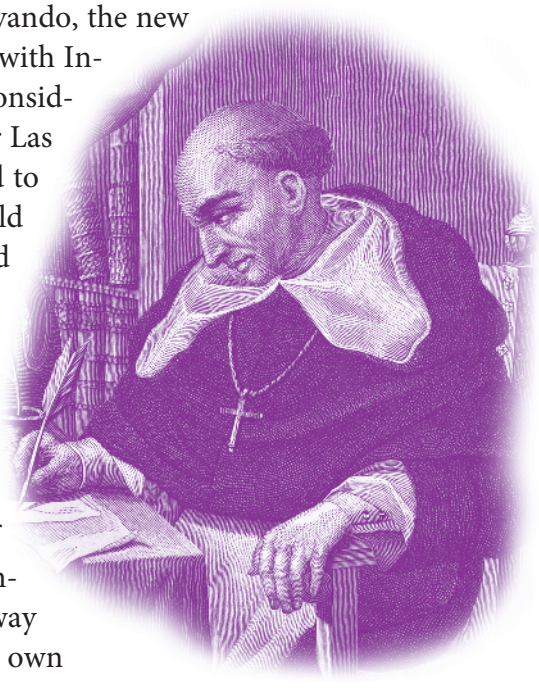
Chapter 3 Conquistadors of Christ

Defender of the Indians

When he first came to the New World in 1502, Bartolomé de Las Casas behaved like any other Spanish colonist. Las Casas had come over the sea from Spain with Nicholas Ovando, the new governor of Hispaniola, who gave him land along with Indian servants to work it. These Indians were not considered slaves, but they had no choice but to work for Las Casas. He, in turn, had to care for the Indians and to teach them the Catholic Faith. In this way he would help them become members of the Church and good subjects of the Spanish king.

Though Las Casas was probably a kind master to his Indians, other Spanish landowners were not so kind. Some landowners would use the Indians as one would use cattle; sometimes, they treated Indians worse than cattle. Often they neglected to teach them the Catholic Faith. Such treatment of the Indians was against the law of the Spanish monarchs, Isabel and Fernando; but they were far away across the sea and so found it hard to enforce their own laws in America.

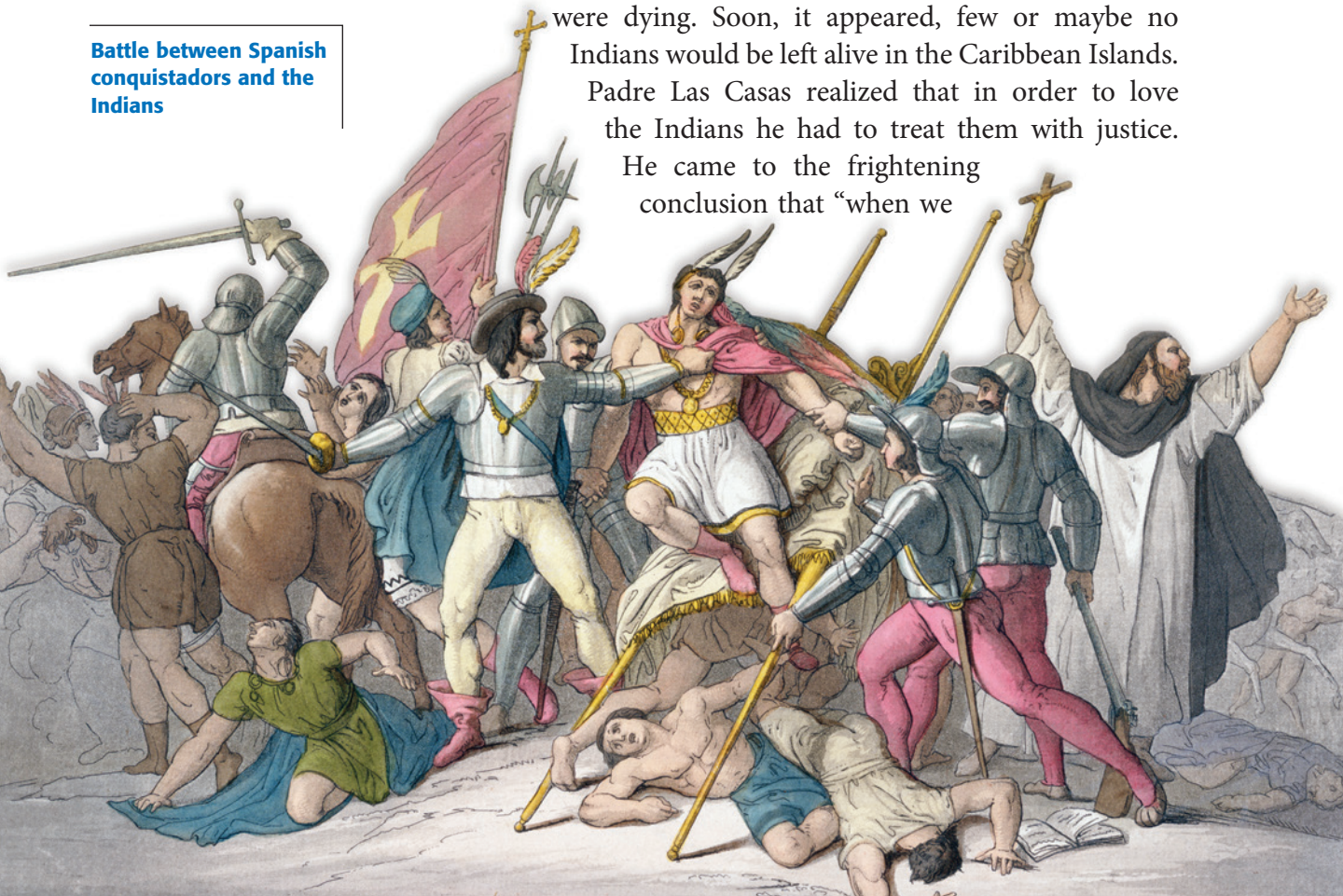


Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas, "Defender of the Indians"

A Turning Point for Las Casas

Though he became a priest in 1510, Las Casas did not give up his lands, nor did he cease forcing Indians to work for him. But at some point in the years after his ordination, Las Casas changed. We do not know when exactly, or why, but change he did. Perhaps he changed on account of a sermon preached by a Dominican friar named Antonio de Montesinos in 1511 in a small church, roofed with straw, on the island of Hispaniola. "Are these Indians not men?" cried Fray Antonio to the congregation of Spanish landholders. "Do they not have rational souls? Are you not obliged to love them as you love yourselves?"

Bartolomé de Las Casas came to the conclusion that he and his fellow Spaniards were not loving the Indians with the love of Christ. Forced to do labor that was too hard for them, thousands of Indians were dying. Soon, it appeared, few or maybe no Indians would be left alive in the Caribbean Islands. Padre Las Casas realized that in order to love the Indians he had to treat them with justice. He came to the frightening conclusion that "when we



Battle between Spanish conquistadors and the Indians

preach to the Indians about the humility and poverty of Jesus Christ, and how He suffered for us, and how God rejoices in the poor and in those the world despises, [the Indians] think we are lying to them." Las Casas freed his Indians and began a lifelong crusade to defend all Indians from the greed and cruelty of the colonists.

The Padre at the Spanish Court

Las Casas returned to Spain in 1517 to inform the court how badly the colonists were treating the Indians in America. Queen Isabel had been dead for thirteen years, and King Fernando had died in 1516. Cardinal Ximenes (hee•MEH•nez) now held the throne until Charles, who was Fernando and Isabel's grandson, could be crowned king. The cardinal listened to Las Casas's complaints and took them to heart. Ximenes gave Las Casas the title of "Protector of the Indians" and appointed a commission of priests to investigate how Indians were being treated in America.

But even though Cardinal Ximenes, and later King Charles, were concerned about how the Indians were treated, little changed after Las Casas returned to Hispaniola. Padre Las Casas came to believe that the only way to help the Indians would be to place them under the protection of the Church.

In 1519, the Spanish government gave Las Casas permission to set up a colony made up only of Indians and Spanish farmers; but this colony, Cumaná, on the coast of Venezuela, was a failure. Spaniards in a nearby settlement so angered the Indians in Las Casas's colony that they rose in revolt, killing as many Europeans as they could find. Disappointed, Las Casas returned to Hispaniola. He entered a Dominican friary and, in 1522, became a Dominican friar.

Though his colony had failed, Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas did not give up fighting for the rights of Indians. He traveled back and forth to Spain to plead with the king for the Indians. He wrote pamphlets arguing that the Spanish government had no right to conquer the Indians, and certainly no right to enslave them. Missionaries, said Las Casas, should go to the Indians without soldiers accompanying them.

The Franciscan priest "Motólinia" thought the ideas of Las Casas were not practical. Though a few missionaries could be cruel toward the Indians, Motólinia was not. He simply thought that without the soldiers protecting them, missionaries would be killed by the Indians. And, then, who would preach the Gospel to them? Sadly, Motólinia was often right, as we shall see in the story of Fray Juan de Padilla.

The Priest Who Lived Like a Beggar

Motólinia was well loved by the Indians because of his great charity and holiness. Whatever he received, he gave to the Indians. Sometimes this meant he had no food for himself. Motólinia lived like a *motólinia* (a "beggar") indeed, for the love of Christ and of souls.



Spanish colonial church in San Cristobal de las Casa, Chiapas, Mexico

King Charles Helps the Indians

Though Las Casas found fault with how the Spanish behaved in the New World, King Charles I did not try to silence him. Instead, the king took everything Fray Bartolomé said to heart. Like Isabel, Charles was a devout Catholic and cared more for the justice of Christ than for worldly riches. King Charles passed laws to help better the lives of the Indians. In 1544 he even made Las Casas the bishop of Chiapas, a region in southern Mexico. As bishop, Las Casas refused to give communion to any colonist who treated his Indian workers as slaves. Many Indians in Chiapas came into the Church because the bishop used peaceful ways to convert them to the Faith.

In 1550 King Charles did a most surprising thing. He ordered an end to all conquests in the New World until a conference of theologians could decide whether it was right to conquer the Indians. Las Casas had come to Spain in 1547, and it was largely because of him that the king had called the conference. But the commission did not entirely agree with Las Casas's opinions. They said Spaniards must first try to convince the Indians to obey the king of Spain. But they also said that force could be used if the Indians refused to obey, or if they threatened to harm missionaries who came to work among them. No one, said the commission, was allowed to make the Indians slaves. The commission's decisions were finally made part of Spanish law in 1573.

Though he was unable to get everything he wanted from the king, Las Casas still did much to help the Indians. Queen Isabel, King Charles, and the kings of Spain that followed them looked upon the Indians as their subjects, equal to their Spanish subjects. Though they wanted the wealth that could be found in the New World, their chief concern was that the Indians hear and accept the Gospel of Christ. The monarchs did not wish to be cruel, but they made many mistakes in dealing with the Indians. Bartolomé de Las Casas helped the monarchs see their mistakes. More importantly, he showed how they might improve the conditions under which the Indians lived. To this day, Indians in Latin America look upon Bartolomé de Las Casas as one of the great friends of their race.

Empress of the Americas

The Bishop and the Men of Blood

Fray Juan de Zumárraga was troubled. Being a bishop is never easy, but being the bishop of New Spain (it seemed) was a task beyond the power of any man. Indeed, Fray Juan had not wanted to be bishop. For over 30 years he had lived the quiet life of a Franciscan

friar. He had prayed and fasted; he had said Mass, administered the sacraments, and preached to the people. Then one fatal day, in 1527, King Charles I had stopped at the Franciscan convent in Valladolid (vah•yeh•duh•LEE), in Spain. The king was so impressed by Fray Juan, who directed the life of the convent, that he wanted him to serve as the first bishop of New Spain. Fray Juan, the son of poor parents, did not think himself worthy of that great office; but his religious superior told him that he had to obey King Charles. So it was that one year later, Fray Juan found himself in the city of Mexico, the bishop of pagans, new Christian converts, and half-civilized Spanish adventurers.

The task of ruling such a diocese would have been hard enough under normal conditions, but Fray Juan had to fight against evil and oppression. Since the conquest of Mexico in 1521, Hernán Cortés had governed New Spain. On the whole, Cortés had been a good governor. He had rebuilt Mexico City and, for the most part, had treated the Indians with kindness. King Charles, though, had heard rumors that Cortés had wanted to take New Spain and rule it for himself. Half believing the rumors, Charles told Cortés to return to Spain. In place of Cortés, the king sent three men—Nuño de Guzmán (NOO•nyoh day gooz•MAHN), Juan Ortiz de Matienzo (HWAN ohr•TEEZ mah•tee•EHN•zoh), and Diego Delgadillo (dee•AY•goh del•gah•DEE•oh)to rule New Spain and to see if the rumors about Cortés were true. With these men, called the "Royal Audience," Charles sent Fray Juan, who would serve not only as bishop, but as "Protector of the Indians." The king wanted to make sure the Indians were being treated with justice.



A detail of a Mexican historical mural shows missionaries with local Indians.

The Royal Audience became Fray Juan's most bitter enemies. Guzmán,

Matienzo, and Delgadillo were cruel men. They forced the Indians to pay heavy taxes. They branded them with red-hot branding irons. They stole their wives and daughters, and they enslaved the Indian men. As Protector of the Indians, Fray Juan did all he could to oppose the Royal Audience; but Guzmán, Matienzo, and Delgadillo would not listen to him. The bishop wrote letters to the king complaining about the Audience, but these letters never reached Charles. The Audience seized the letters before they could leave New Spain.

Bishop Zumárraga, though, finally outsmarted the Audience. With the help of a sailor, he placed a letter in a block of wax, which was cast into a barrel of oil. So hidden, the letter crossed the Atlantic and reached King Charles. When Charles read about the evil deeds of the Audience, he was filled with anger. He sent a new Audience to New Spain to take the place of Guzmán, Matienzo, and Delgadillo. With the Audience went Cortés, whom the king had confirmed as Captain General, but not governor, of New Spain.

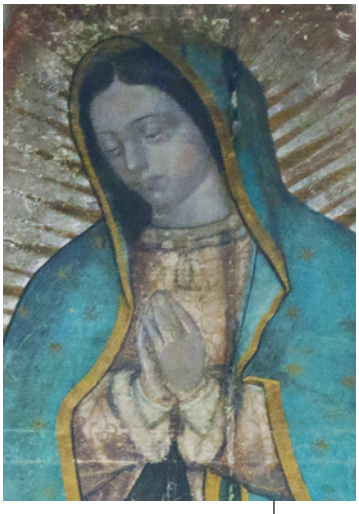
Aztecs in this illustration wear the loincloth and tilma.



Though, by 1531, Cortés and the new Audience were in power, all was not well in New Spain. The conquest and three years of cruelty had made many Indians think that the God the Spanish priests told them about did not love them. To many Indians, Jesus was the white man's god; they thought he did not care about the brown-skinned natives. Bishop Zumárraga loved his Indian flock. How could he convince them that God loved them as well as he loved the Spaniards? Many evils, many cruelties were still part of life in New Spain. What could he as bishop do to stop them?

One cold day in December of 1531, Bishop Zumárraga, busy at work, received a visitor. Before him knelt an Aztec man, clad only in a loincloth and a cloak called a ***tilma,*** made from cactus fibers. The bishop received many visitors, so this man was not unusual. Perhaps Fray Juan was only half listening as the man, named Juan Diego, told his story.

tilma: a cloak made of cactus fibers



Our Lady of Guadalupe

Juan Diego said that he had set out from his village at break of day to hear Mass in the city. Passing by the hill called Tepeyac (TEH•puh•yak), a hill he had passed many times before, Juan Diego heard the singing of birds. He was most surprised, for at that time of the year one did not hear songbirds. He stopped, and looked east toward the hill. Suddenly the singing ceased and, instead, he heard a voice calling his name: "Juanito, Juan Diegito," it said.

Juan Diego said he felt no fear, but climbed to the hilltop from where the voice came. There he saw a most beautiful lady dressed in garments that shone with the brightness of the sun. Then the lady spoke, and beautiful was the sound of her voice. "I am the Virgin Mary, Mother of the true God who created all things," she said. "Go tell the bishop of Mexico that I wish a church built here on this hilltop in my honor. From this church I will show the people of this land that I am merciful to all who call upon me in faith."

Bishops cannot believe everything they are told, and Juan Diego's story sounded fantastic. Perhaps this Indian had made up the story because he himself wanted a church built and was afraid to ask for it himself. But Bishop Zumárraga was not harsh to Juan Diego, telling him, "Come again another time, my son. When you come I will give further thought to what you have to say." Then dismissing Juan Diego, the bishop turned again to the affairs that had occupied him since morning.

Roses in December

Juan Diego was disappointed by his meeting with the bishop. At sundown he returned to Tepeyac hill, where the resplendent Lady awaited him. Falling on his knees, Juan Diego told the Lady that he feared the bishop did not believe his story. "I am a lowly man," he told the Lady. "Send someone else, someone important, to give your message to the bishop. Me he will not believe." The Lady, however,

said she had chosen Juan Diego, and it was he who must go. Gladly Juan Diego obeyed. The next day, Sunday, he said, he would return to the bishop and deliver the Lady's message.

After Mass the next day, Juan Diego went to the bishop's palace. As on the previous day, he waited long before he could get in to see the bishop. Juan Diego, with tears in his eyes, told the bishop of the Lady's request. It seemed to Zumárraga that Juan Diego was not a liar; still, he could not be certain that the Virgin had appeared to the Indian. "You must bring me a sign that the Virgin has appeared to you," he told Juan Diego. When Juan Diego left his presence, the bishop ordered two of his servants to follow him. They set out after Juan Diego, but as they approached the hill of Tepeyac, they lost sight of him. Angry that he had escaped them, the servants returned to the bishop. "That Indian is a liar," they said. "Do not believe him."

Bronze relief of Juan Diego receiving the rose from Our Lady



Meanwhile, Juan Diego had climbed the hill of Tepeyac. "Return here tomorrow," the Lady told him, "and I will give you a sign that will convince the bishop. I will richly reward you for your service to me." Juan Diego promised to return the next day. He then returned home.

But reaching his home, Juan Diego found that his uncle, Juan Bernardino, had fallen sick. The next day, Monday, Juan Diego spent caring for his uncle; he did not return to Tepeyac hill as the Lady had commanded. That night, Juan Bernardino was so sick that he feared he would die. He asked Juan Diego to fetch him a priest who could give him the last rites. Full of sorrow, Juan Diego set out Tuesday morning for the city to find a priest to minister to his uncle.

Approaching Tepeyac hill, Juan Diego tried to take a different way than the one he normally took. He was afraid the Lady might see him and delay him from fetching a priest for his uncle. But the Lady saw him, and descending the hill, asked him, "Where are you

hastening to, my son?" Juan Diego told her of his uncle, and promised that he would return to her tomorrow. "Now," he said to the Lady, "I must find a priest who will hear my uncle's confession and absolve him."

The Lady was not angry with Juan Diego. Instead, promising him that his uncle was already healed of his sickness, she told Juan Diego to climb to the summit of the hill. He obeyed her, and at the place where the Lady had first appeared to him, Juan Diego found many varieties of beautiful roses. Imagine his surprise at this sight, for Juan Diego knew that no roses grew in December. Filling his tilma full with fragrant blossoms, Juan Diego brought them to the Lady. Removing the roses from the tilma, the Lady again replaced them. "Take these roses to the bishop," she told Juan Diego. "They are the sign he asked for. Seeing them he will know that I have appeared to you and that he must do as I requested." Full of joy, Juan Diego continued his journey to the city. He was certain the bishop would this time believe him.

The First Indian Saint in the Americas

For Catholics, there are few places in the world as sacred as the Mexico City basilica, which honors the Virgin of Guadalupe, Mexico's patroness. On July 31, 2002, Juan Diego was canonized (proclaimed a saint) in the basilica by Pope John Paul II. As many as a million people lined the route taken by John Paul to the basilica on the morning of July 31. As the Pope rode past in his "popemobile," people cheered, mariachi bands played, children sang and danced. Many in the crowd traveled hundreds, even thousands, of miles to get to the basilica for the canonization. Some pilgrims, dressed in the traditional garb of the Aztecs, shook clam rattles and blew on conch shells; the festive and joyful service lasted about three hours.



The Virgin Mary giving roses to Juan Diego

A Great Miracle

The day was already growing old when Bishop Zumárraga heard a frantic knocking at his door. Opening it he found two of his servants, their faces pale with astonishment. "That Indian, Juan Diego, has returned," they told the bishop. "Seeing he had something wrapped up in his tilma we asked that we might see what it was. When he opened his tilma, lo! it was full of roses, fresh as if they had been plucked in the spring. We tried to touch them, but every time we reached our hands toward them they disappeared into the cloth." Hearing this marvel, the bishop ordered his servants to bring Juan Diego into his presence.

Entering the bishop's chamber, Juan Diego fell on his knees. "I have returned, lord bishop, with the sign you requested," said Juan Diego. He opened his tilma and a flood of roses fell to the floor. To Juan Diego's surprise, the bishop and all those in the room fell to their knees. The bishop wept as he prayed, "Lady, forgive me for not fulfilling your request." Juan Diego wondered what all this could mean; then looking down at his tilma, he understood. For on the rough white cloth he saw the image of the Lady, just as she had appeared to him on Tepeyac hill.

The next day, Juan Diego led Bishop Zumárraga and others to Tepeyac hill so they could see the place where the Lady had requested her church be built. When Juan Diego asked the bishop's permission to return to his village to see how his sick uncle fared, Zumárraga gave him his blessing, but said he should not return alone. Surrounded by those who had come with him to Tepeyac hill, Juan Diego returned to Juan Bernardino. The great bishop, friend of God and the king, was paying a great honor to poor, lowly Juan Diego! The Lady had worked another wonder. She had exalted the humble and made the great the companion of the lowly.

When they all reached the village, they found Juan Bernardino recovered from his sickness. The Lady, he told them, had appeared to him as well and had cured him. "She said I must go to the bishop



Old Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City

to tell him that she wished her image should bear the name, Our Lady of Guadalupe," said Juan Bernardino.

Bishop Zumárraga fulfilled his promise and erected a church in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe on Tepeyac hill. There he placed Juan Diego's tilma that bore the image of the Lady. In this image, the Lady appears dressed not as a Spanish woman, but as an Aztec princess. She stands before the sun, her two hands pointing, in Aztec fashion, toward the heavens where her Son, Jesus, reigns as king. The Aztecs understood the message. They were no longer to worship the sun god but the more powerful God of the Christians. They also understood that the Lady and her Son loved the Indians as well as the Spanish. Millions of Indians, who had feared the Spaniards' God, now accepted baptism and became Christians.

Our Lady had answered Bishop Zumárraga's prayers.

Missions and Martyrs

Martyrdom in Kansas

They marched forth with the spirit of conquistadors. Fearless, they braved the wilderness and the wrath of savage peoples. They went neither for gold nor silver nor to win great kingdoms for themselves. These men, the missionaries of the New World, wanted only to win a kingdom of souls for their king, Jesus Christ.

Among the most zealous of these courageous men was the Franciscan friar, Juan de Padilla. When he arrived in New Mexico with Coronado, Fray Juan de Padilla had already been successful as a missionary to the Indians in Mexico. When King Charles I had sent the new Audience to Mexico City in 1529, Nuño de Guzmán,

with a band of conquistadors, fled toward the Pacific coast. With them went Fray Juan de Padilla, who served as chaplain. Fray Juan protected the Indians from the cruelty of the bloody Guzmán.

For about ten years, Fray Juan labored among the Indians in what are now the Mexican states of Colima (coh•LEE•mah) and Jalisco (ha•LEES•coh). Though he had become the superior of a Franciscan convent, Fray Juan gave up this position to follow Coronado into New Mexico. With Coronado, he crossed the wide plains in search of the city of gold, called Quivira. Unlike Coronado, though, Fray Juan was not disappointed that the city was merely a village with a little copper instead of gold. It was just for such Indians as those of Quivira that he had come to New Mexico. It was just for such as these that he remained in New Mexico when the conquistador returned to Mexico in 1542.



Bronze statue of Franciscan missionary, Albuquerque Museum of Art and History, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Two other Franciscans remained with Juan de Padilla in New Mexico, as well as a handful of soldiers. The Franciscans labored among the Pawnee and Guia tribes, and many Indians came into the Church. But Fray Juan's zeal would not let him rest. He wanted to go farther east (into the lands then called the **Gran Quivira,** but now Kansas). Unfortunately, though, the tribes to the east were enemies of the Guia and Pawnee and so would probably look on Fray Juan as an enemy also. Captain Pedro Castañeda de Najera (cah•stah•NYAY•dah day nah•HAIR•ah) warned Fray Juan of the dangers that awaited him in the Gran Quivira, but to no avail. With Fray Luis de Ubeda, the soldier Andres Ocampo, two Indians named Lucas and Sebastián, and two other Mexican Indians, Fray Juan marched into the plains of Kansas.

Gran Quivira: the former name of lands in the present-day state of Kansas

It was autumn and the days were growing cold on the vast, treeless plains. Day after day, the missionary adventurers could see nothing around them but endless miles of grass. Above them clouds scudded across a deep blue sky. We know little of Juan de Padilla's journey, except its sad but courageous ending. One day in November 1542, a band of Indians appeared over the horizon. Seeing only lost souls in need of Christ, Fray Juan raised high a rough-hewn wooden cross.

The Indians, though, belonged to an enemy tribe of the Guia. They let fly a barrage of arrows that pierced the good friar, who knelt to the ground, still holding aloft the cross, and then fell. Only in death did Fray Juan de Padilla let fall the sacred sign of our salvation.

Fray Juan's companions were able to escape death from the Indians. Later they returned to bury Fray Juan de Padilla. After many months of wandering, weary and hungry, they reached Mexico City, where they told the story of the death of the man who was the first to shed his blood for Christ in lands that would one day become part of the United States of America.

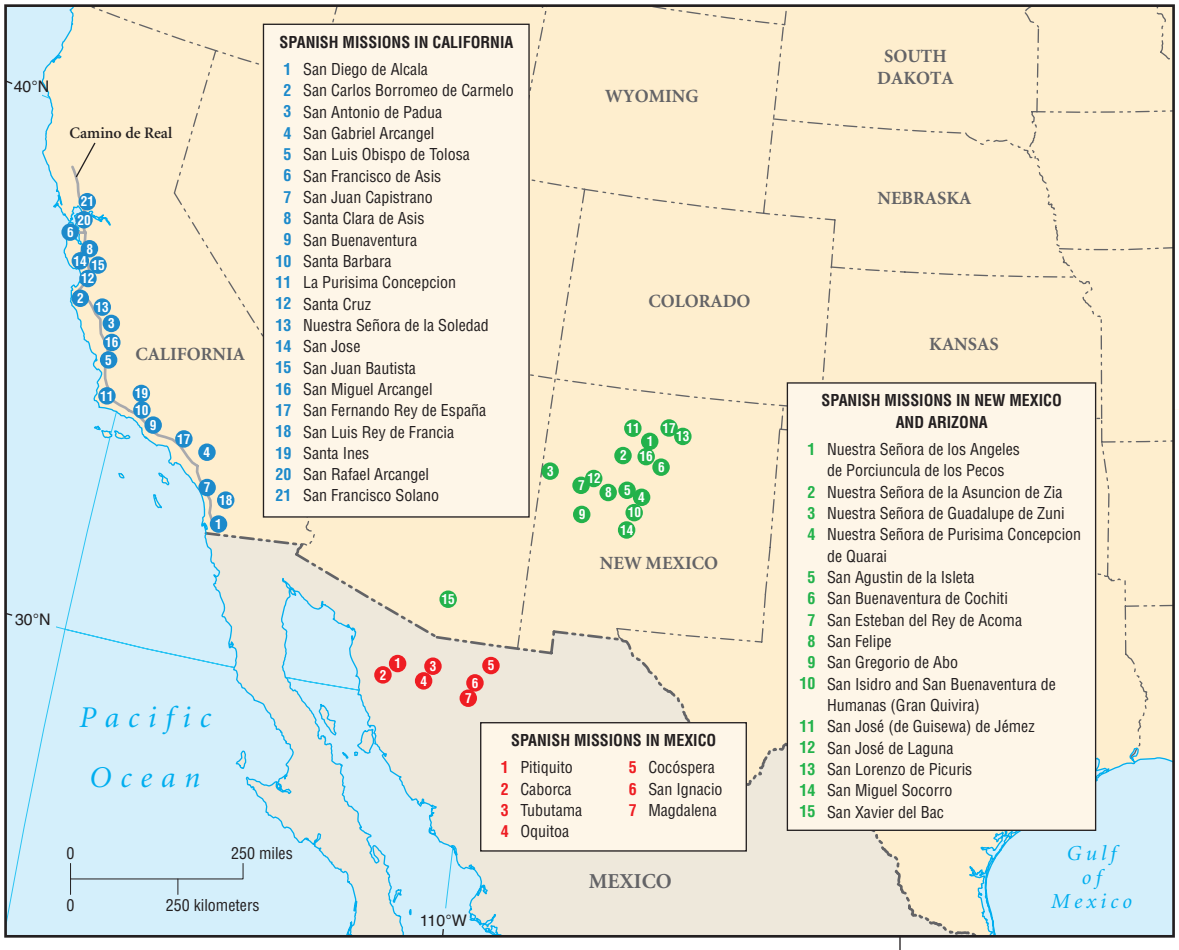
The Lady in Blue

The king of Spain did not abandon New Mexico after Coronado failed to found a settlement there. Fifty-eight years after Juan de Padilla met his death in the Gran Quivira, a new band of settlers crossed the Rio Grande into New Mexico. With these settlers came some Franciscan friars who, by the end of 1598, had established three missions for the Indians.

But the Indians of New Mexico, who lived in pueblos (small towns of adobe dwellings, protected by adobe walls), wanted nothing to do with the Spaniards or with their religion. In 1598 the Indians of the Acoma pueblo ambushed and killed a small band of Spaniards. Vicente de Zaldivar, whose brother was among those killed, led a



Ruins of Mission Los Angeles, New Mexico



Spanish missions in Mexico, New Mexico, and California

force of Spaniards against the pueblo. Acoma was built atop a flat-topped mountain, called a *mesa* (MAY•sah—"table") in Spanish. The steep, sheer walls of the mesa made it very difficult to attack Acoma, but de Zaldivar and his men, using ropes, scaled the mesa walls and took the pueblo, capturing 500 Indians. Many years would pass before the Pueblo Indians again waged war against the Spanish.

Though the settlers were not pleased with New Mexico, the king of Spain, Philip III, would not allow them to return to Mexico. He feared that, without the Spanish settlement, the Indians of New

Santa Fe: city in New Mexico named after the Holy Faith

Mexico would never hear the Gospel. After a time, New Mexico began to prosper. The Spanish founded the city of **Santa Fe** (meaning "Holy Faith"), and the Franciscans established many missions. In less than 90 years after the martyrdom of Juan de Padilla, 60,000 Indians were practicing Catholics.

Texan legend tells of a group of Indians from Texas who arrived in Santa Fe in 1629, requesting baptism. The friars who questioned these Indians were surprised to learn that they knew Christian prayers and the teachings of the Church. When the friars asked the Indians how they knew so much about the Faith, the Indians said that a beautiful lady dressed in blue had many times come to them and taught them. When she last appeared, she commanded them to go to Santa Fe to receive baptism from the priests there.

Who this lady in blue was remained a mystery to the friars who traveled the 200 miles to preach to the Indians in Texas. Then, in 1631, some of the friars from New Mexico returned to Spain. There they found a convent of sisters who wore blue habits. The head of this convent, Sister Maria de Jesus, told the friars that when she was in prayer God had made her appear to Indians in distant America. Could it have been she who had taught these Indians how to pray?

New Mexico Burning

Though the Spanish colony and the Indian missions were making progress, all was not peaceful in New Mexico. Only three years after Indians arrived in Santa Fe seeking baptism, the Indians of Hawikuh pueblo killed the missionary priest, Fray Francisco Letrado. Though pierced by many arrows, Fray Francisco died with a crucifix in his hand, praying for his murderers.

Traditional Navajo dwelling, called a *hogan*



Though many years passed with little violence after the death of Fray Francisco, some pagan Indians only awaited the day when they could drive the Spaniards

out. Indian **shamans,** or "medicine men," were angry over the many Indians who had become Christian. For many years, few Indians would listen to these shamans; but, then, things started to go wrong in New Mexico. Wild Indian tribes attacked the pueblos, enslaving the Indians who lived there. A long drought and sicknesses caused many Indian deaths. The shamans began to say that these evils had come because the Indians had abandoned their old gods to worship this new god called "Christ." Many pueblo Indians believed the shamans and returned to pagan worship.

shaman: an Indian medicine man



Cemetery at Taos pueblo

Other Indians were angry because the Spanish governors of New Mexico had mistreated them. The governors demanded that the Indians pay tribute to them and labor for them. In 1675, Governor Juan Francisco de Treviño (tre•VEE•nyoh) discovered that some Indians were planning to revolt against the Spanish. Imprisoning their leaders, he sentenced them to death. Later he changed his mind and, instead of executing the Indian leaders, had them whipped.

Whipping was, in some ways, worse than death to the proud Indian; it was a serious insult. Because he had been so insulted, Popé (poh•PAY), a shaman from Taos pueblo, laid plans to overthrow the Spanish. For ten years he worked to unite all the pueblos against the Spanish. By 1680 he had gathered a force of Indians strong enough to challenge the Spanish power.

Spanish settlers and Christian Indians did not expect the storm that fell on them on August 10, 1680. Throughout New Mexico, the Indians rose and slaughtered men, women and children. Both Spaniards and Christian Indians died in Popé's rebellion. Priests suffered cruel tortures. Many Spaniards and Indians found refuge in the **presidio** (fortress) in Santa Fe. For eleven days the Spanish soldiers were able to defend the presidio; but when the rebel Indians cut off the presidio's water supply, the defenders knew they had to leave. On August 21, one thousand men, women, and children, escorted by a small band of Spanish soldiers, fled from Santa Fe. The Spanish colony of New Mexico and its missions had been destroyed.

presidio: a fortress

One pueblo, though, remained faithful. This was Isleta, which welcomed the refugees from Santa Fe. But the governor of New Mexico knew he could not remain in Isleta, and so he led the settlers 200 miles south to El Paso on the Rio Grande. The refugees suffered so from their 90-mile summer journey across the burning desert that they called it *Jornada del Muerto* (hor•NAH•dah del MWAIR•toh), the "journey of death."

For 12 years New Mexico remained under the control of Popé and other Pueblo Indian leaders. These were not good years. The Indians did not like the new government their leaders set up. Besides, without Spanish arms to protect them, the pueblos suffered attacks from the Comanches, Apaches, Utes, and Navajos. Finally, some Indians went to El Paso to ask the Spanish governor to return to New Mexico. In August 1692, Governor Diego de Vargas with 300 soldiers and Spanish and Indian colonists set off north towards Santa Fe. Having taken Santa Fe, Vargas spent the next year bringing all of New Mexico again under Spanish rule. Most pueblos surrendered without a battle; others resisted but were finally conquered.

In the years following the reconquest, New Mexico grew and prospered. New settlers came north from Mexico as well as missionaries who founded new missions to the Indians. Though some Indians revolted again in 1696, they could not overthrow the Spanish who had returned to New Mexico to stay.

Into California

Miracle on St. Joseph's Day

Day after day, for nine days, the small man in a gray habit climbed to the summit of the little hill and looked anxiously out to sea. Day after day, he had been disappointed. Below him lay the bay like a long finger of water thrust into the land. Beyond the bay lay the sea; nothing but the sea. No sails could he see coming up over the horizon, no ship sailing into harbor. Nothing but the deep, blue sea.

Fray Junípero (hoo•NEE•peh•roh) Serra, the small man in gray, desperately wanted to see a ship. Without the supplies of food the ship would bring, the new settlement of San Diego, with its mission, could not survive. Don Gaspar de Portolá, commander of the Spanish troops in San Diego, had told Fray Junípero that the settlement had to be abandoned. But Fray Junípero asked Portolá to wait only nine more days, until March 19, the feast of St. Joseph. Fray Junípero said he would pray a novena prayer to St. Joseph; if no supplies came by St. Joseph's day, the friar said he would agree to leave San Diego.

Twenty years before, in 1749, Junípero Serra had left his home on the island of Majorca in the Mediterranean to serve as a missionary in Mexico. With his fellow Franciscans, Fray Junípero had worked among pagan Indians in the Sierra Gorda region, 175 miles north of Mexico City. In 1767, he became the father-president of the Franciscan missions in Baja California. Two years later, Fray Junípero joined Portolá in an expedition into **Alta California,** as the modern state of California was then called. Spain had discovered Alta California more than 200 years before but had never settled it. Spain wanted to settle it now, chiefly because of Russia. For a long time, Russia had been expanding eastward across Asia, and by 1741 the Russians had explored the Bering Strait and crossed over into Alaska. Discovering that America was rich in furs, Russian adventurers were exploring the northwest coast of the continent and were pushing steadily southward—toward Alta California. Spain saw that it might lose upper California if no Spanish settlements were established there. So it was that Portolá was leading a military force northward, both to protect Fray Junípero and the Franciscans and to save Alta California for Spain.

Alta California: Spanish term for the territory north of the Mexican state of Baja California

The mission church of San Diego de Alcala



Russia in California

Russia eventually did establish a settlement in California, though not for many years after Fray Junípero Serra came there. By the early 19th century, the Russian American Fur Company wanted a base in California from which it could supply its fur-hunting settlements in the cold north with food. This base would be the starting point from which Russia could conquer all of California. In March 1812, a large ship flying the Russian double-headed eagle flag appeared off the coast north of San Francisco. It brought native Alaskan fur hunters and a small number of Russian overseers, who began to construct a fort and settlement on a bluff overlooking a stream that became known as the Russian River. The finished settlement, called Fort Ross, had about sixty buildings, orchards, gardens, grain fields, and villages for Alaskans and the local Kashaya Pomo people. Later, the settlers built a Russian Orthodox chapel. Russians and Alaskans at Fort Ross continued to hunt sea otter pelts; but, by 1820, the number of sea otters had grown so few because of Russian, English, and American hunting that Fort Ross's settlers took to farming to supply the Alaskan settlements with food. The Russian American Fur Company abandoned Fort Ross in 1841.

The journey north had been difficult for Fray Junípero. When he first came to Mexico he injured his leg, and the wound had never healed. The journey into California was long and difficult, and Fray Junípero's leg swelled and gave him continuous pain. But so great was his desire to bring the Gospel to the Indians of Alta California that Serra would not be left behind. Despite the great pain in his leg, the friar continued the long journey into the north.

Serra had stayed at San Diego, the first Spanish settlement in California, while Portolá continued his exploration to the north. Things had not gone well at the settlement during the six months Portolá was away. The expected supply ship had not arrived. Fray Junípero had made no converts. The Indians were unfriendly. They stole from the Spanish camp and even tore strips of cloth from the sails on the Spanish ships. When the Spanish fought back, the Indians attacked them with arrows, killing some of the settlers. When he returned in January 1770, Portolá saw how badly off the settlement was. He was certain it could not continue.

What must Fray Junípero have thought when, climbing the hill on the morning of the last day of the novena, he saw no ship? It was St. Joseph's day, and it seemed the saint had not answered

Junípero's prayers. He descended the hill, probably certain that he must abandon California. But the day had not ended. That afternoon, someone sighted a ship under full sail. It was the *San Antonio,* coming from Mexico with supplies for the San Diego settlement. St. Joseph had answered Fray Junípero's prayers after all.

The California Missions

Don Gaspar de Portolá had gone north to find a bay that, over 100 years before, the Spanish explorer Sebastián Vizcaíno had discovered. Vizcaíno had named this bay **Monterey,** meaning "king's mountain." There, the first Mass to be said in California was offered. But in seeking Monterey, Portolá discovered a much larger bay than either San Diego or Monterey. This was **San Francisco Bay,** named after St. Francis of Assisi, the founder of Fray Junípero's order.

Monterey: Spanish for "king's mountain"; the name of a bay in California. Today it is the name of a city on the peninsula at the south end of Monterey Bay.
San Francisco Bay: bay in California named after Saint Francis of Assisi

Fray Junípero joined Portolá on his second journey to Monterey in April 1770. On the feast of Pentecost, the day on which the Church celebrates the descent of the Holy Spirit on the apostles, Serra and Portolá took possession of Alta California for the king of Spain. More importantly, Serra claimed Monterey for the King of Heaven. On the southern part of Monterey peninsula, Fray Junípero established his second mission, calling it *San Carlos Borromeo de Carmelo* (Saint Charles Borromeo of Carmel). With two other friars, Serra next sought a site for his third mission, to the south of Carmel, and discovered it, on a river he called the San Antonio. Hanging a bell from a great tree, Fray Junípero joyfully rang it. "Come, Gentiles!" he cried."Come to the Holy Church. Come and receive the Faith of Jesus Christ!"

Mission San Carlos Borromeo de Carmelo



In the years that followed, Fray Junípero established seven more missions up and down the coast of California. In these missions, the friars not only instructed the Indians in the Faith, but taught them how to farm and do various crafts, such as carpentry, leather tanning, and masonry. The Indians also learned how to play European musical instruments. The friars



California's Mission San Diego de Alcala was founded by Father Junípero Serra in 1769. Father Serra kept all his own records written in longhand. This is a section of one of his original documents that records the founding of the mission.

formed small orchestras of Indian musicians who played many difficult pieces written by European composers. As in other parts of Spanish America, the friars' goal was to teach the California Indians how to live in a Christian and Spanish society.

This was rather difficult, for the California Indians were very primitive. They lived by hunting and gathering acorns and other nuts. California had many small tribes, which fought bloody feuds with each other. Their weapons were made of bone or stone, since they did not know how to smelt iron. Indian homes were small, dome-like structures made of willow branches and reeds. Their greatest art was baskets that had beautiful, intricate designs. These baskets were so tightly woven that they could hold water. The Indians boiled water by heating up stones in the fire and then dropping the hot stones into the water-filled baskets. But though their culture was primitive, the California Indians were quick to learn the arts the friars taught them. The friars themselves commented on how intelligent the Indians were.

But not all was peaceful in Alta California. Fray Junípero argued with the Spanish governor over the cruel way the soldiers sometimes treated the Indians. Then there was the problem that many Indians were dying from European diseases, for which they had no immunities. Though they tried to help the sick Indians, the friars did not fully understand why they were dying from diseases that killed so few Europeans.

Wild tribes, too, encouraged mission Indians to rebel. When, in 1775, the friars at San Diego Mission disciplined two Christian Indians who had been caught stealing, the Indians fled from the mission to the tribes that lived in the hills to the east of San Diego. On the fourth of November, 600 Indians attacked the mission and killed one of the priests there—Fray Luis Jayme (loo•EES

HIGH•may). Then they shot his body full of arrows and pounded his head and face with stones and hunting sticks.

But Fray Junípero showed his charity in asking the governor to pardon the Indian who had been chiefly responsible for Fray Luis's death. The murderer should be punished, Serra told the governor, but he should not be executed. "Let him live," pleaded Fray Junípero, "in order that he should be saved. Give him to understand . . . that he is being pardoned in accordance with our law which commands us to forgive injuries."

Fray Junípero Serra spent the remainder of his life in California, visiting the missions he had established, preaching the Gospel, administering the sacraments, and protecting the rights of the Indians. In 1784 he began to feel pains in his chest, and he knew his end was near. After receiving last rites, Fray Junípero died on August 28. Both Spaniards and the Indians he so loved came to his funeral. So loud was the weeping of the Indians at the funeral that it was hard to hear the friars sing the office of the dead.

Fray Junípero was buried in the sanctuary of the mission church of San Carlos de Borromeo on the Monterey peninsula.

Blessed Junípero Serra: In 1988, Pope John Paul II beatified Serra, the last step before declaring him a saint. Blessed Junípero Serra's feast day is July 1.

Chapter 3 Review

Summary

- Mistreatment by the Spanish made the Aztecs believe that the true God's love did not extend to them—or even worse, that the Spaniards' god was no more real than their gods. Our Lady of Guadalupe helped her beloved Aztecs, appearing to Juan Diego as an Aztec princess and sending him to the bishop with a miraculous tilma. After knowing that God loved the Aztecs, the native Mexican peoples quickly converted to the Faith.
- In the north things were more difficult, and Spanish missionaries were martyred by the Indian tribes. Fray Juan de Padilla was the first American martyr. The missions in New Mexico were destroyed during Popé's rebellion, but Diego de Vargas saved Santa Fe in 1691 and reunited New Mexico.

- Fray Junípero Serra built California's famous missions, whose friars taught the Indians their faith and a new way of life that included farming and crafts. The adobe missions still dot California's landscape, reminding us of Fray Junípero's labors.

Chapter Checkpoint

1. Who was the defender of the Indians?
2. How did some of the conquistadors mistreat the Indians?
3. Why did the Royal Audience come to New Spain? Why were Guzmán, Ortiz, and Delgadillo sent back to Spain?
4. Who was the bishop of Mexico when Our Lady of Guadalupe appeared to St. Juan Diego?
5. Retell the story of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Why does Our Lady's appearance mean so much to Mexican Indians?
6. Who was the first martyr in what is now the United States?
7. What was Popé's rebellion? Where did it happen?
8. What priest is famous for establishing the California missions?
9. What did the California Indians learn in the missions?

Chapter Activities

1. California is famous to Americans as a place where people seek wealth. Miners flocked there during the Gold Rush, and would-be movie stars flocked to Hollywood when film was invented. What would Fray Junípero Serra want California to be famous for today? How can Catholics in America carry on the work he started in those long-ago missions?
2. Ask your family and friends if they know who was the first martyr in the United States. Tell them the story of Fray Juan de Padilla.

The American Larder

With only a donkey and a bag of seed corn for planting, the sixteenth-century Franciscan missionaries went into the harsh, dry lands of Texas to baptize and catechize the Indians who lived along the San Antonio River. The Franciscans taught the Indians to farm and instructed them in the Spanish language. Together, they built several missionary churches. These missions served as the first foundations of Christianity to Indians who were so miserable that they were derided as the "dung-eaters" by the other inhabitants, the cannibal Caddos on the Gulf Coast, and the ferocious Comanches to the west. No one but the Franciscan missionaries seems to have been interested in these indigenous peoples of the San Antonio area; they were just too pitiful to bother raiding.