three altars and the music emanating from the organ. And the church was blessed with many sacramental items made of silver. In a pueblo not far from Santiago Guatusco, however, Palafox was much more reserved in his descriptions.

The origins of the pueblo of San Lorenzo merit further discussion, for they illustrate a complex of resistance and negotiation, not on the part of Indians but of enslaved Africans who had fled bondage. Palafox's pastoral report is one of the few ecclesiastical accounts from the seventeenth century that describes what happened in San Lorenzo, albeit through a lens tinted with the color of an elite bishop. With the approval of the Marqués de Cerralbo, several "negro fugitives" founded the town of San Lorenzo. During the mid-sixteenth century, the growth

---

106 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 22.

107 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 22v.

108 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 22v.
of cattle ranches and sugar mills spread through deserted Indian lands, and these economic engines employed both Indian and Black laborers. Many of the latter escaped servitude and for several years maintained a virtual independent existence on the slopes of the Pico de Orizaba, under the leadership of Yanga.\textsuperscript{109}

To Spanish authorities, they were rebels who raided nearby haciendas and assaulted travelers. The viceroy dispatched an expedition against the community in 1609, whereby a truce was arranged. According to Palafox, in return for a full pardon and its freedom, the Black community agreed to capture and deliver any new fugitives who escaped to the mountains.\textsuperscript{110} In addition, the town was allowed to form a civil government, with justicias, soldados y prisiones, although the juridical categories available to define citizenship in seventeenth-century New Spain, such as vecino, residente, or forastero, were absent from Palafox's report. Forty families (125 persons) were listed as inhabiting the town. So while the members of this community had defined and nurtured the civil, economic, social, and spiritual dimensions of daily life, amidst resistance and negotiation that even the bishop acknowledged, their former status as black slaves and fugitives influenced the way Palafox described their juridical status.


\textsuperscript{110} Palafox y Mendoza, \textit{Relación de la visita}, BN, ms. 4476, f. 22v.
under Spanish law. They were neither citizens nor residents nor forasteros but "these people (esta gente)."\textsuperscript{111}

The Black community of San Lorenzo lived in an environment that Palafox described as being very warm with too many mosquitoes and poisonous animals, although scenes of productive rice fields and corn fields offset some of his criticism. Regarding the church building, Palafox rated it as "adequate," but he pointed out that the temple lacked silver and other fine decorations. He also noted that the nearby forest was filled with cedar and other good timber, perhaps a hint that the town should have been using the natural resource to edify its sacred space. The Black community greeted the bishop with "celebration and love."\textsuperscript{112} This pastoral tour of inspection revealed the ambiguity of Palafox's episcopal sentiment regarding the Black population, or at the very least, it showed how an ecclesiastical elite reacted to persons of color who had carved their own niche outside the legal boundaries of Spanish colonialism.

Perhaps the best examples that illustrate what Palafox expected of local parishes regarding sacramental paraphernalia were the beneficiados of Naulinco and Tlacuilollan, both located in the sierra with humid temperatures and fertile lands. Fifteen Spanish and 100 Indian vecinos lived in Naulinco. Captain Roque Gutiérrez operated a sugar mill in the region, and the area also had eight

\textsuperscript{111} Palafox y Mendoza, \textit{Relación de la visita}, BN, ms. 4476, f. 22v-23.

\textsuperscript{112} Palafox y Mendoza, \textit{Relación de la visita}, BN, ms. 4476, f. 22v-23.
ranches and two other mills. Palafox described the church of San Mateo as sufficient to meet the spiritual needs of the community. When he visited the physical plant of the building, including the sacristy, the Indians from nearby pueblos had brought their ornaments and sacramental vessels for Palafox to inspect. They placed the decorations and objects on several tables to facilitate the inspection, and Palafox was quite pleased by their actions. He remarked that the Indians had all the necessary paraphernalia required by Church law, including proper liturgical colors (of vestments) and a silver chrismera.

Tlacuilollan was the largest beneficio of the region as well as the first to have secular clergy administer to the faithful in the poblano diocese after the Spanish conquest. While the parish itself had no Spaniards, 100 Spanish vecinos lived among the twelve Indian pueblos of the beneficio. One hundred-ninety Indians lived in the parish and another 1000 tributarios casados in the pueblos. Palafox also listed 200 blacks and gente ordinaria, the latter alluding to castas, mestizos, or poor Spaniards. The parish church was large enough to contain three naves and altars and was consecrated to the Immaculate Conception. The parishioners provided a good raci6n to the beneficiado, Licenciado Gerónimo Godines, and his nephew who assisted him, the bachiller Alonso Godines. The pastor had administered the parish for thirty-two years,

113 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 31.

114 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 31 v.

115 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 32.
developing a firm grasp of Náhuatl. Upon visiting the naves, altars, and sacristy, Palafox again encountered several tables on which the Indians had distributed the sacramental vessels and liturgical items required for public worship. After noting that the parish had complied with the canonical requirements regarding these material aspects of sacramental life, Palafox departed for Puebla.

Palafox wrote that, upon entering the city on 11 November 1643, he was received with great affection. It had been over two months since the city’s faithful had seen their bishop, and he imparted the solemn blessing on the large crowd that had gathered in the cathedral. In keeping with the spirit of his first pastoral tour of inspection, Palafox immediately gauged the progress made on the cathedral since he left. He was pleased by what he saw. If small rural parishes were expected to maintain the minimum canonical standards established by the Council of Trent, then certainly the bishop’s cátedra, or seat of authority, should serve as the material and sacramental beacon for the rest of the diocese. It would take another six years before Palafox was able to activate the beacon. In the meantime, however, he made preparations to conduct the second pastoral visitation. The episcopal sentiments expressed during his first tour of inspection would find their way into the second and third visitas too. In concrete terms, the bishop’s first visita allowed him to exercise the power of his office to effect changes in the way Indians and Spaniards understood the role of the episcopacy in shaping parish life. In many ways, Palafox used the occasion of his first tour to

116 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 33.
ascribe Tridentine sensibilities to the local representation of sacred space, the obligations of the laity, as well as the responsibilities of the diocesan clergy to their flock. He began the process of linking parish life in rural Puebla with his broader vision of a Tridentine Church triumphant in its mission to build the 'city of God' in Mexico. During the second and third visitas, we will see how the laity also played an important role in defining the relationship between parish life and the larger diocesan family. Finally, these final tours of inspection also reveal how popular expressions of religious sentiment fashioned Palafox's responses to lay spirituality.
Chapter 5

Popular Religiosity, Priestly Fraternity, and the Material Culture of Tridentine Catholicism in the Second and Third Pastoral Visitas

After sharing a meal with the beneficiado of Matlactlán, a Totonac parish nestled within the wet and humid Sierra Madre — what is today the northern part of the State of Puebla — Bishop Palafox and his chaplains made their way to a nearby river to inspect the catch of local fishermen. As part and parcel of Palafox's pastoral visitas, the inspection combined the ritual dimensions of episcopal blessing upon rivers, lakes, and the sea with the bishop's material concern for the routine payment and collection of the tithe. At this particular time, April 1646, Palafox was conducting his third pastoral visitation of the diocese, and, although he did not know it, the political storm clouds that swirled around him in 1646 would make this third tour of inspection his last. Palafox insisted that the laity and canonical corporations — including the religious orders — pay the ten-percent tax as mandated by Canon Law, and as a result, turmoil and heated polemic engulfed the diocese, a theme developed and discussed in Chapter Six.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the bishop arranged his pastoral itinerary to include inspections of agricultural, ranching, and fishing activities. The Church taxed the goods produced by such enterprises.

The more immediate and tangible danger to Palafox's security as bishop of Puebla, however, was not the political machinations of his enemies but rather
the topographical and climatic extremities that marked the broad expanse of the Diocese of Puebla. To ensure payment of the tithe, Palafox had to pass through diverse ecological zones, each with its own extreme temperatures, precipitation, unreliable roads, and remote parishes. The intense humidity and abundant moisture of Mexico's gulf coast region also provided for a variety of flora, fauna, insects, and reptiles. As Palafox and his entourage approached the river, a poisonous serpent that the bishop identified as a nahuiyaque, or nauyaca¹, suddenly emerged from the calm waters and slithered near the feet of his servant, Isidro, provoking a general panic and interrupting plans to meet with the fishermen. In the end, however, the snake caused no harm. Two days later on the road to Santa María Magdalena Cuautotola, a visita of Xuxupango, the mule on which his chaplain, Francisco Lorente, rode lost its balance on the rocky and narrow cliff walk and stumbled off the mountain. Miraculously, both the priest and beast of burden survived the fall, and after a brief rest, the entourage continued on to the next parish.² Shaken but not deterred, Palafox was determined to visit every parish, bless every field and river, inspect the sanctity of local space, examine the qualifications of every cleric, and impart his episcopal blessing upon the faithful within the jurisdictional boundaries of the Diocese of

¹ The snake, Bothrops atrox, has a fatal bite and is found along the Gulf coast of Mexico.

² The second and third pastoral visitas (1644 and 1646, respectively) are found in Palafox y Mendoza, Relaciónde la visita, BN, ms. 4476. This particular episode comes from the third pastoral tour, fs.73-74.
Puebla. The cultural authority of the Tridentine Church, no less, required human and financial resources that only a bishop could muster and locate within the material and spiritual arsenal of the episcopacy.

These episodes conjure images of Irving Leonard’s vivid account of the Mexican baroque. In the opening pages of his classic study, Leonard described the hardships endured by the new archbishop of Mexico, Fray García Guerra, in 1608, as he participated in the long entrada from the port city of Veracruz to the capital of New Spain, Mexico City. Near the pueblo of Huehuetoca, the archbishop’s carriage turned completely over, “spilling the august occupants by the wayside in the most undignified manner.” A few days later, at the Dominican monastery located on the outskirts of the capital, the outside stage built for the archbishop’s arrival collapsed while he was acknowledging the gathering crowd. Two years later, when Philip III appointed Fray García Guerra as viceroy of New Spain, a circus-like festival sponsored by the local Indian pueblo to celebrate the appointment went awry, as an Indian acrobat lost his grip and crash-landed near the archbishop-viceroy’s feet. Leonard argued that these seemingly trivial and local incidences reflected broader natural phenomena that punctuated the daily routine of baroque culture. That Fray García Guerra would die from an illness that he contracted while attending a cultural event in his honor reflects the tragic and ironic sense of drama that infused the spirit of the seventeenth-century

---

3 Irving, Baroque Times, p. 8.
baroque. The experiences of Garcia Guerra's contemporary, Bishop Palafox, during the second and third pastoral visitations also seem to suggest an irony that was perhaps lost on the prelate. That is, serpents and scorpions, washed out roads and steep cliffs, constant rain and suffocating humidity presaged a darker political horizon.

The second pastoral visita, conducted in 1644, and the third tour of inspection, undertaken in 1646, shared several similarities with Palafox's first visita. Just as he had done in 1643, in keeping with the letter and spirit of Trent, the bishop administered the sacrament of confirmation to the faithful, celebrated the Mass, heard confessions, inspected the physical structure of local parishes, and gauged the spiritual well being of priest and penitent. These activities reflected the administrative and pastoral dimensions of the office of bishop. To demonstrate the cultural authority of the institutional Church — as we have seen in Chapters Two and Four — the Tridentine fathers had pushed bishops to maintain regular contact with the 'people of God,' as well as ensure that the clergy nurtured and sustained the spiritual rhythms and material foundations of their parishes.

Bishop Palafox started the second tour of inspection on 15 June 1644 when he visited the two beneficios of Cholula, a small town outside of Puebla. The shortest of the three pastoral visitas, the second tour ended on 9 August 1644 — six days shy of two full months of travel — when Palafox returned to the

---

cathedral escorting the newly arrived archbishop of Mexico, Juan de Mañozca. Little did Palafox know that the new archbishop would side with the Society of Jesus when conflict erupted three years later in 1647, demonstrating that alliances based on an episcopal esprit de corps remained tenuous and uncertain.

During the second pastoral tour, Palafox visited fifteen beneficios, twenty-two beneficiados, eight assistants, nineteen other priests, four regular clerics, sixteen cofradías, twenty-three Indian pueblos and twenty-four Indian visitas, two doctrinas, and four convents. The bishop also inspected eight haciendas, four sugar mills, two processing plants, two hermitages, two pious works, and a hospital. He performed five special blessings, participated in six feast days, and founded a sanctuary. In human terms – although inconsistent record keeping hinders an accurate assessment – Palafox encountered 2705 indios casados, seventy castas and mestizos, and forty-nine Spaniards. In terms of linguistic geography, Náhuatl and Totonac were the primary languages spoken by the indigenous population, with varying degrees of Otomí and Mixtec as the primary tongue, depending on the region. Palafox also administered the sacrament of confirmation to 3200 lay persons, mostly Indians, but again the statistic is less than reliable since the bishop's scribe was inconsistent when recording the number of lay persons who received the sacrament.

Palafox completed the second pastoral tour of inspection in August 1644. Between the second and third pastoral vistas, several dimensions of episcopal responsibility occupied much of Palafox's time. Chapter Three discussed the
implementation of Tridentine decrees on seminary education, which Palafox accomplished in August 1644, soon after he returned to Puebla from his second pastoral tour. Concomitant with the Tridentine seminary system, the bishop began to organize an inventory of his impressive collection of books and manuscripts, which, as we have seen, he donated in 1646 as part of the seminary’s scholarly apparatus. In that same year, Palafox departed Puebla for what was to be his third and final pastoral visita. On 5 February 1646, as Palafox toured the Carmelite convent in the city of Puebla, the Jesuit provincial in Mexico City, Father Juan de Bueras, died suddenly, and by his passing the anti-Palafox coalition in the viceregal capital strengthened its hand. Father Bueras had avoided direct confrontation with Bishop Palafox over the secularization of parishes — the Society of Jesus having no doctrinas in the poblano diocese. He also had stalled in fashioning a response to the bishop’s insistence that the regular orders pay their share of the ecclesiastical tithe. The person chosen to succeed Bueras, however, Pedro de Velasco, a viceregal aristocrat who was the first creole to ever become Jesuit provincial of New Spain, was closely associated with the extreme anti-Palafox wing of the Society in Mexico. Consequently, from the spring of 1646 onwards, relations between the Jesuits and Palafox began to deteriorate beyond repair. Nevertheless, another whole year was to pass before the smoldering discontent became an explosive tinderbox.
By the time he set out to conduct the third pastoral visita, Palafox was accustomed to the extreme differences in climate and topography that characterized the ecclesiastical province. The third tour also took him through the cold, bleak valleys of the Sierra Madre and into the hot, humid environs of Veracruz. When he finished the inspection on 27 June 1646, Palafox had visited thirty-six beneficios, nineteen Indian visitas, five haciendas, three estancias, three hermitas, four convents, and six doctrinas. In human terms, the bishop encountered thirty-one beneficiados, six assistants, several regular clerics, and thousands of Indians. Just like the second relación, the third was written in the first person. It also provides few statistics on the number of Indian casados or tributarios that Palafox had encountered, although the number of indigenous peoples who received the sacrament of confirmation suggests that the bishop met quite a few Indians: 11,599 Indians received the sacred oils of confirmation from the bishop. The logistics of managing such a sacramental enterprise evoke images of early Franciscan attempts to baptize as many Indians as was humanly possible within a short time period. In the context of Palafox’s interpretation of pastoral obligation, he would have balked at the idea that his approach to confirmation reflected little more than the ability to gather large numbers of people into an ‘assembly-line’ of the sacred. Time and time again, as we have seen, Palafox was surprised that his predecessors failed to maintain their episcopal obligations to administer the sacrament to the faithful. Since most parishes in the diocese had not seen a prelate since the early years of the
seventeenth century, Palafox felt obliged to make up for so many years of indifference.

Several differences distinguish the second and third visitas from the bishop's first tour. Palafox used the first person, as well as the liturgical calendar, to situate into the reladones the intimacy of pastoral action when he exercised the power of his office. He also showed a greater concern for the state of the clergy, both secular and regular, in keeping with his obligation to reorder the context in which the laity interacted with the clergy. The second and third visitas also record Palafox's actions and reactions when he witnessed indigenous religious practice and spirituality. In many ways, Indians shaped the trajectory of Palafox's implementation of Tridentine Reforms, especially when he acknowledged and then sanctified ground considered holy by local communities. The bishop also examined the material culture of local parishes, with an eye toward establishing the proper number of paraphernalia necessary for public worship (candles, incense, chalices, missals, etc). Such material objects facilitated public expressions of faith and piety in the liturgical context of local parish life. Finally, Palafox's encounters with certain leading members of Spanish and Indian society during the second and third tours of inspection illustrate the changes he effected in local political culture after his secularization program had transformed the poblano countryside.

Written in the first person, the second and third pastoral relaciones ascribe an intimacy to the exercise of inspection that the first relación lacked. Although
Palafox employed a scribe during all three tours, he must have ordered the public servant to use the first person (yo). Instead of “el obispo administró el sacramento de confirmación” (the bishop administered the sacrament of confirmation), the more personal “hice yo confirmación” (I administered confirmation) appears. Such use of a conjugated verb in the first person injected intimacy into routine matters of Canon Law. It shows Palafox’s personal involvement in the day-to-day tasks and affairs that the pastoral visita facilitated. When Indians approached the bishop on private or public matters, for example, Palafox responded in terms that revealed pastoral sentiment on a very personal level – something often lost when scribes drew upon formulaic language to convey a general sense of what transpired. Why the sudden change to first person usage remains unclear, although the calendrical dimension of the second and third relaciones offers a clue.

The liturgical calendar – developed by the Church to assign feast days, holy days, and saint days to each of the 365 days of the year – is quite prominent in Palafox’s last two relaciones. The bishop celebrated and observed Lent, Holy Week, the Feast of the Transfiguration, and a host of other festivities with the parishioners and priests of the diocese. Like the tolling of the bells that summoned men, women, and children to their local parishes for public worship, the liturgical calendar structured communal manifestations of the sacramental life. When parishioners attended the Mass, sang special hymns, or received Holy Communion during Pentecost Sunday, for example, they participated in a
routine celebration (the Mass) but one that venerated the historical as well as living significance of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Catholic Church. And Bishop Palafox imbued such feast days in which he presided with the episcopal trappings of his office. In both subtle and dramatic fashion, he inserted the cultural authority of the episcopacy into local celebrations of the sacred. And by doing so, Palafox provided local pastors with a Tridentine blueprint for correct procedures and proper decorum. What better way to demonstrate his implementation of new Tridentine practices than by stating unequivocally that “dije la misa para el día festivo de San Mateo y dirijo la procesión según el nuevo ceremonial” (I said the Mass for Saint Matthew’s feast day, and I lead the procession according to [the prescribed rites] of the new ceremonial). In the first relación, however, the bishop’s scribe often used the formulaic expression, “según la costumbre” (according to custom), when he referred to the liturgical calendar at all. Palafox was telling his superiors that he was following – and in the process, implementing – the Tridentine decrees on new liturgical expressions. On the other hand, as the relaciones for the second and third tours demonstrate, the lack of a secretary to record the bishop’s steps in formulaic fashion hinders an accurate accounting of the number of parishioners that Palafox saw.

In addition to the bishop’s use of the first person and integration of the liturgical calendar, the second and third visitas differed in other important ways from the first tour of inspection. Palafox interacted more often with the secular
clergy, examining their linguistic skills, inspecting their methods of parish administration, and calling upon them to form clerical associations, or congregaciones, a kind of sacerdotal cofradía. Moreover, the bishop also focused attention on the role of the regular clergy in the daily lives of the faithful, often in terms that reflected his tense relationship with the friars. The Franciscans and Augustinians were the two religious orders that had administered doctrinas and convents in the diocese, some of which still functioned despite Palafox's order to desist. Interestingly enough, the bishop mentioned the Society of Jesus but once in the latter two relaciones, and even then only briefly.

The bishop spent ten days in June of 1644 touring nearby Cholula, which was divided into two parishes, San Pedro and San Andrés. Cholula was one of the first doctrinas secularized by the bishop in 1640. Home to 2873 Indian tributaries and perhaps 300 to 400 non-Indian vecinos, Cholula enjoyed a great marketplace that was quite active in exchanging goods with its much larger neighbor, Puebla. The large Franciscan monastery built in 1549-1552 was replaced as the parochial center of spiritual activity by the parish of San Pedro. So important was Cholula to Palafox's secularization scheme that he appointed three curas and four assistants to administer to the six Indian barrios of the city.6 Two of the three curas had earned the licentiate, while three of the four assistants also held the degree. The two remaining clerics had earned their

---

6 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 41v.
bachiller. All spoke "excellent" Náhuatl. The beneficiado who administered to Spaniards held a doctorate. With eight priests living in the same vicinity and administering to overlapping familial and neighborhood networks, Palafox encouraged them to form a congregación, a confraternity for diocesan priests. The bishop wrote that he had exhorted the clergy in another town, Tlaxcala, to do the same when he visited the city during his first pastoral visita, although the scribe at the time failed to note it in the relación. Palafox's model was the Congregación de San Pedro in the city of Puebla, what appears to have been an umbrella organization of poblano priests to which he directed his first pastoral letter in 1640.

The historical literature on the colonial Church in Mexico and Latin America speaks little of clerical sodalities. If records exist that reveal the internal organization of Puebla's sacerdotal confraternities, as well as their by-laws, they are buried in the archdiocesan archive that has been off limits to historians for quite some time. But these congregaciones seem to have been common in seventeenth-century Puebla. After departing Cholula for Atlixco, another small urban center near the city of Puebla, for example, Palafox encountered sixteen clerics who had formed a hermandad. These 'clerics-cofrades' even constructed a special altar in the parish church to venerate their spiritual benefactor, whom Palafox did not identify. He complimented the altar's fine decoration and

---

7 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 41-41v.
adornment, and encouraged the priests in their devotion. How the cofrades raised money to build and adorn the altar remains unknown. Perhaps its members shared a portion of their limosnas and obvenciones to construct or renovate an altar, or they borrowed funds from their respective parish cajas. Palafox also wrote that he issued rules and regulations for the governance of their hermandad, but he hinted little in the relacién as to what they entailed.

When the bishop revisited Tlaxcala in 1644, he wrote that he had convened a meeting of secular clerics from the city, and there he encouraged them to form a congregación. He urged his Tlaxcalan magistrates of the sacred to meet regularly; doing so would promote greater service to God. Finally, Palafox named 'Our Lady' as spiritual benefactor of the confraternity. Palafox's choice of the Virgin Mary reveals little surprise here, for he and his chaplains, as well as the local clergy and laity, prayed the rosary during his visit to the hermitage of Santa María Ocotlán, a shrine and barrio within the limits of the parish church. There the Virgin Mary appeared to an Indian, Juan Diego, in 1541, offering him holy water to alleviate the pain and suffering caused by an epidemic that had ravaged his community. While construction of a shrine to commemorate the apparition would not begin until the latter years of the seventeenth-century – well after Palafox's departure – the bishop noted that the

---

8 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 42.

9 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 42.

10 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 50.
local Indians and parish priests had adopted the rosary as their primary devotional. This demonstrates that the laity and clergy had integrated the veneration of Mary into the local spiritual landscape by the 1640s.\textsuperscript{11} If the local clergy needed any encouragement to nurture and sustain the Tridentine practice of Marian devotion in Tlaxcala, Palafox provided it by naming the Virgin Mary as spiritual benefactor of their confraternity.

Cholula, Atlixco, and Tlaxcala were all vibrant urban centers during the colonial period that attracted a considerable number of priests, and, therefore, it is not surprising that Bishop Palafox either founded or encouraged the clergy to organize sacerdotal confraternities. Perhaps these congregaciones were linked in some way to the Tridentine ideal of ‘continuing education for priests.’ In keeping with the spirit of the new Tridentine priest, as we have seen, Palafox included a third level of priestly formation within the structures of seminary education. Perfecting the art and craft of the priesthood was the primary purpose of Saint Paul’s College, a place where the newly ordained and more seasoned clerics could supplement their theological training, practice the ceremonial, and receive moral support for their public endeavors. But Saint Paul’s curriculum provided for only two years of additional study; afterwards the cleric was expected to move beyond the classroom and transform his vocation into public

service. When the priest found a benefice or apprenticeship in any of the larger towns of the diocese — where inevitably he would encounter several other clerics at work — the formal support system to which he was accustomed in the city of Puebla was no longer available.

A hermandad or congregación could have provided additional support, therefore, and promoted priestly comradeship within the boundaries of the town. While short distances separated the three towns from the diocesan seat of authority — allowing priests to visit family members without incurring considerable expense, fraternize with friends and former classmates, and enjoy the amenities that a large city such as Puebla offered — the average priest could not afford weekly visits if he was to fulfill his pastoral obligations to the local parish. Meanwhile these local parishes had numerous Indian neighborhoods, visitas, and pueblos that offered sources of income if the priest celebrated the sacraments in regular fashion. Socialized in an urban environment and governed by a bishop who often conceptualized the sacred and profane through an urban lens, these priests tried to replicate the support networks that the larger urban cofradías offered its lay membership, if not in material then certainly in spiritual terms.

While the extant documentary record offers few details, Palafox's first pastoral letter provides his assessment of the role and duties of Puebla's priestly confraternity. Written in November 1640, five months after his arrival in New Spain, Palafox chose to direct his first pastoral letter as bishop to the
congregantes, or cofrades, of San Pedro. As abbot of the congregación by virtue of his episcopal office, Palafox exhorted the congregantes to turn their eyes to God so He might fill them with mercy and graciousness, and, upon seeing the good example set by their priests, the laity would be inspired to follow suit. The bishop prescribed a series of spiritual exercises that went beyond formal acts of private prayer, mortification, fasting, and denial – the sine qua non of early modern mysticism – to include public acts of charity. Equating charity with divine love, Palafox encouraged the congregantes to express in concrete terms the deep love that they carried in their souls for God by visiting the sick and infirm, consoling those who languished in prison, assisting the poor, and calming the impassioned. The conciliar emphasis on good works is evident here. Worry little about the lack of material goods that you can share with the laity, Palafox wrote, for Saint Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, the spiritual benefactor of their congregación, offered the world something more precious than money, spiritual health. In many ways, Palafox urged his priests to adopt the ascetic lifestyle practiced in convents and monasteries. Certainly, his emphasis on pious works and self-denial mirrored that found in the rules of several religious orders. Carmelite asceticism and Franciscan poverty inspired the bishop to advocate such virtues, but the model of priestly fraternity that Palafox had in mind was neither Mendicant poverty nor Carmelite austerity but the cathedral chapter.

---

12 Palafox y Mendoza, Carta a la venerable congregación de San Pedro, JCB, BA640 P153c, fs. 1v-2.
Convening once or twice a week as a corporate body to oversee diocesan affairs, the cathedral chapter consisted of “so many learned, spiritual, and passionate men” who were worthy of emulation.\textsuperscript{13} The duties and responsibilities that Canon Law ascribed to cathedral chapters reflected a blending of the liturgical and administrative. Members of the cathedral chapter sang the divine office as a corporate body, distributed alms to the poor, administered orphanages and hospitals, and arranged diocesan-wide feast days. And, of course, the cathedral chapter served as the bishop’s primary advisory board on matters of theology, Canon Law, and liturgy. More importantly, however, it was the only ecclesiastical corporation in colonial society comprised entirely of secular clergy. Travelers or visitors who gave even a cursory glance at the spiritual geography of Puebla could not help but notice the material and cultural influences of the regular clergy, whose fortress-like monasteries, convents, and schools cast their shadows over the streets, plazas, and outskirts of the city and small towns. The cathedral chapter, therefore, remained the only corporate entity within the diocese whose material interests and spiritual agenda reflected the political culture of the secular clergy. Its involvement and participation in so many facets of daily life, including hospital care, public worship, and education provided the bishop with a perfect model of priestly virtue and good works, a model designed and orchestrated by the normal ecclesiastical hierarchy of the Catholic Church,

\textsuperscript{13} Palafox y Mendoza, \textit{Carta a la venerable congregación de San Pedro}, JCB, BA640 P153c, f. 19.
that is, the secular clergy. The Congregación de San Pedro, therefore, became
the second official body of diocesan priests who lived outside the walls of
monasteries and convents.

If the cathedral chapter was the only ecclesiastical body representative of
the secular clergy, the continued presence of the regular orders, still pervasive
despite Palafox’s secularization decrees of 1640-1641, demonstrated the
longevity of monastic influence. The bishop’s interaction with the regular clergy
during his second and third pastoral visitas presaged the difficulties that he would
have with them during his remaining years in Puebla. In Atlixco, for example,
that small urban center where Palafox had encountered a sacerdotal hermandad,
the regular clergy maintained two convents and a doctrina. The nuns of Santa
Clara also had a residence in Atlixco, under Franciscan jurisdiction. The
Franciscans administered a doctrina of Indian charges under the spiritual
auspices of – appropriately enough – Saint Francis. The Mercedarians
administered a pious work for orphans that a secular cleric had established
several years before. And in their convent, the Augustinians oversaw yet another
pious work for orphans, and it too traced its founder to the ranks of the diocesan
clergy.14 Such arrangements illustrated a social reality: a few secular clerics
enjoyed income sufficient enough to manifest good works for the public good but
lacked the necessary administrative apparatus to ensure that their charity
benefited the local community over time. The scores of regular clerics, brothers,

14 Palafox y Medoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 42.
and nuns, with their spacious convents and internal rules of order and governance, provided the requisite administrative structure to deliver the material benefits that pious works offered. While Palafox recognized and appreciated their contributions, he was determined to reshape the material and cultural contexts in which the regular clergy operated within his jurisdiction.

When the bishop visited the Indian doctrina in Atlixco, for example, he chastised the Franciscan doctrinero for failing to own a reliquary, a small silver or gold vessel that protected consecrated communion wafers outside the tabernacle. Those Indians who fell ill had to rely on family or neighbors to carry them to the doctrinero's residence in order to receive the Blessed Sacrament. Palafox told the friar to buy the sacred vessel and distribute Holy Communion to Indians who were too ill to attend weekly Mass.\(^\text{15}\) This of course required the doctrinero to leave his residence and visit the sick. In this instance, Palafox's exercise of power reordered two dimensions of doctrina life: it forced the Franciscan friar to expend funds from the community caja that might have been invested for other purposes; and it obliged the cleric to visit his Indian charges instead of having them seek him out. In many ways, as the first chapter has shown, Palafox's complaint against the Franciscan priest had become routine in New Spain by the early seventeenth-century, as some bishops – and quite often Indians – accused the regular orders of laxity. But the Tridentine spirit of a reformed priesthood informed Palafox's decision here, for he expected all public

---
\(^{15}\) Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 42v-43.
ministers of the faith – secular and regular alike – to attend to their flock. Eventually, Palafox issued an edict that compelled all parishes and convents to own a reliquary that would enable the clergy to ‘carry’ the Blessed Sacrament to those parishioners too ill to attend Sunday mass.¹⁶

In the beneficio of Izúcar, a parish with a cura and two assistants, Palafox visited the Dominican convent after imparting his episcopal blessing upon Spanish vecinos who came to greet him.¹⁷ The order had administered a doctrina in the region since the sixteenth century, one of several that, as we have seen, escaped Palafox’s secularization policy. The Dominican prior received him with all due courtesy and solemnity because, as Palafox emphasized in the relación, the convent and its doctrina were subject to the bishop’s jurisdiction. After inspecting the convent’s tabernacle, baptismal font, and ornaments, the bishop visited members of the four Indian hermandades, and what he found there upset him. Despite their títulos and constituciones, these hermandades were functioning as cofradías – with all the obligations, responsibilities, and material rewards that cofradías offered its membership – so the bishop ordered the doctrinero to amend the titles and rules in order to reflect their true canonical status, that of a hermandad. He gave the Franciscan friar less than thirty days to comply with the order, prohibiting each of the four hermandades, under grave

¹⁶ Palafox y Mendoza, Edictos del ilustrísimo señor don Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, BP, Piso 3, Casilla 366, Libro 12, f. 10.

¹⁷ Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 43v-44.
ecclesiastical penalty, from requesting alms until Palafox approved the changes.\(^{18}\)

As Asunción Lavrin has shown for rural Oaxaca, the vast majority of sodalities during the colonial period were established – and functioning – outside the canonical requirements for their existence. They were hermandades or devociones founded by the parishioners themselves, and lacking the required approval of the local ordinary. Lavrin examined the records of hundreds of confraternities and sodalities in colonial Oaxaca and found few that possessed canonical license. She argues quite persuasively that these organizations simply existed outside the purview of the institutional church for years. Bishops, she posits, must have known of the “disputable grounds of their foundations,” but they turned a “blind eye” to the situation and allowed these corporations to carry out their spiritual and material existence.\(^{19}\) In rural parishes throughout colonial Mexico, priests relied on the limosnas and obvenciones that confraternities and hermandades offered; often these funds were their only reliable source of income. That their local magistrates of the sacred needed at least minimal levels of material comfort to administer effectively, many bishops eschewed the

\(^{18}\) Palafox y Mendoza, *Relación de la visita*, BN, ms. 4476, f. 44.

formalities of Canon Law and allowed these unlicensed sodalities to exist, if only to maintain the basic subsistence needs of those who served them. Bishop Palafox, so it seems, was not one of them.

Other scholarship reveals that priests fostered cofradía development in Indian communities during the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; the potential income offered by the confraternities was too great to ignore, especially for priests who relied solely on limosnas and obrvencion. Priests even pressured Indian pueblos to create new sodalities when the corporate property of the more established confraternities experienced a decline in agricultural production. Perhaps this also offended Bishop Palafox, since the priest who allowed the illicit hermandad to function as a cofradía had taken a vow of poverty. Was this a monastic attempt to profit outside the purview of Palafox’s episcopal gaze, not to mention a serious transgression of the rules and regulations of the Franciscan order?

The lack of detail in the relació hinders an adequate reading of Palafox’s decision, although context suggests that such disregard for episcopal jurisdiction offended his sense of what constituted proper lines of authority and obedience.21


21 Other examples include Palafox chastising the Augustinian order for continuing to operate doctrinas in Tlaupan, Xutepec, and Pahuatlan without episcopal license. In the beneficio of Talpantepeque, a few Otomí remained steadfast in their devotion to the Augustinian friars. To counteract mendicant influence, Palafox decided to appoint to the Otomí neighborhood a secular cleric who was
The Franciscan friar was receiving income from a local association that had not received the episcopal imprimatur. Moreover, the Indian charges of the doctrina expected sacramental rites and rituals as the quid pro quo inherent in the arrangement between their communities and the local priest. On 2 July 1644, however, Palafox had informed the Indians of Izúcar that they were expending income from their community caja to pay a friar to administer the sacraments and bury their loved ones within a cultural context shaped by the rules of a cofradia rather than that of a hermandad. The visiting dignitary now marked these activities and rules as illicit. For the next month or so, until the matter was resolved, the Indians conducted their daily activities without the spiritual benefits afforded them by their sodality. Before departing, however, the bishop extended his right hand to bless the sugar cane, a spiritual act that the Indians probably considered quite empty, especially since they cut and processed the cane for the local ingeniero. Any compensation that they earned from performing these tasks could not be used for public worship. And public worship was an important dimension of daily life in colonial Puebla. Lay participation in public worship often shaped the contours of local political culture. Palafox sought to fashion a conciliar sensibility to those contours and, in the process, reshape the political culture of parish life. This meant that the bishop had to steer indigenous communities away from the

fluent in the indigenous language. See Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, fs. 59, 60v, 61, 61v, and 67.
monastic form of worship and toward conciliar expressions of liturgical celebration.

During Palafox's second and third tours of inspection, as we have seen, the bishop presided over several feast days and celebrations that reflected the ways in which the liturgical calendar structured the rhythms of daily life in Mexico. Each feast day called for different colors, processions, and festivities that the cofradías, hermitas, and visitas sponsored. Even the Mass was different: often sung by the priest, the High Mass included special prayers to venerate a saint or commemorate an event (for example, Saint Peter or Pentecost). If the parish had a supply of incense and candles, the priest would use them to kindle the moment in liturgical drama. In many ways, feast days transformed an ordinary Mass into extraordinary solemnity, as parishioner and priest, community and parish participated in the living history of the institutional Church. The feast day of Saint Peter, for example, reminded participants of the apostle's important role in establishing the papal foundations of Christianity. Neither a simple follower nor ordinary disciple of Christ, Peter was anointed the first bishop of Rome—the first pope—when Christ handed him the keys to the Kingdom. Subsequent popes were said to have occupied the 'Chair of Peter.' And because the Council of Trent emphasized the apostolic line of succession, that is, popes and bishops could trace their authority to Peter, the saint enjoyed the veneration and liturgical support of the episcopacy.
When Palafox visited the pueblo of Tepexoxuma on 29 June 1644, the feast day of Saint Peter, he presided over the festivities that included High Mass, despite having celebrated a Low Mass earlier in the day. How could a prelate forgo the opportunity to venerate, in public fashion, a saint who was intimately linked to his canonical office? While Palafox disclosed none of the contents of his homily in the relación, it is conceivable that he demonstrated to the faithful the full splendor of the episcopacy by linking his authority to Saint Peter. Other examples are found throughout the second visita. In Altixco, the bishop seemed to have enjoyed presiding over the High Mass celebrated for the feast day of Saint John the Baptist, stating that the parishioners of the beneficio had a reputation for expressing their faith with great solemnity — even integrating the Divine Office (public prayer of the Catholic Church) into the events of the day.

In Tlaxcala, Palafox celebrated the feast days of Santiago and Saint Ann, mother of Mary, with the clergy and faithful. The former commemorated the apostle James, who introduced Christianity to Spain and later provided a cultural rallying cry against the Muslims during the Reconquest. The bishop celebrated the High Mass and commented in the relación that a great number of people attended. The following day, 26 July 1644, he presided over another mass to venerate Saint Ann, the mother of Mary. So many people attended the celebration that a sizeable number had to stand outside the church. The local parishioners even

---

22 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 43.

23 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 42v.
designed and built a special chair for Palafox that, according to the bishop, was
decorated and adorned precisely to arouse awe and inspire contemplation during
his sermon.\(^{24}\) In the beneficio of Guamantla, Palafox sang the High Mass to
commemorate the Transfiguration of Christ – when Christ revealed His full glory
to the apostles by appearing with Moses and Elijah – and many parishioners
assembled in the parish church to participate.\(^{25}\)

Since these feast days had been part of the liturgical calendar before the
Council of Trent and celebrated in colonial Puebla before Palafox’s arrival, the
question arises, what changes did Palafox effect on the local level? Three of the
four parishes – Atlixco, Tlaxcala, and Guamantla – were former doctrinas and
thus under the jurisdiction of the regular clergy. Even if the Spanish vecinos had
their own parish and secular priest in the vicinity, often they too joined the
festivities that took place in nearby convents and monasteries. When the
Franciscan convent in Guamantla celebrated the feast day of Saint Francis, for
example, Palafox attended the celebrations and witnessed scores of Spaniards
and Indians participating in the festivities.\(^{26}\) No doubt the idea of a visiting
dignitary prompted curiosity, and perhaps attracted a few stragglers who had not
attended in years past, but Spaniards and Indians had been celebrating the feast
day at the local convent since its foundation. While the bishop’s presence

\(^{24}\) Palafox y Mendoza, *Relación de la visita*, BN, ms. 4476, f. 49v.

\(^{25}\) Palafox y Mendoza, *Relación de la visita*, BN, ms. 4476, f. 51.

\(^{26}\) Palafox y Mendoza, *Relación de la visita*, BN, ms. 4476, f. 51.
demonstrated episcopal approval of this particular monastic celebration – Palafox did preside over the liturgical events of the day – the Franciscan convent, as well as the local Indians and Spaniards, would have honored the saint regardless of the bishop's itinerary.

What makes Palafox's pastoral tour of Guamantla and the other former doctrinas so important to understanding the cultural changes in liturgical celebration on the parish level was his determination to lead the faithful in other feast days that coincided with monastic celebrations. As we have seen earlier, Palafox also presided over the Feast of the Transfiguration during his inspection of the beneficiado of Guamantla.\textsuperscript{27} With his episcopal entourage and the four parish priests in attendance, the bishop began to socialize the parishioners in the importance of other feast days that fell outside the monastic calendar. In other words, Palafox wanted Indians and Spaniards to recognize that the temporal rhythms of monastic devotion no longer fashioned a monopoly over the cultural – and very public – expressions of Catholicism. In the city of Puebla and other towns and pueblos throughout the diocese, the Franciscans, Augustinians, Dominicans, and Jesuits initiated and sustained public celebrations, processions, and liturgies to commemorate the various feast days important to their orders: Saint Francis, Saint Augustine, Saint Dominic, and Saint Ignatius Loyola. While these celebrations would continue, Bishop Palafox rejuvenated the diocesan liturgical calendar with formal, episcopal support.

\textsuperscript{27} Palafox y Mendoza, \textit{Relación de la visita}, BN, ms. 4476, f. 51.
Reordering the cultural context that informed public expressions of the sacred, Palafox reminded Indians and Spaniards that other avenues of public veneration and devotion existed and that these activities were no longer predicated upon monastic traditions. As the first chapter has demonstrated, the first stage of the process began in 1640 when Palafox secularized so many mendicant doctrinas. The process then continued during his tours of inspection, as the bishop infused feast days and their processions with episcopal drama. In the process, he fostered a new social vision of parish life, one that reflected multifaceted hierarchies of Tridentine celebration. Within these hierarchies, the secular clergy and bishop directed liturgical rites and rituals. Although the relaciones provide few details of how Palafox organized feast days and public processions, a brief addendum that he integrated into the diocesan ceremonial sheds light on the reordering of ecclesiastical pomp and circumstance.

Written and distributed in 1649, this supplement to the ceremonial contained an important provision that directed priests on how to organize religious processions in their parishes.²⁸ Again, it reflects the urban lens through which Palafox viewed the spiritual landscape of the diocese. For example, the provision assumes that parishes possessed certain sacramental paraphernalia, as well as several clergymen in various stages of ordination, to comply with the new rules. In towns such as Tlaxcala and Atlixco, the potential to comply with

²⁸ Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, *Forma que se debe guardar en el pararse, sentarse, hincar las rodillas, y inclinarse así en las Missas solemnes*, 1649, JCB, 69-847, fs. 1-6.
the mandate was greater. During the feast day of Saint Ann, when Palafox
presided over the procession and liturgy while visiting Tlaxcala, the celebration
proceeded in the following manner, based on the bishop's mandate regarding
processions. The parish choir led the procession to the church, followed by the
thurifer (an acolyte who carried the container filled with smoking incense). Two
other acolytes followed behind, holding candles and flanking the cross bearer.
The subdeacon was next in line, followed by the parish priests. The celebrant
was the last person to assemble in formation, setting him apart from the others
as a symbol of his leading role in the liturgy. If a bishop was present for the feast
day but had decided to hear the Mass instead of reciting or singing it, he
processed at the right hand of the celebrant. Bishops, therefore, still maintained
the public dignity owed to their office by avoiding a secondary role in the
procession. Even a liturgical event as important as the Mass, where the main
celebrant – the parish priest – conducted the most sacred ritual at the heart of
Catholic doctrine, the faithful who had gathered to participate saw the bishop
walk side-by-side with their pastor. Inside the church, the bishop sat alone in the
presiding chair, set apart from the rest of the clergy, though he was not the
primary liturgical player. If a bishop decided to celebrate the Mass during the
feast day, however, he was the last figure to enter and leave the church building,
and again he occupied the presiding chair. This kind of ritual form reflected a
spatial understanding of hierarchy, as each participant's location in the
procession reflected their particular standing within the sacramental state. In his
addendum to the ceremonial, therefore, Palafox infused the processions that local parishes sponsored with Tridentine hierarchies of the sacramental life and canonical identity. While the bishop integrated a role for the monastic orders in other areas of diocesan life, as we have seen in Chapters Two and Three, on the local level, however, at the very core of the laity’s cultural experience with Catholic rites and rituals – the local parish – he reordered the landscape by privileging the role of the secular clergy in liturgical celebrations. And near the beneficio of Tlaxcala, where the Franciscans lost their first doctrina, Palafox sanctioned a new sacred space where his secular clerics could sodalize the faithful in Tridentine practices.

A distance of over three leagues separated the pueblo of Santa María Nativitas and the beneficio of Tlaxcala. It was one of ten Franciscan doctrinas secularized by Bishop Palafox in 1640. By the end of that year, two secular clerics, Gabriel de Alvarado and Francisco de Arraya, arrived to oversee and administer parish life for the 288 indios casados who lived in twelve visitas. By the end of that year, two secular clerics, Gabriel de Alvarado and Francisco de Arraya, arrived to oversee and administer parish life for the 288 indios casados who lived in twelve visitas.29 Nine years before secularization displaced the Franciscans, the pueblo was witness to an extraordinary event in 1631. The archangel Saint Michael appeared before a young Indian, Diego Lázaro de San Francisco, who was on his way to the doctrina. The angel exhorted him to spread the news that the area was home to a sacred spring of water. The story goes that Saint Michael uttered these words to Diego: “It is God’s will and mine that you tell your neighbors that

29 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 47v-48.
the nearby ravine contains a fountain of miraculous water."30 Diego Lázaro ignored the archangel’s request and continued on his way without mentioning to anyone what he had witnessed. A few days later, however, the young Indian became gravely ill. Saint Michael appeared again, this time in Diego Lázaro’s home while the Indian rested in bed stricken with tabardillo, or high fever. The archangel healed the young man of his affliction and brought him to the ravine saying, "Here is where the fountain of water is to be found, bring it to the attention of others." Diego Lázaro brought his wife and parents to the deep pass and found that a large rock had covered the fountain. When their attempts to remove the heavy stone failed, they received some unexpected assistance from a young boy who suddenly appeared. Basked in angelic aura, the boy proceeded to move the stone away from the spring. And just as suddenly as he appeared, the young boy vanished. Diego Lázaro and his family began to dig around the opening left by the heavy stone, and soon crystal clear water gushed forth upon the earth, set free from its subterranean home. The Indians returned to their pueblo and maintained their silence, telling no one of the miracle that they had witnessed.

A year later, the archangel Michael returned to Diego Lázaro’s home, angry and upset that the Indian had disobeyed his order to share the good news

30 Quoted in Meade de Angulo, “Tlaxcala,” in La ruta de los santuarios, p. 165. My discussion of the details surrounding the apparition relies on this account. Palafox provided such a brief synopsis of the event in his relación that it remains difficult to reconstruct what happened to Diego without consulting what is perhaps the only secondary work that has examined the apparition.
with nearby communities. After chastising Diego Lázaro for his insolence, the archangel again commanded the young Indian to inform the town of the spring's healing powers. Diego Lázaro filled a container with some water that he drew from the fountain and decided to bring the matter before the bishop of Puebla, Bernardo de Quiroz. After hearing the Indian describe each of the three apparitions, the prelate asked that the water be given to several patients in the local hospital who had been stricken with serious illnesses. After quenching their parched lips with the blessed water, these patients regained their strength and made a complete recovery. The news spread rapidly throughout the region, as Indians from neighboring pueblos and visitas made pilgrimages to the holy spring in search of its healing waters.

The story of the apparition mirrors another found in late medieval and early modern Spain, where a strong veneration of Saint Michael had developed in Castile by the thirteenth century. Several dimensions of the Mexican apparition resemble the story recounted in the mother country. In Spain, the archangel chose to appear before a poor shepherd in the foothills of the Sierra de Guadarrama, ordering him to tell the townspeople to build a chapel on the site and organize a confraternity. In the Mexican version, the historical record fails to list the Indian's occupation, although context suggests that Diego Lázaro was either a peasant or shepherd who worked his own plot of land or that of the Spanish gobernador. Furthermore, in both accounts, the archangel left behind supernatural evidence of his appearance. For those who would question the
veracity of the Spanish apparition, Saint Michael left his hand print on the trunk of a tree. The shepherd, Miguel Sánchez, returned home but decided to keep the story to himself. After a few days, he woke up crippled and weak. The local authorities carried him to the apparition site, where they found the tree with the saint’s hand mark on it. After delineating space upon which to build a shrine, the townspeople brought Sánchez to the local parish, celebrated the Mass, and witnessed the miraculous recovery of their neighbor. As in many parts of Europe, many shrines dedicated to Saint Michael were located on mountaintops, where they may have replaced pre-Christian devotions.31

Important nuances distinguish the two accounts, however, which tell us much about the nature of local religion in seventeenth-century Mexico. In Lázaro Diego’s account, the angel demands neither a shrine nor a confraternity as a sign of gratitude or veneration. He only commands the Indian to share the good news regarding the miraculous spring of water found under the rock. This contrasts sharply with the Virgin of Guadalupe’s appearance in post-conquest Mexico, when, in 1531, she told Juan Diego, a young Indian shepherd, to have a shrine built in Her honor. More importantly, however, in the two Mexican apparitions, the institutional church enjoyed a visible role in how events unfolded. In Santa María Nativitas, the Indian brought the holy water to the bishop so that the prelate could inspect it and decide how to proceed. In Tepeyac, Juan Diego brought his cloak filled with roses to Bishop Zumárraga. When the Indian unfolds

31 Christian, Apparitions, pp. 100-103.
his manta for the bishop, Zumárraga sees neither red nor pink flowers but a painted portrait of the Virgin herself. Only then did the bishop make plans to follow the Virgin's request that a shrine be built to honor her.

In the pueblo of Santa María, after the water heals the sick and infirm – proof that the Indian witnessed and experienced something beyond the ordinary – Bishop Quiroz sanctioned the apparition. In Spain, on the other hand, the local parish and diocese were assigned peripheral roles. In fact, the institutional church is mentioned but once, towards the very end of the story when the vecinos carry the disabled Miguel to hear the Mass. Neither the local pastor nor bishop appeared in the story. Moreover, the townspeople marked off the physical boundaries in which the shrine would be built, and they founded and organized a confraternity to express their devotion to the archangel's miraculous appearance. In Mexico, a shrine would eventually be built to provide sacred shelter for the material elements left behind by Saint Michael, that is, the spring of water, but its construction would not take place until Bishop Palafox conducted his pastoral tour of inspection.

Upon arriving in Santa María Nativitas, on 18 July 1644, and after seeing first hand the intensity of the laity's devotion to the site, Palafox decreed that a sanctuary be built "in order to conserve a fountain of water that the Holy Angel discovered." The bishop's mandate illustrates several dimensions of the Church's cultural authority in colonial Mexico as well as patterns of devotional

---

Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 48.
practices developed and embraced by the faithful. Palafox’s mandate provided official canonical recognition of both the apparition and its miracles. And while the archangel himself infused the location with supernatural, healing power, the bishop defined its material expression by constructing a sanctuary, a duly consecrated space where the faithful could manifest their gratitude and devotion to Saint Michael under the auspices of the secular clergy. Only a few years before, the Franciscans had administered the sacraments to the Indian vecinos of Santa María Nativitas. Palafox made no specific reference in his relación as to how the doctrinero facilitated or encouraged the devotion between 1631, when the archangel first appeared, and 1640, when they lost the doctrina to the bishop's secularization program.

The bishop’s attorney in Spain, Fernando Ortiz de Valdés, who would defend his client before the royal household during the conflict with the Society of Jesus in 1648, argued that the archangel himself had requested a sanctuary in his honor but that nothing had been done to fulfill Saint Michael's wishes. The letrado’s comments add a new wrinkle to the apparition story, for they suggest that the Franciscans ignored the archangel’s request and marginalized the indigenous devotional practice of visiting the sacred site. As part of his strategy to defend Palafox’s deployment of episcopal power against the vested interests of the regular clergy, Ortiz de Valdés included the construction of the sanctuary

---

33 Ortiz de Valdés, Defensa canónica, 1648, BP, Piso 1, Casilla 285, Libro 7, Parte VII, Punto XXXIII, fs. 218v-219.
as proof of the bishop's cultural and material sensibilities in the area of public worship. It makes sense, therefore, that he would allude to the absence of a sanctuary before 1644, which implied that the local Franciscan convent had shirked its pastoral obligations to nurture and sustain the faith. As we have seen, however, based on the account of the apparition, Diego Lázaro chose to share the news with the local bishop, bypassing altogether the Franciscan doctrinero. This dimension of the story was not included in Ortiz de Valdés's legal tome, for it might have suggested that Palafox's predecessor had shirked his own pastoral obligation to arouse the faith in his flock. Palafox's Tridentine Church manifested the conciliar reassertion of episcopal authority in the day-to-day affairs of local Catholicism. That his predecessor perhaps marginalized indigenous spiritual exercises – for example, the Indian veneration of the saints in such places as Santa María Nativitas – was something that Palafox refused to entertain. It was much easier, and politically convenient, to fire a political salvo against the Mendicant orders than to focus attention on the dereliction of episcopal duty.

Ortiz de Valdés also wrote that it was Palafox who recognized how much the city of Puebla owed to this “Glorious Captain [Saint Michael] of God's Armies.” And the bishop expressed his recognition and gratitude by building a sanctuary “so magnificent, not to mention one of the costliest, that its countless visitors” can enter the spacious building in comfort. On the other hand, local

---

34 Ortiz de Valdés, Defensa canónica, BP, Piso 1 Casilla 285, Libro 7, Part VII, Point XXXII, fs. 218v-219. The original Spanish reads “commenço luego a
and popular religious practices influenced the trajectory of Palafox's exercise of episcopal power. The bishop's mandate that a sanctuary be built in the Indian pueblo reflected a cultural reality: Indians found spiritual and physical comfort in the cool waters that bubbled up from the spring. They had encountered a healing refuge from the diseases that had wreaked so much havoc on their communities. In other words, the Indians of Santa María Nativitas, as well as those from neighboring pueblos, had already carved a niche in their belief system for the sacred waters. For his part, Palafox simply endowed this particular indigenous practice with Tridentine sensibilities of what constituted the public dimensions of sacred space. Water that had been discovered and blessed by the highest-ranking angel in God's celestial army deserved the holiest of fonts. Palafox recognized and encouraged the Indian devotion to Saint Michael's healing spring by ordering the construction of a duly consecrated — and canonically approved — shrine. As we have seen in Chapter Two, the Council of Trent exhorted bishops to arouse in the faithful a fuller understanding of doctrine by supporting visible manifestations of local Catholic practices. Moreover, now that the secular clergy, Palafox's magistrates of the sacred, had assumed pastoral authority over the Indian pueblos and visitas of the region, the bishop was assured some degree of influence over the ways in which the faithful

labrarle un tempio tan magnifico, que ultra de lo costoso, entran en el commodamente las innumerables gentes...."
expressed their piety and devotion. Finally, Palafox also created new spaces when he administered the sacrament of ordination.

During the third pastoral visit, in addition to administering the sacrament of confirmation, the bishop also ordained forty-six men to major orders and sixteen to minor orders. Of those who entered the priesthood, fifteen were members of the regular clergy and thirty-one became diocesan priests. While Palafox and the monastic orders disagreed vehemently over jurisdiction of the tithe and secularization, both recognized that Canon Law placed the sacrament of ordination squarely in the hands of the episcopacy. If the Franciscans or Augustinians wanted to increase their numbers by advancing candidates to the priesthood, they needed the pastoral services of a bishop. Only prelates enjoyed the sacramental power to impart Christ's graces upon the heads of ordinandi (seminarians who pass through the priestly formation process). And Palafox conferred holy orders in a variety of places, illustrating that the cultural authority of the institutional church included sanctifying space according to circumstance. For example, when Palafox ordained several men to the priesthood in the beneficiado of Veracruz, he did so within the confines of canonically approved space, that is, the parish church. With hundreds of vecinos in attendance, Palafox was able to draw on the traditional Catholic custom that called for the laity to assent to members of their community who desired the priesthood. This dimension of the ordination ceremony reflected the institutional church's desire to
include local communities in matters that directly affected their spiritual life. But Palafox also administered the sacrament in locations that bore little resemblance to canonically-approved space. In Hueyacocla, for example, the bishop ordained a young man who had visited Palafox while he rested in a thatched-roof hut located on the outskirts of the beneficio. Based on his strict adherence to Tridentine law, we can assume that Palafox considered the twenty-seven year-old qualified to receive the sacred chrism of the sacrament. By administering the rites of ordination there, the bishop transformed a simple shepherd's hut into sacred ground, a space worthy enough to facilitate the creation of canonical identity, that is, the priesthood. A place of respite for shepherds and travelers had become sacred space, demonstrating that the cultural authority of the church, as exercised by Palafox, could be found in the most marginal of places. The incident was rather exceptional, however. The bishop was more concerned with ensuring that local parishes had properly constituted places of worship and the sacramental paraphernalia to guarantee community liturgy. The parish church was, after all, the local expression of Tridentine Catholicism, and it was Palafox's responsibility to see that the local manifestation of the sacred complied with official expressions. During the third pastoral visita, Palafox wielded his crozier again to reshape the material and cultural expressions of parish life.

35 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 81v.

36 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 62v.
As part of his duties as ordinary, Palafox examined the physical structure of local parishes, including the quantity and quality of sacramental paraphernalia, particularly the sagrario, or tabernacle, and the baptismal font. As material objects that symbolized the Blessed Sacrament and baptism, respectively, the sagrario housed the unleavened bread consecrated during the Mass, and the font contained holy water that priests poured over the foreheads of newborns to cleanse original sin and welcome them into the local Catholic community. Since the Council of Trent decreed that all parishes had to maintain such material expressions of the sacramental, if Tridentine worship was to animate public life, Palafox was determined that the Diocese of Puebla would comply with the Tridentine mandate. Palafox’s inspection of sacramental paraphernalia went beyond the sagrario and baptismal font, however, for he also examined the location of parish churches, their cemeteries and rectories, the state of liturgical music and the choirs that proclaimed the Mass in song, and the number of silver candlesticks, patens, chalices, altar cloths, missals, etc. He also reviewed the quantity and quality of liturgical vestments, as well as their fabric and colors to ensure that the liturgical calendar was followed. Priests wearing a green chasuble (cape) during Pentecost Sunday, for example, failed to illuminate for the faithful the links between the color red and the tongues of fire which represent the Holy Spirit. The clergy wore green vestments only during ‘ordinary time,’ that is, the liturgical season between Advent and Lent (roughly May through November). Since enough parishes in the diocese lacked the material
objects necessary for public demonstrations of Tridentine worship, Palafox issued edicts after completing these last two tours of inspection. The edicts invigorated the spiritual economy of the Diocese of Puebla, for they pushed local pastors and lay persons to trade, barter, and negotiate goods and prices in order to fashion the Tridentine ideal of what constituted properly arranged sacred space and local material culture.  

When the bishop returned to Tlaxcala in 1646, for example, he noted that the parish had followed his orders from the second tour and made the necessary changes to the church building. In fact, the bishop was confident that the construction and repairs would be finished in four months. He did order the beneficiado, however, to remove from the building a “disproportionate and ugly” image of Christ and to replace it with more appropriate one. In Zacatlan, Palafox ordered the priest and his parishioners to expand the church toward the road next to the encomendero’s house in order to avoid the sounds coming from the local inn. He also told them to seal off the door of the church that faced the cemetery of the local convent. In the parish at Tamiagua, the bishop told the mayordomo of the local hermandad to construct an altar and retablo. The

---

37 The decrees are bound together as ‘papeles diversos’ in Palafox y Mendoza, _Edictos_, BP, Piso 3, Casilla 366, Libro 12.

38 Palafox y Mendoza, _Relación de la visita_, BN, ms. 4476, f. 55v. The Spanish reads “una imagen...tan desproporcionada y fea.”

39 Palafox y Mendoza, _Relación de la visita_, BN, ms. 4476, f. 58.

40 Palafox y Mendoza, _Relación de la visita_, BN, ms. 4476, f. 65v.
Indians who worshipped in the church at Tamapache were told that their building and retablo were in fine condition, although the altar lacked a "large, heavy silver vessel" (*un vaso grande y pesado de plata*). Casting a silver ornament was an easy task, however, when compared to what other indigenous communities were ordered to do. Palafox told those attending Sunday mass in the parish at Talpantepeque to construct a tabernacle, find an organ, and renovate the retablo.

In another region, the indigenous community lost two sacred spaces, as the bishop — without giving a reason — closed the cemetery and hermitage located in an unnamed visita of Tlamatlan.\(^{41}\) In San Francisco Cuesala, the Indians were ordered to put a roof on both the sacristy and priest's residence. When Palafox arrived in San Miguel Xuxupango, the cabecera of the beneficio of Santa María Magdalena Coutotola, he was astounded that only six Indians lived there. How could a cabecera comprise only a handful of people, Palafox asked. He closed the church and had the baptismal font dismantled.\(^{42}\) Even larger parishes, such as the beneficio of Veracruz, were not immune from the bishop's orders. There

\(^{41}\) Palafox y Mendoza, *Relación de la visita*, BN, ms. 4476, f. 72. The subsequent edicts issued by the bishop to ensure that local parishes complied with Tridentine mandates regarding material expressions of the sacramental suggests that perhaps the cemetery lacked a fence to prevent livestock from entering the hallowed grounds. And the hermitage probably was missing the requisite lock and key. See Palafox y Mendoza, *Edictos*, BP, Piso 3, Casilla 366, Libro 12, f. 10v.

\(^{42}\) Palafox y Mendoza, *Relación de la visita*, BN, ms. 4476, f. 74. The bishop failed to describe the fate of the six Indian parishioners, although it seems likely that they were forced to migrate to the main beneficio or a nearby visita when they wanted to receive the sacraments.
he mandated that the parish church should have a new tabernacle. Moreover, he inspected the baptismal font and holy oils with the laity present, perhaps in an effort to show the public that even holy water and holy oil were part and parcel of the parish community. Finally, not everything the bishop ordered built or repaired was of a sacramental nature. While visiting the parish of Nopaluca, for example, Palafox left orders for the repair of several ditches and canals that were damaged, observing that they irrigated the seeds that would eventually become crops suitable for tithing.

On 8 March 1646 and 7 April 1646, Palafox issued and distributed edicts to every priest in the Diocese of Puebla, mandating that all parishes be equipped with certain sacred objects, images, and relics. These edicts were designed to "promote service to God, the well-being of souls, and the reformation of customs and decorum of public worship." The bishop decided to issue the edicts after completing his tours of inspection, when he saw firsthand the material contents of each parish. He explained why the diocesan family had to comply with his mandates. First, Palafox noted that some parishes in the diocese enjoyed plenty of sacred vessels and ornaments. It was not his intention to restrict how many

---

43 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 81v-83. According to the edicts, tabernacles were to be made of gilded wood, nicely adorned, with a lock and key, as well as a curtain to cover its door. See Palafox y Mendoza, Edictos, BP, Piso 3, Casilla 366, Libro 12, f. 8.

44 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 86v.

45 Palafox y Mendoza, Edictos, BP, Piso 3, Casilla 366, Libro 12, f. 5.
items these parishes might possess; rather, he was going to employ these
parishes as models for the rest of the diocese. In fact, these parishes and their
parishioners deserved episcopal gratitude. Other parishes lacked only a few
ornaments and jewels. In those instances, the bishop decreed, the parish should
melt down their surplus goods — for example, silver candle-stick holders — and
recast them as lamps or sacred vessels. If the priest had too many green
vestments, he should barter the surplus for other colors. He also ordered pastors
to sell any extra ornaments or jewels to poorer parishes in the region, directing
them to include their Indian parishioners, as well as others, in the business of
selling surplus ornaments and liturgical garb as well as establishing fair prices.
When buying items from others, pastors were expected to set the example by
donating money toward the purchase. They were allowed to solicit donations
from the laity so long as they set the example by making the first donation.
Palafox gave local parishes one year to comply with his edicts, although he left
open the possibility of an extension if conditions warranted it. He was careful to
point out that his mandates reflected the 'good traditions' of the institutional
church in Spain and New Spain. These edicts were neither trivial nor
insignificant, he argued, because the shepherd was entrusted with the
responsibility of ensuring that everyone "should take great care in our public
worship."^46 Within two months of receiving the edicts, pastors were expected to
notify the episcopal palace of their needs.

^46 Palafox y Mendoza, Edictos, BP, Piso 3, Casilla 366, Libro 12, f. 5v-6.
Palafox's edicts also established a comprehensive list of material goods that he expected each parish to possess. The new Tridentine Church was providing institutional support for a market in religious externals that, although brisk before Palafox's arrival, now enjoyed a formal "inventory of the sacred." Local talent – including blacksmiths, candle makers, weavers, carpenters, and merchants – would meet the demands of this spiritual economy by generating and exchanging certain items that every parish was to own: candles, tabernacles, incense, crucifixes, relics of saints, chalices, patens, portraits of holy men and women, bells, retablos, reliquaries, lamps, thuribles, altar cloths, wooden lecterns, and an organ, just to name a few. How could the Body of Christ be exposed during Corpus Christi if parishes did not possess a silver or gold monstrance in which to safeguard it? How could the laity venerate the 'Mother of God' if their house of prayer lacked a portrait or statue of the Virgin Mary? While the documentary record often remains silent on what effect the edicts had on local markets and local trade, Palafox observed that some parishes which he had visited more than once had begun to acquire the necessary items. Whether through trade or barter, the parish church in Orizaba, for example, was well on its way to fulfilling the material obligations to Tridentine practice.47 This suggests that the bishop's exhortations during previous tours of inspection triggered activity in the spiritual economy even before he issued the edicts.

47 Palafox y Mendoza, Edictos, BP, Piso 3, Casilla 366, Libro 12, f. 5v-6. Other parishes that also increased their inventory of sacramental paraphernalia were Tlaxcala, Cholula, Atlixco, Tepeaca, and Tehuacán.
On the other hand, the edicts also demonstrate how Palafox’s deployment of episcopal power reordered local space in a manner that moved parishes away from monastic arrangements. He started this process of refashioning local parishes along Tridentine lines when he privileged various feast days in the liturgical calendar over those of the monastic calendar. In addition to his emphasis on liturgical feast days, the bishop instructed pastors to remove any object that obstructed the laity’s view of the ‘Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.’ He was alluding to the custom whereby the regular orders had placed bars and grills in the center of their churches in order to separate the monks from their Indian charges. Palafox stated that this was not necessary anymore, especially since the regular clergy – who practiced such customs to comply with the rules of their orders – were no longer entrusted with the spiritual well-being of the faithful.

The secular clergy were now the mediators of the Church’s cultural and political authority, but they could not rely on monastic rules for guidance. Palafox wanted to ensure that they possessed certain key texts and books, therefore, so they could serve the people’s needs. What better way for a diocesan priest, especially one who was new to the ministry, to administer his parish than to have copies of important manuals, ceremonials, dictionaries of indigenous languages, and devotionals to which he could refer during times of uncertainty or doubt. These books and printed matter also could serve as sources of inspiration and

---


guidance when the pastor planned a special liturgy or benediction for his flock. Before secularization, the mendicants used to peruse the rules and regulations that governed their respective orders when preparing for feast days or the Mass; the secular clergy were now expected to obtain the new administrative, liturgical, and spiritual manuals for their parishes.

Inspired by Tridentine decrees on priestly formation, as we have seen, Palafox sought to reform the secular clergy by establishing the material and pedagogical foundations for their proper training. The foundation of seminary education in the city of Puebla, as well as the donation of his personal library, initiated the intellectual dimensions of clerical renewal. Once ordained with the sacred oils of ordination, priests were still expected to sharpen the art and craft of the priesthood. For Palafox, the proper administration of a parish was predicated upon access to books and printed matter that projected both Christian doctrine and ecclesiastical discipline in many forms. For example, the bishop ordered every parish priest to have a bible, which he considered "the treasure of sacred learning." While the idea that a clergyman should own a bible might seem obvious to the contemporary reader, it was a sore point for the Catholic Church in the early modern period. Martin Luther and other Protestant reformers had criticized the Church in the sixteenth century both for its lack of attention to scripture and its emphasis on tradition and custom. The Council of Trent countered by issuing decrees on the proper role of scripture in the life of the

---

50 Palafox y Mendoza, Edictos, BP, Piso 3, Casilla 366, Libro 12, f. 10.
institutional church. Palafox was simply integrating the bible into the lives of his priests just as any prelate shaped by the conciliar spirit should have done.

In addition to Holy Scripture, Palafox also included other important texts that would illuminate the Tridentine ideal of what properly trained clerics should read and learn. The diocesan manual for administering the sacraments was designed to instruct the clergy in the proper ritual and form of the seven sacraments. The breviary, or the Divine Office, provided priests with the public prayers of the Church. The ceremonial that Palafox had published also was required reading. So too was any book on moral theology, which Palafox considered quite helpful when the clergy counseled the faithful. A manual on preaching gave useful suggestions on how to develop and deliver a homily during Sunday liturgy. The bishop also expected his magistrates of the sacred to own a catechism so they could instruct the laity in matters of the faith and Church doctrine.\footnote{Palafox y Mendoza, \textit{Edictos}, BP, Piso 3, Casilla 366, Libro 12, f. 10.}

Other significant books included dictionaries and glosses of the various indigenous languages. With the mendicants ousted from most of the doctrinas, Palafox recognized that if the diocesan clergy were going to socialize Indian communities in the new Tridentine culture they had to possess the linguistic skills necessary to undertake such an endeavor. His establishment of seminary education in the diocese, which included the study of Indian languages, was the first step in the process of creating a demand for more books and printed matter.
related to Indian culture. In fact, when Palafox inspected the benefició of Hihuetzan during the second pastoral visita in 1644, he had ordered the publication of glosses and dictionaries to cover the indigenous languages spoken not just in Puebla but in all of New Spain. In his Edictos, Palafox wrote that the diocese would help those priests who had difficulty obtaining these linguistic tools by printing more of them at no cost to the parishes.

The last significant publication that Palafox expected his clergy to obtain and safeguard was the decrees of the Council of Trent, which he called "the teacher of the truths of faith and all good ecclesiastical discipline." The letter and spirit of conciliar law had shaped his career as one of the leading churchmen in Spain and New Spain. To build the Tridentine edifice of Mexican Catholicism in Puebla, Palafox had to ensure that conciliar law would animate those who had the most contact with the laity. Moreover, he also obliged pastors to maintain - along side the decrees - the integrity of the edicts that he had issued since taking possession of the diocese, as well as those that he would promulgate in the future (and those of his successors). In this instance, Palafox linked his

---

Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 56v. The bishop specifically listed NahuaTL, ChoChá, ToToNac, MÍxtex, and Otomí, which were, and still are, the primary languages of central Mexico.

Palafox y Mendoza, Edictos, BP, Piso 3, Casilla 366, Libro 12, f. 6v-7.

Palafox y Mendoza, Edictos, BP, Piso 3, Casilla 366, Libro 12, f. 10.

Palafox y Mendoza, Edictos, BP, Piso 3, Casilla 366, Libro 12, f. 10.
episcopal power with the conciliar authority that granted him the right to exercise that power.

Palafox directed the diocesan clergy to build cupboard-like shelves inside the walls of their sacristy that would serve as the parish archive. He expected pastors to keep and maintain the parish records as well as the necessary manuals to administer a parish. The edicts, for example, obliged pastors to maintain the baptismal, confirmation, marriage, and death registries (*libro de bautizos, libro de confirmación, libro de matrimonio, and libro de difuntos*). In essence, the parish priest functioned as the local registrar who recorded the vital statistics of his parishioners. Instead of merely serving the interests of civil society, however — that is, the need to maintain an accurate census for purposes of tribute — these statistics also reflected the cultural rhythms of daily life for the laity. The various sacraments served as benchmarks in the lives of Catholics, as both Indians and Spaniards gathered to celebrate birth (baptism), childhood (confession and holy communion), adolescence (confirmation), adulthood (marriage or holy orders), and also to mourn the loss of a loved one (viaticum and anointing). Finally, In addition to the sacramental registries, Palafox also ordered pastors to keep an inventory of parish property and parish income, including real estate and chaplaincies.56 The proper administration of a beneficio also had its financial dimensions, and Palafox encouraged the clergy to employ prudent accounting measures to ensure the economic security of the parish.

56 Palafox y Mendoza, Edictos, BP, Piso 3, Casilla 366, Libro 12, f. 8-8v.
Economic security also provides a subtext to Palafox's second and third pastoral tours of inspection. The theme provides the final distinction between these visitas and his first tour, for the bishop wrote much about his encounters with Spaniards and Indians, encomenderos and alcaldes mayores, as well as with Spanish and Indian women and children with varying degrees of local authority. From the beginning of his tenure in 1640, Palafox challenged the repartimiento system that had governed Spanish-Indian relations since the days following the conquest of Tenochtitlán. While he was unable to overhaul the system in a manner more favorable to Indians, the bishop used the pastoral visita to reiterate his position that some alcaldes and encomenderos abused their authority, hindering the material and spiritual welfare of indigenous communities, often at the expense of the local church. Palafox also met Spanish and Indian women who came to him with special requests and favors. The bishop also mentioned his interaction with children – mostly Indian but some Spanish – as he examined their knowledge of the catechism and began to appoint boys and young men to his recently established seminaries. Palafox's interaction with the laity during these tours of inspection illustrates several dimensions of political culture in local communities, a political culture influenced by the broader context of regional politics and local issues of cultural legitimacy. The bishop's encounter with alcaldes mayores provides a good beginning.

As the first chapter has demonstrated, Palafox argued quite forcefully to the Spanish Crown that the majority of alcaldes mayores fulfilled no useful
purpose and served only to oppress the people, particularly Indians. He even suggested that the crown abolish the post and allow alcaldes ordinarios – the elected aldermen in town councils – to preside over local government.\(^57\) As visitor-general, Palafox had punished several alcaldes mayores for their corruption and abuse of power, those of Texcoco and Tepeaca serving as the most obvious examples. When he visited the beneficio of Zacatlán during the third pastoral visita, however, and discovered that the alcalde mayor remained in power despite Palafox’s order to vacate his office, the bishop made little attempt to enforce the edict. He wrote in the relación that everyone (todos) assured him that the alcalde mayor, as well as his brothers, mistreated neither Indian nor Spaniard. In fact, the alcalde assisted Indian communities during times of disease, attending to them personally. “Todos” even went so far as to inform the bishop that the alcalde acted out of great charity and love for the Indians.\(^58\) Palafox’s response was telling. Rather than measure the veracity of these statements, he merely wrote that the alcalde treated him with great courtesy and attention and that the ‘caballero’ was wealthy. If personal wealth figured little as a leading indicator of spiritual health, why the sudden change in the bishop’s view of alcaldes, especially since this particular alcalde had disobeyed orders? The political context had changed. He never abandoned his mistrust of their power and influence, but Palafox’s primary opponents were no longer found

\(^{57}\) Israel, *Race, Class and Politics*, p. 227.

\(^{58}\) Palafox y Mendoza, *Relación de la visita*, BN, ms. 4476, fs. 57v-58.
primarily in the lay leadership of towns and regions; rather, the corporate interests of both the Society of Jesus and the Mendicant orders, as well as the alliances forged between the archbishop and viceroy, openly challenged his power as bishop of Puebla and visitor-general of New Spain.

By 1646, Palafox was well aware that his attempts to abolish the office of alcalde mayor had failed. The bureaucracy in Mexico City, with full support from the viceroy and archbishop, undermined Palafox's attempts to curb the power and authority of alcaldes mayores. The bishop relegated his criticism of them to the margins of his pastoral reports. For example, after visiting the beneficiado of Talpantepeque, he wrote that the Indians of the parish were good souls despite the constant humiliations that they suffered at the hands of the alcalde mayor.59 In Tamapache, Palafox encountered few Indians and Spaniards in the region, and he attributed their absence to the machinations of the local alcalde.60 The incident served to remind those who would read the relación that the alcaldes' corrupt ways and abuse of power continued to force the laity to migrate to more hospitable areas. On the other hand, Palafox could point to the 100 or so cases that he personally adjudicated as visitor-general, when he successfully curbed the power of certain alcaldes mayores in central Mexico. His critics accused him, as we have seen in the first chapter, of wanting to replace the secular office of

59 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 68.
60 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 64.
alcalde mayor with that of the diocesan priest. Perhaps the local Indian leadership also helped to fill the void.

Bishop Palafox's encounters with Indian principales shed some light on how indigenous communities responded to the absence of secular authority, not to mention secularization. In Guachinango, for example, where the Augustinians administered one of the few doctrinas that escaped secularization, the bishop met with an india principal, who was the daughter of the local gobernador and wife of Gregorio Nacianseno, a fugitive from justice condemned by the audiencia for grave crimes. It was reported that Gregorio fled to Tlaxcala to avoid arrest. She asked the bishop to issue a writ obliging her husband to fulfill his marital duties. Palafox advised her to make a formal complaint – notarized before competent authority – and bring it to Puebla for him to act upon, and she agreed to follow the proper channels. While the bishop never mentioned the case again, the episode suggests that the region's secular and religious authorities had failed to respond to community grievances, or at the very least, constant political maneuvering between lay and Mendicant opponents of Palafox marginalized indigenous community issues. That the india principal's marital strife probably served to destabilize local town life – her husband was branded a thief and criminal – and the fact that neither the Spanish nor Augustinian authorities could resolve the case indicates that some Indians filled the void by appealing directly

---

61 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 64.
to the one person who exercised both secular and ecclesiastical power, the visitor-general and bishop of Puebla.

In the beneficiado of Tlamatlán, a former Augustinian doctrina that Palafox had secularized during his tenure as viceroy in 1642, the bishop encountered another india principal who had filled the material and cultural void created by secularization and out-migration. Doña Catalina had donated her house to the parish so that it would have a place of public worship. Apparently, the Augustinians made use of their residence to administer the sacraments, but when Palafox removed them from the area, the local Indian population was left without a formal place to practice their faith. Doña Catalina's donation provided the necessary physical structure that permitted spiritual continuity in Indian religious practices. At the same time, though less explicit in Palafox's description of the episode, the india principal employed the material wealth at her disposal to facilitate political legitimacy in her community. In other words, by donating her own private home to ensure local worship and veneration, especially during a time of uncertainty, Doña Catalina demonstrated to her community the linkages between indigenous political culture and articulation of local notions of cultural survival. Since neither cofradas nor hermandades seemed to have played a major role in the cultural life of Tlamatlán – Palafox made no mention of them – Doña Catalina carved out a new niche in the local political structure by creating a physical landscape for community interaction. Disruptions in the ecclesiastical

---

62 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 63.
hierarchy of Spanish colonialism afforded her the opportunity to legitimize her own political standing and cultural authority. For his part, Bishop Palafox sanctioned Doña Catalina's leadership with episcopal approval by ordering the beneficiado, alcalde mayor, and Indian parishioners to build her a new house. Such direct action must have had a profound impact on local parishioners. Not only did the India principal maintain cultural continuity in indigenous practices but she commanded the appreciation of Puebla's highest-ranking ecclesiastical authority.

Not every indio principal fared as well, however. When Don Francisco, the hispanized principal of Talpantepeque, visited Palafox, he did so with an unusual request. He asked the bishop for permission to change his name to Juan de Palafox. The prelate gently denied the request, encouraging the Indian to express his faith by serving God and His church. Palafox intimated, however, that Don Francisco could have been using his name anyway without formal license. The bishop failed to record why the Indian principal thought it so important to carry his name, although the cultural dynamics of local political legitimacy offers a clue. Spanish civil presence in the region had abused and humiliated the Indians of Talpantepeque, exacting heavy tribute payments above and beyond what had been stipulated by law. Palafox had protested the alcalde mayor's treatment of the indigenous population. Blessed with fertile cotton and tobacco fields, fruit trees, deer and pheasant, Talpantepeque's abundance only

---

63 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 68.
encouraged Spanish officials to demand more and more over time. By changing his name to Juan de Palafox – the institutional church’s point man who supported Indian communities against the material demands of the civil and Mendicant authorities – Don Francisco wanted to recast the relationship between the office of principal and those agents of Spanish colonialism who burdened local communities. Don Francisco must have sensed that the name carried political weight and afforded some kind of cultural capital during the process of reconstituting Indian communities that suddenly found themselves with a greater degree of autonomy.

No longer obliged to support large convents and monasteries, some Indian communities could redirect resources to other tasks. Moreover, the uncertain political landscape provided for less civil control over Indian affairs, albeit temporarily. Many alcaldes mayores spent time defending their authority and privileges to the visitor-general, who also happened to be the bishop of Puebla. These time consuming measures alleviated some of the political and economic pressures that Indian communities faced before Palafox’s arrival in 1640. What better way to fill the political vacuum in one’s community than to arrive bearing the name of Juan de Palafox.

Meanwhile, the Indian principal of Papaloticac, an indigenous neighborhood less than a league away but outside the boundaries of the Diocese of Puebla, came to visit Palafox to protest the harsh treatment that his community

---

64 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 67-67v.
had endured at the hands of the local Augustinian convent. This principal likewise had a request, for he asked Palafox to combine the two parishes into a larger beneficio. The bishop wrote in his relación that he considered the proposal sound and even necessary, but he hesitated to decree the change in parish boundaries to avoid conflict with the viceroy. Palafox promised the principal that he would gather more information on the matter before reaching a decision. The tremendous changes that had taken place in the region — as a result of Palafox's attacks on both Mendicant and Spanish civil authority in the region — created new opportunities for Indian principales to reassert political authority and legitimacy by appealing to a bishop who understood that local conditions remained very much in flux. On the other hand, of course, such conditions benefited Palafox's ecclesiastical and political agendas.

Strengthening the authority and influence of the secular clergy had become the cornerstone of a much broader policy that sought to locate the lower echelons of the normal ecclesiastical hierarchy in every dimension of daily life. The corporate interests of the regular clergy, as well as the material interests of the alcaldes mayores, viewed such policy as a direct challenge to their own authority. That Indian principales found room to maneuver in a tense environment illustrates another dimension of human agency in the service of local political legitimacy and cultural survival. The broader legitimacy of Palafox's exercise of episcopal power, however, which had fashioned and then located a

---

65 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 68-68v.
conciliar sensibility in the daily lives of the faithful, was about to face an immense challenge. The pastoral tours of inspection had provided Palafox with ample opportunity to impart on colonial Mexican society his own cultural and political framework for the implementation of Tridentine decrees. His requirement that the beneficios acquire certain decorations and jewels may have placed an undue financial burden on the poorer parishes of the diocese, but in no way did it encourage diocesan-wide insubordination nor did it fan the flames of political violence. The bishop's expectation that the secular clergy master the languages of their Indian parishioners perhaps caused some consternation among those disdainful of further study. It never caused a backlash against his episcopal rule, however. But when Palafox toured sugar mills, haciendas, estancias, and ranches, he was evaluating their production and output of goods that could be subject to the tithe. Once he applied to the Society of Jesus the same criteria used to determine the tithe for the laity the bishop disturbed the economic structures and practices that had benefited the Jesuits and their key political supporters in the colony. The archbishop of Mexico City, the viceroy, and the Society of Jesus launched an attack on Palafox's authority as bishop of Puebla and visitor-general of New Spain.
Chapter 6

The Political Culture of Ecclesiastical Conflict: Bishop Palafox, the Society of Jesus, and Viceregal Politics

At the very end of Palafox’s second pastoral visita, in August 1644, after he had toured the beneficio of Guamantla, the bishop received word that the new archbishop of Mexico was aboard the flotilla anchored in Veracruz harbor. He decided to greet and welcome Juan de Mañozca to New Spain. The meeting of the two highest-ranking prelates in the colony must have been momentous. Palafox wrote that he wore the palio, or pallium, a white vestment, often made of wool, that the Pope bestows on archbishops and certain bishops as a symbol of episcopal office. With Mañozca’s arrival, however, Palafox no longer occupied the highest ecclesiastical office in colonial Mexico, although, as we have seen in the first chapter, he maintained the political office of visitor-general. In the New World, dioceses were grouped into larger territorial units called provinces, of which the chief bishop, who headed an archdiocese, had the title of archbishop or metropolitan. There was only one archdiocese in a province – in the case of New Spain, Mexico City – the others being called suffragans (for example, the Diocese of Puebla was a suffragan). The metropolitan had no jurisdiction over the internal administration of his suffragans, although in some cases his ecclesiastical courts could hear appeals from theirs. Within three years, Palafox and Mañozca became bitter enemies, as the latter supported the Society of
Jesus when turmoil erupted over the tithe and canonical licenses. During their first encounter, however, a cordial formality dictated the flow of events.¹

The two prelates returned to the beneficio of Guamantla. There, in the pastor's residence, the bishops shared a meal with several important dignitaries of the archdiocese who had traveled to Veracruz to greet Mañozca: the archbishop's nephew, also named Juan de Mañozca, who happened to be the Inquisitor of New Spain and perhaps the most virulent inquisitor to serve in the colony during the seventeenth century; the Provincial of the Franciscan order, Fray Andrés de Artiaga; Juan de la Cámara, a canon in the cathedral chapter of Mexico City; and the archbishop's personal secretary, Juan de Oyo Francisco. Since the informal setting precluded the services of a scribe, we know nothing of the conversations that took place between these men. We do know, however, that Palafox and Mañozca maintained a friendly, even supportive relationship for a brief time.

The deep rift that soon tore apart any semblance of episcopal collegiality has been the subject of some speculation. Jonathan Israel suggested two possible explanations for the split: Mañozca hailed from the Basque region of Spain, one of the more conservative provinces in the peninsula that consistently demonstrated its loyalty to, and support of, royal interests. The archbishop, therefore, harbored deep suspicions of creoles, or American-born Spaniards. Palafox, on the other hand, while also a staunch supporter of the Spanish crown,

¹ Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 51v.
generally viewed his secular offices (visitor-general and interim viceroy) as conduits for creole interests. Israel also argued that Mañozca took umbrage at Palafox’s unassailable position as the de facto head of the Mexican secular clergy. Israel pointed out that Mañozca was an inquisitor by training and inclination, that he virtually controlled the Mexican Inquisition during his tenure as archbishop by virtue of his special commission to reform the tribunal. Mañozca’s first loyalty, therefore, was very much to the Holy Office and not to the Tridentine vision of hierarchy.²

In the parish church at Guamantla, Palafox celebrated the Mass for his episcopal brother, illustrating the bishop’s appreciation of the Tridentine lines of authority. Although not canonically required to administer the sacraments to his metropolitan, Palafox in all likelihood wanted to demonstrate a sense of respect and deference to the newly arrived prelate. A few weeks later in Mexico City, the bishop of Puebla presided over the investiture ceremonies where Mañozca was installed in his new ecclesiastical post. Before he could accept the archiepiscopal pallium, however, Mañozca had to find his way to Mexico City. Tlaxcala was the next stop on his itinerary.³

Palafox noted in his relación that no sooner had Mañozca departed the beneficio of Guamantla for Tlaxcala he returned, apparently lost and unaware of how best to proceed to the town. Palafox offered to show him the way, and

² Israel, *Race, Class and Politics*, p. 228.
³ Palafox y Mendoza, *Relación de la visita*, BN, ms. 4476, f. 51v.
together with their respective entourages, they made their way to the town of Tlaxcala. The alcalde mayor, Diego de Villegas, welcomed the two bishops and prepared a hearty repast for them. Villegas, no doubt, was relieved to find an ally in the new ecclesiastical dignitary, especially since Palafox, in his role as visitor-general, as the first chapter has demonstrated, had attacked the power of the district magistrates. While Palafox spent the night in humble surroundings, that of the parish priest, the archbishop found respite in the alcalde’s royal house. Again, perhaps Palafox was expressing deference to his metropolitan by forgoing the comforts that the royal residence afforded visitors. As the pastoral tours of inspection have demonstrated, however, the bishop’s almost feverish embrace of an ascetic, simple lifestyle informed his decision to sleep in the local pastor’s house. What better way to set an example for his diocesan priests than to deny, in public fashion, the amenities and comforts of the royal house.

The following day, 9 August 1644, Palafox urged Mañozca to visit the city of Puebla, the seat of his authority. After the archbishop accepted the invitation, Palafox dispatched a letter to the convents, monasteries, and churches to toll the bells upon their arrival. Members of the cathedral chapter, pastors, secular and regular clerics, as well as nuns, city officials, and the faithful came out to welcome their shepherd home as well as greet the new archbishop of Mexico City. In the Cathedral of Puebla, the clergy sang prayers of thanksgiving for the

---

4 Palafox y Mendoza, Relación de la visita, BN, ms. 4476, f. 52.
two prelates. Whether he expressed it openly or not, Palafox most certainly took some pleasure in displaying the material symbol of his office, for much progress had been made on its construction since his arrival in 1640. Meanwhile, Mañozca must have known that the material symbol of his authority, the Cathedral of Mexico City, was but a skeleton compared to the magnificent baroque temple that his counterpart was building. If any value was placed on comparing the progress made on those two monumental tasks — a measure of the intense competition between the two largest cities of New Spain — it belonged to Palafox’s seat, for it was nearing completion much faster than Mañozca’s seat of authority. On the other hand, the archbishop began to lay the foundations for a different kind of edifice: a pyramid of political alliances that included members of the cathedral chapter in Puebla. Mañozca’s strategy of cultivating allies in the very heart of Palafox’s seat of power would obstruct the bishop’s exercise of power in 1647, especially when some members of his own cathedral chapter sided with the Society, the archbishop, and the new viceroy, the Count of Salvatierra.

On 7 May 1647, the members of the Puebla cathedral chapter gathered to hear one of its own, Francisco de Requena Galvés publicly endorse Bishop Palafox and his reform program. In what must have been a spirited and eloquent delivery, Requena spoke of the rancor and bitter polemic that had divided the city and diocese since February. The “general peace and public quietude” that had

---

5 Palafox y Mendoza, *Relación de la visita*, BN, ms. 4476, f. 52.
characterized Puebla since Bishop Palafox's arrival in 1640 was now overshadowed by a "calamitous and miserable" state of affairs. The cleric reminded his colleagues that the bishop was sent to New Spain in the service of two majesties, and that Palafox had performed his duties so well that the faithful reaped the material and spiritual benefits of the bishop's zealous commitment to his duties as shepherd. Moreover, the secular clergy, Requena averred, owed much of their material well-being - in the form of prebends and benefices - to Palafox's successful efforts to secularize the mendicant doctrinas. But now other corporate interests, specifically the Society of Jesus but also the viceregal bureaucracy, threatened to tear apart the very fabric of poblano civil and spiritual life. Palafox had ordered the Jesuits to exhibit their licenses to preach, say the Mass, and hear confessions. He also had demanded immediate payment of the tithe on the agricultural and ranching enterprises under their supervision. The Society of Jesus and its allies refused to comply. The bishop, therefore, was in terrible need of support to combat these social ruptures and political cleavages. Requena asserted that all diocesan clergy made a solemn promise of obedience to the bishop and his successors on the day of their ordination, something that should have been obvious to those who had taken the tonsure. Some of his colleagues had sided with the jueces conservadores (special judges appointed to settle disputes between ecclesiastical groups), however, or those special

---

6 ACP, ACE, Libro 11, 7 June 1647, f. 368v.

7 ACP, ACE, Libro 11, 7 June 1647, f. 368v.
ecclesiastical judges, who, in one swift move, pronounced in favor of the Jesuits, excommunicated the bishop, and exhorted the faithful to abandon their obedience to him.° Puebla had become a smoldering tinderbox on the verge of explosion. What had brought the city, diocese, and even the colony of New Spain, to the edge of political violence? How was it possible for ecclesiastical judges to usurp episcopal jurisdiction? What motivated a member of the cathedral chapter to make an emotional appeal for calm and the restoration of order? Why prompted other members to oppose their leader? The conflict that erupted between Palafox and the Jesuits underscored in stark fashion the limits of episcopal power, the ambiguities of Habsburg support of its royal representative in the face of powerful corporate interests, and the political and social divisions that had fractured the colonial polity since the turn of the century.

The vitriolic polemic between Bishop Palafox and the Society of Jesus remains one of the least understood episodes in colonial Mexican history, despite its broad implications for the study of power relations. Both sides had their supporters and detractors who wielded pens and employed printing presses to gild their version of events for public and scholarly consumption. Such an avalanche of paper and ink has had obvious consequences for the historian: an excessive number of printed matter marked by bias and distortion, many of which were written years after the dispute in an effort to facilitate or hinder Palafox's canonization in the eighteenth century. Gregorio Bartolomé examined the pro-

° ACP, ACE, Libro 11, 7 June 1647, f. 369.
and anti-Palafox campaigns that were launched soon after the bishop’s death in 1649. His analysis suggests that the conflict with the Society of Jesus kindled such a passionate advocacy among the bishop’s supporters and a spiteful disdain among his detractors that often the historian is hard pressed to separate fact from fiction. Laden with ideological bias – and employed as instruments of propaganda – these sources have shaped much of the historiography.

The pro-Palafox camp is easily distinguished from that which has favored the Jesuits. Sor Cristina de la Cruz de Arteaga’s biography of Palafox illustrates the sympathy that he continues to elicit from certain quarters of the Church, particularly the nuns of the Carmelite order of which Cruz de Arteaga is a member. She portrays the Society’s conduct during Palafox’s tenure as an affront to the hierarchical order of the institutional Church, not to mention the ecclesiastical discipline that such an order requires in the service of the Sacramental Church. In other words, the Jesuit reaction to Palafox’s exercise of power undermined temporarily the pastoral responsibility to administer the sacraments to the faithful. By opposing Palafox’s canonical right to compel ecclesiastical corporations to exhibit their licenses and pay the tithe, the Society impeded the laity on their sacramental path to Christ’s grace because conflict

---


10 Cruz de Arteaga, *Una mitra sobre dos mundos*, passim.
erupted that prevented all sides from ministering to the people. Her pastoral understanding of the conflict reflects a belief that corporate self-interest – in this case, the material interests of the Society of Jesus – only served to prevent the faithful from practicing their religion. Sor Cristina fails to acknowledge, however, that Palafox wielded the power of his office to advance the interests of the secular clergy at the expense of the regular clergy. Strictly speaking, Canon Law did not recognize the secular clergy as a corporate entity with juridical personality. Rather, it ascribed an apostolic personality to diocesan priests by linking them with the normal ecclesiastical hierarchy, which in turn traced its temporal and spiritual authority to Saint Peter. Palafox tried to fortify the material foundations of the diocese – upon which the secular clergy drew its strength – by subjecting the corporate wealth of the Jesuits to the tithe.

Another pro-Palafox historian was Francisco Sánchez-Castañer, who, in 1964, published a work that detailed Palafox’s conflicts with the regular clergy. He left little doubt as to where he stood in the debate: the bishop was in his right to subject the monastic orders and the Society of Jesus to episcopal authority. Moreover, the royal and papal response to the controversy revealed that Palafox enjoyed the support of those most interested in maintaining the social order in New Spain. Both the king and the pope sided with Palafox in the disputes over the tithe and licenses. What Sánchez-Castañer neglected to mention,  

---

however, was that the Spanish monarch ultimately decided that to preserve the social order in his Mexican colony, it was far more expedient to recall his visitor-general and bishop of Puebla than it was to suppress, or at least restrict Jesuit activities. The pope, too, refused to redefine the role of the Society in ways that Palafox would have done, despite his pronouncements in support of the bishop’s actions. As Charles Simmons pointed out, the “church and state, slumbering and complacent, rejected any effort to change the status quo.”

Ernesto de la Torre Villar provides a different perspective in his Juan de Palafox y Mendoza: Pensador político. After evaluating Palafox’s political and ecclesiastical treatises, Torre Villar suggests that the bishop expressed genuine discomfort with the material wealth of the temporal church because so many struggled in his day to avoid privation, including the secular clergy. What moved Palafox to confront the Society of Jesus in 1647 and 1648 was a desire to curtail the order’s political power in the diocese by subjecting its economic power to episcopal authority, which in turn would bolster the secular clergy’s position in colonial society. Torre Villar’s persuasive assessment illustrates how Palafox’s exercise of his office sought to refashion the political and economic contexts that informed the laity’s contact with ecclesiastical institutions. His study, however, fails to link explicitly the material dimensions of episcopal office with the cultural

---

12 Simmons, “Palafox and His Critics,” 395.

13 Ernesto de la Torre Villar, Juan de Palafox y Mendoza: Pensador político (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1997).
manifestations of Tridentine authority. Put another way, Palafox challenged the political and economic power of the Jesuits in order to bolster the material well-being of the secular clergy, and in the process, he effected changes in the way the laity experienced the cultural and sacramental attributes of Catholicism. By paying its share of the tithe to the normal ecclesiastical hierarchy in Puebla, as Palafox so desperately wanted, the Jesuits were being told to relinquish some of their wealth in order to support Palafox’s reform of the diocese.

Only two historians thus far have written about the conflict in English, Jonathan Israel and David Brading. Both scholars emphasized primarily the political features of the conflict, as they isolated and excerpted the ecclesiastical dimensions of the polemic, rendering them either inert or inconsequential to the broader meanings of everyday life in seventeenth-century Mexico. Such an exercise, however, assumes that the religious dimensions of the conflict influenced little of its trajectory. As this chapter demonstrates, the turmoil and discord had an ecclesiastical side to it, one that shaped, and was shaped by, the political and social contours of lay and clerical alliances in both the city of Puebla and the viceregal capital. As this chapter shows, the conflict between Palafox and the Jesuits was neither a purely political affair nor an ecclesiastical squabble that ran amok. Rather, it demonstrates the subtleties and nuances of Tridentine political culture in the seventeenth century, which had begun to fashion the

---

14 Brading, First America, especially pp. 241-247; and Israel, Race, Class and Politics, especially pp. 217-247.
material and religious dimensions of daily life in colonial Mexico when Palafox arrived in 1640 to implement the conciliar reforms.

The story begins in late 1642 when a dispute developed between the secular clergy and the Society of Jesus over the distribution of tithes in the Diocese of Puebla. As Israel and Brading have shown, by 1640, the Jesuits had acquired so much landed property in New Spain that many colonists – the growing hacendado class in particular – began to protest to the Spanish Crown.15 While the documentary record offers little guidance in the effort to calculate the order’s wealth – historians are unable to locate the accounting books from the various Jesuit haciendas and estancias – Palafox argued that the Jesuits possessed a great deal of real estate which generated substantial agricultural and ranching products. For example, within the diocese of Puebla, Palafox claimed that 300,000 sheep grazed on Jesuit ranches, while their six sugar mills produced an annual income of 300,000 pesos.16 On another occasion, the bishop charged that the various Jesuit schools in the Puebla region had more than 87,000 head of cattle, 16,000 sheep, and 12,000 lambs. According to Palafox, such wealth was excessive when compared to the number of active

15 Brading, First America, p. 242, and Israel, Race, Class, and Politics in Colonial Mexico, p. 218.

16 Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, Carta segunda a Inocencia X, 25 May 1647, in Obras, vol. XI.
Jesuits in the area: 401 priests and brothers.\textsuperscript{17} For their part, the diocesan clergy, especially members of cathedral chapters and local bishops, were worried about the adverse impact of Jesuit expansion on diocesan coffers. The Society had always claimed exemption from the tithe, based on their reading of papal protection outlined in several bulls.\textsuperscript{18}

Bishops in the New World, however, had never acknowledged nor accepted these claims. At first, such disagreements mattered little in the years following the Spanish conquest, as the landed property held by the regular orders throughout the hemisphere had not been especially extensive. By 1642, however, the Society of Jesus had been bequeathed and had otherwise obtained a rather large number of ranches, haciendas, and plantations, which reduced significantly the area in central Mexico on which tithes could be assessed and paid. Moreover, the Jesuits earned the reputation for being such good farmers, ranchers, and administrators that they invariably increased the value and yield of the properties that they acquired.\textsuperscript{19} Bishops throughout Mexico were, or so they argued, far more dependent on their income from tithes than their counterparts in Spain. Israel posits that the financial strength of dioceses in New Spain was


\textsuperscript{18} Gregory XIII issued many new privileges to the Society of Jesus, adding to those granted by his predecessor Pius V. Technically, the privileges were not to contravene any Tridentine decree, although the Jesuits would later claim that papal supremacy protected their privileges from episcopal office.

\textsuperscript{19} Israel, \textit{Race, Class, and Politics in Colonial Mexico}, p. 218.
roughly proportional to their agricultural wealth; Puebla, therefore, enjoying within its boundaries the most intensively cultivated land in the viceroyalty, was twice as wealthy as the archdiocese of Mexico City and several times richer than most other bishoprics.²⁰

In 1624, for example, the cathedral chapters of Mexico City and Lima initiated what was to become one of the most protracted suits in Spanish legal history, as they combined forces to compel the religious orders in the New World to pay tithes. In 1636, the dispute assumed a new dimension when both cathedral chapters were permitted to send delegates to the royal court in Madrid to plead their case. It was during these proceedings that the Crown heard members of the diocesan councils question the right of the regular clergy to acquire property in the first place.²¹ While the king decided in favor of the bishops and their cathedral chapters, viceroys were slow to implement the royal decision. Non-payment of the tithe, as well as acquisition of land, continued without hindrance. The Society of Jesus in particular amassed impressive tracts of good agricultural and grazing land.

The Jesuits were the wealthiest order in New Spain, and they were most eager to refute criticisms of their wealth made by ambitious hacendados and cash poor bishops. While the mendicant orders shied away from any discussion ²⁰ Brading, First America, p. 242, and Israel, Race, Class, and Politics in Colonial Mexico, p. 218-219.

²¹ Israel, Race, Class, and Politics in Colonial Mexico, p. 219.
of the tithe — their embrace of evangelical poverty mixed badly with their acquisition of valuable plots of irrigable land — the Jesuits were not at all embarrassed by their substantial holdings. The Society argued in very strong terms that its wealth was not only justifiable but was quite necessary and essential to their commitment to serve the people of God. As part of the Catholic Reformation, the Jesuits interpreted their mission quite differently from that articulated by the mendicant orders, whose rules and precepts expressed medieval notions of evangelical poverty and asceticism. The Society of Jesus had been founded to strengthen the institutional church in the light of the gains made in Europe by the various branches of Protestantism. To fulfill their obligations to the Church, its members required access to worldly goods, especially money and political influence. As long as its wealth and political contacts were held in common and not spent on the comfort of its individual members — or so the Jesuits asserted — there was ample justification for its acquisition of property. The rhetorical question that the order always asked was, “If our order eschews wealth, how can we maintain our colleges, schools, and missions?”

The polemic between Palafox and the Society of Jesus stemmed from a dispute between the cathedral chapter and the order that had started even before

---

22 Padre Alonso de Rojas, Al rey por la Compañía de Jesús de la Nueva España en satisfacción de un libro de el visitador obispo don Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, 1647, Mexico City.

23 Israel, Race, Class, and Politics in Colonial Mexico, p. 219.
Palafox arrived in the colony. In 1639, Hernando de la Serna, a wealthy diocesan cleric who served as a racionero in the cathedral chapter, announced his plans to endow a new college that the Jesuits had founded in Veracruz with a sheep hacienda worth approximately 70,000 pesos. The rest of the diocesan chapter, lead by its executor, Juan de Merlo – who would turn out to be one of Palafox’s staunchest supporters – warned Serna not to bequeath the property without first ensuring that the lands would be liable to the tithe. Serna, for his part, ignored the warning and completed the transaction without making any such provision or stipulation, thereby depriving diocesan coffers of a significant annual income. Merlo retaliated by declaring Serna fully responsible for the lost income and confiscated his remaining properties until payment was made. The Society of Jesus responded by taking legal action in defense of their patron, so tempers were flaring when Palafox entered the city of Puebla in 1640 to take possession of his seat of episcopal authority.24

The new bishop, as we have seen, focused his attention on the secularization of mendicant doctrines and the implementation of Tridentine reforms. He provided few hints in those early years as to how he would decide the issue of jurisdiction and the payment of tithes. The Jesuits could not help but feel uneasy during this period of episcopal silence. What was the meaning of Palafox’s reformation of Catholicism in New Spain? Would his reform and revival

of the diocesan clergy reduce or marginalize Jesuit influence? From the Jesuit point of view, the signs were not encouraging. Although the order was not directly affected by the bishop's secularization program of 1640-1641, the usurpation of the mendicants from their doctrinas might encourage Palafox to invoke his power as visitor-general to follow suit with the Jesuit missions located on the far northern frontier of New Spain.  

It also seemed obvious to the leadership of the Society of Jesus that Palafox's reforms would require large infusions of cash and extensions of diocesan credit. Where would the bishop find new sources of revenue to fund his reform program? The order worried that Palafox would turn his episcopal gaze toward Jesuit wealth and take a hard line on tithes. Indeed, the angst and suspicion that had tempered the order's initial reception of the bishop were quite justified. As Chapters Three, Four, and Five have shown, Palafox's reform of liturgy, sacred space, sacramental paraphernalia, and seminary education required the diocese and local parishes to spend large sums of money. Moreover, the bishop breathed new life into the construction of the cathedral, which had languished since 1618. He made no secret of his desire to build and consecrate a cathedral that would rival any found in Europe. The Society's vast tracts of agricultural land and grazing pastures might well generate the amount of revenue needed to complete the bishop's transformation of poblano society.

---

25 Israel, Race, Class and Politics, p. 220-221.
Eventually, Palafox upheld Merlo’s policy of ensuring that tithes be paid to the cathedral chapter on estates bequeathed to ecclesiastical corporations, although the bishop did release Sema’s property. The Society of Jesus waited until Palafox relinquished his interim office of viceroy to the Count of Salvatierra in November of 1642 before taking further action. Once Salvatierra assumed office, the Jesuits brought a suit before the audiencia against the cathedral chapter, which, in effect, was a suit against Palafox since he was ex officio head of the chapter.26

What followed was a remarkable contest between Palafox and the Society in the exercise of influence with the Audiencia in Mexico City. The Jesuits had many friends who sat as judges on the high court, but Palafox also enjoyed leverage since one of his tasks as visitor-general was to investigate and reform the tribunal. The result was that the judges split evenly into pro-Palafox and pro-Jesuit camps, and twice they had to suspend the case without reaching a decision. By the end of the year, however, the Audiencia settled the dispute in Palafox’s favor.27

Despite their anger and disappointment, the Jesuits remained silent for two years on the issue, although they refused to accept the idea that bishops had the right to assess taxes on Jesuit properties. The order restricted its movements against the bishop until it could find the appropriate allies in viceroyal

---

26 Israel, Race, Class and Politics, pp. 221-222.

27 Israel, Race, Class and Politics, p. 222.
and archdiocesan palaces. At this point, in late 1642, the disagreement between them was limited and narrowly defined, that is, payment of the tithe. The years 1644-1646, however, witnessed the formation of new political and social alliances whose purpose was to oppose Palafox’s program of Tridentine reform for Puebla as well as for New Spain. The new viceroy, Salvatierra, entered the fray and, in doing so, created the necessary swing in the fragile balance of power, one that benefited the Jesuits.

The origins of the dispute between Bishop Palafox and Viceroy Salvatierra can be found in the first months of the latter’s term of office. Salvatierra arrived in New Spain as a loyal supporter of the Franciscans, and he backed their opposition to Palafox’s secularization program. Moreover, the alcaldes mayores exerted pressure on Salvatierra to counter the bishop’s secularization scheme, as these district magistrates saw their local power diminish when diocesan priests began to assume control of the doctrinas. Such complaints revealed the close links between the mendicant friars and the alcaldes mayores. But now that the mendicants were gone, their replacements felt no need to seek the support of the alcaldes. Diocesan priests enjoyed the patronage of the bishop and visitor-general, Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, whose titles also included that of visitor-general, captain-general, and interim viceroy. Local political authority offered them little in terms of material benefits and political security.

---

28 Israel, Race, Class, and Politics, p. 223.
Several other incidents between Palafox and the viceroy presaged things to come. For example, in September 1644, Palafox summoned the alcalde mayor of Huexotzingo to arrest a Spaniard in the area who had insulted an Indian principal appointed by the new beneficiado. Instead of jailing the Spaniard, however, the alcalde seized the Indian and two of his assistants. Palafox responded by raising the censure of excommunication as well as calling on the Audiencia to detain the alcalde. Viceroy Salvatierra, eager to solidify his position within the viceregal bureaucracy, tried to persuade the Audiencia to dismiss Palafox’s request. Three of the four judges, however, openly sided with Palafox; a rebuffed viceroy witnessed the arrest of the alcalde mayor and his underlings.²⁹

In yet another dispute between Palafox and an alcalde mayor, Salvatierra claimed that a diocesan priest from Puebla exhibited perverted behavior in the confessional with the alcalde’s wife. After recounting the incident to her husband, he denounced the cleric before the cathedral chapter. Instead of defending the woman’s virtue and the alcalde’s honor, Palafox had the alcalde jailed, which deprived the viceroy of another lay ally.³⁰

Relations between Salvatierra and Palafox deteriorated rapidly in September 1644 when the bishop returned to the viceregal capital to resume work on his visitation. The two disagreed on almost every point that Palafox raised regarding the royal administration of the colony. Many bureaucrats,

²⁹ Israel, Race, Class and Politics, pp. 233-234.

³⁰ Israel, Race, Class and Politics, p. 224.
fearing the loss of employment when Palafox advised the king that royal income could be increased upon the reduction of the bloated bureaucracy, scrambled for the viceroy’s protection. It was at this juncture that Salvatierra decided that he had to orchestrate Palafox’s removal from the colony if he was to maintain any real power and influence. With pen in hand, he sent several letters to the Spanish crown, expressing his resentment against Palafox and accusing the bishop of preventing effective royal control over the colony. Salvatierra also encouraged all those who opposed Palafox to send their own letters to Madrid. With the exception of the Carmelite order, the regular clergy accepted the viceroy’s invitation.\textsuperscript{31}

Even with the full cooperation of the regular clergy, however, Salvatierra recognized that, in order to achieve his goal, he also had to convince local secular power to join his cause.\textsuperscript{32} To this end, in 1646, the viceroy turned his attention to the city council in the viceregal capital, which represented creole interests and concerns. Aided by the alcalde mayor of Mexico City, Diego Orejón, Salvatierra intimidated some regidores while bribing others. After some time had passed, the viceroy’s efforts reached fruition as the city council wrote a

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{31} Israel, \textit{Race, Class and Politics}, p. 225.
\end{footnotesize}

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{32} Israel, \textit{Race, Class and Politics}, p. 225.
\end{footnotesize}
scathing letter to the Spanish crown criticizing Palafox and asking that he be recalled.\textsuperscript{33}

The year 1646 was one of acute division within the colonial political system. Palafox, for his part, did not hesitate to rally opposition to Salvatierra just like he had done in 1641-1642 against Salvatierra's predecessor, the Duke of Escalona. As Israel has documented, Palafox received the support of the bishop of Oaxaca, Bartolomé de Benavente y Benavides, as well as the bishop of Nueva Vizcaya, Francisco Diego de Evia y Valdés. Benavente joined Palafox in requesting that the crown withdraw Salvatierra from the government of New Spain. Indeed, Palafox wrote no less scathingly against the viceroy, warning the Royal Council of the Indies that Salvatierra posed a threat to the implementation of royal decrees and edicts. Furthermore, the viceroy's hand in the appointment of alcaldes mayores weakened royal control, for Salvatierra named incompetent administrators and political cronies to fill vacancies that had developed from the time Palafox's brief tenure as interim viceroy had ended.\textsuperscript{34}

Although there were deep fissures in Mexican politics in the years 1644-1646, the tinderbox had not yet exploded. For one, Salvatierra lacked firm and consistent support from the regular clergy. Initial support from the mendicants evaporated in 1644, for example, when the General Chapter of the Franciscans

\textsuperscript{33} Copia de las cartas que las ciudades de Mexico y la Puebla escrivieron a la real persona, 1648, Mexico City, fs. 34-35.

\textsuperscript{34} Palafox to the Royal Council of the Indies, 30 November 1646, in Defensa canónica, Obras, Vol. XI, f. 112.
in Spain withdrew the order's legal claim to the Indian doctrinas. To enforce the new policy, the Franciscan General selected the most conciliatory and agreeable Spaniard that he could find as the new commissary-general of the order in New Spain. Fray Buenaventura de Salinas, who, after navigating the muddied waters of colonial politics with great care, won the praise and trust of Bishop Palafox. Fray Buenaventura was a witness to the bishop's donation of his library to the city Puebla in 1646, as we have seen in Chapter Three. Interestingly enough, at the very same time, the Society of Jesus in Mexico began to lose the support of European Jesuits. The Jesuit General in Rome sought to improve relations with Palafox by appointing a provincial who shared many of the same characteristics as his Franciscan counterpart, that is, politically moderate, an astute statesman, and one who was willing to compromise.  

While Salvatierra made few inroads with the regular clergy in 1646, he did find a key ally in the ecclesiastical arena: he won the support of the new archbishop of Mexico City, Juan de Mañozca, who had been consecrated by Palafox himself in 1644. As we have seen, the two prelates shared the episcopal bond for a brief time, after which they became bitter enemies. Mañozca may have resented creole support of Palafox. Perhaps it was the archbishop's influence over the Inquisition in New Spain, particularly in light of the fact that his cousin, Juan Sáenz de Mañozca, who was named inquisitor of New Spain,  

---

invited the archbishop to reform the tribunal. Palafox would not have found it easy to accept such divided loyalties, especially since he considered the episcopacy to be the guardians of Trent and the guarantors of royal support for the Church's mission in the New World.

In February 1646, the moderate Jesuit provincial, Father Bueras, passed away suddenly, and his death strengthened the anti-Palafox coalition within the Jesuit order. The person chosen to succeed Bueras was a creole aristocrat, Pedro Velasco, the first creole to ever become the Jesuit provincial of New Spain. He was a nephew of a late sixteenth-century viceroy, had spent many years in the Jesuit missions of Nueva Vizcaya, and was closely linked to the extreme anti-Palafox wing of the Society in Mexico. Consequently, from the spring of 1646 onwards, relations between the Jesuits and Bishop Palafox became more and more strained.

Another year was to pass, however, before the conflict erupted. The major players vacillated between calculation and hesitation, as they waited for the other side to make a move. The Jesuits employed their skills as eloquent preachers to attack Palafox during Sunday Mass. One Jesuit priest went so far as to suggest that the faithful would be better to "commend New Spain to God [right now]...for from the provocation that the bishop of Puebla had given to the

---

viceroy and audiencia, an even bigger conflict was to be expected. Palafox, for his part, seemed content to remain on the defensive. No recorded sermon of his exists in the documentary record to suggest that the bishop employed the bully pulpit to launch a counter-attack. Instead, Palafox decided to wield his crozier and force the Jesuits into submission. If certain Jesuit priests were going to use the Mass – particularly the homily – for political purposes, then the bishop had every right to intervene. And Palafox did so by employing a dimension of his episcopal authority that he had not used before.

On 6 March 1647, the vicar-general of the Diocese of Puebla, Juan de Merlo, acting on Palafox’s instructions, ordered all Jesuits to exhibit their licenses to preach, say the Mass, and hear confessions. Canon Law ascribed to episcopal office the right to issue and examine licenses to administer the sacraments and preach the word of God. All clergy, therefore, had to obtain episcopal license to undertake public ministry in any diocese. In the past, Palafox had complained that certain Jesuit priests had exercised their sacerdotal functions on haciendas owned by Jesuit colleges without his permission. In recent weeks, however, some Jesuits had launched virulent sermons against the bishop, desecrating the pulpit and altar with profane words and overt political language designed to incite the faithful. The Society refused to comply with the

---

37 Sermon que predicó el Padre Juan de San Miguel, 1646, Mexico City, cited in Israel, Race, Class and Politics, p. 229.

38 Palafox y Mendoza, Defensa, in Obras, vol. XI, f. 121.
order, citing special privileges and exemptions granted to them by various popes immediately following their establishment as a religious order.\textsuperscript{39} Included within these special privileges, or so the Jesuits claimed, was the right to refuse to exhibit any license to justify its exercise of the priestly ministry.

Two days later, on 8 March, the Society was given an ultimatum: produce the necessary documentation or face the harshest penalty that episcopal office could mete out in such circumstances. The Jesuits ignored the ultimatum. Faced with the summary dismissal of his episcopal jurisdiction and authority, Bishop Palafox suspended the order’s ability to administer the sacraments. In other words, ordained members of the Society of Jesus were prohibited from saying Mass, preaching from the pulpit, hearing confessions, baptizing infants, and blessing marriage contracts within the canonical boundaries of the Diocese of Puebla. Moreover, the faithful were forbidden to receive any sacrament from the Society of Jesus under the threat of excommunication. In effect, Palafox stripped the entire order of its priesthood within a diocese where it had possessed two colleges and a parish. As Palafox later declared, the general privilege and exemption that the Jesuits claimed as their own applied only to its missions; it certainly did not include such places as Puebla where the Catholic faith had been firmly established for over a century.\textsuperscript{40} As David Brading has

\textsuperscript{39} Mariano Cuevas, \textit{Historia de la iglesia en Mexico} (Mexico City), vol. 3, pp. 312-313.

\textsuperscript{40} Palafox, \textit{Defensa}, in \textit{Obras}, vol. XI, f. 122. The royal patronage stipulated that the regular clergy would found and administer doctrinas and missions until that
argued, for Palafox to have conceded the case would have been tantamount to stripping the bishop of his crozier, to deny him the exercise of the jurisdiction conferred by the Council of Trent, to introduce an alien authority between him and his flock. 41

When news of the prohibition reached the Jesuit Provincial, Pedro de Velasco, he convened a series of meetings with his colleagues and other representatives of the regular clergy to prepare his reply. Rather than submit to Palafox's demands, the Jesuits invoked an old privilege used by the orders to resolve disputes between ecclesiastical corporations, that is, the appointment of two judges, the jueces conservadores, to settle the conflict. The election of two prominent Dominican friars was the first step in the process. The Jesuits could not have orchestrated a more brilliant move, for the Dominicans at this time were the most militant of the mendicant orders and very much anti-Palafox. The bishop had secularized three of their Indian doctrinas in 1641, but their primary reason for joining in the attack was their concern that the bishop of Oaxaca, who, as we have noted earlier, was a loyal supporter of Palafox, would threaten their interests in southern Mexico. 42
Having chosen the jueces conservadores, the Society of Jesus then called
upon the viceroy to acknowledge the validity of the election and prevent Palafox
from blocking its functions by way of the audiencia. Salvatierra, of course,
readily agreed. He bypassed the audiencia and approved the election of the
special judges. Palafox was outraged that the Dominicans – of all orders –
should ally themselves with the Jesuits, especially since both corporations had
disagreed so vehemently in the past over theological and legal issues. Even the
Castilian province of the Society expressed its disbelief and displeasure with the
alliance.43 Meanwhile, in Mexico City, the archbishop sided with the jueces
conservadores and had imprisoned Palafox's diocesan representative to the
viceregal court.

On 2 April 1647, the jueces conversadores rendered their verdict and,
predictably enough, they found in favor of the Society of Jesus. Palafox was
given six days to drop his case, restore the licenses that he had taken away from
the Jesuits, and was threatened with a burdensome financial penalty if he
resisted. The jueces also threatened his vicar-general, Merlo, with
excommunication if he continued to support the bishop's case against the
Society. Finally, the Dominicans manipulated the immediate boundaries of the
dispute by declaring that the Jesuits did not have to pay the tithe, a decision that
fell outside their purview and jurisdiction. On 6 April, Palafox responded to these

43 Carta que el padre provincial de la Compañía de Jesús de Castilla, 1647,
Madrid, f. 304.
verdicts by excommunicating the judges and prohibiting anyone within his diocese, clerical or lay, from recognizing their authority. Moreover, the bishop excommunicated several of the more prominent members of the Society of Jesus who resided in Puebla, and he encouraged the citizens of the city to withdraw their sons from Jesuit schools and transfer them to his Tridentine seminaries. The situation in Puebla had now become untenable once the jueces conservadores retaliated by excommunicating both Palafox and Merlo, and they raised the threat of excommunication on anyone who questioned their verdicts as well as their competency to hear the case. Since the bishop controlled the printing presses, however, their edict had little practical effect in the city of Puebla. But the viceroy, archbishop, and inquisitor-general decided to dispatch an armed expedition to Puebla to coerce Palafox into submission. Agents of the Holy Office arrived in the city first, however, armed not with weapons but with special posters that they affixed to walls and gates all over the city. These posters informed the citizenry that the Inquisition forbade criticism of the jueces conservadores, declared that it was a religious offense to ridicule the Society of Jesus, and banned the printing press in Puebla for four years.44

The next series of events unfolded on 7 June 1647. A popular demonstration broke out in Puebla's zócalo as many of the faithful gathered to express their support of Bishop Palafox. According to a pro-Palafox pamphlet that appeared shortly thereafter, the bishop made an appearance in the main

44 Israel, _Race, Class and Politics_, pp. 232-233.
plaza and, as was the custom, the cathedral bells pealed to alert the faithful. Soon a large crowd assembled, a "spontaneous act [designed] to show their love and affection" for their shepherd. According to the viceroy's version of events, however, Palafox had organized the spectacle as a means of impressing his enemies with his power to disturb the stability of the colony. Salvatierra wrote that Palafox toured the city in his carriage while the unruly crowd shouted, "Viva Palafox," "Palafox es nuestro virrey." In return, the bishop's supporters argued that the viceregal camp was simply out to tarnish Palafox's reputation with the Spanish Crown.

The show of popular support for the bishop convinced the viceroy that he had made the right decision when he dispatched the armed expedition to force Palafox into submission. On 9 June, a viceregal agent arrived in Puebla to proclaim an edict that had already been published in Mexico City two weeks earlier. The edict announced that His Majesty, as well as the Royal Council of the Indies, had acknowledged the legitimacy of the jueces conservadores and threatened with severe punishment anyone who contradicted their verdicts. Purporting to be a cédula real, the edict was in fact a forgery, one authorized presumably by the viceroy himself. Palafox and his cathedral chapter, in a last hour attempt to calm the situation, sent a group of representatives to Mexico City


46 Viceroy Salvatierra to Philip IV, Carta del virrey al rey nuestro señor, 1647, Mexico City, f. 38.
to placate the viceroy, but it was too late to resolve the crisis by negotiation. In fact, Salvatierra refused to meet with the delegation and instead had them imprisoned.47

The bishop now found himself in the most delicate situation of his entire career. If he resisted the viceroy, as Israel and Brading have argued, he would have been found guilty of treason, have threatened the stability of the viceroyalty, risked everything for which he had worked, and, probably, ruined his own career.48 On the other hand, if he submitted to his enemies, he would have undermined the power invested in his episcopal office and hindered subsequent bishops from exercising their canonical authority. How did Palafox decide to resolve the conundrum? On the evening of 14 June, the bishop slipped quietly away, abandoning his seat to find refuge in the poblano sierra. He informed the cathedral chapter of his decision, saying that he left the city to avoid further chaos: “the miserable state in which my Church and diocese finds itself today...awakened as it is [by my enemies] against my jurisdiction...obliges me to leave immediately...for the viceroy has sided with the so-called jueces conservadores...who have the assistance of the regular clergy...[but] I have my life, my honor, and my dignity...[but] without sufficient strength to defend my jurisdiction...and it being unjust and forbidden for me to deliver [my seat] to mitigate the current crisis...[perhaps the situation will resolve itself] if I leave the

47 The contents of those concessions remain unknown.

48 Israel, Race, Class, and Politics, p. 237, and Brading, First America, p. 245.
city. He asked the cathedral chapter to include his letter with the minutes of the meeting in order to "preserve the truth," and he appointed Alonso de Salazar, Juan de Merio, and Nicolás Gómez to govern the diocese in his absence. It was later discovered that Palafox sought refuge in the small, impoverished rural parish of San José Chiapa, located in the poblano sierra.

In the days following Palafox's disappearance, Puebla was the scene of some extraordinary events. Salvatierra's armed expedition arrived in the city, followed by the Jesuits and Dominicans who staged a grand entry of their own. With crucifixes and banners lifted high in the air, the regular clergy chanted *Te Deum Laudamus* in the streets. Festivities were planned, banquets prepared, and the anti-Palafox alliance staged shows and concerts. The bishop's residence was seized and ransacked, and many of his papers confiscated. The seminaries that Palafox had founded were occupied by the viceregal forces, and the local Carmelite priory - the one religious community that had always supported the bishop - was searched in the hope of finding clues to the bishop's whereabouts. Other activities included the gathering of evidence against the bishop, most of which, according to Palafox's supporters, were false statements made under duress.

Perhaps the most intriguing episode to occur was the cathedral chapter's decision to declare the diocese sede vacante, or vacant, on 6 July 1647. The

---


50 Israel, *Race, Class and Politics*, p. 238.
bishop's advisory board could not escape the meltdown that had wracked the city. Archbishop Mañozca and other viceregal supporters worked hard to extract this declaration from the chapter. To achieve their goal, however, they imprisoned Juan de Merlo, Palafox's loyal lieutenant, as well as five other members who refused to submit to their demands. The dean of the chapter, Juan de Vega, was simply bribed with what must have been a handsome sum. Vega, along with the remaining members, declared the diocese vacant upon Palafox's disappearance and attempted to deal with the normal business of the day as if nothing odd had just occurred.\footnote{ACP, ACE, Libro 11, 8 July 1647, f. 375.}

Never before in the history of New Spain had a cathedral chapter unilaterally declare a diocese vacant when a canonically appointed bishop remained in the jurisdiction. In fact, it was the first and last time that a diocesan council would take such drastic measures.

The campaign against Palafox continued throughout the summer of 1647. On 21 July, for example, the Jesuit Provincial, Pedro de Velasco, and the jueces conservadores presided over the return of their sacerdotal faculties to the Jesuits of Puebla.\footnote{Israel, Race, Class and Politics, p. 239.} It was, apparently, a festive occasion at which the viceroy, archbishop, inquisitor-general, and the mendicant orders were represented. But by far the most remarkable demonstration in Puebla during Palafox's four-month absence was the masked ball and procession orchestrated by the Jesuits to commemorate the feast day of Saint Ignatius. According to the pro-Palafox
camp, the Jesuits had hired students, slaves, and others to parade through the city streets with a grotesque representation of Palafox and a triumphal float bearing Saint Ignatius. Another group of masqueraders, dressed like secular clergy, also passed by the anti-Palafox crowd whose jeers and taunts delighted members of the regular clergy. If the pro-Palafox camp is to be believed, they found comfort in the fact that the head of Saint Ignatius fell off as the procession neared its end.  

During those tumultuous summer months, the pro-Palafox crowd did manage to stage a few counter-demonstrations. The Inquisition noted that someone had ordered the cathedral bells to toll on the afternoon of 24 September. Soon a riot broke out when sympathizers to the bishop began to shout, “Viva Palafox, viceroy and bishop,” as well as “Death to Salvatierra,” in the zócalo. They threw stones at the residence of Juan de Vega, the disgraced dean of the cathedral chapter, and hurled epithets at the Society of Jesus. The crowd even entered the Jesuit College of the Holy Spirit and destroyed part of its choir loft. Of course, these so-called rioters claimed that the Jesuits had exaggerated the extent of the damage. They were, in reality, minor incidents when compared to the satirical revelry sponsored by the viceroy and the Society of Jesus. In fact, the anti-Palafox coalition overplayed its hand, as their excesses worked to the bishop’s advantage.  

---

53 Cited in Israel, Race, Class, and Politics, p. 240.

54 Israel, Race, Class and Politics, p. 240-242; and Brading, First America, p. 245.
Towards the end of October 1647, news arrived from Madrid and Rome. The Spanish Crown and the pope had finally rallied to Palafox’s defense, sending harshly worded reprimands to the viceroy, the Inquisition, the Society of Jesus, as well as to the jueces conservadores and the cathedral chapter. The Dominican judges, for example, were removed and sent back to Spain. Members of the cathedral chapter were accused of usurping the Crown’s right of patronage and were put under house arrest. Even the Holy Office was quieted. Viceroy Salvatierra was relieved of his office and shipped off to represent royal interests in Peru, a characteristic trademark of the Habsburgs. The archbishop of Mexico City, while defiant in words, acquiesced to royal demands. The Society of Jesus was ordered to exhibit their licenses and to seek out episcopal approval. Finally, Palafox returned to his see on 10 November, arriving in the dark of night to avoid any sudden outbursts of popular support. Fifteen days later, however, the festivities began in earnest, as the pro-Palafox alliance organized various Masses of Thanksgiving, banquets, concerts, and processions.\textsuperscript{55}

Just when it seemed that Palafox’s cause had triumphed in the face of harsh opposition, the bishop made a decision that changed the dynamics of the polemic. It was one thing to argue – and argue passionately – that the regular clergy, including the Society of Jesus, was subject to episcopal jurisdiction. It was quite another to broaden the scope of his criticism. He ceased to limit his

\textsuperscript{55} Israel, \textit{Race, Class and Politics}, p. 240-242.
comments to matters at hand, that is, payment of the tithe and the exhibiting of sacerdotal licenses. In what was to be his second letter to Pope Innocent X, Palafox condemned Jesuit wealth and expressed his distaste for the way the Society had cultivated its own spiritual flock. The bishop was referring to those who toiled on Jesuit haciendas and plantations and received the sacraments from the order. Such activities kept the faithful away from their parish churches and, therefore, outside the view of his episcopal gaze. Later he added, “What other religious order has been such an obstacle to the progress of the Church and filled Christendom with such despair.” Palafox considered the Jesuits neither the regular nor secular clergy but a separate, powerful entity that threatened the integrity of episcopal jurisdiction. Worse still, he wrote, the Society had distorted and maligned Holy Scripture and church doctrine to further their material goals. In short, Palafox asserted that the Jesuits had undermined the faith and morals of society to such a degree that they were “not only bad, but very dangerous and prejudicial to the Christian community.” The bishop ended his letter by asking the pope to suppress the order in its existing form and merge

---

56 Palafox y Mendoza, Carta segunda a Inocencio X, in Obras, fs. 34-35, 48, 52, and 58.

57 Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, Carta del venerable siervo de Dios Dona Juan de Palafox y Mendoza al sumo Pontifice Inocencia X, 8 January 1649, in Obras, vol. XI, f. 141.

it with another religious community, or, perhaps, transform its membership into the secular clergy and place them under the direct jurisdiction of bishops.

Palafox's critique pushed the Society of Jesus in Europe to undertake a massive campaign to undermine the bishop's position in Mexico. By the beginning of 1649, all possibility of reconciliation had disappeared, as the Jesuits took up the anti-Palafox mantle in Madrid and Rome. Indeed the new provincial in Mexico City, Martin de Rada, informed the bishop that the entire summer of troubles was of his own making. The Jesuits continued to press for further review of their case and, in general, refused to admit that they had transgressed Canon Law, the royal patronage, or episcopal jurisdiction. The Habsburg court became disturbed at the ever-widening implications of the conflict, especially Bishop Palafox's refusal to suspend his duties as visitor-general and quiet his criticism of the Jesuits. In the autumn of 1648, the Spanish Crown recalled him to Madrid. Palafox was to sail on the flotilla of 1649.59

Regarding the episcopal examination of licenses and the requirement that the Society pay the tithe, the facts, as well as the law, favored Palafox. The Jesuits were indeed a wealthy order and, although they devoted a major portion of their vast income to spiritual ends, they had no canonical justification to seek exemption from the general obligation to pay the tithe.60 On the issue of licenses, conciliar law endowed the office of bishop with the authority and

59 Israel, Race, Class and Politics, p. 244.

60 Brading, First America, p. 246.
obligation to supervise the liturgical dimensions of daily life, which included the administration of the sacraments and preaching during the Mass. Any ordained clergyman who celebrated the Mass, or who preached at the Mass, was obliged to have episcopal permission to do so in the form of a license. When Palafox broadened the dispute, however, by questioning the very existence of the Society, he, too, overplayed his hand. Palafox's exercise of episcopal power was too rigid and absolute in this instance, leaving little room for those important diplomatic pauses that often facilitate the emergence of a less hostile environment. He refused to entertain the notion that perhaps compromise was possible or even desirable for the sake of social tranquility. Why was Palafox so stubborn and uncompromising when dealing with the Jesuits? One of his writings provides a clue.

In a pastoral letter written in 1657 after his return to Spain, Palafox argued that all Christians had the obligation and duty to pay tithes to diocesan coffers. As an entirely spiritual act, the bishop asserted that the payment of the tithe supported the normal ecclesiastical hierarchy – bishops, priests, and deacons – of the Catholic Church, maintain the fabric of the cathedral, and assist the poor and infirm. Failure to pay the tithe was tantamount to a denial of God's authority; even the King of Spain tithed. The refusal to do so only confirmed Palafox's fears of an alien authority – the Society of Jesus – undermining the episcopal administration of God's authority on earth. The bishop's use of vivid metaphors suggests that he couched the material dimensions of his fight with the Jesuits in
scriptural terms as a way to provide a cultural explanation of the importance of maintaining the structural integrity of the diocesan church. He recognized that his vision of a Tridentine society was predicated upon the episcopal ability — and willingness — to harness the material resources available in order to implement conciliar reforms and effect changes in the political culture of the diocese. As the first chapter has shown, Palafox took over a diocese whose spiritual and cultural rhythms had been shaped by monastic customs and traditions. Even a vast portion of diocesan territory — with its abundant fields, pastures, and numerous Indian towns — was under the political tutelage of the regular clerics, who reaped the material rewards of such an arrangement at the expense of the diocesan clergy.¹

For its part, the Jesuit leadership in Europe disagreed with their Mexican brethren, arguing that there was little to be gained by opposing the bishop of Puebla. The climate of opinion changed when the leadership interpreted Palafox’s renewed attacks as evidence of a large-scale assault on the Society. The order launched an effective counter-attack that succeeded in shaking the Spanish king’s confidence in Palafox. With the Count-Duke of Olivares no longer around to support the bishop — having been ousted from the royal court in 1643 — Palafox’s future in the New World was at the mercy of Habsburg politics. His recall in 1649 revealed a Habsburg court too distracted by war and economic

¹ Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, Carta pastoral de la debida paga de los diezmos y primacias, 1657, Osma, Spain, cited in Obras, vol. XI, fs. 257-331. See also Brading, First America, p. 242-243.
woes at home to support a prelate who had challenged virtually all of the leading corporate interests in New Spain. Despondent and angry, Palafox decided to seek solace in the remaining time he had in Puebla by tending to the consecration of the cathedral.
Conclusion

On 20 February 1649, Bishop Palafox issued a pastoral letter to the parishes, convents, and monasteries of the Diocese of Puebla. In it, he announced that the construction of the material symbol of his episcopal office, the cathedral, was complete, and that he was going to consecrate the massive edifice before departing for Spain. To facilitate the laity's participation in the ceremonies scheduled for 18 April, Palafox employed a long tradition in the Catholic Church whereby prelates granted indulgences to the faithful for visiting newly finished seats of episcopal power. Palafox gave a plenary indulgence of one year to anyone who visited the cathedral. Moreover, the pastoral letter advised the faithful that their venial sins would be forgiven if they attended the ceremony of consecration. Finally, Pope Innocent X granted a plenary indulgence of fifteen years to parishioners and clergy alike on the feast days of Saint Michael, Saint Peter, and the Immaculate Conception.¹

¹ Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, Carta pastoral del ilustrísimo señor obispo de la Puebla de los Ángeles, don Juan de Palafox y Mendoza; previendo los ánimos de los fieles de su obispado a la consagración del real templo de su catedral, que los invictísimos reyes, nuestros señores, fundaron y con su orden acabo el dicho señor obispo, 20 February 1649 (Puebla: Gobierno del Estado), pp. 142-143. Palafox designated the Immaculate Conception as the patron of the cathedral, thus expressing again his Marian devotion. Saint Michael the Archangel was the patron of the diocese, and Saint Peter represented the apostolic vision of the Tridentine Church that located the normal ecclesiastical hierarchy within the 'Rock of Saint Peter,' the first pope and founder of institutional Catholicism.
The consecration of the cathedral constituted Palafox's official goodbye to the diocese and colony. Philip IV's decision to recall Palafox to Spain after the debacle with the Society of Jesus left little room for subsequent episcopal posturing. As we have seen, the king agreed with the bishop that the Jesuits had to respect episcopal jurisdiction, specifically Palafox's right to issue or inspect sacerdotal licenses regarding the administration of the sacraments. The issue of the tithe, however, remained a thorn in Palafox's side for quite some time. The Royal Council of the Indies refused to take sides until 1652, when it ruled that all religious orders should pay tithes to the diocesan authorities in which their haciendas and estancias were located. All regular clergy, except the Jesuits, reluctantly accepted the ruling. Of course, the council's decision was made after Palafox had returned to Spain, so it had little practical effect on his ability to redirect and redistribute the financial resources of the Society of Jesus to the secular branch of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. The bishop was determined, however, to harness every available peso in order to leave yet another indelible mark on the diocese before setting sail to the mother country.

Still considered today by many as "la joya de la ciudad (the jewel of the city)," the Cathedral of Puebla was constructed in the Renaissance style of the Escorial, with an interior dominated by a resplendent retablo that soars to the vaults above the principal altar. Construction started on 18 November 1575, but

---

2 Brading, First America, p. 243.

3 Brading, First America, p. 233.
it was apparent by the early seventeenth century that neither the cathedral chapter nor any bishop was able to raise enough funds to finance such a massive undertaking. By 1626, the laborers and architects had gone home after diocesan officials halted construction. Apart from the cathedral’s foundations, the only other task that had been accomplished was to raise the main pillars to half of their eventual height. Palafox arrived in Puebla on 22 June 1640 armed with a royal decree dated 19 January, whereby Philip IV directed the bishop to finish the construction. In less than two months – on 13 August – Palafox had the necessary funding in place to restart construction. Based on a careful reading of Palafox’s Obras, David Brading posits that Palafox set aside 12,000 pesos from his own annual income, together with another 3,000 pesos each from the cathedral chapter and Spanish Crown, to finish the cathedral. Overall, Brading writes, the bishop invested some 370,000 pesos in the cathedral, a sum that left him in debt for the rest of his life.

Unfortunately, historians must rely on these descriptive accounts left by the bishop and his supporters, since any records related to the building’s construction are – in all likelihood – located in the archdiocesan archive which has been off-limits to scholars for quite some time. The construction of such an imposing edifice in the 1640s, however, a time when Spanish armies in Europe suffered defeat and the power of the monarchy crumbled, reminds us, as Brading

---

4 Brading, First America, p. 233.

5 Brading, First America, pp. 233-234.
has argued so skillfully, of the sheer scale of clerical income in the middle years of the seventeenth century.\(^6\) That Palafox wanted to tax the income generated by Jesuit ranches and farms revealed the material dimensions of the exercise of episcopal power. What better way to express the cultural authority of episcopal power than to build a cathedral, in part, from revenues generated by the "useful workers" and "light cavalry," terms that Palafox employed to describe the regular clergy as subordinate to the normal ecclesiastical hierarchy composed of bishops and secular priests.\(^7\)

The festivities began on Saturday, 17 April, when the clergy and laity — including Indians — gathered at 2:30 in the afternoon in front of the main entrance to the cathedral. Dressed in colorful garb and carrying banners, many Indians arrived, according to the official chronicler of the event, Antonio Tamariz de Carmona, playing musical instruments as a way to prepare the ever-growing crowd for the various liturgical celebrations that made up the consecration ceremony.\(^8\) Bishop Palafox also arrived at the main entrance with a contingent of secular clergy. The exterior atrium was adorned with flowers and tree branches, while inside Palafox approached a small altar that contained relics of saints: a small piece of the Virgin Mary's headdress, or wimple, the bones of two

\(^6\) Brading, *First America*, p. 234.

\(^7\) Brading, *First America*, p. 234.

\(^8\) Antonio Tamariz de Carmona, *Relación y descripción del templo real de la ciudad de la Puebla de los Ángeles en la Nueva España, y su catedral*, 1650 (Puebla: Gobierno del Estado), p. 49.
pope-saints, Sixtus and Cornelius, and an ivory crucifix. How and when the bishop obtained these holy relics – they obviously had to be imported from Europe – remains unknown. Palafox was soon joined by members of both the cathedral chapter and the city council for the formal veneration of this area of the cathedral.\(^9\) Representatives of the various religious orders, including the Franciscans, Mercedarians, Augustinians, Carmelites, and Jesuits, also accompanied the episcopal entourage. Despite secularization and heated social unrest over the tithe and sacerdotal licenses, the regular clergy remained an enduring part of Puebla's cultural and political landscape. By allowing those 'defenders of corporate interest,' the regular clergy and monastic orders, to participate in the liturgical celebrations related to the consecration, Palafox was acknowledging their role in maintaining the Church's presence in Puebla, if not their implicit support of most of his Tridentine reforms. Time and again, as we have seen, Palafox had relied on certain regular clerics to implement his reform projects, for example, the Franciscan commissary served as a witness to the donation of the bishop's library, and some Jesuit and Carmelite scholars expedited approval of Palafox's new ceremonial. Finally, the liturgical program

---

\(^9\) Tamariz de Carmona listed the following members of Puebla's city council as being present: the alcalde García Osorio de Valdez, Jerónimo Pérez de Salazar, alférez mayor, the recording secretary Alonso Vázquez Corona, the alguacil mayor, Miguel Rodríguez de Guevara, as well as other regidores and elite members of poblano society.
for the day concluded with evening vespers to the Immaculate Conception, followed by secular festivities in the zócalo and streets.\(^\text{10}\)

Formal consecration took place on Sunday, 18 April, beginning at 6:00 in the morning when the clergy and laity gathered again in the exterior atrium to await the bishop. For his part, Palafox was following the rubrics set down by the pontifical regarding a bishop’s duties in the consecration ceremony. Dressed in episcopal garb, he entered the atrium and made his way to the main chair. Members of the cathedral chapter followed him: Juan de Merlo, his most loyal supporter who was entrusted with the administration of the diocese in Palafox’s absence, and who was recently informed of his appointment as bishop of Honduras; Miguel de Poblete, another staunch supporter of episcopal prerogative who was rewarded for his loyalty by receiving the appointment of archbishop of Manila; and the archdeacon, Alonso de las Cuevas Dávalos, who also received a promotion to that of dean of Mexico City’s cathedral. Professors from the seminary colleges of Saint Peter and Saint John likewise participated in the subsequent procession, as did leading members of Puebla’s civil society. Once the participants had arrived at Palafox’s side, the bishop began the consecration with an antiphon and litany. Afterwards, he arose from his chair and proceeded to bless the exterior walls of the cathedral, with responses to his spoken prayers provided by the various deacons in attendance. Then Palafox

\(^{10}\) Tamariz de Carmona, Relación, pp. 50-51. The secular activities included indigenous music, fireworks, and the tolling of the bells.
raised his crozier, his shepherd’s staff, to make the sign of the cross at the main entrance of the cathedral.

After entering the cathedral, the bishop and those priests who served as masters of ceremonies made their way to a chapel, while the majority of participants – lay and clerical – waited outside. Soon Palafox emerged from the chapel to kneel down in prayer between the principal altar and the choir. After singing the appropriate prayer from the pontifical, the bishop continued to impart his blessings on his cátedra, or seat of authority, including some items that were important to the public celebration of liturgy and the sacraments: holy water, salt, and ashes. Finally, Palafox left the cathedral by leading a procession to the exterior atrium, where another large crowd had gathered. After singing several antiphons, prayers, and psalms, the bishop preached to the audience. The contents of his homily – his last in the city – demonstrate that he was forever the zealous defender of episcopal office trying to nurture and sustain the Tridentine vision of society. The sermon, in many ways, demonstrates why historians should include in their theoretical discussions of power the pastoral and material dimensions of episcopal office. For example, Palafox extolled to the crowd the virtue of ecclesiastical rites and ceremonies in their lives. As a bishop who had implemented the Tridentine decrees on liturgy and ceremonial, Palafox was well aware of their capacity to illustrate for the laity the mysteries of the faith.

Churches and cathedrals, he continued, should be venerated as the only places

---

11 Tamariz de Carmona, Relación, pp. 51-54.
where one can make offerings to the 'eternal Father, and His sovereign Son, Jesus Christ.' This institutional rendering of the church building as sacred space was followed by Palafox's suggestion that heavenly gifts await those who show their respect to houses of worship, while punishment awaits those who do not.

In keeping with the theme of respect, he also exhorted the laity to show reverence both to the clergy and the sacerdotal life, calling the priesthood "such a supreme state." As for the clergy, Palafox told them that they should love the laity and welcome them with great kindness each time they gather to celebrate the liturgy. He even described the clergy as "vice-gods (vicedioses)" who distribute to humankind God's grace and blessings.¹²

The bishop concluded his homily, not surprisingly, by linking payment of the tithe with support of the Church's unique role in public worship. Simply put, Palafox told the crowd that everyone was obliged to give to God a small part of his or her "first fruits," especially since God had given everything to them.

Without the revenue generated by tithes on lay and clerical agricultural and ranching activities, the diocesan church would be unable, or so Palafox averred, to sustain its parish priests in their efforts to facilitate the public and private dimensions of liturgy and the sacraments.¹³ Despite his recall to Spain, or perhaps because of it, Palafox continued to press for payment of the tithe.

Those Jesuits attending the consecration ceremonies must have derived some

---

¹² Tamariz de Carmona, Relación, p. 55.

¹³ Tamariz de Carmona, Relación, p. 55.
comfort in the bishop's imminent departure. The order would enjoy some respite from episcopal attack. In fact, it remains doubtful, based on subsequent allegations, whether the Jesuits ever paid more than a nominal tithe on the vast produce of their farms and ranches, because most bishops wanted to avoid the bitter polemic that had marked Palafox's final years in New Spain.\textsuperscript{14}

Finally, Palafox reminded the clergy, both secular and regular, of their obligation to defend and protect the 'Most Catholic Crown of Spain.' The monarchy was the absolute power in the Americas, said the bishop, and its generous financial support facilitated the completion of the cathedral in record time.\textsuperscript{15} In a very public display of the royal patronage, or \textit{patronato real}, the archdeacon of the cathedral chapter recognized the alcalde mayor, García Osorio de Valdez, as the representative of Marcos de Torres y Rueda, bishop of Yucatán, who had been appointed interim administrator of New Spain until the new viceroy could arrive. In turn, the alcalde, who was, in effect, representing the monarchy, recognized the accomplishments of Bishop Palafox and his cathedral chapter. A gold key that contained the royal arms was produced for the occasion, as evidence of the crown's appreciation of Palafox's service.\textsuperscript{16}

While he left no written record of his initial reaction, it is not too difficult to imagine this moment as bittersweet for the bishop. Forced to give up his seat of

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{14} Brading, \textit{First America}, p. 243.
  \item \textsuperscript{15} Tamariz de Carmona, \textit{Relación}, pp. 55-56.
  \item \textsuperscript{16} Tamariz de Carmona, \textit{Relación}, pp. 56-57.
\end{itemize}
episcopal power – a diocese blessed with abundant natural and human resources – Palafox was reduced to accepting a souvenir as a token of royal appreciation for his efforts to reform the diocese and colony.

The limitations of power in the broader Hispanic world of the seventeenth century shed light on the events that took place in New Spain during Palafox’s tumultuous stay. While the consecration of the cathedral brought together diverse social groups that represented various lay and clerical interests in Puebla, for example, alcaldes mayores, hacendados, Indians, regular clergy, diocesan priests, etc., the consecration of the cathedral also underscored Palafox’s inability to effect changes in the way these social groups constituted the political and economic threads of daily life in the Spanish empire. As visitor-general and interim viceroy, his political power was predicated on the Habsburg ability to not only approve but to strongly endorse political and economic changes to the colonial structure. And the Habsburg ability to support its visitor-general and viceroy was linked, more or less, to its own political and fiscal strength. The Thirty Years’ War, coupled with the Spanish military campaign in France, distracted the royal court in Madrid from events unfolding in Mexico. The loss of revenue due to the Portuguese and Catalanian revolts of 1640 likewise stymied potential royal support of Palafox’s endeavors. Moreover, the Count-Duke of Olivares’ fall from grace in the mid-1640s removed from the king’s most trusted circle of advisers the bishop’s staunchest and most loyal supporter. Any attempt in New Spain, therefore, of reforming the repartimiento de comercio, for example,
or the system of selecting alcaldes mayores, never went beyond the discussion stage.

In his theoretical discussion of the 'long' seventeenth century in Latin America, Antonio Annino argues that two different tendencies coexisted in both Europe and the New World, tendencies that shaped the trajectory of reforming state projects and any responses to those projects. On the one hand, there was the monarchist tendency that sought to make political power identical to the person of the king, and it had evolved into an abstract idea on state power and sovereignty. Palafox's political projects as visitor-general and interim viceroy placed him within this first tendency. He viewed the system of colonial government through a lens tinted by notions of a universal Catholic monarchy that presided over many overseas kingdoms. If he underestimated the strength of traditional corporate interests in those overseas kingdoms, i.e., the alcaldes mayores and the Society of Jesus, particularly when he tried to reform existing practices, he did so thinking that he enjoyed the unconditional support of the universal Catholic monarchy. The crown's failure to provide that support illustrated the debilitating effects of years of warfare and empty coffers on the Habsburg dynasty in Spain. The exercise of royal power in the New World was, at best, conditioned by the fiscal and political well-being of its source.

The second tendency that Annino stressed was the pluralist dimension of sovereignty.\(^\text{18}\) The emergence of intermediate social groups – neither aristocratic nor poor – in colonial society rearranged the framework by which early modern colonialism was supposed to operate. In Spanish America, these social groups (hacendados, estancieros, district magistrates, Jesuit ranchers and farmers) jockeyed for regional and local power, not to mention economic security and recognition of their newly acquired social status, but they operated within a political environment that was devoid of constant reminders of the formal machinery of state sovereignty and state power. Beginning in the latter half of the sixteenth-century, royal representatives who arrived in Mexico (such as the viceroy or visitor-general) often had cultivated economic and social ties with the local elite. When Palafox arrived and began to attack the sources of these ties – while simultaneously heralding the willingness of royal power to resuscitate the machinery of state sovereignty in New Spain – he encountered stiff and spirited resistance.

Palafox’s exercise of power, however, was not merely secular in nature. He also was the bishop of the Diocese of Puebla, and he wielded his crozier to reshape the cultural and material rhythms that had informed Indian and Spanish understandings of the sacramental life. Put another way, Tridentine Law ascribed pastoral sentiment to the office of bishop, and Palafox deployed the power of the episcopacy to recast the social context in which the faithful

understood the spiritual and material attributes of their public and private lives. The secularization of mendicant doctrinas, for example, pushed the laity away from monastic traditions and customs and toward the sacramental purview of the secular clergy. That such a monumental task provoked little protest from Indians and Spaniards, while receiving the Habsburg seal of approval, helps to explain the trajectory of episcopal power. A bankrupt royal treasury would be unable to maintain its commitment to the royal patronage, that is, financially support and maintain the mendicant efforts to evangelize, without suffering further fiscal drain. Palafox's secularization program, in effect, freed up monies for the Spanish crown. The financial burden to support the sacramental and cultural life of towns and villages shifted to lay Spaniards and Indians. Again, the relative strengths and weaknesses of the Spanish crown illuminate Palafox's successful attack on the corporate interests of the monastic orders.

The bishop's establishment of a three-tiered system of seminary education also generated little protest. The Society of Jesus operated several colleges and novitiate houses in the city of Puebla, with an eye toward training young men to become future Jesuit priests and brothers. The purpose of Saint Peter's minor seminary was to nurture vocations for the diocesan priesthood. Since the mid-sixteenth century, the Jesuits had established a strong reputation in the fields of education and priestly formation, thus ensuring a steady flow of young clients from some of the leading families in the city and diocese. If anything, Palafox's seminaries provided new opportunities for those children from poorer or middle-
sector families who were not initially considered part of the strategies designed by the Society or previous bishops to attract vocations. Today, his seminary remains the only institution in the Archdiocese of Puebla that prepares seminarians for ordination as diocesan clergy.

Bishop Palafox's reform of the liturgy, prayer life, and the administration and reception of the sacraments also enjoyed long-term success. Whether he was issuing guidelines for the proper reception of Holy Communion or behavioral norms for the clergy and laity during the Mass, or even how to pray the rosary, Palafox sought to ignite the letter and spirit of Tridentine Catholicism in the diocese. In fact, his prescriptions and rubrics governed the liturgical life of Puebla well into the twentieth-century. It would not be off the mark to suggest that the bishop's reforms facilitated a Tridentine liturgical complex of ritual and ceremonial that, even today, informs the average practicing Catholic's understanding of when to gesture, kneel, pray aloud, or pray in silence during the Mass. Palafox's fervent support of a routine prayer life surrounded by the angels and saints, candles and incense, priests and penitents, may be the legacy least understood by historians.

In the late seventeenth century, in an effort to stem the tide of a growing devotion around Palafox, the Holy Office of the Inquisition banned the bishop's portrait, "because of the worship and veneration given to it...[by] vulgar and rustic people, who venerate him as a saint, burning candles before [the portrait], and placing it on altars, in locations superior to those of declared saints...and even of
Our Lady the Virgin Mary." While Palafox would have been uncomfortable with the idea that his portrait was placed in a location superior to the Virgin Mary, he would have recognized and appreciated the form of veneration embraced and acted out by the faithful because it was the form that he had championed. The Holy Office's edict conjures images of an earlier time when Palafox himself, surrounded by acolytes burning charcoal and incense, deacons holding candles and silver crucifix standards in procession, or even Indians and Spaniards rearranging an altar in their parish church to satisfy the liturgical requirements of Tridentine Catholicism, actively encouraged popular devotion to the 'communion of saints' in order to ensure 'life everlasting.' He mustered the pastoral dimensions of his episcopal office to kindle a baroque understanding of the efficacy, as well as immediacy, of sacred images in the daily lives of Tridentine Catholics in New Spain.

Today, it is quite common to see votive candles burning around Palafox's cenotaph in the Cathedral of Puebla. Whether or not the laity are placing these candles to express their support of the bishop's canonization is unclear. Perhaps a diocesan priest is manifesting his recognition of Palafox's contributions to the fiscal and spiritual health of the secular clergy centuries ago. The cause of canonization remains stalled in the Vatican bureaucracy. Contemporary supporters and detractors alike are unsure of the outcome. While the Society of

---

Jesus has not articulated a public position on the matter, it is generally believed that the order continues to undermine efforts to make Palafox a saint. Perhaps it was Palafox's strident calls to the king and pope to suppress the order at the height of the diezmo controversy that the Society cannot or will not forget. It was Charles III, after all, who enthusiastically endorsed the bishop's canonization in the eighteenth century, only to be disappointed that the Jesuits exerted more influence in the papal court than his ambassadors were able to do. The monarch would list the Society's opposition to Palafox's canonization as one of many reasons to expel the order from all Spanish dominions in 1767. One thing remains clear, however. The state and city government, as well as the archdiocese, will continue to sponsor academic and cultural activities designed to weave Palafox's material and cultural legacies into the fabric of Puebla's urban landscape. Where else in Mexico's colonial past had one man, according to official tourist guides, built no less than fifty churches, renovated 140 altar pieces, consecrated the cathedral that dominates the main plaza, donated a personal library of 5000 books, established schools and seminaries, and rebuilt the episcopal palace? The material and cultural residue of Palafox's exercise of episcopal power in seventeenth-century Puebla is, perhaps, his most enduring legacy.
REFERENCES

Archival and Manuscript Sources

Archivo Catedralicio de Puebla, Mexico [ACP].

Archivo General de Notarías del Estado de Puebla, Mexico [AGNP].

Archivo Histórico Diocesano de la Arquidiócesis de Puebla, Mexico [AHDP].

Biblioteca José María Lafragua, Benemérita Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Puebla, Mexico [BL].

Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid, Spain [BNM].

Biblioteca Palafoxiana, Puebla, Mexico [BP].


Copia de las cartas que las ciudades de Mexico y la Puebla escrivieron a la real persona. Mexico City: 1648.


The John Carter Brown Library, Providence, Rhode Island [JCB].

Palafox y Mendoza, Juan de. Carta pastoral del ilustrísimo señor obispo de la Puebla de los Angeles, don Juan de Palafox y Mendoza; previendo los ánimos de los fieles de su obispado a la consagración del real tempio de su catedral, 20 February 1649. Puebla: Gobierno del Estado, 1991.


———. Puntos que el señor obispo de la Puebla de los Angeles, don Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, dexa encargados y encomendados a las almas de su cargo, 29 April 1649. Puebla: Gobierno del Estado, 1991.

———. "Salmodia palafoxiana." Fojas Culturalis 54, no. 88 (September, 1996).


**Secondary Works**


Bartoli, Guillermo. *Historia de a vida del venerable señor don Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, obispo de Puebla y después de Osma.* Madrid: Biblioteca Nacional, n/d.


