

# General Chapter of San Millán de La Cogolla, 1908

Ángel Martínez Cuesta

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## Introduction

These venerable stones have witnessed many events. They have welcomed visiting kings, princes and eminent ecclesiastics. These cloisters have seen the work of artists of stone, of pen and of brush, and its walls have sheltered the chants, the labors, the dreams and the whole life of thousands of monks and friars in the course of the centuries. From this monastery have emerged a number of bishops and hundreds of religious who have sown the seed of the Gospel in various countries of the world, from China and the Philippines to the United States, Panama, Venezuela, Trinidad, Brazil and Peru, as well as in several regions of our native Spain. These stones have been formed, accustomed, to all types of celebrations, both civil and religious. In these last decades, they have opened wide the doors to intellectuals, scholars and lovers of art and language, to those who seek the delights of conventual peace, as well as to harried tourists and the curious.

Today they welcome us to commemorate an event which some may consider of minor import. Some people may think that a gathering of 21 friars who, early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, on a July month like this, met, morning and afternoon, in its sacristy for eleven days to discuss issues and projects which affected some 350 religious, did not warrant being chiseled with special characters onto its annals.

But such was not the opinion of its protagonists, who at no time doubted the importance of their assembly. That awareness is clearly seen in the careful attention in its preparation and in the repair and beautification accomplished before the gathering. It also moved them to create a precapitular commission to prepare a list of the most important issues and to study the mechanics for their discussion, as well as to insist that the papal nuncio in Madrid preside over the gathering. In his brief salutatory, the apostolic commissary reflected on “the exceptional importance and transcendence of the event that was going to be held”<sup>1</sup>. The official chronicler of the chapter talked of “a very important date” and of “an event of capital interest for our congregation”, and applied to it time and again the adjectives “exceptional”, “capital” and “transcendental”<sup>2</sup>. The chapter fathers, for their part, did not want its memory to be forgotten and before ending the assembly they unanimously approved a memoir that gathered all the details of its celebration and submitted it to the authority<sup>3</sup>. Fr. Pedro Corro, son of the valley and first pupil of the convent’s *preceptoría*<sup>4</sup>, was tasked to

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<sup>1</sup> *Actas de los capítulos generales* 1 (1908-56) 16: AGOAR, mss.

<sup>2</sup> Pedro CORRO, *El capítulo general de los padres Agustinos Recoletos celebrado en julio de 1908*, Madrid 1908, 92 pp. 28, 33, 34, 55.

<sup>3</sup> “*Eighth*: Lastly, for the perpetual memory of such an important event, to write and print a Report of the present chapter along with the sermons preached in it”. Fruit of this resolution was the already mentioned pamphlet by Pedro Corro, although the sermons preached during the event were not published. The principal sermons were preached by Fathers Martín González, Pedro Corro, Gregorio Segura and Francisco Sádaba: *Ibid.* 64-76.

<sup>4</sup> “Preceptorías”, which were then frequent in Spain, were a kind of school of Latin, where the aspirants to the priestly and religious life did their initial studies.

redact it. They also ordered that its memory be etched in a Latin inscription on marble, which today can still be seen in the sacristy<sup>5</sup>. It was the work of a Catalan Latinist, friend of Fr. Enrique Perez, the Piarist Tomás Viñas Sala.

Posterity has also recognized the chapter's value. On its fiftieth anniversary, the prior general, Fr. Eugenio Ayape, wrote that it occupied a "locum præcelsum in moderna evolutione nostri Instituti" and ordered that its determinations be reprinted and be read in all communities<sup>6</sup>. Our gathering here is another indication of the interest that it continues to arouse.

## **State of the Order on the eve of the chapter**

The chapter of San Millán is like a hinge that, like all hinges, consists of two parts and a common axis. One part was fixed and was firmly anchored in tradition; the other was movable, with sights set on the future; and the axis was the will of the capitulars, which allowed the whole thing to rotate harmoniously. It was like a halt on the road which, after a decade of agitated journeying and of excessive-but-not-clearly-directed activity, the Order gave herself so as to scan the future and program it better. It was the first serious attempt to give stability and order to what was already accomplished and to juridically sanction the emerging lifestyle by directing it into a normal legal, administrative and charismatic channel. It was like a two-faced arch. In one face it allowed entry to the vital sap of the past and, nourished by the sap, it came out in the other to face the future.

The past had been traumatic. Government hostility had divested the Order, in the now distant 1835, of all its convents and her goods, and, worse, it had expelled its friars, banning them from living together, from donning their habit, from living their rules... It had deprived the Order as such of directing its destiny, of holding its chapters and of electing its superiors. Only a little part of it was respected, the convent of Monteagudo, whose task it was to provide missionaries for the distant Spanish colony of the Philippines. Thanks to that self-interested political aid, the province was able to survive and, later, in the course of the century, was able to develop itself with relative freedom. Counting on the tolerance, benevolence even, of the government, it opened two other houses in Spain: that of Marcilla in 1865 and this house of San Millán in 1878, which was then in an abandoned state and was in danger of being victim to the reversals of time or the unscrupulous greed of some swashbuckler.

But at the end of the century, another political storm, the pro-independence revolt of the Philippines, cracked the foundations of the province. In a few weeks, 30 of the more than 300 religious who were working there perished in the hands of the revolutionaries, 91 others were taken prisoners and the rest had to abandon posthaste their parishes and take refuge in the two convents in Manila or return to Spain via the ports of Macau, Hong Kong or Singapore. The two hundred young religious – between novices and professed – who were preparing to exercise the priestly ministry in the Philippines, in one fell swoop lost the horizon to which they had directed their lives and

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<sup>5</sup> «*Fifth*: Likewise, that in memory of the glorious event that we are about to end let there be placed in this sacristy of the convent of San Millán designated as chapter hall a memorial tablet of the event". The text of the inscription can be seen in CORRO, *El capítulo...*, 61, and José Javier LIZARRAGA, *El padre Enrique Pérez, último vicario y primer general de la orden de agustinos recoletos*, Rome 1989, 89-90.

<sup>6</sup> Eugenio AYAPE, Circular a la orden con motivo del quincuagésimo aniversario del capítulo de San Millán, Rome, 30 June 1958: *Acta Ordinis* 5 (1958-59) 16.

their means of subsistence. The 36 novices had to return to their homes; the same lot fell on the hundred boys who had filled the recently opened Saint Joseph school, situated in this very monastery. The solemn professed were assigned to Colombia and the simple professed were gathered in this convent of San Millan, while the two other convents – Marcilla and Monteagudo – were reserved for the refugees from the Philippines.

All of a sudden, the province found itself in a desperate situation, with several hundreds of unemployed religious, without a field where to employ them, and with scarce resources to attend their needs. Finding a way out was of utmost urgency, cost what it might. And that was the first concern of the superiors and of the most spirited individual religious. On 13 August 1898, ten days after the Americans entered Manila, the first group of seven religious, led by Fr. Patricio Adell, took to the Pacific Ocean en route to South America with the hope of finding welcome and work there. After a hazardous four-month trip via Hong Kong, Tokyo, Honolulu and San Francisco in California, they set foot in Panama on 11 November. They had left Manila without clear plans or fixed instructions, without knowing what awaited them in Panama and perhaps without the plan to remain there. They arrived like the shipwrecked plucked to safety from the waves. But they were not ordinary castaways; they were courageous castaways who were conscious that God did not abandon his faithful, that the world did not end in the Philippines and that their priestly services could be useful in other shores.

Their hopes were not in vain. Providence accompanied them throughout their journey and everywhere they found open doors. In Panama it was wide open. The bishop offered them a mission territory, in Darien. It was a marginalized and insalubrious region, but Fr. Adell was not in a choosy mood and there he sent some of the religious. But Panama was small for him. The province needed a bigger field and wider horizons. In Manila he was told that perhaps he could find them in Venezuela and he sailed there on 30 November in the company of Fr. Fermin Catalán. Seven days later they touched port in La Guaira, the harbor of Caracas. At the end of 1899 between Panama and Venezuela he had found work for more than 20 religious. A little later, on 19 February 1899, Fr. Mariano Bernad disembarked in the Brazilian port of Santos at the head of another group of 13 volunteers. These were the pioneers, the trailblazers. Very soon there emerged friars who followed their steps.

The activity of these pioneers was extraordinary, despite the moment's pressures, the prejudices they were victims of, the scarcity of means, the hostility of Venezuela's government (where, even if in decline, the antireligious tradition of the last decades still persisted), the continuous conflicts and wars that kept the religious in an air of temporariness and rendered difficult a middle term programming. Other factors that did not help were the distance and the disconnect between the superiors and the shifting attitude of some bishops, who were influenced by a clergy that swung from appreciation for the help given by the new arrivals and the envy at the favor shown them by the people.

In order to move with ease they would have needed more abundant and precise information, well prepared plans and sufficient material resources. Unfortunately, the information was always inadequate. Fr. Adell and companions set sail moved by simple comments of the Madrid and Rome superiors, who in their letters to Manila alluded to the scarcity of priests in the American churches and the possibilities open to the Recollects there. Information improved later, because the missionaries and above all the superiors, meaning Fr. Adell from Venezuela and Fr. Bernad from Brazil, maintained constant contact with Madrid, Manila and Rome. But the nervous, emotional and

excessively eager character of the former and the contrary information that arrived of dissatisfied or disillusioned religious detracted from his reports and often placed superiors in real dilemmas. On the other hand, any transaction with the provincial in Manila took months. The apostolic commissary in Madrid, besides wasting time in trivial details unworthy of his post, worked on his own and, seemingly, never got along with the vicar provincial, Juan Cruz Gómez, who was the one with direct jurisdiction of the religious in Spain and who had control of the province's finances. Moreover, the superiors were too isolated. The apostolic commissary even lacked councilors with whom to share his concerns, get a better picture of the situation and adopt the most appropriate measures. Only in October 1901, with the promotion of Fr. Mariano Bernad to the general apostolic commissariat, did it start to be organized and to act with a well-defined plan.

In spite of those deficiencies, the Philippine Recollects settled in Venezuela and Brazil with relative speed. In Panama they also arrived well but the insalubrity of the isthmus, which in a few months sent several missionaries to the grave, and the consequent diffidence of the religious residing in Spain, drastically reduced the number and importance of their foundations. In Trinidad they ran into opposition from the Dominicans, to whom the Congregation of Propaganda Fide had entrusted the island, but in the end they were also able to establish some foundations there, which were strategic because Trinidad was the port and market of the Venezuelan Guayana. Another pair of religious settled in Tumaco under the protection of Fr. Ezekiel Moreno, where they laid the foundations for the future apostolic prefecture of Tumaco (1927). By mid-1902 this Filipino advance party in America formed a small body of 69 units: 36 in Brazil, 25 in Venezuela, 4 in Panama, 2 in Trinidad and other 2 in Tumaco<sup>7</sup>.

At that same time, other religious were striving to establish the Order in Spain. In 1898, there were only four houses of the Order in Spain: the Madrid house on number 5, Fortuny Street, which was the seat of the vicar provincial of Saint Nicholas Province in Spain and which also served as residence of the apostolic commissary general, and the convents of Monteagudo, Marcilla and San Millán. The massive repatriation of the Philippine religious forced the urgent search for new houses where they could be accommodated and find employment. The first foundation took place in Granada in February 1899, thanks to the support of the count of Antillón, personal friend of Fr. Íñigo Narro, apostolic commissary of the congregation. The Augustinian Recollect nuns facilitated the foundations of Motril (May of that same year) and of Lucena (four years later). Those three houses would form the basis of the future province of Saint Thomas. In December 1899 the Recollects established themselves in Puente la Reina, and in 1902 in Sos del Rey Católico, invited by the bishop of Jaca, who was then a Calced Augustinian.

In 1905, Sigüenza bishop Fr. Minguella offered a house in the capital city of his diocese. In 1907, Saint Nicholas province acquired the former Franciscan convent of Berlanga de Duero (Soria) and in the following year, after getting around not a few

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<sup>7</sup> Regarding these events, the reader can refer to my articles: «Los agustinos recoletos en América»: *Recollectio* 18 (1995) 43-84; «La Iglesia y la revolución filipina de 1898»: *Ibid* 21-22 (1898-99) 19-83; «Los agustinos recoletos en Panamá. Un siglo al servicio de la Iglesia y de la sociedad, 1898-1998»: *Ibid* 23-24 (2000-01) 83-163, and «De Filipinas a América del Sur. I. Viajes, andanzas y fundaciones del padre Patricio Adell por Panamá, Venezuela y Trinidad»: *Ibid* 25-26 (2002-03) 359-634 y 27-28 (2004-05) 591-696; «Los agustinos recoletos en Venezuela»: *Pensa-miento agustiniano* 14 (Caracas 1999) 151-202. Also: José Luis SÁENZ, «Comienzo de la actividad misionera de la provincia de San Nicolás de Tolentino en Panamá, Venezuela y Brasil»: *BPSN* 83 (1993) 169-95, 84 (1994) 29-104; y E. DURÁN Y DURÁN, «Perspectiva histórica de la provincia de San José: Venezuela y Perú»: *Recollectio* 16 (1993) 447-90.

obstacles, it was able to establish itself in Zaragoza. With this last foundation, the first phase of expansion ended, which was characterized by a worried search for vital space. In nine years nine houses had been opened in Spain, one of which – Falces – was relinquished after three years. The Sigüenza foundation was also short-lived, lasting only six years.

Those foundations were an indication of vitality, since Spain breathed anticlerical air and voices were raised in parliament against the proliferation of religious houses. At the end of June bloody anticlerical incidents occurred in cities like Sevilla, Zaragoza, Valencia and Barcelona, which ended up with numerous casualties. Days later, on 5 July 1899, Canalejas adopted the campaign with his famous *discourse of the five isms*: reactionarism, clericalism, militarism, regionalism and capitalism. In the following years anticlerical riots mushroomed, like those that followed the opening night of Galdos' *Electra* on 30 January 1901, and legislative bills multiplied that tended to stop the spread of religious communities and to reduce their influence in society. In 1900 heated debates raged in the Cortes about the religious orders, with the aim of subjecting them to common law and submitting them “to the inspection, vigilance and obedience of the diocesan prelates in what refers to the spiritual and canonical service, and to the civil authorities in their relations with the state and the juridical existence”. The establishment of a new house, “even by the authorized congregations”, would require the approval of the concerned diocesan prelate and the authorization of the government by a royal decree (base 21). The Orders were accused of monopolizing education and of unfair competition in industry<sup>8</sup>.

In 1903, the pessimism was being overcome, but there were still many disillusioned religious, who, anchored in nostalgia and in their Philippine practices, were unable to react and were living uselessly in their convents. The Order still kept the seminary and novitiate closed, and its ministries were in a very precarious state, spread over vast territories, separated one from the other by thousands of kilometers, under the caprice of the government and the not-always firm will of the bishops, and with nothing to consider their own in any foreseeable emergency. But everything was being surmounted by the energy and clear-sightedness of the superiors, especially from October 1901 onwards, when the congregation was governed by Fr. Mariano Bernad, on whom the Holy See conferred very ample faculties, and the collaboration of a committed group of individual religious who, aware of the situation, did not yield to adversities and with great generosity multiplied themselves in order to pull the Order out of the stagnation that it was in. In early 1904, Victor Ruiz, a provincial with great zeal for observance, after a conscientious visit to the houses of the province (October

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<sup>8</sup> José Andrés GALLEGO, *La política religiosa en España: 1889-1913*, Madrid 1975, 143-240; Manuel SUÁREZ CORTINA, «Anticlericalismo. Religión y política en la Restauración», in E. LA PARRA LÓPEZ-M. SUÁREZ CORTINA (Eds), *El anticlericalismo español contemporáneo*, Madrid 1998, 127-210.

In February 1901 in Spain there were 3.055 religious houses (512 male) with 45.728 religious (9.493 men) and 5.235 novices (1.589 men). They attended to 167.992 free scholars (36.0286 in schools of religious) and 59.879 paying students (12.742 in schools of religious) and 57.902 sheltered (3.613 in houses of religious).

	Houses	Religious	Novices	Free Scholars	Paying Students	Sheltered
Religious men	512	9.493	1.589	36.286	12.742	3.613
Religious women	2.543	36.235	3.736	131.706	47.137	54.289
Total	3.055	45.728	5.235	167.992	59.879	57.902

The religious women attended to 26.580 sick and 1.290 prisoners: Cristóbal ROBLES, «Frente a la supremacía del Estado. La Santa Sede en la crisis de la Restauración (1898-1912)»: *Anthologica Annua* 34 (1987) 281. In August of the following year, the religious houses numbered 535, of which 201 were devoted to education; 200, to the pastoral ministry; 55 to the missions; 50, to contemplative life; 23, to beneficence, and 6 to other ends: *Ibid.*

1903-February 1904), saw a notable improvement in the discipline<sup>9</sup>. In that same year, the seminary was reopened here in San Millan and the novitiate in Sos del Rey Católico. In early 1906, the Candelaria Province took over Sos and Saint Nicholas Province reaffirmed its commitment with the Philippine Church by resuming the sending of missionaries to the Islands. In October of the following year, a new province could already be established, that of Our Lady of the Pillar, with the three Andalusian residences, the Spanish houses of Berlanga and Zaragoza, which was still under negotiation, and all the ministries of Panama, Venezuela, Trinidad and Brazil<sup>10</sup>.

## Convocation and celebration of the chapter

After the establishment of the third province of the Order, the friars could already think of the celebration of the general chapter. Great were the difficulties, including those of a juridical nature. In 79 years, the Order had gone through very considerable changes and it was not always easy to apply laws that were set down for a community of five provinces of a conventual nature, with a well-delimited territory and a perfectly defined activity, to another of only three provinces, one of them recently created, spread across three continents and engaged in a variety of activities, with the superiors of all the three having been named outside of the normal constitutional channel. The last chapter of Saint Nicholas Province was in 1897 and that of Candelaria was in 1860. It was thus obvious that commissions had to be named to prepare the list of concerns for discussion and that a president had to be sought who would unite wills and enjoyed the authority to heal foreseeable defects of procedure on the fly and fill legal lacunae. The friars did not want a merely honorific presidency but one that was effective and efficacious, with full authority, and with as ample faculties as possible; such that it would have full authority to dispense with any mere formality; settle doubts; decide on questions; heal defects and errors; preside the sessions and confirm the elections. All of that was obtained with relative ease and speed. On 2 June 1908, the apostolic commissary Mariano Bernad, on convoking the future capitulars could already inform them that the chapter would take place in San Millán. Eight days later, on the 10<sup>th</sup> of the same month, he set the date of its start, which would be the 16<sup>th</sup> of the following month of July, feast of our Lady of Mount Carmel.

Two days before the scheduled start, the president, Monsignor Antonio Vico, then papal nuncio in Madrid, arrived. The other capitulars also came trickling in. For eleven days they held lively discussions about the Order's problems, unanimously elected Fr. Enrique Pérez as vicar general, and drew up a list of 28 determinations.

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<sup>9</sup> Circular of 21 February 1904: "During the holy visit, and also in many other occasions, I have observed with genuine pleasure that, despite the small unavoidable deficiencies natural to us, there reign in all our houses peace, order and tranquility, and there is that observance of the latest mandated precepts and the principal religious practices which is compatible with the abnormal and extraordinary circumstances of the present": *Crónica de la provincia de Santo Tomás Décadas de la provincia de Santo Tomás de Andalucía de Agustinos Recoletos en su Restauración. Década primera: 1899-1909*, Monachil (Granada) 1920, 20.

<sup>10</sup> Regarding the conduct of Fr. Bernad: José Javier LIZARRAGA, «Mariano Bernad, último comisario apostólico de la Recolectión, 1901-1908»: *Los agustinos Recoletos en Andalucía y su proyección en América*, Granada 2001, 427-45, reproduced in BPSN 91 (2001) 75-145; the same author has thoroughly studied the creation of Saint Thomas Province in his doctoral dissertation *El padre Enrique Pérez, último vicario y primer general de la orden de agustinos recoletos*, Rome 1989, 119-58. Less complete are reconstructions by the authors of the *Crónica de la provincia de Santo Tomás: Década primera*, 26-47, and Jenaro FERNÁNDEZ, «De erectione Provinciæ del Pilar et restauratione Provinciæ Sti. Tomæ a Villanova, documentis illustrata»: *Acta ordinis* 5 (1958-59) 308-30.

After 79 years, the Order had once more gathered in chapter thus ending an anomalous period in its history. Through the chapter, the Order once again was governed by a vicar general freely elected by its members and endowed solely by the constitutional faculties and accompanied by a team of four councilors. And it served notice of its change of spirituality by declaring solemnly that its present finality was “the apostolic life in all its expressions”<sup>11</sup>.

Those are the most visible traits of the chapter. But along with them we also have to recall some others which may not have attracted much the attention of the scholars. The first is the strengthening of its collective identity. The chapter fathers felt themselves steeped in the Recollect tradition and they committed themselves to restoring its old provinces; they wanted to revitalize its missionary tradition and strengthen its link with Saint Augustine by fomenting studies, especially Augustinian studies, and they emerged from the gathering with the determination to work for the full autonomy of the congregation as soon as possible.

The chapter put an end to a period of experimentation, a phase of boundless activity, and started another wherein reflection would prevail and a series of measures would be taken that in a few years would lead the Order to the reconstruction of its old regime of government (1908), to its administrative autonomy (1912), to the updating of its laws (1912), to the resumption of the provincial chapters (1911-13) and, most of all, to the more realistic reformulation of its charism and function within the Church and society through recovery of the fundamental traits of its spiritual portrait that in the 19<sup>th</sup> century had been forgotten. The Order emerged from the chapter with the firm determination to intensify its Augustinian character by fomenting the devotions and associations proper to it; to improve the academic preparation of its religious, to revive its missionary tradition, and to resume, though in a different way, the life which the course of the times, and above all, the ill-will of the Spanish and Colombian governments, had rudely interrupted.

## Short presentation of its determinations

After that general presentation of the chapter, I deem it appropriate to make an initial classification of its 28 acts. But before that, it would be good to mention a desire of the chapter that is not reflected in any determination but about which documentation abounds. I refer to the chapter’s intention of obtaining full juridical autonomy once and for all. It was an act that had a long prehistory and a very recent history. The prehistory goes back to the second decade of the 17<sup>th</sup> century when the Recollects worked to attain autonomy but faced the resistance of the Roman Curia, which refused to grant the status of a totally autonomous order to a community that would be governed from Madrid, with the consequent possible interference of the Spanish king<sup>12</sup>.

Its history, although announced in the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, had started a month earlier, with a letter from the Augustinian procurator general, that the San Millán capitulars deemed untimely, offensive and incorrect<sup>13</sup>. In the letter the

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<sup>11</sup> Determination 28: “The present chapter declares and determines that the present end of our congregation is the *apostolic life* in all its expressions, such as teaching, and, most of all, the missions; and to said end must tend all its efforts, utilizing for such all resources available”.

<sup>12</sup> Ángel MARTÍNEZ CUESTA, *Historia de los agustinos recoletos* 1, Madrid 1995, 248-49.

<sup>13</sup> T. GIACHETTI, *Carta al secretario de la congregación de Obispos y Regulares*, Rome 26 June 1908: AGOAR, box 5, dossier 4, n. 5. A summary of its content is found in LIZARRAGA, *Enrique Pérez*, 320-21.

Augustinian procurator cautioned the congregation of the Bishops and the Religious against the holding of the chapter. According to him, the chapter aimed to ignore the rights of the prior general and introduce changes in the constitutions against the Order's unity. He also asserted that the majority of the Recollects wanted to be united with the body of the Order. The congregation immediately sent the letter to the Recollect procurator, Fr. Enrique Pérez, who received it while on spiritual retreat in the Trinitarian convent of Algorta. Fr. Enrique answered the congregation by return mail, lamenting the Augustinian procurator's move, denying his assertions and underscoring the dangers involved in his proposal to suspend the general chapters of the Recollect congregation and make it depend on the general as if it were any other province of the Order<sup>14</sup>. But, not content with that reply, on 20 July, already elected vicar general, he presented the letter of the Augustinian procurator to the vocals of the chapter, who considered it offensive to the good name of the Recollection and demanding an official response. In a letter to Cardinal Rampolla on 31 August, Fr. Enrique wrote that "its reading produced a very bad impression and deep indignation, as it was considered prejudicial to the privileges and rights of our congregation, greatly offensive to its good name and utterly untimely, for in it is the desire to revive old questions that greatly harm charity and fraternal unity"<sup>15</sup>.

On the last day of the chapter, all the capitulars reaffirmed their Recollect identity and the desire to keep it till the end of their days in a letter addressed to the Pope: "Sicut fuimus, et hoc perpetuo sumus. Nullo pacto, unio a fratribus maioribus optata et a nobis reiecta intentetur; ut Recollectio augustiniana de Ecclesia optime merita in perpetuum vivat: as we were, so we will be forever. There must be no attempt at the union desired by our elder brothers and rejected by us, in order that the Augustinian Recollection, which is so worthy of the Church, may live forever"<sup>16</sup>.

The incident could have ended there, but occurring as it did in an atmosphere already agitated by those issues, it unleashed a process that four years later led to full juridical separation between the two organisms and the definitive autonomy of the Recollection.

After the chapter there were interviews and clarifications at the highest level of Augustinian and Augustinian Recollect authority, but they could not halt the secessionist will of the latter, who considered the ties that still bound them to the order as anachronistic, obstacles and limitations "in the manner of children's walkers that were placed on the Recollection at the start and that are now incompatible with the development that it has achieved"<sup>17</sup>.

The clear expression, without any hint of doubt or reservation, of the congregation's identity, even in relation with the Augustinians, fruit of a charismatic origin and of a centenary history of its own is, in my judgment, the principal legacy of the chapter of San Millán. In addition to that desire for autonomy, the awareness of their own identity moved them to attempt to restore the old provinces and to promote the cause of the martyrs of Japan (determination 7). There was also mention of resuming the *Chronicles* of the congregation, with Fr. Pedro Corro even named to the task. But

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<sup>14</sup> Enrique PÉREZ, *Carta al secretario de la congregación de Obispos y Regulares*, Algorta, 7 July 1908: AGOAR, box, 5, dossier 4 n. 3 (copy), summarized in LIZARRAGA, *Enrique Pérez*, 85-86.

<sup>15</sup> See *Correspondencia del cardenal Rampolla con religiosos agustinos recoletos*, Madrid 2003, 209-11.

<sup>16</sup> LIZARRAGA, *Enrique Pérez*, 322.

<sup>17</sup> E. PÉREZ, *Carta a F. Sádaba*, Roma, 2 May 1911: AGOAR, box 69, dossier 2.



that appointment was not included in the official acts and appointments, as it was not considered of general rank.

Lizarraga in his exemplary study of Fr. Enrique's generalate has grouped the remaining determinations of the chapter around four nuclei:

The first was the restoration of the congregation's government, which returned to the constitutional model. For that end, it was determined that the next chapter be held in 1914, that the law of alternatives be observed (det. 12) and that all general posts have a six-year term (det. 9). Also, the chapters of the three surviving provinces were reestablished (det. 14), and the sees of their respective provincials were set in Manila, Bogota, and in one of the American countries, although due to the abnormality of the situation the provincials of Saint Nicholas and Our Lady of the Pillar were allowed to reside in Spain in the meantime that the vicar general did not decide otherwise (det. 23). The chapter also ordered the restoration of the two Spanish provinces (det. 27). Almost all of these instructions were fulfilled with relative speed. By mid-1914, the congregation had fully recovered its old regimen of government.

The second nucleus was the revision of the official books of the congregation, that is to say, the constitutions, the ceremonial and the ritual. This second task was more complicated, even if the revision of the constitutions was already ongoing. The chapter praised the work accomplished (det. 13), approved *in specie* the fifth section, dedicated to studies, and expressed the desire that the remaining sections be finished as soon as possible. But those desires came up against many obstacles, which considerably delayed the work and, finally, ended it in failure<sup>18</sup>.

The work was of paramount importance. During the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the whole of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there were no changes in the constitutional text, though the congregation went through great changes in its structure and activities. It lacked the peace and liberty to undertake them. It was only in the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that some religious, concerned about the existing divide between the juridical life and the real life of the congregation, called for constitutional reform of the constitutions. They were already two hundred years old and were directed at a conventual type of community, whereas their religious were totally immersed in the apostolate. Many of the norms have fallen into disuse and others ignored and even contradicted Roman Curia directives. Such dichotomy had harmful effects on the Order. The principal one was the undervaluing of the law. A law that proceeds apart from real life and does not orient the work of each day nor responds to the most deeply-felt needs falls into discredit and oblivion. The subjectivism of some superiors also helped, which at times made them arbitrary and authoritarian. Other times, on the contrary, the law tied the Order's hands, with the religious hiding behind certain norms that had already been revoked in practice. Amidst the confusion following the Philippine Revolution, in which a critical spirit scrutinized everything, the religious clearly saw the urgency of a substantial revision of the constitutions. In 1900, the apostolic commissary and the procurator general treated the topic in letters to the cardinal protector and to some eminent religious of the Order<sup>19</sup>. Gradually, the idea gained ground. In 1903, the provincial of Saint Nicholas believed that the task could no longer be postponed<sup>20</sup>. On

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<sup>18</sup> Cf. Á. MARTÍNEZ CUESTA, «Constituciones e identidad carismática»: *Recollectio* 27-28 (2004-05) 18-19.

<sup>19</sup> I. NARRO, *Carta a M. Rampolla*, 26 April 1900; E. PÉREZ, *Carta a M. Bernad*, 8 June 1900: RAMPOLLA, *Correspondencia*, 129, 150.

<sup>20</sup> On 4 September 1903 the provincial sent to the apostolic commissary a long report on the most urgent needs of the congregation, *Libro de resoluciones, determinaciones y acuerdos del definitorio provincial 1902-1923*, 7r-12v.

20 February 1905, the apostolic commissary tasked Fr. Enrique Pérez with its systematic revision.

Fr. Enrique set himself to the job. But the work was hard and it had to be interrupted without achieving a constitutional text of full juridical validity, since the general chapter of 1920 did not deem it opportune to grant the third and final approval “because it is necessary to insert variations and additions in conformity with what is mandated by canon 489”<sup>21</sup>. The path of the job was crossed by so many opinions and, above all, by the 1917 Canon Law with its new demands. However, the text had its practical validity for 16 years, from 1912 till 1928, since the intermediary chapter of 1911, with authority received from the 1908 general chapter, gave it the first approval, ordered its printing, and decreed it binding “till the next general chapter”.

The constitutions were published in 1912 and were placed in the hands of all religious. It was a clear juridical text, which scrupulously hewed to the punctilious norms of the Holy See. Its new features were relevant, but perhaps not as deep as a cursory reading may suggest. The most significant ones referred, as expected, to apostolate and government, the two areas in which the congregation had experienced the greatest changes. There was also a different language and different arrangement of subject matter. Less divergences are noted in the spiritual orientation and it was because Fr. Enrique was faithful to his aim of preserving, as much as possible, the spirit and even the flavor and words of the former editions. “I have tried”, he wrote to Fr. Mayandía in February 1908, “to conform the constitutions to the first ideals of our Barefootedness and to the manner of being that we have taken, lest the former be an obstacle to the latter and the latter make us forget the former”<sup>22</sup>.

The making of the ceremonial and the ritual (det. 26) was left for a more appropriate occasion. In the case of the ritual, it was not deemed timely to revise it before the publication by the papal commission of the editio typica of the Gregorian gradual and antiphonarium. This circumstance is the reason the ritual was not edited until 1927<sup>23</sup>.

The third nucleus was in relation to the academic formation of the religious, which needed to be more solid and complete. With that end in mind, some privileges were granted to lectors, to the regent of studies and to the directors of reviews (det. 17), and it was mandated to give more attention to libraries, especially the Augustinian section, which ought not to be absent in any house (det. 21).

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In the first point, he insisted on the need to have clearer constitutions, “because the doubts about the validity of many of the present [norms], the non-fulfillment of not a few of them, especially of parts 1 and 3 and of all of part 5, which, because they are penal, are of paramount importance for religious observance and life, the little clarity in the faculties of each governing entity and the certainty that our code is not accommodated to the needs of our present time, are causes that make the superiors hesitate, bind their hands and prevent them from demanding their fulfillment for fear of greater evil, such as formal rebellion” (f. 8r): AM, book 24.

<sup>21</sup> “The rules and Constitutions of religious institutes that are not contrary to the canons of the present code continue to be valid; but those that are opposed to it are revoked”.

<sup>22</sup> LIZARRAGA, *Enrique Pérez*, 399-429.

<sup>23</sup> General Chapter of 1914, act XXV: “The chapter, informed too of the works accomplished by the different commissions named for revision and reform, as much of the Ceremonial as of the Ritual, and considering the reasons why the publication of said works has not been possible, orders that, as soon as the Sacred Congregation of Rites finishes the announced reforms in liturgy and the Church singing, the revision and reform of the two aforesaid books and their printing be accomplished, observing what is mandated by the Sacred Congregation about the printing of liturgical books”: Regarding the progress of the reform of liturgical singing in the Church: H. JEDIN, *Manual de Historia de la Iglesia*. 8. *La Iglesia entre la adaptación y la resistencia*, Barcelona 1978, 569-76.

The fourth was directed to reaffirming the apostolic character of the Order. In line with those ideas, greater importance was given to the missionaries, giving them vote in the chapter (det. 16) and declaring that the vow of obedience obliged the religious to go to all types of mission, “established or to be established” (det. 24). And, most of all, it was determined that the “present end of our congregation is the apostolic life in all its expressions, such as teaching, and above all, missions; and to said end must tend all its efforts, utilizing for such all resources available”.

With such a decision, the chapter considered completed the charismatic evolution that took place in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Thus, with no traumas and perhaps with no sufficient reflection either, the whole Order was given an end which, though it had never been alien to its spirit, until then was predominant only in the province of the Philippines. As it turned out, the very province that had secured the material survival of the Recollection, now applied on the latter the direction it would take from then on.

Angel Martínez Cuesta