

PRIESTS, PARISHIONERS, AND THE PASTORAL VISITA:
THE MORAL ECONOMY OF VILLAGE LIFE IN THE
DIOCESE OF LA PAZ, 1680-1730

By

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Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School
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This dissertation focuses, in general, on how parish priests who lived and worked in the Diocese of La Paz from 1680 to 1730 managed their lives as cultural brokers between the Spanish crown and the predominantly indigenous communities they served. Specifically, I explore the possible causes for and the character of contested relations between members of the secular clergy and their parishioners as reported to ecclesiastical officials who periodically visited Indian villages of this jurisdiction throughout the period under review. I conclude, among other things, that priests and their parishioners engaged in constant negotiations with each group vying for advantages, respect, and financial benefits according to a constantly evolving yet essentially consistent view of social norms and obligations. Theoretical support for my argument comes from E. P. Thompson's ideas on "the moral economy of the poor,"

which, he argued, gave legitimacy to the English crowd's demands for fair, if not uncorruptible, market practices in eighteenth-century England.

Like the riots which served as a medium for the working people of England to voice their objections in the late eighteenth century, I argue that the pastoral *visita* (inspection), as practiced in the 1680s and 1690s, proved to be an effective tool of social and political bargaining between priests and their parishioners. It was effective because it served as a check on parish priests — the majority of whom allegedly sought to abuse their positions of authority for personal gain — and concomitantly empowered native elites by providing them an opportunity to air grievances on behalf of their exploited communities. After 1697, the *visita* ceased to be an institution that parishioners, particularly Indians, could rely on to negotiate for relief or advantage. This was due, in part, to more relaxed enforcement of Church policies by the bishops of the early eighteenth century and because travel and administrative duties were hampered by a series of epidemics which plagued the region in the late 1700s and throughout the 1710s.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

To the first-time visitor's eye and mind, the transition from the tranquility of the Bolivian *altiplano* to the confusion that dominates street life in that country's biggest city is sudden and astonishing. I first traveled to Nuestra Señora de La Paz in the summer of 1994 as a student and a tourist. I remember being rudely introduced to the city by means of its offspring, El Alto, with its squalid sprawl of makeshift homes, muddied streets, and darting pedestrians. By the time our bus began its descent from El Alto to La Paz, my imagination had taken firm hold of my senses, and I wondered to myself how I would manage to complete my studies, let alone survive, in such a place.

The first sight of La Paz took my breath away, both figuratively and literally. Located at between 12,000 and 11,000 feet above sea level, depending on how far down the valley you are, it resembles a large, irregularly shaped bowl with skyscrapers at the base and shacks perched on cliffs which rise all the way up to the rim. As in most big cities around the world, the contrast of affluence and poverty is immediately striking. Most of the wealth is concentrated in the downtown area and further down the valley. In these zones, bunches of business people with cell phones dress in tailored suits and drive Mercedes Benz Sports Utility Vehicles. At the higher elevations, where the poorer *paceños* live, running water is rare, electrical and phone lines dangle haphazardly from posts and homes, and people work hard to climb and descend the dirt and gravel streets

which wash away every year during the rainy season from November to March. The rich and poor, and those in between, however, are not segregated in La Paz; the city's central avenues and main plazas overflow with middle-class families, well-to-do *cholas*, half-clothed beggars, shoe-shine boys, and street kids of all socioeconomic classes playing soccer with their T-shirts on the ground as goal markers. I appreciated in the first few hours after arriving in La Paz the appeal and the charm of the city's stark human contrasts.

I came to La Paz to study native religion during the colonial period. I had learned from a few American scholars of an ecclesiastical archive there which had scarcely been investigated by historians. I had been told that the Archivo Central Canónigo Felipe López Menéndez (the Archive of the Archbishopric of La Paz) may contain some cases involving Indians accused of witchcraft and idolatry. After making contact with the archivist, Professor Norman Reyes Dávila, and perusing the index of the main series of documents, I determined that nothing of the sort existed in this particular archive. With little money to travel elsewhere (to Sucre and the Archivo Nacional, perhaps), and since I genuinely liked the atmosphere, if not the altitude, of La Paz, I decided to stay and focus my attention on what appeared to be the documentary strength of the Archivo Central — a series of pastoral inspections called *visitas y escrutinios*.

Anachronistic considerations aside, I decided after a few days of reading these primary records that certain elements of human activity had changed little in the city of La Paz in the last three hundred or so years. First and foremost, as arguably the most “Indian” of all South American nations, Bolivia as a whole still retains an indigenous quality about it; the Aymara culture in particular dominates the countryside around La Paz

and the Lake Titicaca region. Mixed in to this cultural and ethnic majority — in varying proportions depending mostly on the distance from urban areas — are people of ostensibly different backgrounds and socioeconomic levels. Indeed, apart from the *cholitas* and the men dressed in traditional Andean garb, it is difficult, especially as an outsider, to understand the complexity of cultural variations that now defines modern Bolivia.

But Bolivians of different ranks and ethnicities, as stated earlier, do not live insulated and separate lives. As profoundly public people, their relations, interactions, and interconnections are part of the public forum which can be said to constitute social life in this land-locked Andean nation. It is at this point — at this confluence of human activity — that life in Bolivia today, I suspect, coincides with that of the past. Indeed, the most striking feature of the *visita y escrutinio* cases that I came to know that summer in 1994 was that they dealt precisely with this issue of public exchange, popular action, and the interrelationships between peoples of different cultural backgrounds and legacies.

This dissertation examines how parish priests who lived and worked in the Diocese of La Paz from 1680 to 1730 managed their lives as cultural brokers between the Spanish Crown and the predominantly indigenous communities they served. Specifically, I explore the possible causes for and the character of contested relations between members of the secular clergy and their parishioners as reported to ecclesiastical officials who periodically visited Indian villages of this jurisdiction throughout the period under review.

William Taylor, Nancy Farriss, and David Brading, among others, have confirmed in their respective studies of religious life in colonial Latin America that parish priests

operated as agents of both the Spanish crown and the Catholic Church.¹ Especially during the Hapsburg era, “no sharp line had divided secular and religious life,”² so priests — particularly those working in Indian villages — were expected to maintain public order, uphold Christian morality, judge and discipline their parishioners according to a strict social and religious ethic, and perhaps most importantly, mediate the often delicate relationships between God, the Spanish state, and the members of their congregations. Each of these scholars demonstrates that in the course of managing these responsibilities, the moral, religious, and sociopolitical authority of parish priests did not go unchallenged. That priests enjoyed a privileged position in the hierarchical colonial society, and that they often desired a comfortable, if not prosperous, life, added dimensions to the strained relations they sometimes had with other colonial groups, namely royal authorities and their own parishioners.

¹William Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred: Priests and Parishioners in Eighteenth-Century Mexico* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996); Nancy Farriss, *Crown and Clergy in Colonial Mexico, 1759-1821* (London: Athlone, 1968); David Brading, *Church and State in Bourbon Mexico: The Diocese of Michoacán, 1749-1810* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). Other works on the secular clergy in colonial Latin America include John Frederick Schwaller, *The Church and Clergy in Sixteenth-Century Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987); Schwaller, *Origins of Church Wealth in Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1985); Adriaan Van Oss, *Catholic Catholicism: A Parish History of Guatemala, 1524-1821* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Lincoln Draper, “Archbishops, Canons, and Priests: The Interaction of Religious and Social Values in the Clergy of Seventeenth-Century Bolivia.” Ph.D. diss., University of New Mexico, 1989; and Raymond Patrick Harrington, “The Secular Clergy in the Diocese of Mérida de Yucatán, 1780-1850: Their Origins, Careers, Wealth, and Activities,” Ph.D. diss., Catholic University of America, 1983.

²Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred*, 12.

All three of these scholars concentrate on the Catholic clergy in late colonial Mexico, and they dedicate much of their attention to the Spanish crown's efforts to control priests during the contentious era of the Bourbon reforms. Farriss considers the last two decades of the eighteenth century as a period of crisis between Church and State — “a crisis provoked and sustained in large part by a basic conflict between the State's need to exert authority over a powerful and influential clergy and the latter's claim to exemption from that authority.”³ Similarly, Taylor focuses in part on the problems that erupted between secular priests and Bourbon district governors when priests perceived their judicial jurisdiction to be threatened by new initiatives implemented in the last four decades of the eighteenth century. Brading, in his discussion of priests and laity, basically follows Farriss' lead and accounts specifically for the unrest created by royal laws that challenged priests' legal authority in the Diocese of Michoacán after 1795. Unlike Farriss, who scarcely discusses how parishioners fit into these relations between religious and secular authorities, Taylor and Brading are more cognizant of the nature of grass-roots tensions and of the social and political nuances of the relationship between priests and their parishioners. While Brading focuses more on elements of priestly power, methods of coercion, and the apparent acceptance by some members of the secular and regular clergy of some aspects of native religion, Taylor is more interested in how priests performed as brokers between two cultural worlds. He writes:

He was both a father and a stranger, traditionally required to stand apart and above, his conduct to be measured by a higher standard. Parishioners were drawn to the priest by his spiritual power, his ability to sanctify the

³Farriss, *Crown and Clergy in Colonial Mexico*, ix.

local community, and his patronage in parlous times, but they found themselves distanced from him by his demands for money, labor, and obedience, [and] by his institutional ties.⁴

This study of the parish priests who lived and worked in the Diocese of La Paz from 1680 to 1730 builds on Taylor's emphasis on personal relations, since I seek to achieve a better understanding of how these men figured into the broad social matrix that was village life in the southern Andes in the mid-colonial period. Specifically, I am interested in why — in spite of their duties to serve as agents of a protective Spanish crown and as spiritual models of proper conduct — a majority of secular priests who served in this district during the last two decades of the seventeenth century had to defend themselves against widespread charges of corruption and sacerdotal neglect. Surely, just as in Bourbon Mexico, priests who worked in the Diocese of La Paz one hundred years earlier engaged in legal and moral disputes with secular magistrates over matters of authority and jurisdiction, but the focus here is squarely on the allegations of impropriety brought by members of their congregations, most of whom were Indians.

One of my main arguments is that throughout the period under review but most vividly in the 1680s and 1690s, priests, parishioners and the visiting bishops or *visitadores generales* operated within a moral economy that saw each group bargain, from fairly equitable footing, for advantage, legitimacy, and social order. The medium of contact — the instrument which enabled representatives of these three groups to articulate their sentiments, attitudes, and opinions — was the episcopal visita, which, I argue, empowered Indian witnesses during the 1680s and 1690s with a valuable tool to resist colonial policies

⁴Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred*, 25.

and forms of exploitation which they deemed unfair, unscrupulous or against the common good of their communities. As I discuss in the second half of Chapter 7, this era of overt negotiations, bargaining, unwritten contracts, and jostling for power, profit, and favor, at least as seen through the lens of the *visita y escrutio* process, fell apart after 1700. This was in part due to the fact that after this date, the *visita* marginalized the primary voice of previous discontent — monolingual Indians — and because the *visita* itself became an infrequent and undependable source through which native elites could air their grievances. Which other outlets native elites sought to voice their displeasure, remains, at least in terms of the present study, a topic of future research, but surely — even if with reduced numbers — they found other ways (perhaps through *corregidores*) to negotiate boundaries of acceptable conduct with village priests.

Taylor's explicit goal in *Magistrates of the Sacred*, which studies the role of the secular priests in the Archdiocese of Mexico and the Diocese of Guadalajara, is to examine the social, political, and religious lives of parish priests and "to offer several perspectives on how public life was organized and to gauge the scope and consequences of some Bourbon administrative reforms."⁵ He attests also to the effectiveness of parish priests — who served as the grass-roots agents of social control — whose dedication and loyalty emboldened Spanish imperial efforts to maintain control of most of its original American territories without the expense of a standing army.⁶ In fulfilling these goals, he

⁵Ibid., 3.

⁶Farris made this same point nearly thirty years earlier when she remarked, "Whatever its gradations, clerical influence was a strong force in colonial society, not only in Mexico but throughout the entire Indies, a force which had significant political and

is mostly successful; Taylor's book is a veritable gold mine of useful data on priests, their social backgrounds, educations, behavior, career paths, religious views, involvement in secular activities, and on how priests responded to the Bourbon initiatives which ostensibly reduced their capacities as authority figures. But Taylor does not ignore how Indian parishioners played a role in the clergy's development and influence. He discusses, among other things, their views on Christianity and native religion, their keen predilection for miracles and other Christian icons like Santiago and the image of Guadalupe, their participation in Church activities, and finally, their involvement in the movement toward Independence after 1810.

Magistrates of the Sacred has influenced the present study in three important ways. First, it has served as a guide for how to organize my thoughts on the different levels of interaction between priests and other social groups, and how religious life and public life often coincided during the colonial period. Second, Taylor has written a resource book that contains information on seemingly every imaginable element of Catholicism as it was practiced and administered in colonial Spanish America. Third, and most importantly for my emphasis on conflict and patterns of domination, his abundant examples of the controversies that arose between parish priests and parishioners provide useful sources of comparison for my own ideas on the motives and essential qualities of

social implications in the history of the Spanish empire. Whether condemning or praising Spanish rule in America, both contemporary observers and present-day historians agree that a large share of the credit for maintaining this rule for almost three centuries belongs to the colonial clergy. The peaceful subordination of a vast empire with only a token force of troops during most that period was possible . . . because the priests and bishops constantly impressed upon the people their duty to render obedience and devotion to their temporal sovereign as well as to God." *Crown and Clergy in Colonial Mexico*, 3.

priestly behavior during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries in the southern Andes.

Unfortunately, while Taylor has much to say about dissension between priests and parishioners — he offers at various points, for example, snapshot theoretical explanations for popular action and how this affected competition for pueblo leadership — he is so wary of the hazards of generalization that his many contextual citations of contested relations lack a general theoretical construct. Nevertheless, he offers a view of the secular clergy rarely found in historical scholarship, and several of his conclusions relate directly to the present study.

For example, Taylor finds, as I do, that Indian parishioners “were players more than counterplayers in the colonial order, even in their resistance to colonial officials’ new laws.”⁷ His analysis, furthermore, of the “explosion of disputes” over clerical fees in the second half of the eighteenth century shares many of the same qualities found in the era of intense negotiation and bargaining (1680s and 1690s) that I discuss in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.⁸ On the fissures caused by overcharging for religious services, he rightly contends that “the fees were as much a pretext as the cause for dispute, an opening advertised by the colonial administration that engaged deeper tensions over control among competing interests and order within the community or local territory.”⁹ In this respect, he understands that personal ambitions, as well as traditional feuds and village factionalism

⁷Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred*, 345.

⁸Ibid., 425.

⁹Ibid., 345.

played key roles in the controversies which arose between priests and parishioners. Frequently, and as I also point out, priests found themselves in the middle of inter- and intra-village political squabbles which had little to do with their job performance or character. Many priests were, as a result, compelled to defend their actions before visita officials. And finally, Taylor cites a number of different sources of conflict that strained relations between priests and their parishioners, and confirms, as I do in Chapter 5, that political wrangling, clerical fees, and “other economic demands were at the heart of most disputes.”¹⁰

In the end, while Taylor is interested in the multiple and evolving interfaces between priests and their Indian parishioners (he rightly acknowledges, by the way, that these relationships were constantly being redefined, reformulated and contested), he generally supports the idea that erring priests were members of a corrupt colonial society who, like other colonial agents of control, sometimes abused their positions of authority for personal gain. Certainly, civil and criminal trials, ecclesiastical *visitas*, and other Church records contain ample evidence from Mexico, Alto Perú, and throughout colonial Latin America, of a delinquent clergy which sought to enrich itself at the expense of the poorer and more vulnerable sectors of society. But a more difficult task, and the one which I take on in this study, is to reconstruct elements of the social and moral order which enabled these priests to take advantage of their positions of power while remaining in good (or at least acceptable) standing with the bishop's office, other royal officials, and in many cases, the very communities they allegedly exploited.

¹⁰Ibid., 353.

To help explain the nature of priestly misconduct and the ways in which ecclesiastical officials responded to allegations of impropriety, and to understand how bishops, priests, and parishioners managed the pressures, anxieties, and temptations of a corrupt, paternalistic society such as colonial Spanish America, E. P. Thompson's ideas on the moral economy of the eighteenth-century English crowd are instructive. In his analysis of the cost and supply of food staples and the impact fluctuating prices and corrupt market activity had on uprisings among the poor, Thompson argues mainly that riots occurred not "spasmodically . . . [as] rebellions of the belly," but rather as supremely organized, disciplined reactions by people defending traditional rights.¹¹

I mean that the men and women in the crowd were informed by the belief that they were defending traditional rights or customs; and, in general, that they were supported by the wider consensus of the community . . . it is of course true that riots were triggered off by soaring prices, by malpractices among dealers, or by hunger. But these grievances operated within a popular consensus as to what were legitimate and what were illegitimate practices in marketing, milling, baking, etc. This in turn was grounded upon a consistent traditional view of social norms and obligations, of the proper economic functions of several parties within the community, which, taken together, can be said to constitute the moral economy of the poor.¹²

Throughout his argument, Thompson describes an intricate system of social and economic relations between governmental regulators, farmers, millers, dealers, bakers, and the "labouring people,"¹³ all of whom continually tested the limits of their customary responsibilities in order to achieve maximum benefits for either themselves or their specific

¹¹Edward P. Thompson, "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century," *Past and Present* 50 (February 1971): 76-77.

¹²Ibid., 78-79.

¹³Ibid., 80.

class. In other words, interwoven into the social fabric of English society at that time were traditional customs and unwritten contracts between different socioeconomic classes, with each group vying for advantage over others either through legal or illegal means. When a group or an individual within a given group violated the social contract; when traditional mores of market behavior were out of balance; or when the level of moral turpitude exceeded customary levels of corruption and exploitation (characteristics, indeed, of all societies),¹⁴ riots — almost always initiated by the oppressed — ensued. On the other hand, as long as consumers and producers honored the principles of acceptable behavior, bargained effectively, and operated within the ever-changing confines of the paternalistic, traditional order, peace — however tenuous — prevailed.

In this dissertation, I argue that three groups — the various bishops of the Diocese of La Paz who served from 1680 to 1730, the hundreds of priests who staffed the parishes throughout the diocese at this time, and the Indian "flocks"¹⁵ who formed the demographic majority of the supposed Catholic population in the region — operated within, and behaved according to, a standard of conduct and code of morality which delineated, however ambiguously, acceptable conduct in this particular colonial (and paternalistic) setting. Just as "grievances operated within a popular consensus as to what were

¹⁴I tend to agree with William Taylor when he writes in a different study: "I am inclined to view conflict and temporary accommodation as perennial among and within the groups that formed colonial [Spanish American] society." William Taylor, *Drinking, Homicide & Rebellion in Colonial Mexican Villages* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1979), 9.

¹⁵Priests and bishops primarily used the terms *feligresía* and *rebaño* to refer to their native constituents.

legitimate and what were illegitimate practices in marketing, milling, [and] baking" in Thompson's eighteenth-century England, complaints against parish priests, their responses to the charges and the bishop's final sentences reflected what were acceptable and unacceptable violations of the social standards which members of these three groups used to organize their lives.¹⁶ As I discuss in the central chapters, people's actions, corrupt or not, and the prevailing code of morality depended on a variety of different factors, including, among others, an awareness by priests and parishioners of current crown and Church laws; the diligence of presiding religious officials; opportunities for exploitation (i.e., the relative wealth or poverty of a given area); the willingness of witnesses to speak out against their priest; a region or a town's noted predilection for peace or turmoil; the local demographic and ethnic composition; the strength of native Andean social and religious traditions; past controversies between priests and parishioners; the bishop's preference for, or dislike of, a particular priest on trial; and the scope and severity of corrupt activity.

Other colonial actors were significant in the creation and maintenance of this moral economy; *corregidores*, their lieutenants, *hacendados*, miners, members of the local business community, to name just a few, certainly added conditions and attitudes which helped define norms of conduct and boundaries of permissible exploitation. But my main focus here is on the social behavior of parish priests who as a group, I argue (like Taylor does in *Magistrates of the Sacred*) were more immersed in rural communities than other royal officials and Spanish citizens.

¹⁶Ibid., 79.

That a career in the priesthood, at least in the Diocese of La Paz, was a desirable job during the late Hapsburg and early Bourbon eras is unquestionable. Despite the hardships of work and poverty parish priests described in their numerous reports to the bishop,¹⁷ the sheer number of applicants for jobs and ordination reflect an occupation not lacking in qualified professionals. One probable explanation for this high level of interest in the priestly profession involved the economic and social benefits the position offered. All parish priests working in the Diocese of La Paz from 1680 to 1730 either earned a set stipend (designated by the bishop and paid for by members of their parishes) or lived from the proceeds of a *capellanía*, a type of ecclesiastical endowment used to support a cleric and donated usually by a rich relative.¹⁸ In either case, the "legitimate" wages priests made were insufficient. As Murdo MacLeod explains in his essay on the delegation of functions in the colonial period in Central America, colonial agents (including parish priests) simply made up the difference between what they earned and what they needed to live comfortably through a systematic exploitation of the local, in this case, Indian population. "A discreet amount of fee gouging," he writes, "influence peddling and direct extortions such as *derramas* and *repartimientos de efectos* among the rural powerless,

¹⁷I refer here of course to the *relaciones de méritos y servicios*, submitted by priests either in the course of applying for orders or during competitions for vacant *curatos*.

¹⁸Priests supplemented their annual wage by charging fees (*obvenciones*) for religious services such as burial masses, wedding ceremonies, baptisms. Exceeding the charge prescribed by the *arancel* (schedule of ecclesiastical fees) was a frequent source of conflict between a priest and his parishioners and between priests and bishops on visita.

especially the Indians, were part of the unwritten contract."¹⁹

For the purpose of my thesis, these unwritten contracts and subtle negotiations between different (and sometimes rival) colonial groups constituted the foundation upon which the moral economy rested. Of course, bishops, priests, and parishioners were all well aware of the countless royal decrees, papal edicts, and other forms of official, recorded policy designed to curtail exploitation by royal officials. Indeed the written laws and regulations, even if not practiced, helped to define the Spanish crown's vision of ideal behavior, and thus set standards which affected social behavior. But the measure of priestly conduct, of course, cannot be assumed by examining what ecclesiastics and parishioners were supposed to do, rather what they actually did. The documentary evidence from the Diocese of La Paz from 1680 to 1700 (and probably before and beyond) suggests that all three parties (bishops, priests, and parishioners) operated with an acute awareness of the multitude of written laws and regulations (the equivalent of Thompson's "paternalistic model," which he adds, "parts company at many points with eighteenth-century actualities"²⁰) but negotiated, bargained and jostled for advantage according a constantly evolving, reformulated, and redefined standard of permissible behavior.

¹⁹Murdo J. MacLeod, "The Primitive Nation State, Delegation of Functions, and Results: Some Examples from Early Colonial Central America," in *Essays in the Political, Economic and Social History of Colonial Latin America*, ed. Karen Spalding (Newark, DE: University of Delaware, Latin American Studies Program, Occasional Papers and Monographs No. 3, 1982), 56.

²⁰Thompson, "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century," 84.

Chapters 2, 3, and 4 are background chapters which set the stage for the conclusions I draw in the later chapters. Chapter 2 deals with the establishment of colonial society in this particular zone of the southern Andes. In addition, I also trace the evolution of ecclesiastical administration in the Audiencia of Charcas, and I examine some of the nuances of the pastoral visita as it was practiced in this particular jurisdiction. Chapters 3 and 4 focus on biographical details of the men who comprised the secular clergy in the Diocese of La Paz from 1680 to 1730. I discuss, among other things, their origins, social and economic backgrounds, and aspects of their educational and professional careers.

CHAPTER 2 THE SETTING

To establish the setting for my study of parish priests who worked in the Diocese of La Paz in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, this chapter describes the historical formation of the southern Andean region from Spanish arrival in the mid-1530s up to Juan Queipo de Llano Valdés' installation as bishop in 1680. Specifically, I examine the colonization of La Paz and the city's emergence as the main political and commercial center linking the city of Cuzco and the important silver mines of Potosí.¹ I then outline the foundation of the Catholic Church in Alto Perú, highlighting the enduring tradition of the episcopal visita which, among other things, elucidated the relationship between priests, the communities they served, members of the upper clergy, and ultimately the Spanish crown.

The historiographical record is rich in studies of the city of La Paz, the Audiencia of Charcas, and the Catholic Church in colonial Bolivia.² But rather than rely exclusively

¹Two major transportation links connected Charcas with Lower Peru. The *camino de la sierra* began in Lima, then traveled through Jauja, Ayacucho, Andahuaylas, Abancay, Cuzco, La Paz, La Plata, and finally Buenos Aires. The *camino de la costa* ran from Lima to Arica, then east to La Paz, and south to Potosí. Luis Peñaloza Cordero, *Nueva Historia Económica de Bolivia* (La Paz: Editorial Los Amigos del Libro, 1984), 81.

²On La Paz and the surrounding area, see Mario Bedoya Ballivián, *Crónicas de Nuestra Señora de La Paz* (La Paz: Librería Editorial Juventud, 1988); Clara López Beltrán, *Alianzas familiares: élite, género, y negocios en La Paz, siglo XVII* (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 1998); and Victor Santa Cruz, *Historia colonial de La*

on secondary sources to reconstruct the region's early history, I base part of the following summary on a series of primary manuscripts located in Section Five (*Gobierno*) of the Archivo General de Indias in Seville, Spain. All of the documentary data come either from *relaciones* (statements) or *informes* (reports) filed by various bishops of La Paz in response to regularly issued *cédulas reales* which required them to update the Spanish crown on different aspects of their episcopal jurisdiction.³ I was unable to locate any primary material on the diocese dated prior to Bishop Pedro de Valencia's *relación de visita* from 1620; hence, my discussion of the sixteenth century and the tenure of the first bishop of La Paz, Domingo Valderrama, relies mostly on secondary literature.

The Audiencia of Charcas and the City of La Paz, 1535-1680

Prior to the discovery in 1545 of rich silver deposits in a highland zone which came to be called Potosí, Spanish authorities in Lima were seemingly resigned to let civil war between the *Pizarristas* and supporters of Diego de Almagro take its course in the vast

Paz (La Paz: Editorial Renacimiento, 1942). On the colonial history of Charcas, see Clara López Beltrán, *Estructura de una sociedad colonial: Charcas en el siglo XVII* (La Paz: Centro de Estudios de la Real Economía y Social, 1988); and Roy Quejerazu Lewis, *Impacto hispano-indígena en Charcas: análisis historial del coloniaje* (La Paz: Librería Editorial Juventud, 1996). On the history of the Catholic Church in colonial Bolivia, see Josep M. Barnadas, *La Iglesia Católica en Bolivia* (La Paz: Librería Editorial Juventud, 1976); Estanislao Just, *Aproximación a la historia de la Iglesia en Bolivia* (La Paz: Editorial Don Bosco, 1987); and Roberto Querejazu Calvo, *Historia de la Iglesia Católica en Charcas* (La Paz: Imprenta Publicidad Papiro, 1995).

³The prelude to a 1651 royal edict concerned, among other things, local commercial development, the condition of the cathedrals and churches, current population figures, and the composition of the working clergy (regular or secular). It read: "*Los Reverendísimos Arzobispos y Obispos Del Perú Y De La Nueva España Han De Remitir Para Poner la Ultima Historia De Sus Santas Iglesias Y De Si Mismos Lo Siguiete...*" Archivo General de Indias (hereafter AGI), Charcas 138, 3 March, 1651.

eastern territory *crónistas* referred to as Alto Perú.⁴ Soon after Gonzalo de Pizarro's defeat at the hands of the royal army in 1548 near Guarina, Spanish officials rushed to the region to establish an orderly colonial presence. Their goal, ostensibly, was to gain control politically and to begin supervision of what were already lucrative, Spaniard-dominated industries in mining and agriculture.⁵

Chuquisaca (Spaniards changed the name of the city to La Plata, and later, soon after Independence from Spain, it was renamed Sucre in homage to the famous liberator, Antonio José de Sucre), became the *de facto* administrative center of Alto Perú as early as the late 1530s. But after 1545, mining and business activity in Potosí dominated the region and spurred the foundation and colonization of supporting cities.⁶ To recognize the

⁴One of the best colonial sources on the Spanish Civil War is Garcilaso de la Vega's account in the classic *Reales Comentarios de los Inca*, which has been translated into English as *Royal Commentaries of the Incas and General History of Peru*, trans. Harold Livermore (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1994). An interesting recently published monograph by Nelson Manrique, *Conquista y Orden Colonial* (Lima: SUR Casa de Estudios del Socialismo, 1996) places the conquest and subsequent civil war in the context of current theoretical debates of race, ethnicity, etc. The latest biography of Pizarro, which focuses particularly on his life after the conquest, comes from Varón Gabai, *Francisco Pizarro and His Brothers: The Illusion of Power in Sixteenth-Century Peru*, trans. Javier Flores Espinosa (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997).

⁵The administrator who supervised the post-Pizarro colonization of Alto Perú was Pedro de la Gasca. Gasca served as President of the Audiencia of Peru and had effective authority to govern the region between Blasco Núñez Vela's (1544-46) and Don Antonio de Mendoza's (1551-52) respective tenures as Viceroy of Peru. In large part, according to most colonial scholars, he was responsible for ending the civil war in Peru and the reassignment of *encomiendas* to a new generation of Spanish war heroes. For a biography of his career, see *Don Pedro de la Gasca, 1493-1567: su obra política en España y América* (Lima: Pontificia Universidad del Perú, Fondo Editorial, 1989).

⁶Monographs on Potosí and the silver mines of the Cerro Rico are numerous. Three of the best are Jeffrey Cole, *The Potosí Mita, 1573-1700* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985); Mariano Baptista Gumucio, *Esplendor y grandeza de Potosí*,

growing political and commercial importance of Alto Perú, King Charles V officially created the Audiencia de Charcas (with La Plata as the capital) by issue of a *cédula real* dated 12 June, 1559.⁷

In the course of the remainder of the sixteenth century, the Audiencia of Charcas came to encompass most of the territory of modern-day Bolivia. La Plata and Potosí were the important urban and mining centers in the south; Santa Cruz de la Sierra became the frontier staging center for military⁸ and missionary expeditions⁹ in the east; the centrally

1545-1825 (La Paz: Anthropos, 1997); and Peter J. Bakewell, *Miners of the Red Mountain: Indian Labor in Potosí 1545-1650* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984). Carlos Sempat Assadourian has written extensively on the social and economic effect Potosí had on surrounding populations. In an essay entitled "Andean Communities, Political Cultures and Markets: The Changing Contours of a Field," he writes that Potosí was "the principal motor force of structural change that affected all facets of economic and social relations throughout the Andes." Brooke Larson and Olivia Harris, eds., *Ethnicity, Markets, and Migration in the Andes: At the Crossroads of History and Anthropology* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 15.

⁷Ramiro Condarco Morales, *Atlas Histórico de Bolivia* (La Paz: Imprenta "San José," 1985), 30.

⁸According to the Bolivian historian Manuel Fontaura Argandaña, the quick establishment and subsequent colonization by the Spanish of the Audiencia of Charcas was only in part due to the potential of the Potosí mines. He claims that perhaps more important, and somewhat overlooked, was the significance of Charcas as an expeditionary point of departure. He writes: "in effect, from Charcas they organized expeditions to the south toward Tucumán, to the west and southwest to Chile, to the southeast to Paraguay and to the north toward Brazil." Manuel Fontaura Argandaña, *Descubridores y Exploradores de Bolivia* (La Paz: Editorial Los Amigos del Libro, 1971), 43.

⁹Several monographs have examined the colonial history of the Jesuit missions among the Moxos and Chiquitos Indians of eastern Bolivia. On the Moxos, see David Block, *Mission Culture on the Upper Amazon: Native Tradition, Jesuit Enterprise and Secular Policy in Moxos, 1660-1880* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994); and for Chiquitos, see Werner Hoffman, *Las misiones jesuíticas entre los chiquitanos* (Buenos Aires: Fundación para la Educación, Ciencia, y Cultura, 1979); and Juan Patricio Fernández, *Relación historial de las misiones de indios chiquitos* (Asunción: A. de Uribe

located Cochabamba valley and its surrounding area grew from a collection of small agricultural farms into the primary granary of Potosí,¹⁰ and La Paz, with its ecologically diverse provinces and dense indigenous populations, dominated the northern sector of the *audiencia*.

The Spanish *conquistador* Don Alonso de Mendoza founded the city of Nuestra Señora de La Paz on October 20, 1548. Three days later, after "appreciating that the site was hostile to all forms of decent life," Mendoza moved the city to its current location in a valley some twenty kilometers west.¹¹ Prior to the arrival of the Spanish, this valley was home to a handful of indigenous gold miners who had formed small settlements along the banks of the Chuquiabo River.

By the time of Mendoza's establishment of effective administrative control in the region, a number of *encomenderos* (all of whom had served under Francisco Pizarro), already had profitable commercial enterprises which capitalized on the region's vast

y Compañía, 1896).

¹⁰On the foundation and eventual florescence of the Cochabamba valley as an agricultural area, see Brooke Larson, *Colonialism and Agrarian Transformation in Bolivia: Cochabamba 1550-1900* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), and Robert Jackson, "The Decline of the Hacienda in Cochabamba, Bolivia: The Case of the Sacaba Valley, 1870-1929," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 69 (1989): 259-281.

¹¹Alberto Crespo Rodas, Mariano Baptista Gumucio, José de Mesa, *La Ciudad de La Paz: su historia su cultura* (La Paz: Impresora Editorial Educacional, 1989), 29. The original location became the town of Laja located on the *altiplano* approximately thirty-five kilometers west of the capital city. Laja served as an important link between La Paz and the many densely populated villages in the Province of Chucuito, the district's westernmost region. It was also commonly the first village visited when the bishop or the visitor-general toured this part of the diocese.

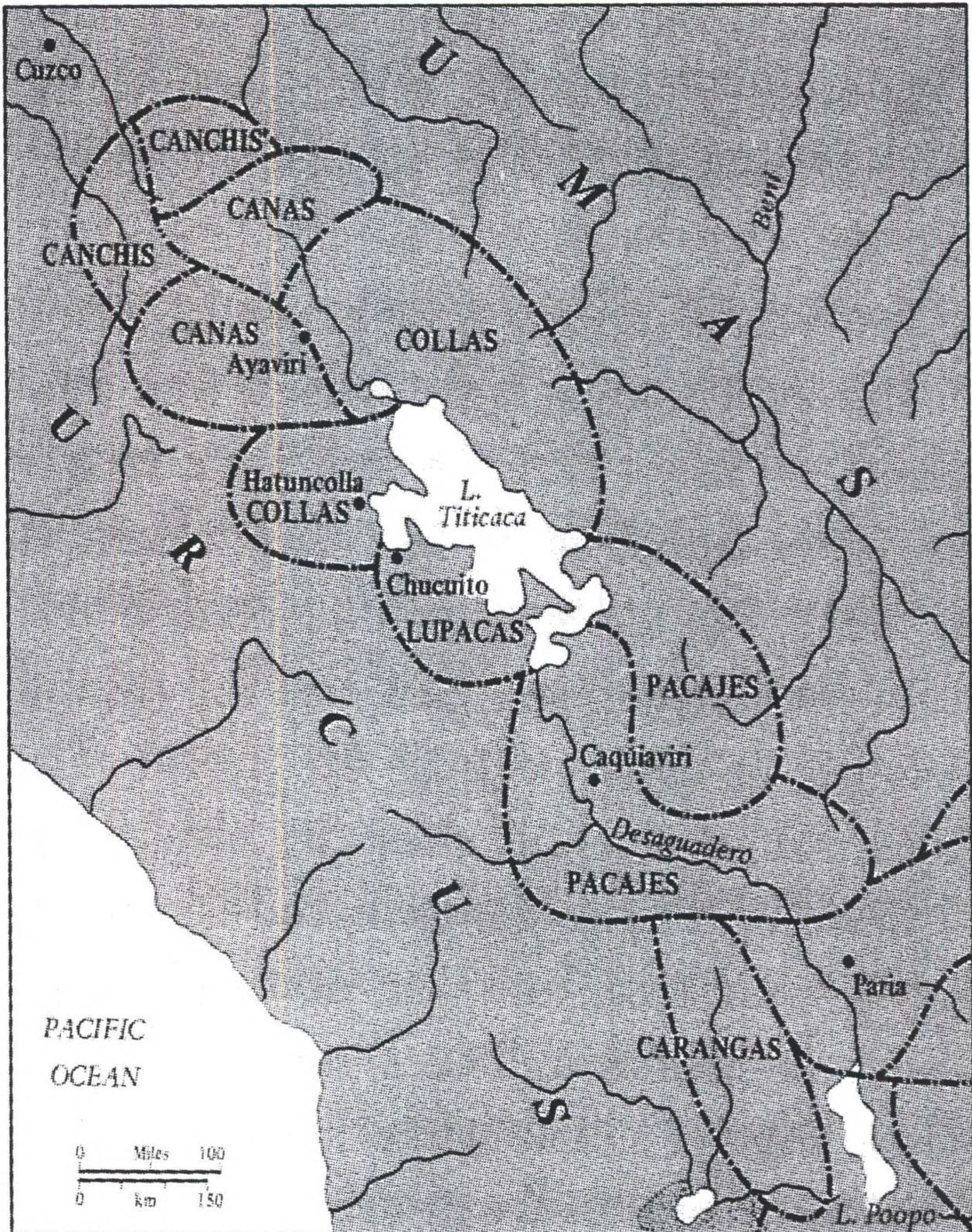


Figure 2-1 The Aymara Kingdoms in the late 15th and early 16th century
 (Source: Herbert S. Klein, *Bolivia: The Evolution of a Multi-Ethnic Society* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1982]).

agricultural potential and sizable indigenous population.¹² In his *Colección de documentos pertenecientes a la historia eclesiástica y civil de América*, written in 1645, Juan Diez de la Calle (who identified himself as an *oficial segundo* of the presiding Secretary of the Council of the Indies) wrote:

The city of Nuestra Señora de La Paz or Chuquiabo in the Province of Charcas is situated in the middle of the Callao district, 100 leagues from Cuzco and 80 from La Plata. It was founded by Captain Alonso de Mendoza in 1548 by order of the Governor and President of Perú, Licenciado Pedro de la Gazca. . . . It is composed currently of six *corregimientos* and is of agreeable climate, abundant with wine, cattle and fish, which are healthy and fresh year round on account of a large lake nearby.¹³

Among the local *encomenderos* in the 1530s and 1540s were Mendoza (his *encomienda* grant was located between Achacachi and Sorata); Pedro León Romano (Guarina); Juan de Espinosa y León (Laja); Antonio de Esquivel (Tiahuanaco); García Herrezuela and García Peralta (Desaguadero); Antonio Alvarez de Carrasco (Carocaró); and Francisco Pizarro, who — prior to his death in 1541 — possessed three *encomiendas*, one south of Laja, one just west of Cohoni, and one in Sicasica.¹⁴ Pizarro, according to most contemporary scholars, held quasi-feudal control of the region prior to

¹²In her book, *Potosí: La versión Aymara de un mito europeo. La minería y sus efectos en las sociedades andinas del siglo XVII. La Provincia de Pacajes* (Madrid: Editorial Catriel, 1993), Teresa Cañedo-Argüelles Fábrega uses both secondary and primary sources in her analysis of the pattern and effect of the first European incursions into Upper Peru. She is interested, mainly, in patterns of Spanish colonization, and, in particular, how natives of what became the *corregimiento* of Pacajes reacted to the arrival of Spaniards and the subsequent forms of social, political, and labor control implemented after the Toledan reforms of the 1570s.

¹³Biblioteca Nacional (Madrid, hereafter BN), Legajo 2930, fol. 130.

¹⁴Condarco Morales, *Atlas Histórico de Bolivia*, 32.

Mendoza's arrival and had allotted more than 12,000 Indians to the personal service of the new Spanish colonists by 1540.¹⁵

By the end of 1548, forty-three Spanish *vecinos*, their families and an unknown number of natives (most of whom probably served the new Spanish colonists in some capacity) and black slaves occupied the city.¹⁶ By 1586, La Paz' Spanish population had reached two-hundred and sixty, but accounted for only 4.7 percent of the urban population which totaled 5,540.¹⁷ Demographically, Indians dominated the countryside as well. In 1600, according to the *cronista* Juan López de Velasco, 30,000 *tributarios* lived in the six provincial *corregimientos* (Paucarcolla, Chucuito, Omasuyos, Larecaja, Pacajes, and Sicasica) and the *corregimiento* of La Paz.¹⁸ Three episcopal visitas from the 1620s

¹⁵Under his 1537 Chuquiabo *encomienda* grant, Pizarro obligated Indians from both banks of Lake Titicaca and the important cultural zone along the Desaguadero River — which were the most densely populated regions of Upper Peru — to service the new Spanish landowners.

¹⁶Crespo Rodas, *La Ciudad de La Paz: su historia, su cultura*, 436.

¹⁷Ibid., 36. Indians, slaves and *mestizos* thus combined to number 5,280.

¹⁸Condarco Morales, *Atlas Histórico de Bolivia*, 34. In the documentation of the Archivo Central, *tributarios* are interchangeably referred to as *originarios*. These Indians claimed ancestral ties to the communities they lived in and enjoyed the benefits (mainly rights to land) that this status conferred. Perhaps these population figures were so high on account of the relatively low percentage of native mortality in the region during the demographically calamitous one-hundred year period from 1550 to 1650. Between the reigns of Viceroy Andrés Hurtado de Mendoza Cañete (1556-1560) and Viceroy Francisco de Toledo (1571-1581), López Beltrán reports that the area around La Paz and Lake Titicaca lost only 7.6% of its total indigenous population compared to a 32% loss in and around Potosí and La Plata. In other words, it is possible that the native populations in the northern sector of the *audiencia* were less affected by disease, abuse, and overwork, and migration to avoid the Potosí *mita* than Indians in the southern areas. *Biografía de Bolivia*, 63.

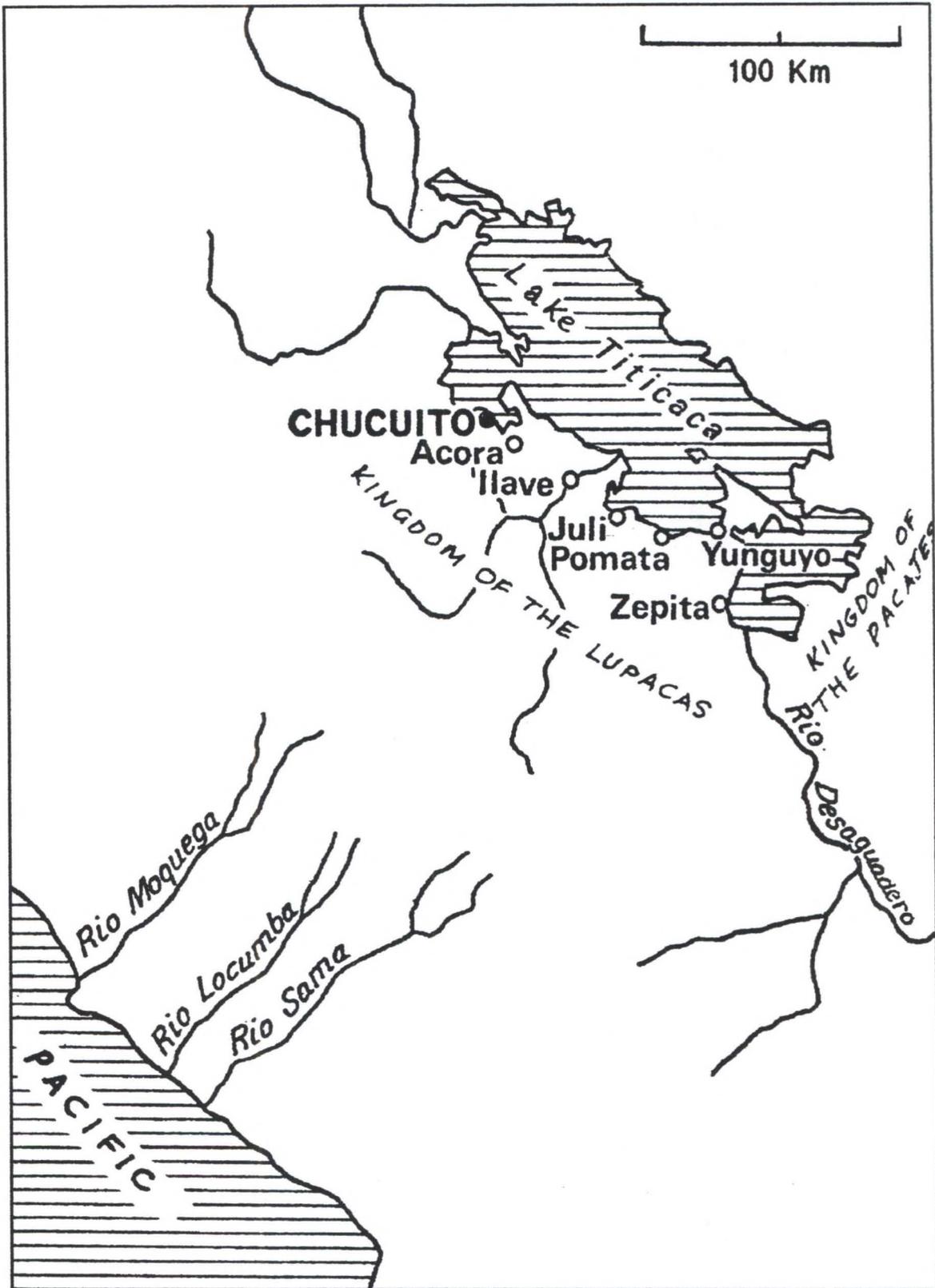


Figure 2-2 Principal Indian Villages on the Southern Bank of Lake Titicaca, circa 1600
(Source: Nathan Wachtel, *The Vision of the Vanquished: The Spanish Conquest of Peru through Indian Eyes, 1530 - 1570* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1982]).

and 1630s certify these figures and confirm the relatively dense population of the Lake Titicaca region and La Paz' eastern hinterland. Bishop Pedro de Valencia reported after a general visit of the diocese in 1620 that he had saved over 10,000 ("*arriva de diez mil*") new souls through confirmation.¹⁹ Sixteen years later, in 1636, Bishop Feliciano de la Vega declared that as result of his year-long tour of the diocese ("according to my diary, I have walked four hundred and one leagues") the number of confirmed Christians in the region totaled 37,642.²⁰ By 1638, that number had reached 52,000.

In 1684, the total population of La Paz surpassed 12,600. A census compiled by the *corregidor* that same year declared that about two hundred Spanish families lived in the city, each having an average of six or seven household servants.²¹ Towards the close of the colonial period, in 1764, La Paz was the third most populated urban center in the Peruvian Andes with over 20,000 Indian and Spanish inhabitants.²² One scholar goes further and claims that La Paz boasted a population of 40,000 in 1750; in the adjacent areas, furthermore, "the 150,000 to 200,000 *campesinos* . . . converted La Paz into the

¹⁹AGI, Charcas 138, 20 March, 1620.

²⁰AGI, Charcas 138, 4 March, 1636.

²¹Ibid., 36. Crespo Rodas states that in 1650, 850,000 people lived in the jurisdiction of the Audiencia of Charcas; there were approximately 750,000 Indians; 50,000 Spaniards; 30,000 black slaves; 15,000 mestizos; and 5,000 mulatos. Ibid., 60.

²²Nicolás Sánchez-Albornoz, *The Population of Latin America: A History*, trans. W.A.R. Richardson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 100. Lima, with a population of 54,000, and Cuzco, with 26,000 inhabitants, were the two biggest cities in the Peruvian Andes.

[most important] administrative and mercantile center in the densely populated *altiplano* and valley region."²³

Potosí certainly dominated the mining sector of Alto Perú. But miners working in locations within what would become the Diocese of La Paz also experienced considerable, albeit usually short-term success. Herbert Klein points out in his general history of Bolivia that by the close of the sixteenth century, the search for mineral deposits touched even the poorest *altiplano* communities.²⁴ Mining in Berenguela²⁵ and San Antonio de Esquilache, both located in the heart of the *altiplano* south of Lake Titicaca and southwest of La Paz, proved to be two of the region's more lucrative and long-lasting enterprises in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Colonial authors and scribes continually referred to Berenguela as an important mining district and rock quarry inhabited chiefly not by any *tributario* work force but rather by an ethnically mixed group of mestizo and *forastero* laborers.²⁶ Northwest of Berenguela, according to a mid seventeenth-century source, was

²³López Beltrán, *Biografía de Bolivia*, 91. An especially fascinating and recently published study of the city of La Paz (including some colonial illustrations) as seen through traveler's accounts from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries is Mariano Baptista Gumucio, *La Paz vista por viajeros extranjeros y autores nacionales, siglos XVI-XX* (La Paz: Anthropos, 1997).

²⁴Herbert Klein, *Bolivia: The Evolution of a Multi-Ethnic Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 57.

²⁵Alberto Crespo Rodas reports that the stones ("*pedra blanca*") extracted from quarries in Berenguela were so valuable they were shipped as far a Lima to be used for construction of churches and other important buildings. Crespo Rodas, *La Ciudad de La Paz: su historia, su cultura*, 45.

²⁶The ethnic designation of *forastero* referred to those Indians and their descendants who had been uprooted from their ancestral homes or who had fled voluntarily to avoid tributary obligations.

a great mountain of mines called San Antonio de Esquilache which is very old and well-established. . . . In the entire empire there is no better production of metals. It currently has six processing mills . . . and in addition some metal crushers (*trapiezes*) which they use to grind [metals] in each of these mills.²⁷

But agriculture, not mining, was the primary source of wealth for residents in and around La Paz and the banks of Lake Titicaca as *encomenderos* and later, *hacendados*, benefitted from the region's diverse ecology. Farmers of the arid highland plains of the *altiplano*, which stretched from north of Lake Titicaca to Argentina and Chile, produced potatoes, *quinua* (a type of grain), and to a lesser extent, wheat.²⁸ In the steep river

²⁷AGI, Charcas 138, 3 March, 1651. San Antonio de Esquilache was the site of a mestizo-led insurrection in 1661, and subsequently, suffered a bad reputation among ecclesiastics assigned to work there. Alonso de Monasterios, cura of San Antonio in the 1680s, sought a transfer after a murder attempt concocted and carried out by a few unhappy Indians. Don Alonso explained in a private letter to Bishop Queipo de Llano Valdés: "I appear before Your Most Excellent Lord . . . to request a transfer with the priest from Yunguio . . . because some Indians entered my house with the goal of killing me." Archivo Central Canónigo Felipe López Menéndez (hereafter ACCFLM), Tomo 2, fol. 228. Ambrosio de Urquieta y Salinas applied in 1720 for several other positions because of the disagreeable weather and inability to make a proper living in San Antonio. He stated in his *relación*: "it is a land supremely unknown on account of the inhospitable weather which is totally opposed to good health. It has such poverty that it is difficult to gather any salary which corresponds to the parish. . . . I have been relegated to the status of a beggar for my own survival because of the lack of parishioners and local foods, all motives which compel me to impose on the charity of Your Most Excellent Lord." ACCFLM, Tomo 32, fol. 104.

²⁸Nils Jacobsen, in his case study of the Peruvian *altiplano* describes the region as the "cradle of Andean civilization." He writes, "The Titicaca basin forms the northern third of the *altiplano*, which extends for some twelve hundred kilometers from the dividing line of the modern departments of Puno and Cuzco southward to the border between Argentina and Bolivia. It is surrounded by the eastern and western cordillera of the Andes. . . . at an altitude of 3,812 meters above sea level, Lake Titicaca, nearly two hundred kilometers long and up to seventy kilometers wide, provides the special environment that has allowed the *altiplano* to become one of the most densely settled areas anywhere on our planet at comparable altitudes. It has moderated the harsh climate and favored agricultural production in a narrow belt around its shores." Nils Jacobsen, *Mirages of*

valleys northeast of La Paz known as the Yungas, the climate was humid and more tropical.²⁹ This region, according to Thierry Saignès, attracted many of the first Spanish colonists due to the market potential of the primary crop: coca. Indeed, of the many civil court cases I consulted in the Archivo de La Paz which involved secular priests, several dealt with litigation pertaining to priest-owned coca farms (*cocales*) in the Yungas. Joseph López Botello, an assistant priest (*ayudante*) in Yanacache in the 1710s, for example, allegedly owned several *cocales* near town and forced Indians to work them without proper compensation. A witness named Pedro Alavi testified that: "Licenciado Botello has had farms for many years for coca production and also maize, and it is customary for him to compel the *alféreses* to work them without payment for their personal service."³⁰

In addition, as important suppliers to the local consumer market, farmers in this lush environment grew fruits of all kinds, including oranges, limes, pears, peaches,

Transition: The Peruvian Altiplano, 1780-1930 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 13.

²⁹Thierry Saignès dedicated much of his scholarship to this particular region of Alto Perú. In his edited volume (with F.M. Renard Casevitz and A.C. Taylor) entitled, *Al este de los Andes: Relaciones entre las sociedades Amazónicas y Andinas entre los siglos XV y XVII* (Lima: Instituto Francés de Estudios Andinos, 1986), he discusses, among other things, how Inca, and later, Spanish colonists to the region used pre-incaic roads to facilitate economic exploitations of the region. In an essay entitled "Indian Migration and Social Change in Seventeenth-Century Charcas" (Larson and Harris, eds. *Ethnicity, Markets, and Migration in the Andes*), Saignès explains that throughout this century, *tributario* males frequently migrated out of their *altiplano* villages and settled in the Yungas territory at the behest of Spanish landowners because of the economic possibilities of the region.

³⁰ACCFLM, Tomo 27, fol. 245.

example, allegedly owned several *cocales* near town and forced Indians to work them without proper compensation. A witness named Pedro Alavi testified that: "Licenciado Botello has had farms for many years for coca production and also maize, and it is customary for him to compel the *alféreses* to work them without payment for their personal service."³⁰

In addition, as important suppliers to the local consumer market, farmers in this lush environment grew fruits of all kinds, including oranges, limes, pears, peaches, pomegranates, figs and plums.³¹ In the higher reaches of the Yungas and in the ecological zone between the tropical forests and the *altiplano* (which included predominantly indigenous settlements such as Songo and Challana), farmers specializing in maize and grape production capitalized on the popular market for alcoholic beverages. *Chicha*, a type of corn beer of ritualistic significance in pre-Colombian (and contemporary) Andean cultures, remained popular in the colonial period and was principally consumed (in excess if we are to believe most Spanish sources) by the area's native populations.³² Spaniards

³⁰ACCFLM, Tomo 27, fol. 245.

³¹Crespo Rodas, *La Ciudad de La Paz: su historia, su cultura*, 382.

³²On the use of *chicha* and coca as important ingredients in contemporary Andean religious rituals see Catherine Allen, *The Hold Life Has: Coca and Cultural Identity in an Andean Community* (Washington D.C.: The Smithsonian Institution, 1988). For a more historical analysis of *chicha* in Andean cultures, see María Clara Llano Restrepo, *La chicha, una bebida fermentada a través de la historia* (Bogotá: Instituto Colombiana de Antropología, 1994).

Vivero, possessed — prior to his conviction on numerous violations of Church policy — between six and seven hundred head of cattle and sheep which he kept on his ranch near Guarina, located just northwest of La Paz on the *altiplano*. Don Antonio, according to allegations, also employed a herd of forty mules which he utilized to transport wine from Arequipa to La Paz and coca from his farms in the Yungas to destinations throughout the Diocese of La Paz.

Catholicism in Charcas, 1535-1680

Commensurate with the effective establishment of political and economic control of the region in the 1540s and 1550s was the creation of an episcopal administration whose responsibilities included converting to Catholicism the multitudes of indigenous peoples and servicing the ever growing number of Spanish colonists.³⁵ Missionaries from the various orders, as in other parts of the Americas, were the first ecclesiastics to establish sustained contact with the crown's new Indian subjects in Alto Perú.³⁶ According

he argues, they deeply resented (like their descendants would centuries later) the new obligations imposed on them by the Dominican friars who demanded payments for religious services.

³⁵In his new book, *Entre el oro y la fe: el dilema de América* (San Juan, Puerto Rico: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1995), Luis N. Rivera Pagán analyzes the fundamental motives and myths of Spanish conquest and Christianization in the Americas with particular emphasis on the earliest years of missionary activity.

³⁶The problem of language, especially in the attempt to make Indians believers in the Catholic faith, surfaced immediately. Commenting on the importance of language and the difficult task of conversion, the famous historian of the Church in colonial Mexico, Robert Ricard, writes: "The friars of Mexico, from the moment of their arrival, recognized that the knowledge of the Indian languages was the essential prerequisite of serious evangelization. . . . It was the best means of penetrating the spirit of the pagans and conquering their hearts." Robert Ricard, *The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico*, trans. Lesley Byrd Simpson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 24. Sabine MacCormack's

to the priest and contemporary historian David Maldonado Villagrán, Pizarro brought with him to Charcas six Dominican friars. Among them was Pedro Valverde, who in 1538 became the bishop of Cuzco.³⁷ Indeed, clerics of the main regular orders — the Dominicans, Franciscans, Augustinians, Mercedarians, and the Jesuits — were well established in all the major cities of the *audiencia* by the close of the sixteenth century.³⁸

The region, in terms of religious jurisdiction, was first governed by the bishop of Cuzco, but the growing importance of Potosí after 1545, combined with the sheer immensity of the territory (technically, the Diocese of Cuzco in 1550 extended from Popayán to Chile), led King Charles to divide the diocese in 1552. Thus, on 5 July of that year, the Bishopric of Charcas (La Plata) was officially recognized as a separate ecclesiastical entity; its territory stretched from Cuzco east to the Chaco area, north into

Religion in the Andes: Vision and Imagination in Early Colonial Peru (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), is an innovative study which analyzes the objectivity and authenticity of colonial sources which dealt with religious practices and beliefs in the Andes.

³⁷David Maldonado Villagrán, *500 Años de Evangelización en Bolivia* (La Paz: Empresa Editora "Urquiza," 1991), 36.

³⁸Canónigo Felipe López Menéndez reports in his study of the Archdiocese of La Paz that the Franciscans established a monastery in La Paz in August of 1549. They were followed by the Mercedarians who arrived a month later, the Augustinians in 1562, and the Jesuits in 1582. Felipe López Menéndez, *El Arzobispado de Nuestra Señora de La Paz* (La Paz: Imprenta Nacional Ayacucho, 1949), 250-260. In his more general study, López Menéndez states that the Dominicans had established convents in Copacabana, Pomata, Juli, Sepita, and Yunguyo (all towns in the jurisdiction of the Diocese of La Paz during the colonial period) by 1600. Felipe López Menéndez, *Compendio de Historia Eclesiástica de Bolivia* (La Paz: Imprenta El Progreso, 1965), 11.

the western rainforests of the Amazonian basin, and south to Tucumán.³⁹ The densely populated region around Lake Titicaca, as the seventeenth-century commentator Diez de la Calle pointed out, was an important focal point of early Church activity: "the lake area has had [from Spanish conquest] many men of nobility and lots of missionaries from the Franciscan and Augustinian orders."⁴⁰

The first ordained parish priest in La Paz, according to the *Actas Capitulares de la Paz* (1548-54), was *Bachiller* Juan Rodríguez.⁴¹ It is unclear if he served in the city's first church, San Sebastián — which was built in 1539 and administered by the members of the Franciscan order — or the parish of San Pedro (staffed throughout the colonial period by secular priests), founded in 1549. San Sebastián, San Pedro and later the parish of Santa Bárbara (1557) serviced the city's sizable indigenous population. La Paz' Spanish community, somewhat surprisingly, did not have its own parish until town leaders commissioned the Iglesia de la Matriz to be built in 1556. Eventually, with the foundation of the Diocese of La Paz in 1605, the Iglesia de la Matriz became the diocesan Cathedral.

During the sixteenth century, the competition among ecclesiastics for the right to service the region's sizable Indian and growing Spanish population was fierce.⁴² To ease tensions between the bishops of Cuzco and La Plata, and to provide a more focused

³⁹BN, Legajo 3010, fol. 216r. With the creation of the Diocese of Charcas, Cuzco was elevated to the status of Archdiocese.

⁴⁰BN, Legajo 2930, fol 130.

⁴¹López Menéndez, *El Arzobispado de Nuestra Señora de La Paz*, 117.

⁴²Thierry Saignès, *En busca del poblamiento étnico* (La Paz: Avances de Investigación, 1986), 36.

colonial presence in this pivotal junction which linked Potosí to destinations in Lower Peru, Pope Paul V signed a papal bull on July 4 1605 entitled *Super specula militantis*, which established La Paz as the capital of a new see called the Diocese of La Paz.⁴³ This bull also created the Diocese of Santa Cruz de la Sierra, and elevated the former Diocese of Charcas to the status of Archdiocese of La Plata. Two years later, in 1607, King Philip III confirmed and ratified the bull, and ordered the President of the Audiencia of Charcas, Alonso de Maldonado, to set the frontiers and jurisdictional borders of the new dioceses.⁴⁴ President Maldonado determined that the bishop of the Diocese of La Paz would assume episcopal control over all parishes in the city and the six previously mentioned *corregimientos* of Paucarcolla, Chucuito, Omasuyos, Larecaja, Pacajes, and Sicasica.⁴⁵

Thus, in the first decade of the seventeenth century, the Diocese of La Paz began to take shape, and after two unsuccessful attempts to install a resident bishop in the diocese (one nominee was transferred to another post before taking office and the other one died en route), the Dominican Domingo Valderrama finally arrived in La Paz from Quito and took office in April 1610.⁴⁶ During his five-year tenure, Bishop Valderrama

⁴³According to López Menéndez, Pope Paul V's bull "ordered that the bishop proceed with appointments of a good number of dignitaries, canons, and prebends, and other beneficed priests to serve in the city and throughout the diocese, whose obligation it would be to save souls . . . and to build up the secular clergy as ordered by King Philip and those who preceded him and those future kings of Spain." *El Arzobispado de Nuestra Señora de La Paz*, 74.

⁴⁴Ibid., 2.

⁴⁵Over time, the boundaries of the jurisdiction of the diocese changed; in 1627 for example, Bishop Pedro Valencia did not include Sicasica as a *corregimiento* under his control, rather a district he called Caracollo. Many, but not all of the towns, were part of both *corregimientos*.

⁴⁶Ibid., 4.

organized his administrative office, staffed the *cabildo eclesiástico*, founded the *colegio seminario* in honor of San Gerónimo,⁴⁷ began construction of the Cathedral, conducted the first ecclesiastic visit of the diocese, published the first schedule of religious fees (the *arancel eclesiástico*), and began to ordain secular priests to serve in the region's many Indian parishes.⁴⁸ Subsequent seventeenth-century bishops were: Pedro Valencia (1617-1631),⁴⁹ Feliciano de la Vega (1634-1639); Francisco Luna Alonso (1642); Antonio de Castro y Castillo (1647-1653); Martín de Velasco Molina (1656-1662); Martín Montalvo (1666-1668); Gabriel Guilléstegui (1671-1678); Juan Pérez de Concha Illescas (1679); Juan Queipo de Llano Valdés (1680-1694); and Bernardo Carrasco de Saavedra (1695-1697). The four bishops of the early eighteenth century who supervised the priests covered in this study included Nicolás Urbano Mata y Haro (1702-1704); Diego Morcillo Rubio y Auñón(1708-1711); Mateo Villafañé Pandaño (1714-1722) and Alejo Fernando

⁴⁷Commenting on the state of the *colegio seminario* in 1634, Bishop Feliciano de la Vega stated in a report to King Philip IV: "the seminary school was destroyed and its only staff were four professors. In the meanwhile, after taking a look at the accounts and assets in order to determine how many of them it could support, I have named up to twelve so that the Church here might have more distinction. I am currently drawing up series of constitutions for its governance, because one has never been written." AGI, Charcas 138, 12 March, 1634.

⁴⁸Crespo Rodas, *La ciudad de La Paz: su historia, su cultura*, 44.

⁴⁹Bishop de la Vega explained that one of the reasons for the poor condition of the diocese upon his arrival in 1634 "was because Bishop Don Pedro de Valencia had gone blind seven years before death, and on that account I found the Divine Cult in poor condition, as well as the regimen of the church [perhaps] because there were only three prebends. . . . [All this] caused the citizens much grief." AGI, Charcas 138, 12 March, 1634.

de Rojas y Acebedo (1723-1730).⁵⁰ All these men, according to the historian Antonio de Egaña, fulfilled the duties of their office with zeal and diligence and were especially faithful to the mandates of the Council of Trent, promulgated by the Catholic Church in the sixteenth century.⁵¹ Egaña stresses:

from the beginning, the new diocese possessed the distinct features of a see strongly dedicated to the spirit of the Tridentine strategy [of episcopal administration] . . . and a profound preoccupation (*honda preocupación*) for the welfare of its Indian subjects.⁵²

A dissenting view of the behavior of the Church's higher administration in La Paz comes from the contemporary Bolivian economist Luis Peñalosa Cordero, who writes in his history of the country:

One might say that with some exceptions, the Church abandoned its spiritual mission and dedicated its attention to satisfying more material concerns . . . as priests and bishops sought not only wealth, but also a cozy and comfortable (*cómoda y holgada*) life. . . . The majority [of upper clergy] lived tranquilly, well-served, and without discomfort because their parish priests exploited the indigenous parishioners and stole their lands and other assets.⁵³

According to Felipe López Menéndez, there were seventy-two parishes in the Diocese of La Paz in 1609. At this date, all but the Cathedral and the main church (*la Iglesia Mayor*) in Chucuito (the second most important urban center in the Diocese during

⁵⁰López Menéndez, *El Arzobispado de Nuestra Señora de La Paz*, 4-13.

⁵¹For a historical analysis of the Council of Trent, see John C. Olin, *Catholic Reform: From Cardinal Ximénez to the Council of Trent* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1990).

⁵²Antonio de Egaña, *Historia de la Iglesia en la América Española* (Madrid: La Editorial Católica, 1966), 372-376.

⁵³Peñalosa Cordero, *Nueva Historia Económica de Bolivia*, 193.

the colonial period) served predominantly indigenous parishioners. Prominent villages along the banks of Lake Titicaca were Chucuito, Ancoraymes, Copacabana, Juli, and Puno. Charasani, Ambaná, Sorata, and Combaya in the north, and Collana, San Andrés de Machaca, and Berenguela in the south were towns of notable size and commercial distinction.⁵⁴ In the Yungas east of La Paz there were several significant settlements due to the lucrative coca industry, including Chulumani, Coroico, and Suri.⁵⁵ Near La Paz,

⁵⁴Thierry Saignès has done considerable research on the demographic composition and origin of native towns in the region encompassed by the Diocese of La Paz. In his book entitled, *Los andes orientales: historia de un olvidado* (La Paz: Centro de Estudios de la Realidad Económica y Social [CERES], 1985), he maps out boundaries of conquest and attempts to determine which villages were of pre-Columbian origin. He concludes that most of the larger towns (such as Sorata, Ambana, Carabuco, and Mocomco) by the middle of the seventeenth century were the result of policies implementing the *congregación* (*reducción*) policy implemented by Viceroy Toledo in the 1570s.

⁵⁵Travel in this tropical area was notoriously difficult and dangerous. Priests throughout the period under review complained incessantly about the inaccessibility of many of the Indian hamlets. In the 1630s, when many of the region's inhabitants were still unfamiliar with the motives and teachings of the Church, Bishop Feliciano de la Vega visited several villages. "Having departed on the pastoral visita of this bishopric, beginning with a tour of the Yungas Chapes, a province where no prelate had entered before since the discovery of this kingdom, on account of the harshness of the roads which were more like cliffs that were inaccessible in some parts. . . . I entered the districts of Songo and Challana, which are also villages occupied by these Yungas Indians and of even poorer roads than the others, and these people had also never seen a prelate before, because many of them [former bishops] could not go by horseback. The royal visitors who have served [this region] had also never arrived here, at least according to the parochial books of the churches. For these reasons the Indians were unfamiliar with the teachings [of Christianity], and in no way understood what was the sacred sacrament of confirmation. They asked me in Challana if the bishop, which they refer to as the *apo*, was a human — such was the extent of their ignorance." AGI, Charcas 138, 4 March, 1636.



Figure 2-3 Principal Towns of the Diocese of La Paz, 1680 - 1730

Laja, Tiahuanaco, and Viacha were three of the most important indigenous communities of the *altiplano* in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁵⁶

Although the documentary evidence is ambiguous, members of the various regular orders serviced at least eleven of the seventy-two parishes in 1609. The Jesuits founded a *colegio* dedicated mainly to language instruction in Juli in 1577, and administered all four of the parishes in that important colonial town until their expulsion from Spanish America in 1767.⁵⁷ The Mercedarians staffed the church in Guarina until 1753. The Augustinians worked in the *altiplano* village of Pucarani until 1767, and in the important lacustrine pilgrimage site of Copacabana throughout the colonial period.⁵⁸ The Dominicans controlled the three churches in Pomata located on the southern banks of Lake Titicaca between Copacabana and Chucuito. And finally, the Franciscans managed the parish of San Sebastián in the city of La Paz until their transfer to Charasani in the northernmost

⁵⁶The complete list of *curatos* which comprised the Diocese of La Paz in 1609, according to López Menéndez, were (in Alto Perú) Achacachi, Ancoraymes, Ambaná, Copacabana, Cohoni, Caracato, Coroico, Combaya, Carabuco, Calamarca, Camata, Carejana, Circoata, Caquiaviri, Caquingora, Calacoto, Challana, Chacapa, Chuma, Charazani, Guarina, Guaqui, Huaychu, Irupana, Ilabaya, Ytalaque, Jesús de Machaca, La Paz (Matriz, San Sebastián, San Pedro), Mocomoco, Palca, Pucarani, Pelechuco, Quiabaya, Sapahaqui, Songo, Simaco, Sorata, Suri, San Andrés de Machaca, Santiago de Machaca, Tiahuanaco, Viacha, and Yungas Chapes. In Bajo Perú were Puacarcolla, San Francisco de la Puna, Guancané, Vilque, Moho, Puno Icho, Capachica, Coati, three parishes each in the villages of Chucuito, Acora, Pomata, and Zepita, two parishes in Yunguyo, and four parishes (all administered by the Jesuits) in Juli. *El Arzobispado de Nuestra Señora de La Paz*, 35.

⁵⁷Perhaps the best general work on this topic is still Magnus Morner's *The Expulsion of the Jesuits from Latin America* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1965).

⁵⁸For a history of the church and shrines of Copacabana, consult Fray Julio María Elías, *Copacauana-Copacabana* (Tarija, Bolivia: Editorial Offset Franciscana, 1976).

sector of the diocese at the end of the seventeenth century. Each religious order had a *convento* (monastery) in La Paz. Commenting in 1620, fifteen years after the creation of the diocese, Bishop Valencia stated proudly:

in the convents of Santo Domingo, San Francisco, San Agustín, La Merced, and La Compañía [de Jesús] there are ordinarily two or three preachers (*predicadores*), and another three or four clerics . . . who preach in the Cathedral and in their convents without ever missing a sermon on Sundays or festival days, and every Sunday before the main mass they preach in the cemetery of the Church in the general language [Quechua] and in Aymara to the Indians where many get together, both men and women. I personally attend this sermon because the value [of my presence] to the Indians is well-known. And in the afternoons the fathers of the Compañía de Jesús lead a procession of a thousand Indians through the streets, reciting the catechism.⁵⁹

In 1627, according to an unusually detailed report compiled by Bishop Valencia, the number of parishes remained at seventy-two. Secular priests occupied fifty-eight of the parishes while regular priests from the various orders managed the remaining fourteen. As seen in Appendix A (“Diocesan Parishes in 1627”), nearly a third of the parishes in the *corregimiento* of Chucuito were administered by regular priests. At the end of the report, Bishop Valencia stated that the fifty-eight secular priests working in the diocese in 1627 had collectively paid him 7,000 *pesos ensayados*⁶⁰ generated from the *cuarta funeral* and other sacramental offerings (*ofrendas*). On the issue of priestly payments, he noted with obvious irritation that the fourteen regular priests serving under his supervision had not

⁵⁹AGI, Charcas 138, 20 March, 1620.

⁶⁰There are two types of currency referred to throughout the documentation of the Archivo Central — the peso *corriente* and the peso *ensayado*. I believe the peso *corriente* was a more vulgar form of coin, and the *ensayado*, as its name indicates, a sort of assayed metal coin which was of more value than the other variety.

contributed any portion of their funeral charges to his office — nor had they donated money to the seminary, "*ni otras cosa alguna*" (nor anything else at all) — also adding that and in spite of this, they enjoyed their full salaries.⁶¹

Separate from the list of *corregimientos*, parishes, and salaries, Bishop Valencia commented extensively on other ecclesiastical matters such as the staffing of the Cathedral Chapter, the previous year's *diezmos y veintenas* (the royal tithes and twentieths) revenue, church construction projects,⁶² and the distribution of funds. In addition to the parishes listed in the tables, the bishop accounted for the three Indian churches in La Paz — San Pedro, San Sebastián, and Santa Bárbara — whose curates respectively earned 600, 400, and 400 pesos per year.

Sometime prior to 1701 the standard yearly stipend for parish priests working in the Diocese of La Paz rose to 1093 pesos. Few records in the Archivo Central contain data on priestly salaries, but two reports from 1701 and 1709 indicate that the respective parish priests of Sorata and Hilabaya both earned this base amount as their annual wage. In addition, each collected an average of between 750 and 1,500 pesos a year for the completion of various religious services (such as baptisms and funerals). In a rare annual

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Upon his arrival in La Paz in 1634, Bishop Vega was unimpressed with the physical condition of the Cathedral. He wrote to King Philip IV: "when this church was made into the Cathedral it consisted of two sections, and even now they have not even begun the roof. So it remains without a choir, without doors, and without any place to pray or to sing the divine mass. They have made a roof of branches which is most indecent, and that edifice which was here before is almost in ruins on account of it being so old, and having withstood so many floods and hard rains. It is in terrible shape and dangerous." AGI, Charcas 138, 12 March, 1634.

report, Licenciado Joseph Ferrán de la Nussa advised *Provisor* (the chief administrator of ecclesiastical affairs during a *sede vacante*) Gerónimo de Cañizares Ybarra that in the previous year (1700) he had donated thirty-three pesos to the seminary, five hundred to the bishop's office to pay the *quarta funeral*, five hundred in salary to his *ayudante*, and another two hundred pesos to various priests who had assisted him during the busy season of Lent. In his 1709 report, Pedro Toledo y Leyba stated he had contributed thirty-two pesos and six reales to the seminary, paid two hundred fifty pesos as part of collected *quarta funeral* charges, and given four hundred pesos to his assistant, Br. Diego de Areaya.

By the time Bishop Queipo de Llano Valdés assumed control of the bishopric in 1680, the diocese was well-organized and consisted of sixty-nine parishes, ten of which were served by members of the various religious orders.⁶³ Secular priests thus staffed fifty-nine parishes in 1680. At the end of the period under review (1730), the number of parishes increased by three as San Marcos de Mollebamba, Simaco and Coata were incorporated into the diocese. Secular priests staffed each of these new churches, but Pelechuco, once part of the *corregimiento* of Larecaja, switched from secular control over to the Franciscans sometime after 1683.⁶⁴

⁶³Some parishes had been consolidated with others nearby, and some had been created in the fifty-six year period between Bishop Valencia's 1627 report and Bishop Queipo de Llano Valdés first round of visitas in 1683. For example, in 1683 Chucuito possessed only two churches: the Iglesia Mayor, and Santo Domingo. Those in the advocacy of Los Reyes and San Pablo had been closed down. Caracato and Coroico were two towns that gained parish status at some point prior to 1683.

⁶⁴There is little reference in the Archivo Central's documentation to the Franciscan-controlled region of Apolabamba north of Charasani in the northernmost sector of the

The Pastoral *Visita y Escrutinio*

This dissertation is mostly based on a series of documents which provide at regular intervals an unusually detailed view of local conditions, conflicts, and customs in the Diocese of La Paz from 1680 to 1730. Called *visitas y escrutinios* (visits and inspections), these episcopal inquiries were basically trials held to assess the behavior of secular parish priests who worked in diocesan parishes. From 1680 to 1730, the various bishops — or more commonly their episcopal appointees (*visitadores generales*) — conducted three hundred sixty-four pastoral *visitas* in 1683, 1687, 1690-91, 1697, 1701, 1710, 1717, 1725, and 1728.⁶⁵ Thus, all of the bishops of the Diocese of La Paz who served from 1680 to 1730 supervised regional inspections except for Nicolás Urbano Mata y Haro, who, according to some sources, died the day after arriving in La Paz from Lima on December 24, 1704.⁶⁶

Certainly Queipo de Llano Valdés would have to be considered the most assiduous bishop if judged by his *visita* record. He or his visitor-general, Juan Antonio de Egaures y Pasquier, traveled to every village in the diocese over the course of his administration, and

diocese. However, much has been written about this missionary effort. One good monograph is César Augusto Machicao González' *Historia de Apolo y de la Provincia de Franz Tamayo* (La Paz: Prefectura del Departamento de La Paz, Dirección de Cultura, 1990).

⁶⁵Bishop Castillo y Castro alluded in his long 1651 report to Bishop Valderrama's initial tour of the diocese, but no primary records of that visit exist in any archives in La Paz. The first record of a completed *visita* was filed by Bishop Valencia in 1620; I located this file in the Archivo General de Indias in Seville. The first formal *visita y escrutinio* trial (with witnesses) housed in the Archivo Central Canónigo Felipe López Menéndez is dated May 20, 1683, and was held in Guarina near La Paz.

⁶⁶López Menéndez, *El Arzobispado de Nuestra Señora de La Paz*, 12.

in all, conducted three episcopal tours over an eight year span from 1683 to 1691.

Usually the investigative team set out from La Paz in June or July — months in the middle of the dry season — and concluded their visits by October, prior to the advent of the yearly rains which significantly curtailed travel from November to March. However, Bishop Queipo de Llano Valdés final and most extensive tour of the diocese took well over a year to complete. With occasional stopovers in La Paz, it lasted from June 1690 to September 1691.

The Spanish tradition of the general visit has a long history. John Leddy Phelan, in his book, *The Kingdom of Quito*, traces its roots to the patrimonial kingdoms of Western Europe during the Middle Ages. A key element of the patrimonial state, as posited by the German sociologist Max Weber in his long discussions of modern bureaucracies, was the implementation of periodic visits by the ruler or his designated official to different parts of the realm to prevent a fragmentation of royal authority.⁶⁷ Certainly, the nature of the episcopal visitas and the inquiries of visiting ecclesiastical officials represented, as Phelan points out, "a vision of society as it ought to be, a pale but nevertheless recognizable reflection of the ideal world encompassed in divine and natural law."⁶⁸ Even if the bishop of La Paz or his visitor-general rarely encountered in the course of their travels ideal

⁶⁷John Leddy Phelan, *The Kingdom of Quito in the Seventeenth Century: Bureaucratic Politics in the Spanish Empire* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1967), 325. Phelan points out that the historical origins of the *visita general* go back to Alfonso El Sabio's *Siete Partidas*. For a thorough discussion of the early history of the civic *visita general* in Spain and Spanish America, see Chapter 10 of Phelan's study of colonial Quito.

⁶⁸*Ibid.*, 328.

Christian communities complete with model priests and a dutiful congregation, the visita in this part of Upper Peru — I argue later in this dissertation — empowered parishioners by providing them an opportunity to air grievances which, with some luck, might lead to an amelioration of their oppressed condition or improve their negotiating position *vis-à-vis* the priest or rival village factions. In any case, the pastoral visita served as a nexus of contact between rulers and those they ruled, and it appears from the witness testimonies of the 1680s and 1690s that parishioners relished the chance to inform Church authorities of aspects of the parish priest's behavior, whether positive or incriminating.⁶⁹

Only the bishop or the visitor-general possessed the authority to judge the priests on trial and impose penalties. Usually the collection of testimonies and evidence fell to the second in charge, the chief prosecutor (*promotor fiscal*). Further down the line of authority, and perhaps the man who did most of the actual work, was the *secretario*. His job was to record in written form all relevant matters of the inspection (i.e. the tour of the church and chapels, the reading of the public edict announcing the goals of the visita, the interrogation of witnesses, the issuance of the final sentence, etc.). A vast majority of visiting bishops and visitors-general also employed a translator — often a member of one of the religious orders and usually a Jesuit — who was proficient in both Aymara and

⁶⁹This appears to be in contrast to the situation in Central America and Mexico. Murdo MacLeod reports that in these regions, the episcopal visita became a corrupt and much resented institution in many cases, largely because of three features. 1. The bishop tended to be less tolerant of local heterodoxies and would stamp them out via whippings, jailings, burning of idols, etc. 2. Visitas became notorious for collecting large sums in "fees" of various kinds. Some records from Chiapas tell of Indians fleeing to the *monte* when they heard the bishop was coming. 3. Bishops often traveled with large entourages, which meant food, food for mules and horses, and lodging for the whole crowd. Indians, in some places, resented this. Personal correspondence, May 1999.

Quechua. A survey of the witnesses brought before the various *promotores fiscales* during the first two decades of this study indicates that just over half required a translator to give their testimony. The other members of the investigative team were a few secular priests brought along to serve as witnesses of the proceedings. Frequently these priests resided or worked near the town being visited, and were thus commissioned on a temporary basis to certify the legitimacy and fairness of the trial.

Visiting authorities from the Diocese of La Paz followed roughly the same protocol throughout the period under review. That is, the presiding official basically obeyed the same logistical procedures as his predecessors. Using a 1683 *visita y escrutinio* held in Combaya (located north of Lake Titicaca near Sorata) as an example, it is possible to gain insight into the organization and day-to-day operations of the process as it was practiced over a fifty-year period.

According to a report filed by *Secretario* Francisco de Truxillo y Godoy (his official title was *Presbítero Secretario de Cámara del Ilustrísimo Señor Don Juan Queipo de Llano Valdés mi Señor Obispo de La Paz*), the group arrived in Combaya the morning of the 9th of July, 1683. "After being received in the customary manner by Bernardo Hernani de Bonifaz [one of the parish priests on trial] and a host of many Spaniards and Indians,"⁷⁰ Visitor-General Eguares y Pasquier proceeded to say mass before the congregation. After the Eucharist, he read a four-page *edicto de visita* (the edict of the visit) in its entirety. Among other things, the edict explained the purpose of the episcopal visit and outlined the questions which witnesses (who were generally drawn

⁷⁰ACCFLM, Tomo 3, fol. 7.

from the town's more prominent citizens) would have to answer. In addition, Visitor-General Eguares y Pasquier announced that any parishioners not called to testify before the *promotor fiscal* could file a separate affidavit to air any grievances or protests they might have. This proved to be an important outlet for women parishioners to denounce the priest's behavior, since they were never called as primary witnesses in any visita trial held during the period under review.⁷¹ In fact, over a third (34 percent) of all separately-filed affidavits (which numbered in the hundreds) during the first two decades of this study were submitted by women.

After mass, the investigative team visited the tabernacle and other shrines of importance. It was during this tour that Secretary Truxillo y Godoy recorded the visitor-general's impressions of the church's ornaments and decor. In the end, after a generally favorable inspection of the physical property, the secretary noted "one of the communion chests (*caxuelas*) had some vessels (*ampolletas*) of silver and others of glass and so the *Señor Visitador* ordered that all should be of silver."⁷² Such minor directives were a common part of the pre-interrogation record, but occasionally a priest incurred significant rebuke and even fines for his careless upkeep of the church or chapels. In fact, at the end of this particular visita, Visitor-General Eguares y Paquier warned Don Bernardo that he would be fined if he did not improve the physical conditions of several rural chapels in his district.

⁷¹Occasionally, women were called to testify before the *promotor fiscal*, but only when they had been implicated in earlier testimony as either victims of priestly abuse or witnesses of misconduct.

⁷²*Ibid.*

In the course of the inspection of this town, it has come to my attention that the chapels and vice-chapels within this parish's jurisdiction, to include Carasani, Conlili, Suntusidi, Coata, and Chiacono, are without doors and keys resulting in free access [of these holy places] to cows and herds of horses.⁷³

After the inspection, Visitor-General Eguares y Pasquier then returned to the church and reviewed the *libros parroquiales* — the records of baptisms, confirmations, marriages, and deaths — and an inventory of church construction. In addition, he made sure Don Bernardo possessed relevant books and manuals concerning religious matters, such as the published records of most recently convened provincial councils and synods, a summary of moral cases (*la suma de casos morales*), an edition of the Council of Trent decrees, and the all-important *padrón*, the record of parishioners who had fulfilled their yearly quota of confessions.⁷⁴

Don Bernardo then filed a report on other priests who lived in the area. In this case, he mentioned Licenciado Lucas de Sosa, whom he described as a *becino* and *hacendado*, Licenciado Ygnacio Pinto (also an *hacendado*) and Melchor de Salinas. The first two, according to Don Bernardo, assisted him at various times throughout the year, especially during Lent when religious activity was brisk and confession mandatory for all

⁷³ACCFLM, Tomo 3, fol. 125.

⁷⁴By comparison, during the 1710 series of visitas, Fray Diego Morcillo Rubio Auñón reviewed the following books (cited here as they appear in the original document) prior to interrogating witnesses: "El Concilio Provincial, El Concilio de Trento, Las Sinodales de este Obispado, El Cathecismo de Pío Quinto, Las summas que tuviese de cassos morales, Los Libros de Baptizados, Cassados y Difuntos, Los Padrones de Confessados, Las Licencias para los Casamientos" ACCFLM, Tomo 27, fol. 213.

parishioners in the district. Although Don Melchor occasionally helped out in the church, Don Bernardo had never seen him administer the Sacred Sacraments to any parishioners.⁷⁵

The trial of Bernardo Hernani de Bonifaz was preceded by an inquiry into the *vida y costumbres* (life and customs) of Combaya's former priest (Don Bernardo's predecessor), Joan Diez de Fuenmaior.⁷⁶ The interrogation began on the 10th of July, the day after the group's arrival. In his official account of the proceedings, Secretary Truxillo y Godoy recorded the first witness to testify before Promotor Fiscal Francisco de León was "an Indian, who according to the interpreter Don Pedro de Valdés — the translator named for the visita of this bishopric — calls himself Antonio Canabire, an *hilacata* from the *ayllu* Yampara."⁷⁷ Almost every witness in each *visita y escrutinio* trial held from 1680 to 1730 was identified in this way; he stated his name, his professional or social

⁷⁵"As for Melchor, I have never seen him celebrate or administer the Sacred Sacraments." ACCFLM, Tomo 3, fol. 9.

⁷⁶This is a fairly common occurrence throughout the documentary record. The trial of resident priests usually came after a review of the parish's previous priest. Almost without exception the same witnesses testified in both hearings.

⁷⁷ACCFLM, Tomo 3, fol. 21. The *ayllu* has been the topic of extensive research by both historians and anthropologists of the Andes. It is usually considered the primary social foundation upon which Andean culture stands, since most individuals living in predominately indigenous villages today have some *ayllu* affiliation. In the pre-colonial period, an overwhelming majority of commoners, nobles and rulers were members of *ayllus*, and thus shared in communal work obligations and the distribution of land. For a comprehensive and contemporary examination of the social, political and economic facets of the *ayllu* as it evolved in the colonial period, consult the several chapters dedicated to Andean social structure in Larson and Harris, *Ethnicity, Markets, and Migration in the Andes*; and Roberto Choque Canqui, *Sociedad y economía colonial en el sur andino* (La Paz: HISBOL, 1993).

rank,⁷⁸ and his *ayllu*, district⁷⁹ or village affiliation. Later in the testimony, *testigos* also provided their age. The youngest men to appear before the *promotor fiscal* were eighteen years of age. The oldest were Don Carlos Gudina, a ninety year old *Yndio natural* of Songo, and Pedro Linaja, a former *principal* of Combaya who claimed to be ninety-four years of age when he testified in 1710.

Antonio Canabire and all the subsequent witnesses proceeded to answer a series of twenty-six questions which had first been announced in the *edicto de visita* and that varied from issues concerning the proper administration of the Sacred Sacraments, to Don Juan's

⁷⁸A vast majority of the Indians called as witnesses were either *caciques* (regional chiefs), *hilacatas* (defined by Theresa Cañedo-Argüelles Fábrega as “*Indios de segundo rango*”), or *principales* (other important members of the community). Cañedo-Argüelles Fábrega, *Potosí: la versión Aymara de un mito europeo*, 25.

⁷⁹Frequently Indian witnesses identified themselves as members of a *parcialidad*, a socially and geographically based faction of citizens. Like the *ayllu*, the moieties of *Hanansaya* and *Urinsaya* were characteristic of pre-Columbian societies, whereby those members associated with the *parcialidad Hanansaya* occupied the upper half of society (i.e. the nobility) and those of the *parcialidad Urinsaya* were commoners. Writing in 1621, the Augustinian friar Ramos Gavilán commented “The *Urinsayas* are the natural Indians who are of common background — at least according to the *Anansayas* — who were *forasteros* and upstarts, people without their own land, maintained by charity in their [the *Anansaya*’s] villages. The *Anansayas* reported that they had come here at the behest of the Inca because he knew them to be troublesome. . . . They possessed little loyalty for his Highness.” Thierry Saignès, *Los andes orientales: historia de un olvido*, 34. According to most scholars of Andean history, including Saignès and Karen Powers, these hierarchical groupings changed considerably during the colonial period due to the influx of foreign elements (*forasteros* and *yanaconas*) into what had previously been predominately *originario* settlements. For a general discussion of moieties in the colonial Andes, see Irene Silverblatt, *Moon, Sun, and Witches: Gender Ideologies and Class in Inca and Colonial Peru* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987); Thierry Saignès, *Los andes orientales: historia de un olvido*; Ann Zulawski, “Forasteros y Yanaconas: la mano de obra de un centro minero en el siglo XVII,” in Brooke Larson, Olivia Harris, and Enrique Tandeter, eds. *Estrategias y reproducción social: siglos XVI a XX* (La Paz: CERES, 1987); and Karen Powers, *Andean Journeys: Migration, Ethnogenesis and the State in Colonial Quito* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995).

sexual behavior ("has the parish priest had inside his house any suspicious woman which would cause much scandal within the community."⁸⁰), to his involvement in local commercial ventures ("has the parish priest had business dealings or contracts involving trade goods, thus intermingling with secular men for these purposes."⁸¹) After Antonio's testimony (which included, incidentally, widespread allegations of religious and criminal misconduct) eight other witnesses came before the *promotor fiscal* and corroborated his testimony. This pattern was common; the vast majority of visita trials from 1680 to 1730 involved witnesses whose testimonies were consistent.

Subsequent *testigos* in the case against Don Joan were Capitán Joan Martín de Sosa (a fifty-five year old lieutenant of the *corregidor* of the province), Miguel de Sosa (a forty-four year old *hacendado*), Luis de Ojeda (a 30 year old *vecino* of Combaya), and finally a group of Indians who testified together: Sebastián Quispe and Andrés Mamani (twenty-one and eighteen years old respectively and both identified as *yanaconas* from the parish of San Sebastián de La Paz),⁸² Joan Tamona (a thirty year old from the *ayllu*

⁸⁰ACCFLM, Tomo 3, fol. 13r.

⁸¹Ibid. A transcription of these questions — which throughout the time under review remained thematically consistent, albeit sometimes in different forms — is included as Appendix B and entitled "The Visita Interrogation."

⁸²*Yanacona* is another term from the pre-Columbian era. In the Diocese of La Paz during the colonial period, the term was used to identify landless Indians who mainly worked for local *hacendados*. *Yanaconas* were distinguished from *forasteros* because the latter could technically (and did, in some instances) own land, even though they had no ancestral ties to it. Herbert Klein states: "Arriving as migrants to the old communities or latecomers to the new ones, these *forasteros* . . . were given lesser land rights or no land at all, and simply took up residence as landless laborers on the plots of the *originarios*. In changing status, they may have lost their lands, but they removed themselves from all their tax obligations as well. Until the eighteenth century, *forasteros* did not have to pay the

Charasani),⁸³ Xtóbal Alanoca (a twenty-five year old from the *ayllu* Guache), and Diego Estaca (a thirty year old from the *ayllu* Yampara). This particular witness pool was not typical, at least for the first two decades of this study. In most *visitas y escrutinios* from 1680 to 1700, the *promotor fiscal* interrogated exclusively Indian parishioners. If a Spaniard testified at all, he was usually the only one.

Because this visita involved two parish priests, Promotor Fiscal León did not issue his summary of the case to Visitor-General Eguares y Pasquier until the July 12, two days after the interrogation began. In his report, he outlined the allegations of misconduct made against Joan Diez de Fuenmaior, which included, among other things, forcing the sick and dying to come to Combaya instead of going out to them to administer last rites, and having in his company two brothers who abused the Indians, whipped them for no reason and "made them work without compensation, which is against ordinances (*ordenanzas*) and decrees of His Majesty."⁸⁴ In typical fashion for cases which involved violations of Church rules, the *promotor fiscal* recommended that the erring priest be punished severely for his delinquencies:

To Your Majesty I ask and appeal that in conformity with the proof of allegations . . . condemn the aforementioned Licenciado Joan Diez de

tribute tax, nor were they subject to the *mita*." Herbert Klein, *Bolivia: The Evolution of a Multi-Ethnic Society*, 52. A more contemporary source on *yanaconaje* in colonial Bolivia is Thierry Saignès, "Indian Migration and Social Change in Seventeenth-Century Charcas," in Larson and Harris, *Ethnicity, Markets, and Migration in the Andes*.

⁸³Combaya was frequently cited as being composed mostly of *forasteros*. It is likely the *ayllu* that this witness referred to was the Indian village of Charasani, located less than fifty kilometers away to the northwest of Combaya.

⁸⁴ACCFLM, Tomo 3, fol. 39.

Fuenmaior in the form he deserves for the crimes that he has committed about which I put forth these accusations. . . . I ask for justice and court costs.⁸⁵

In trials which involved no punishable transgression, the visitor-general or the bishop then filed his final sentence.⁸⁶ But because this case revealed several violations of Church authority, Visitor-General Eguares y Pasquier issued his own summary of the charges against Don Joan and summoned the priest to respond to the allegations within a few hours. In a written report, the priest defended himself and his actions ("*todo es falso*"⁸⁷), and appealed: "it would serve you to order me free of all charges that the *promotor* has had against me, to declare me a good priest, and likewise to award my zealous and vigilant work according to my [exemplary] record."⁸⁸ Not surprisingly, as I discuss at length in the later chapters of this dissertation, the case against Licenciado Joan Diez de Fuenmaior ended with the issuance of a favorable final sentence: "We declare that . . . he fulfilled as was his obligation the task of administering the Sacred Sacraments to the parishioners of this district . . . living honestly without neglecting the duties of his sacerdotal position."⁸⁹

⁸⁵ACCFLM, Tomo 3, fol. 39r.

⁸⁶Most *sentencias finales* which concluded the *visita y escrutinio* were favorable and formulaic; usually they did not mention specific accomplishments other than "being a good priest" and "having sufficiently administered the Sacred Sacraments to his parishioners." A transcription of a typical final sentence is included as Appendix C and is entitled "The *Sentencia Final* of Pedro de Montesdoca."

⁸⁷ACCFLM, Tomo 3, fol. 43.

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹ACCFLM, Tomo 3, fol. 46.

He was, however, fined a total of sixty pesos for three offenses; Visitor-General Eguares y Pasquier designated a third to be paid to complete the construction of the church in Combaya. Don Joan had to pay twenty pesos to the Tribunal of the Holy Crusade (*la Tribunal de la Sancta Cruzada*), and the final third would be applied as Bishop Queipo de Llano Valdés saw fit. Finally, the visitor-general ordered Don Joan to repay any amounts of money which were inappropriately and illegally collected from widows of the recently deceased.

On the fourteenth of July, the investigative team led by Visitor-General Eguares y Pasquier left Combaya and arrived the next evening in Ancoraymes, located approximately thirty kilometers away. Just as in Combaya, the visiting officials arrived at the church, were greeted by Indians and Spaniards, held mass, and conducted interrogations of parishioners. In another contentious trial which pitted parishioners and other priests against Bachiller Antonio de Vivero, the *promotor fiscal* interrogated over fifteen witnesses and received affidavits from a record twenty-two other citizens. The content of the case against Don Antonio, the indictments brought forth by nearly every parishioner (Indian and Spanish alike), the priest's appeal, and the final sentence are chronicled in detail in the last section of Chapter 6 of this study.

Summary

Shortly after Francisco Pizarro's arrival on the Pacific coast, and in the subsequent decades of Spanish colonization of Peru, Charcas became one of the most important mining and commercial centers in all of the American colonies. To the highland mines of Potosí in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries came tens of thousands of European

settlers, most of whom — after failing in their endeavor to return eventually to Spain with their riches — stayed in the southern Andes to capitalize on the many economic opportunities the diverse region, and its native peoples, promised.

For much of the colonial period, life in La Paz and its supporting territories (mainly the Yungas and the Lake Titicaca district) was probably less frenzied compared to the hustle and bustle of Potosí and the *audiencia* capital of La Plata (Sucre). But La Paz dominated the northern sector of the district, and served as a vital commercial link and provisioning junction between these southern Andean cities and the important urban center of Cuzco.

As throughout much of colonial Latin America, the region's relative prosperity depended, in part, on the Spaniard's ability to raise capital and maintain political and social control of the sizable and comparatively healthy indigenous population. Mostly, however, it relied on the systematic exploitation of Indian labor and the expropriation of native land. Among the many agents of social, economic and political control were Catholic priests, both secular and regular, who served, in a sense, as intermediaries between two cultural worlds.

The Spanish brand of organized religion came to Charcas with the first colonists, as missionaries accompanied the initial conquistador bands that roamed east from Cuzco in the 1530s. Soon however, ecclesiastical administrators recognized the need for proper jurisdictions, and by the early seventeenth century an archbishop in La Plata and two bishops in La Paz and Santa Cruz de la Sierra governed religious life in the territory. Under their supervision and usually far away from the episcopal seat, thousands of parish

priests toiled and with few exceptions, they led inconspicuous lives despite the significant role they played as agents of the Spanish crown and the Catholic Church in colonial Latin American society.

In the Diocese of La Paz in 1730, secular priests staffed sixty one of the district's seventy-two parishes. The other eleven churches were managed by members of the various religious orders. After 1680, rarely did parish priests work alone; usually they hired one or two assistants (*ayudantes* or *tenientes de cura*) to help them with their religious duties in town and to service remote hamlets throughout their jurisdiction. These men, like the parish priest himself, were often underpaid and overworked, and — as I point out in Chapter 5 — not infrequently engaged in illicit practices or commercial dealings (at the expense of Indian parishioners) to make a decent living. One check on illegal activity by priests was the *visita y escrutinio*, a trial procedure which involved periodic visitations by ecclesiastical officials to each parish in the diocese. These *visitas* form the documentary backbone of this dissertation, since they reveal both the spiritual and intellectual concerns of the high clergy and patterns of socioeconomic and religious behavior among parish priests. More importantly, as I discuss fully in the later chapters of this dissertation, these pastoral inspections constituted a point of interaction — a medium of contact and negotiation — between Indian parishioners, ecclesiastical officials, and the resident priests on trial.

In the next two chapters, however, I focus on who these secular priests were, their origins, what types of families they came from, and their self-professed motives for entering the priesthood. In Chapter 3, I discuss their social and economic backgrounds.

Chapter 4 deals with their academic careers and achievements as parish priests, as employees of the Spanish state, and as friends, neighbors, and sometimes bitter rivals of the people they served.

CHAPTER 3 SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BACKGROUNDS

Parish priests living in the Diocese of La Paz from 1680 to 1730 were men of varied backgrounds who sought to depict themselves professionally as religious men, even though their collective behavior in civil activities suggests they were more worldly and materially centered than they indicated in official correspondence. If, as agents of the church and men of the cloth, they may have aspired to a higher, more spiritual level of consciousness and conduct, the documentary records suggests they were in fact simply men of their time and place, preoccupied with many of the same concerns as their secular neighbors and relatives.¹ Who these men were, and how their social backgrounds, educations, and professional careers helped shape their attitudes and behavior are significant factors in understanding not only how religious life was organized on the most basic level, but also how these men factored into the complex social milieu that was colonial Andean society.

After a brief discussion of documentary sources, this chapter focuses on the familial and financial backgrounds of the parish priests who worked in the Diocese of La Paz from 1680 to 1730. In the subsequent chapter (Chapter 4), I examine the priests'

¹In his negative assessment of the performance of priests living and working throughout the Audiencia of Charcas, Luis Peñaloza Cordero writes: "one might say that with some exceptions, the Church abandoned its spiritual mission and dedicated its energy to satisfying their material needs." *Nueva Historia Económica de Bolivia*, 192.

academic careers, before concluding with an analysis of how these men viewed themselves professionally as spiritual specialists in this rugged and often inhospitable Andean region.

Sources and Samples

This analysis of the career patterns and socioeconomic background of the secular clergy of the Diocese of La Paz is based on information derived from three types of archival sources: *peticiones de órdenes* (petitions for orders), a collection of documents handed in by prospective priests seeking ordination from the bishop; *relaciones* (or *probanzas*) *de méritos y servicios* (account or proofs of merits and services), a type of professional résumé priests submitted when applying for a job or transfer; and two reports recommending certain priests for promotion or special recognition, one filed by Bishop Queipo de Llano Valdés in 1690 and the other by Bishop Fernando de Rojas y Acebedo in 1725.

Petitions for minor (first tonsure and *los cuatro grados* — the four degrees²) or major (subdeacon, deacon and presbyter) orders followed a standard set of procedures. The applicants — usually young boys inclined to the priestly vocation or older seminary students — provided the bishop with personal information which proved their legitimacy, worthiness for the priesthood, dedication to the Church, educational training, and any spiritual predilection which signaled their calling to the service of God. As part of their applications, candidates provided birth and baptismal records and sometimes

²The ritual of "first tonsure" involved the ceremonial cutting of a portion of the candidate's hair on the crown of the head. In the sixth and seventh centuries, this practice emerged as a distinct rite of admission to the clerical ranks. The "four degrees" refers to the four ministries conferred upon the minor ordinate: porter, lector, exorcist and acolyte. *The Encyclopedia of Catholicism*, 1st ed., s.v. "first tonsure," and "minor orders."

recommendations written by prominent friends or relatives.³ The most important part of the ordination process, apart from the general examination of the candidate himself, was the interrogation of witnesses before an ecclesiastical board of examiners. Both of these procedures were governed by an *edicto para órdenes* (edict for orders, a formal document issued by the presiding bishop for each candidate) whose tone and content betrayed the spirit of the Council of Trent and the religious preoccupations of the time.

Bishop Queipo de Llano Valdés' edict for orders for Juan Feliz de Vargas y Villagómez, processed in June of 1689, was typical of edicts issued by the various bishops of the Diocese of La Paz throughout the period under review. It advised all persons, ecclesiastics as well as ordinary citizens, that Don Juan was seeking first tonsure⁴ — the first of several transitional ministries for those preparing for the priesthood — and that persons aware of any reason that the young boy should not be admitted should come forward. The edict, as a whole, concerned the life and customs of the candidate, and included a wide variety of questions which ranged from the applicant's lineage and age to his record of service in his local church. Almost invariably then, one of the witnesses in any ordination trial (including Don Juan's) was the boy's hometown priest. At issue was

³Filed as part of Gonzalo Núñez Bela's ordination papers, for example, was a recommendation by the presiding bishop of Santa Cruz, who, on behalf of the young man, wrote: "he is a fine young lad and appears to me to be of modest character." ACCFLM, Tomo 27, fol. 82.

⁴William Taylor reports that the Fourth Provincial Council of Trent elaborated on this guideline, adding that boys as young as seven were eligible for first tonsure if they were prudent boys who showed an inclination toward the office. Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred*, 571.

not only the candidate's behavior and background, but also that of his parents, other living relatives, and ancestors. The first sections questioned:

if the father or mother of the aforementioned Don Juan Feliz de Vargas...or any of his two paternal grandparents has been a heretic or believer, follower or defender of heretics, or if the aforementioned candidate for orders has been a slave, Indian or mestizo or if he is descendant of those recently converted to the faith or . . . if he is the product of a legitimate marriage.⁵

The edict's subsequent questions expressed similar concerns; does the applicant generally behave like a Christian should; is he married⁶; has he ever been married or been possessed by the devil; is he crazy; if in battle, has the candidate run away from the enemy in a cowardly fashion; does he often get drunk or frequent taverns or drinking houses; and finally, was the applicant "prudent, composed, peaceful, and of good reputation, qualities which are and have been worthy and sufficient for ordination?"⁷

The witnesses, for their part, almost uniformly responded by simply repeating the question, adding only a "*si*" or a "*no*" to the clause.⁸ Bachiller and fellow priest Juan de

⁵Ibid.

⁶Gerónimo Gabriel de Villalba was the only candidate for orders or jobs who acknowledged he had previously been married. To convince the bishop of his noble desire to enter the priesthood and the admirable qualities of his then-deceased, fourteen year old ex-wife, Don Gerónimo explained: "I have applied myself to my studies after the death of Doña Rossa de Vera y Molina, my legitimate wife with whom I contracted to marry. She died a virgin in a bedroom of her parent's house. On this account, as is public knowledge, I have not led a disorderly life (*irregularidad de vida mía*) because I was married just once to a virgin. . . . It would serve Your Most Excellent Lord to admit me to first tonsure." ACCFLM, Tomo 23, fol. 144.

⁷ACCFLM, Tomo 15, fol.5.

⁸On the quality of responses by witnesses in La Plata in the 1600s, Lincoln Draper writes: "the repetition of information tends to follow the pattern established in the cover

Valencia, testifying on behalf of young Juan de Yvero 1691, stated:

The aforementioned candidate for orders never has been a member of a religious order, neither has he been re-baptized nor possessed [by the devil] nor has he had premonitions, heart disease, leprosy, or other contagious illnesses, and [I] know that the aforementioned applicant is not impeded by any part of his body.⁹

Job vacancies generated documents which were similar to the petitions for orders, such that priests were required to submit baptismal records along with their *relación* and a brief account of their performance in past *visitas y escrutinios*. Unlike the petitions, apparently no standard format was followed by priests applying for jobs and witnesses were not a part of the procedure. Clearly the most important element of each candidate's portfolio was the *relación*, but these letters varied considerably in detail from one priest to another.

Indeed, while the archival records from La Paz, Madrid, and Seville contain considerable details on the lives of many priests, others left scant, and in some cases, no details concerning their education, birthplace, religious service, or professional accomplishments. This is especially true for the veteran priests who were working in the diocese when Bishop Queipo de Llano Valdés arrived in 1681. In his 1686 petition for a vacancy in Guancané, for example, Joseph Muñoz de Real provided no information other

letter and was obviously the product of an agreement between the priest and the testigo." Lincoln Arnold Draper, "Archbishops, Canons and Priests: The Interaction of Religious and Social Values in the Clergy of Seventeenth-Century Bolivia."

⁹ACCFLM, fol. 70 Tomo 19.

than the fact that he was the legitimate son of Capitán Francisco Faría Mascareñas and Doña Andrea de Ver y Cárdenas.¹⁰

By contrast, other curas, especially those working in the 1710s and 1720s, recounted their entire lives from infancy¹¹ to their latest promotion. In this way, the more complete *relaciones* differed significantly from the petitions: whereas the petitions tended to furnish only basic personal details (date and place of baptism, hometown, names of parents and godparents, and sometimes a brief record of their educational training up to that point), the detailed *résumés* contained considerable data on priests' illustrious Christian heritage, admirable past service, hardships endured in the field, and usually long lists of academic achievements.

In any case, both the petitions for orders and job applications gave prospective priests and ordained clerics an opportunity to boast about themselves and their ancestors, and thus contain an inherent bias which cannot be overlooked. In his study of the secular clergy in La Plata, Lincoln Draper states: "As a result, the picture of the priesthood that emerges from a reading of a number of these documents is that of a clergy as it wished to be seen, or as it thought the royal government in Spain wanted the clergy to act."¹² This problem of reliability of sources, of course, cannot be overcome, and it is possible to

¹⁰ACCFLM, Tomo 9, fol. 7.

¹¹Commenting in 1710 on his early calling to the Church, Joseph Francisco de Abendaño "dedicated all the time from my youth, from the time I could reason (*desde la edad del usso de razón*) to serving this Sacred Cathedral Church." ACCFLM, Tomo 27, fol. 51.

¹²Draper, *Archbishops, Canons and Priests*, 202.

ascertain (through analysis of a wide array of documentary sources) at least some idea of the socio-economic base of parish priests and the extent to which they deemed their lives as valuable to the overall mission of Catholicism and to imperial Spain.

Perhaps the most unbiased view of the secular clergy comes from the two reports (*informes*) written in 1690 and 1725 by Bishop Queipo de Llano Valdés and Bishop Fernando de Rojas y Acebedo, respectively. Unfortunately, however, Bishop Queipo de Llano Valdés limited his *informe* to only the top thirty-five parish priests, and while Bishop Fernando de Rojas y Acebedo reviewed the accomplishments of fifty-five priests, it is obvious when comparing both bishops' accounts that they relied heavily on the priests' *relaciones* for their information. Indeed, a thorough reading of the reports gives the impression that personal preferences and friendships, rather than educational qualifications or dedication to one's job made the difference between priests listed first or last among *personas beneméritas* (praiseworthy people).

Another problem of sources stems from the fact that biographical data for the eighteenth century are more complete than those for the seventeenth century. This is possibly a result of better bookkeeping, but more likely attributed to population growth, professionalization of the ecclesiastical bureaucracy over time, and increased activity and competition within the diocese for Church jobs. No statistical study has been done for the territory which comprised the Diocese of La Paz during these years, but Herbert Klein claims in his general study of Bolivia that while many of the other regions in Charcas faltered demographically in the eighteenth century, the region around La Paz actually prospered and grew in population. Klein states: "the one hundred fifty or two hundred

thousand *campesinos* of its [La Paz'] hinterland converted the city into the administrative and mercantile center, [thus] making it the most densely populated zone of the *altiplano*.¹³ Indeed, the number of submitted petitions for orders reflected this growth of population and religious activity over time. Records from the Archivo Central in La Paz indicate that from 1680 to 1700, seventy-one young boys and seminary students applied for minor or major orders compared with one-hundred and twenty seven for the first three decades of the eighteenth century. Likewise, and in part due to the tragedy of the general epidemics of the late 1700s, and 1710s which took the lives of several eighteenth-century priests, Bishops Queipo de Llano Valdés (1680-1694) and Bernardo Carrasco de Saavedra (1695-1697) oversaw only twelve job competitions (*oposiciones*), while the bishops of the last thirty years of this study supervised twenty one.

Of the one hundred and seventy-eight clerics who held the title of cura in cities and villages throughout the Diocese of La Paz from 1680 to 1730, good biographical records exist for only eighty-seven priests. Of the one hundred and ninety-eight candidates for ordination, I have located satisfactory data for only fifty men. Thus, the following study draws together data from one-hundred thirty-two men, most of whom went beyond the request for orders to become fully ordained priests.¹⁴ It is important to mention that this sample is representative because all five decades of the study are equally covered, and

¹³Klein, *Bolivia: The Evolution of a Multi-ethnic Society*, 91.

¹⁴A few men who were assistants to the parish priests (usually called *ayudantes*, but also sometimes *tenientes de cura*) and a fair number of priests who served as either *cura interin* or *cura coadjutor* are also represented in this analysis, albeit to a significantly lesser extent.

both men of high achievement and those who may have been unemployed (at least as priests) for a majority of their lives are part of this survey.

Priests as Members of Colonial Andean Society

With the exception of an Indian from Chucuito named Joseph Julián Ynga Charaja, all applicants for orders and parish priests of the Diocese of La Paz from 1680 to 1730 claimed Christian heritage and Spanish ancestry.¹⁵ Juan Feliz de Vargas y Villagómez' description of his ancestry was identical — nearly to the word — to statements made by other priests regarding their family backgrounds. In his response to the question concerning his legitimacy¹⁶ and the racial purity¹⁷ of his ancestors, Don Juan commented:

¹⁵A relatively small number of Indians managed to enter into the priesthood as ordained priests and those who did had to prove their aristocratic origins. In his study of priests in Mexico, William Taylor reports, however, "There were few Indian curas in Guadalajara, but in the archdiocese perhaps 5 percent of the parish priests in the late colonial period were identified as Indians. All had demonstrated to the satisfaction of the examiners that they were men of noble ancestry and legitimate birth, and most were from one of the Indian barrios of Mexico City or a pueblo in the Valley of Mexico." Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred*, 87.

¹⁶Nearly all candidates for orders and jobs in the Diocese of La Paz claimed legitimacy, meaning that they were the sons of a married Christian couple. Francisco López de la Vega, a presbyter from Oruro applying for residency in the diocese, was the only example of a priest who acknowledged his parents were single (*solteros*) at the time of his birth. Nevertheless, he claimed purity of blood, and mentioned his parents, Don Antonio López de la Vega and Doña Leonor de Balboa, by name. ACCFLM, Tomo 9, fol. 94.

¹⁷In a few cases, such as the ordination trial of Juan Francisco de Herrera, the status of the candidate's purity of blood was in question since he was abandoned (*expósito*) as a child. Don Juan appealed to Bishop Queipo de Llano y Valdés in 1685: "as I have always been known as an orphaned child without knowledge of my father or mother." ACCFLM, Tomo 9, fol. 115. Although bishops did call a few extra witnesses to testify to the good behavior of those whose parents were unknown, not once did any bishop deny ordination based on this uncertainty.

I am the legitimate son of Don Bernardo Feliz de Vargas y Villagómez and of Doña Ynez Fabiana de Roa y Espinosa. . . . My grandparents have never been believers, accomplices, followers, or defenders of heretics and . . . [I] am not and never have been a slave, an Indian, a mestizo or offspring of the recently converted to the faith.¹⁸

Technically Indians and mestizos could enter the priestly vocation. The Third Ecclesiastic Council of Lima held in 1582-83 issued the following decree which was later summarized in the *Recopilación de las Leyes de Indias* (Book 1, Title VII, Law 7): "the Bishops of these Indies [can] ordain as priests mestizos from their districts if they possess the qualities and credentials of priests."¹⁹ But the difference between policy and practice, at least in the Diocese of La Paz was profound, as illustrated by the distance which candidates for ordination and jobs uniformly placed themselves away from any *mala raza* or racial taint. Gaspar de Herrera, using language typical of his peers, began his ordination request in 1686 by declaring: "we [members of my family] are Old Christians, free of all racial taints and known publically as such."²⁰ Joseph Julián Ynga Charaja's case, obviously, was the exception, and reflected the crown's active promotion of Indians for ordination which began after the promulgation of a royal decree issued in March 1696, whereby Indians technically could be ordained and ascend to the status of presbyter.²¹

¹⁸ACCFLM, Tomo 15, fol. 8.

¹⁹Monseñor Severo Aparicio Quispe, O.M. "Estudio Preliminar," in *La Evangelización del Perú en los siglos XVI y XVII* (Arequipa: Actas del Primer Congreso Peruano de Historia Eclesiástica, 1990), 62.

²⁰ACCFLM, Tomo 9, fol. 81.

²¹The *cédula real* (royal decree) referred to here is entitled, "Decree issued by the Council of the Indies concerning the promulgation of the general law which confirms that Indians and mestizos can ascend to high positions within the Church and as ecclesiastics."

Born in the second most important urban center of the diocese, the city of Chucuito which is situated on the southern banks of Lake Titicaca, Joseph Julián Ynga Charaja's father had formerly served as the region's *cacique gobernador* (governor chief). His mother, according to his *relación*, was a member of the city's most prosperous *ayllu*, the Guagi. In his application for minor orders, Don Joseph expressed himself much like his creole peers:

I appear humbly at the feet of Your Most Excellent Majesty . . . and say that in order to serve better our God. . . . I have decided to follow the ecclesiastical path, continuing with my studies of grammar and moral theology, undertaken from my earliest years until the present time, always giving proper attention to my personal behavior and compartment.²²

Witnesses brought in to testify on Don Joseph's behalf attested to the young man's noble heritage: "he is from Indian nobility on account of the honorific positions they [his ancestors] have held in that province."²³ The crown and Church's preoccupation with purity of blood apparently did not end with those of Hispanic descent; at one point in the interrogation of witnesses, the applicant's pure Indian blood was questioned.²⁴ For their

and located in Richard Konetzke, *Colección de documentos para la historia de la formación social de Hispanoamérica*, (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1962), vol. 3, 64. For a comparison of how this decree was handled in Mexico, see Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred*, 568.

²²ACCFLM, Tomo 27, fol. 45.

²³ACCFLM, Tomo 27, fol. 46.

²⁴In a *cédula real* dated 12 March, 1697, King Philip IV declared "that Indians of high nobility, such as caciques and their descendants, will be considered to have purity of blood, to be nobles and capable of redemption in all functions and professions that require such prestige." Vicente G. Quesada, *La vida intelectual en la América Española* (Buenos Aires: La Cultura Argentina, 1917), 224.

part, none of the witnesses were willing to state definitely that Don Joseph's was "pure-blooded." They uniformly remarked: "I do not know if he has any mixture of black, mulato or mestizo [blood]." ²⁵

In all other ordination procedures, applicants underwent a series of standard examinations designed to prove their Christian ancestry, and to test their competency in Latin, the Indian languages, and Church doctrine. ²⁶ In the case of Don Joseph, Bishop Morcillo Rubio y Auñón, in addition to the exams, sent the young man to the Convent of San Francisco for a probationary period of service. In the opinion of the prior of the convent, Fray Juan Martínez Xuárez, Don Joseph possessed all the necessary qualities to become a good priest.

[the candidate] has worked in this convent for eight continual days in various exercises in fulfillment of your Lordship's mandate . . . and he has participated in all of the acts of the community, the choir, and other exercises of humility culminating with the administration of the Sacred Sacrament of penance and [thus he was] received by Our Lord to attain with cleanliness of his soul the Sacred Orders he seeks. ²⁷

²⁵ACCFLM, Tomo 27, fol. 46. Reflecting the growing intolerance of Spanish policies towards people of mixed blood, Quesada comments on the crown's reluctance to admit people of color and mixed-bloods into American schools and other organizations. "From these teachings mestizos, mulatos, *cuarterones* and by all means, blacks were excluded . . . the Viceroy . . . ordered that zambos, mulatos and *cuarterones* shall not be admitted as students, and if they obtained a degree, it shall be nullified." Quesada, *La vida intelectual en la América Española*, 222 .

²⁶The Third Ecclesiastical Council of Lima recommended that all bishops "appoint in their dioceses examiners who will test those curates who will work with Indians. They will be tested to see if they have sufficient knowledge of the Arts and also if they are proficient in the language of the Indians." Aparicio Quispe, "Estudio Prelimar," in *La Evangelización del Perú en los siglos XVI y XVII*, 59 .

²⁷ACCFLM, Tomo 27, fol. 47.

Accordingly, on the 14 of March, 1710, Bishop Morcillo Rubio y Auñón conferred minor orders upon Don Joseph Julián Ynga Charaja, who thus became the first “pure-blooded” native American to enter the secular clergy in the Diocese of La Paz.

Except for his Indian blood, Don Joseph had many of the same qualities and credentials as his Spanish colleagues, including his birthplace and residence. Indeed, an overwhelming majority of the members of the secular clergy who worked and lived in the Diocese of La Paz from 1680 to 1730 were American-born creoles (*criollos*) whose parents lived within the territorial confines of the diocese. Of the one hundred thirty-two parish priests in the sample group, only thirty were born outside the region, and many of these men had lived as *domiciliarios* (residents) of the diocese for many years. Twenty-three priests professed to be born and raised in La Paz, while twenty-one men defined themselves somewhat ambiguously as *originarios* — or natives, which may indicate they were from the capital city or its environs (Calacoto and Palca, for example), but certainly meant that they were born in the diocese. Thirty men of the sample group were from smaller towns of the diocese, growing up on *haciendas* near provincial villages like Sorata, Mocomoco, Moho, Achacache, or Chuma. Four were from Don Joseph’s hometown, Chucuito, and the Villa de Puno — another important colonial village — was home to three men.²⁸ The birthplace of twenty-three priests from the sample group is unknown.

It was not uncommon for priests who were *originarios* of the Diocese of La Paz

²⁸Both Chucuito and Puno are now cities in Peru, but until the 1780s, when the new episcopal boundaries were drawn, were a part of the Diocese of La Paz.

to return eventually to their hometowns as parish priest, and the record shows that many curas at least applied for jobs where they grew up, even if they did not ultimately get the position. The tragic case of Gonzalo de la Cueba and Antonio de Valdés illustrates the efforts of two priests who sought to return home, only to have nature step in the way. De la Cueba (cura of Sorata) and Valdés (cura of Asillo, Bishopric of Cuzco) signed a mutual agreement in March of 1694 to exchange *curatos*: "we have made an agreement to exchange, one for the other, our respective benefices of Sorata and Asillo."²⁹ Each of these priests had left the diocese of his birth and now wished to return to his hometown for several reasons, but most importantly because of poor health. De la Cueba wrote in his appeal to the bishop:

I suffer from illnesses and discomfort while urinating and other internal diseases which are exacerbated by the weather of Sorata on account of that town's heat and humidity. The town of Asillo is much more favorable [for me] because of its moderate climate and dryness.³⁰

Maintaining residence in either location, the men emphasized, was a risk to their lives, an accurate premonition since Don Gonzalo died before the transfer took place.

Two clerics from the sample group were from the capital of the Audiencia of Charcas and the home of the archdiocese, the city of La Plata, and one *cochabambino*, Pedro Alvarez de Ayora y Estrada, applied for orders from the bishop of La Paz.³¹ Three

²⁹ACCFLM, Tomo 15, fol. 175.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Don Pedro's career, parenthetically, is typical in some ways of the mobility of clerics. Born in Cochabamba, he attended the Real Seminario de San Christóbal in La Plata, where he attained his bachelor's degree and for four years taught grammar, before moving to the Diocese of La Paz where he worked for eighteen years in various parishes.

candidates for ordination were originally from Oruro, including Nicolás Pérez de la Mata Patón, who referred to himself as a relative of Nicolás Urbano Mata y Haro who served as bishop of La Paz from 1702 to 1704. No applicants with any experience or background in Potosí appeared in the archival record of the Diocese of La Paz, perhaps indicating the desirability of working near or in the richest and most populated city in Alto Perú at that time.

Looking outside the territorial boundaries of modern Bolivia, eighteen of the one hundred thirty-two priests were from Perú: four from Arequipa, two from Cuzco, one from the town of Azagara, and the rest from Lima. The fact that so many clerics from the sample group were *limeños* might be attributed to the fact that a majority of bishops who came to serve in the diocese from 1680 to 1730 held prominent positions in the viceregal capital before being promoted to La Paz. Juan Queipo de Llano Valdés was a *fiscal* of the Inquisition in Lima in the 1670s. Nicolás Urbano Mata y Haro held the position of theological canon in Lima's cathedral before coming to La Paz, and Fray Alejo Fernando de Rojas y Acebedo was a *limeño* by birth.³² In addition, Fray Diego Morcillo Rubio y Auñón, who served as bishop from 1709 to 1711 before his promotion to Archbishop of La Plata, brought with him at least six male relatives, three of whom were originally from Lima (the other three were men from Honduras and Guatemala and worked for him there during his tenure as Bishop of León [Nicaragua], prior to coming to South America).

One cleric, the well-traveled Juan de Mosquera, was born and raised in the Kingdom of Santa Fé de Bogotá, and served as cura in the dioceses of Cuzco and

³²López Menéndez, *Historia de la Diócesis de La Paz*, 10-13.

Arequipa before coming to work for the Bishop of La Paz as cura of Guancané in the 1690s. It is curious that no ecclesiastics or *seminarios* from cities or towns in territories of modern day Paraguay or Argentina applied for orders or sought positions within the Diocese of La Paz from 1680 to 1730.

Nine men from the sample group cited direct Spanish lineage. Of these nine, two curas were actually born in Spain. Lucas Bonilla y Portillo, a relative of Fray Diego, and that same bishop's younger brother, Pedro Morcillo Rubio, were from Villarobledo and La Mancha, respectively. Among those who claimed Spanish heritage, it was not unusual for them to be tied through patronage to the presiding bishops or one of his predecessors. The *paceño* Gabriel de Barroeta y Guilléstegui, for example (cura of Sapaqui, Guaqui, and Tiahuanaco, and then rector of the Cathedral from the 1680s to the 1710s), was the nephew of Gabriel Guilléstegui, bishop of La Paz from 1670 until his death in 1678.³³ Don Gabriel's parents, according to his job application of 1688, were "natives of the Villa Marquina, Province of Cantabria, in the Kingdom of Spain."³⁴

Clearly, candidates for orders or jobs saw any Spanish ties as beneficial and hastened to make hereditary connections to the metropolis to impress their superiors. Often, these ancestral ties were to military men whose courageous exploits and acts of heroism were symbolic of the family's distinguished lineage and loyalty to the Crown. In his *relación* of 1692, Licenciado Dionisio Provincia de Peralta recalled the memory of his

³³Ibid., 9.

³⁴ACCFLM, Tomo 13, fol. 268.

famous uncle, Luis de Peralta Cabeza de Vaca: "he was . . . [one] of the first *conquistadores* and pacifiers of this Kingdom."³⁵

Among the many cases of priests recounting the legends of their ancestors, the story of the *paceño* Doctor Pablo Joseph Salgado y Araujo stood out. After introducing himself as the legitimate son of the Maestro de Campo Martín Salgado y Araujo and Doña Lucía Diez de Medina, Don Pablo proceeded to chronicle the noble and heroic deeds of his parents, grandfathers, grandmothers, and other relatives on both sides of his family in vivid detail. Boasting of the political record of his Galician-born great-grandfather, Don Pablo contended that Payo Salgado y Araujo served as Governor of the cities of Aguila and Barleta in the Kingdom of Naples before coming to the Americas as a retainer of Viceroy of Perú, the Count of Montesclaros, who served in that post from 1606 to 1616.³⁶ Don Pablo's great-grandfather eventually settled in Arica, becoming Commissary General of the Cavalry, a charge

quite appreciable considering the circumstances of the time, which immediately resulted in a appointment in the Royal Service of Your Majesty, with the widely known dangers to life occasioned by the hostilities of the enemy's invasions.³⁷

This reference to enemy invasions probably referred to the continual Dutch attacks on coastal ports north and south of Lima in the seventeenth century.³⁸

³⁵ACCFLM, Tomo 22, fol 87.

³⁶J.H. Elliott, "Spain and America before 1700," in *Colonial Spanish America*, ed. Leslie Bethell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 66.

³⁷ACCFLM, Tomo 30, fol. 181.

³⁸For a complete record of naval hostilities along the coast of Peru during the colonial period, see José Valdizán Gamio, *Historia Naval del Perú* (Lima: Dirección General de Intereses Marítimos, 1984).

Further, Don Pablo emphasized how his great grandfather also "gave donations of considerable quantity to the *oidores* (judges) who came to him to ask for them in Your [Majesty's] Name."³⁹ Don Pablo's father, Martín Salgado y Araujo was also a soldier in Arica, and in addition to defending the coast from enemy aggression, took on the civic duty of *alcalde ordinario* (town mayor), "in whose ministry he dedicated himself with vigilance."⁴⁰

Doctor Antonio de Zegarra de las Ruelas de la Cueva y Olea's description of his illustrious lineage — while perhaps not as far-reaching as Don Pablo's family history — was more typical of accounts priests told of their ancestors in hopes of gaining favor with the bishop. In his bid for a canonship in the Cathedral in 1732, Don Antonio claimed his ancestors had descended from a *mui exclarecida* (very distinguished) nobility and that his paternal great-grandfather, Juan Segarra abandoned an entailed estate (*mayorazgo*) which he possessed in Seville to come to this Kingdom of Perú to assume official duties in the *corregimientos* of "Condesuios, Aimaraes and Pacajes."⁴¹ Don Antonio's other great-grandfather was Don Nuñi de la Cueva of the prestigious Order of Santiago. He was also a recipient of an early *encomienda* in Condesuios on account of the "heroic service of his ancestors in the *Gerras de Flandes* (sic) [the wars of Flanders]".⁴²

³⁹ ACCFLM, Tomo 30, fol. 181.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ AGI, Charcas 389, 4 Julio 1732. The *corregimientos* of Condesuios, Aimarares, and Pacajes are references to three of the first *corregimientos* established in the mid-sixteenth century in Alto Perú by Francisco Pizarro.

⁴² Ibid.

Don Antonio's account of his family's prominent position in local society was probably accurate; if the archival record for the Diocese of La Paz is any indication, the Zegarra family is well represented in the early history of Alto Perú and specifically the region encompassed by the Diocese of La Paz. Men with the surnames Olea, de la Cueba, and Zegarra served in the diocese in various priestly functions in four of the five decades covered in this study. In the 1720s alone, priests of this lineage were parish priests in Palca, Chulumani, Caquingora, San Antonio de Machaca, Calacoto, and Caracato. Indeed, representation in the diocese of relatives, whether cousins, brothers, or uncles and nephews was quite common between 1680 and 1730 and suggests that many of the region's prominent creole families intermarried to form a kind of socio-religious class of citizens.⁴³

Furthermore, and as might be expected given the importance of the parish priest in colonial Spanish American society, many curas' families were among the most powerful and influential in the region. To use just one example, Bishop Queipo de Llano Valdés' visitor-general throughout the 1680s, Juan Antonio de Eguares y Pasquier, was the brother of the *corregidor* of Larecaja in the 1690s, Francisco Antonio de Eguáres y

⁴³See Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred*; Draper, "Archbishops, Canons, and Priests;" and Schwaller, *The Church and Clergy in 16th-Century Mexico* for an analysis of extended family networks and service in the secular clergy. By far the best source on the social origins and family structures of parish priests in the colonial Andes is Paul Bentley Ganster, "A Social History of the Secular Clergy of Lima during the middle decades of the 18th Century," Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1974. In this doctoral dissertation, Ganster argues against the notion that rivalries invariably existed between *peninsulares* and creoles at the end of the colonial period. Among the secular priests of these backgrounds, he points out, contestation depended more on socioeconomic factors rather than birthplace.

Pasquier.⁴⁴ Bishop Guilléstegui, who served in that post in the 1670s, certainly left a legacy of collateral descendants active in secular and religious life for decades after his death in 1678. Curas with the surname Guilléstegui worked in the diocese in all five decades of this study, highlighted perhaps by Gabriel Barroeta y Guilléstegui's service as vicar-general (*provisor*) between Bishop Villafañe Pandaño's and Bishop Fernando de Rojas y Acebedo's respective tenures in the 1720s. In a final example, the Vivero brothers, Luis and Antonio, served in the diocese in the late seventeenth century, and even had a familial hold on the benefice of Ancoraymes, located on the northern shore of Lake Titicaca, for nearly two decades in the 1680s and 1690s. Martín de Vivero, incidentally, assisted his brothers as a *theniente de cura* in Ancoraymes at least until 1687.

The archival record for the Diocese of La Paz contains numerous appeals and recommendations written by prominent members of society on behalf of a young man seeking ordination or a priest hoping for promotion. A recommendation written by Francisco de Carrión y Cáceres (cura in Palca and Songo in the 1680s and 1690s), for his nephew Pedro Lino de Montalbo, was typical of how priests attempted to use their positions of authority to help relatives gain favor with the bishop. Licenciado Carrión y Cáceres appealed for Bishop Queipo de Llano Valdés to focus not on the boy's obvious physical handicap — which the priest acknowledged would have an impact on his ability to carry out his priestly duties — but rather on his fine family lineage ("his parents are Old

⁴⁴ACCFLM, Tomo 8, fol. 52. *Corregidores* of the city of La Paz served five year terms starting in the seventeenth century and were paid a salary of two thousand pesos per year. *Corregidores* of the other *corregimientos* within the jurisdiction of the Diocese of La Paz (Omasuyos, Paucarcolla, Larecacha, and Sicasica) were paid at an annual rate of one thousand pesos per year. Crespo Rodas, *La ciudad de La Paz: su historia, su cultura*, 66.

Christians"⁴⁵) and his (the uncle's) own proven service to the church and crown when deciding his nephew's fate. In this odd recommendation which seemed to stress the negative rather than the positive credentials of the applicant, the uncle beseeched:

Have pity on him. . . . The affliction, my Lord, of my nephew Don Pedro Lino de Montablo . . . and excuse my ignorance of such matters, [causes him] an irregularity whereby he limps on one foot, and because of this impediment Your Most Excellent Lord has every reason not to continue with the conferring of orders that has begun for this man. . . . This functional bodily defect is such that it makes the man useless . . . a deformity, offensive to the sight of others . . . which necessitates some sort of . . . staff or a kind of wooden leg because excluding such a thing, he cannot rise to the pulpit to say mass without considerable indecency.⁴⁶

For his part, Don Pedro did not bother to mention his deformity to the bishop, noting only that his mother was the sister of the priest of Songo and that, like his peers, he "has studied and dedicated myself to the study of grammar and moral theology and I do not possess any defect outlined by the Council of Trent."⁴⁷

Familial favors and nepotism dominated Diego Morcillo Rubio y Auñón's tenure as bishop from 1709 to 1711. As mentioned earlier, Fray Diego brought with him from the Bishopric of León at least six relatives, each of whom had considerable success in the several job competitions conducted from 1709-1712,⁴⁸ this despite not having any

⁴⁵ACCFLM, Tomo 19, fol. 2.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Ibid, 4. According to subsequent testimony, two years after applying for minor orders, on the 27th of December 1663, Pedro Lino de Montalbo was ordained a Presbyter by Bishop Queipo de Llano y Valdés, although no records indicate if he ever served as priest or assistant in any parish in the diocese.

⁴⁸There were nine *concurros* in the span of three years from 1709 to 1712, compared with only twelve for the first twenty years of this study. The inordinate number

knowledge, at least initially, of the local languages of Quechua and Aymara. Pedro Ygnacio de Foncueba was cura of Vilque, Mocomoco and Laza in the 1710s and 1720s; Ygnacio de la Rreta worked in the much sought after village of Coroico in the 1710s; Ygnacio Díaz procured the *curato* of Ambana in 1710 and served that post until 1716, when he followed Fray Diego to the Archdiocese of La Plata to become *cura* of the Indian town of Quillacolla; Nicolás Mexía de Vargas worked in Sorata before moving on to Laza in the 1720s; Lucas Bonilla y Portillo probably worked in the village of Suri, but the archival record is ambiguous; and Pedro Morcillo Rubio, the bishop's brother, worked in the Indian parish of San Pedro Extramuros in La Paz in the 1710s. Although not specified as relatives, at least two other retainers of Bishop Morcillo y Auñón also held important positions in the diocese. Juan Manuel de Figueroa, born and educated in Guatemala, was still serving as parish priest in Sorata in 1730, and Francisco Coronado worked as rector of the seminary school in La Paz in the 1710s, and for more than a decade from 1717 until at least 1728, was cura of the pueblo of Laja, just west of the capital city.

Most of these men, therefore, stayed in the Diocese of La Paz after their benefactor moved on to the Archdiocese of La Plata. This suggests either that Fray Diego's retainers were either content with their employment in the diocese, or did not see much of a future in moving south. Judging from the countless claims by parish priests of their overwhelming poverty, perhaps the latter assumption was more accurate. Indeed, Licenciado Francisco Coronado was one among a significant number of parish priests in

of deaths among priests perhaps was a result of the general epidemic which plagued the area in the early 1710s.

the Diocese of La Paz who complained incessantly of his financial woes. More than half of the members of the sample group (sixty-nine, or 52 percent), either in their petitions for orders or professional résumés, mention personal poverty as a significant quality of their lives. Of course, it is impossible to discern the legitimacy of these claims, and the few records which exist on priests' financial situation do not necessarily corroborate their collective testimony of poverty.⁴⁹ To use just one example from literally hundreds of cases located in the Archivo de La Paz of priests engaged in civil litigation involving valuable estates and assets, Presbyter Antonio Mañueco complained in 1720 that Lorenzo Porcel owed him the monetary equivalent of eight hundred fifty baskets of coca, an amount allegedly advanced to Porcel from the cura's productive *cocales* (coca farms) in the Yungas.⁵⁰ In addition, a review of several priests' final wills and testaments reveals that at least a few curas were considerably well off. For instance, Doctor Pedro de Goizueta Brabo de Paredes, who served as precentor (*chantre*) of the Cathedral in the 1670s and 1680s, left an impressive quantity of riches to his relatives, including a house full of European furniture, a valuable wardrobe, several chains of pearls, and an assortment of silver rings — "one filled with diamonds."⁵¹

⁴⁹Alberto Crespo Rodas contends that the city and region surrounding La Paz was thriving compared to other parts of the Audiencia of Charcas. He bases his theory on the sizable population of the area and the fact that "the agriculture farmed by the indigenous peoples of the pre-Columbian era (potatoes, *quinua*, pineapple, and a variety of fruits) was expanded by the Spaniards." Crespo Rodas, *La ciudad de La Paz: su historia, su cultura*, 382.

⁵⁰ALP, Caja 52, Expedientes Coloniales Num. 7, 1720.

⁵¹ALP, Caja 28, Expedientes Coloniales Num 8, 1682. On the personal holdings and riches of priests, Peñalosa Cordero states accurately: "the personal belongings of

In any case, a significant number of priests invoked the bishops' sympathies for their impoverished condition, usually supporting their claims with stories of poor relatives who relied on their assistance for survival. Indeed, some priests, like Licenciado Martín de Sarricolea y Olea, allegedly entered the priesthood not because of any religious calling, but rather to provide for the welfare of their families. It is worth noting that poorer candidates for orders and jobs frequently walked a fine line between, on one the hand, trying to convince their superiors of their prestigious Spanish lineage and purity of blood, while at the same time seeking the bishop's pity for their families' financial difficulties.

Don Martín stated in his application for a job in 1693:—

I was born in the City of Kings [Lima] of such reputable parents...[but I cannot] . . . represent my nobility [*hidalguía*] to Your Most Illustrious Lord . . . [because] they left me so poor, which was my reason for having applied myself totally to my studies, the only asset I have to help my three orphaned sisters. . . . [I] being [solely] responsible to relieve their suffering.⁵²

Taking care of family members, in fact, was the most common way for priests or prospective priests to bring up their privation. Usually, as in the case of Don Martín, priests asked the bishop to consider the plight specifically of their poor sisters, some of whom were nuns or lay women housed in the nunnery of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception for lack of other alternatives for care. Pleading for an appointment to one of the vacant posts in Songo and Caquiavire, Santiago de la Torre began his *relación* in

priests were often sumptuous and the clergymen counted among their assets agricultural estates, workshops, manufacturing plants, etc....In addition, they made money from their endowments and for the celebration of dedicated masses." *Nueva Historia Económica de Bolivia*, 29.

⁵²ACCFLM, Tomo 22, fol. 268.

1710: "I have four sisters who are nuns in this nunnery . . . and another one [outside the nunnery] and I cannot [because of unemployment] manage to relieve their suffering, so my father, burdened by old age, is forced to work."⁵³

The obligation to support poor sisters and other family members was not the only method priests used to elicit compassion from the bishop for orders or employment. While impoverished family members certainly played a part in the desperate appeal of Doctor Diego Mexías Hidalgo, a prolonged drought left the priest unable to grow even the most basic foods on the family farm. Moreover, Don Diego's mother invested the little money bequeathed by his recently deceased father on his education in Cuzco, which meant that the rest of the family was left penniless. In one of the most descriptive accounts of poverty of all applicants for orders or jobs in the Diocese of La Paz from 1680 to 1730, Mexías Hidalgo wasted no time emphasizing the gravity of the situation. He began his *relación*:

The reasons that I find myself with many obligations include having a sickly mother (*enfermisa*) and a poor sister, who has been sick for more than ten years as well, [constantly] collapsing and then [struggling] to right herself for more than four of those years which required her to stay mostly in bed, plus I have six orphaned cousins who are like sisters and then three [dependent] nephews. . . . because of the fact that our parents are all dead, we have been left destitute, without any relief other than that provided by the small parcel of land (*chacracilla*), which my parents gave to me upon ordination. . . . This *chacracilla* has not been able to provide even the slightest sustenance. . . . I have applied for jobs in the last four competitions, not gaining employment in any of them. . . . I put myself at your feet . . . to favor me with a benefice so we can feed ourselves, for the few resources which my father left us my mother used to support me in the Real Colegio of Our Father San Bernardo de Cusco.⁵⁴

⁵³ACCFLM, Tomo 32, fol. 133.

⁵⁴ACCFLM, Tomo 30, fol. 185.

Some petitioners who claimed poverty recalled the memory of prominent past relatives, usually former or current bishops of the Diocese of La Paz who either ordained them or awarded them for their faithful service with favorable positions, and who certainly (at least in the view of the poor priest) would have worked to enable the petitioner to avoid his current financial crisis. Julián de Mendoza y Calatayud came to La Paz from Lima as a *familiar* of Bishop Bernardo Carrasco de Saavedra in the late 1690s. In the job competition of 1728, Don Julián wrote briefly of his *cortos méritos* (few merits) before appraising Bishop Fernando de Rojas y Acebedo

of the tremendous arrears and miseries which I have suffered in the twenty-four years I have served in this bishopric . . . having the responsibility for four poor sisters who continually ask me about my fortunes . . . and I always give them what I have, so as to relieve their suffering.⁵⁵

Juan Manuel de Figueroa, one of Fray Diego's retainers from the Bishopric of León, reminded the bishop in his *relación* from 1710: "I have worked for Your Most Illustrious Lord for more than three years . . . [with] such decorated and praiseworthy service, attending [to my duties] with punctuality and [proper] conduct." Don Juan ended his the appeal by telling the bishop of his "seven poor and virtuous sisters back in Guatemala who rely on my stipend for their survival."⁵⁶

Summary

Almost all the boys and young men who applied for ordination in the diocese, and a majority of parish priests who worked for the bishops of La Paz from 1680 to 1730 were creoles from local families. All claimed illustrious and untainted Spanish (or — as in the

⁵⁵ACCFLM, Tomo 30, fol. 274r.

⁵⁶ACCFLM, Tomo 27, fol. 148.

case of Joseph Julián Inga Charaja — Indian) heritage, and many had ties to former bishops or royal officials of some economic or political importance. The fact that most priests from the Diocese of La Paz had local connections helps explain, to a certain extent, why many of them were involved in land and work-related disputes with their parishioners. These men, in other words, had important personal links to the secular world around them, and as many of the witness testimonies from the 1680s and 1690s prove, a fair number exploited these ties to their own advantage.

Claims to noble descent and connections with powerful members of local society, however, did not translate — if the priests' *relaciones de méritos y servicios* and the *peticiones para órdenes* are to be believed — to a life of comfort and prosperity. Indeed, priests from all five decades of this study complained constantly of the poverty and hardships of their positions, this despite contradictory evidence from other sources which suggests that many priests were well-endowed financially, some even affluent. As we will see in Chapter 4, moreover, a fair number of seminary students attended school in Cuzco, La Plata and even far off Lima, a fact which does not support the repeated claims of financial destitution.

In the broader picture, of course, these claims of poverty were a frank admission that obtaining a parish was seen, among other things, as an economic advantage. Judging from the parishioner statements from the 1680s and 1690s, many beneficed priests active in the diocese during these years sought to parlay this advantage into an even more profound dominance over local resources, labor, and ultimately, village politics. In other words, a majority of priests employed at this time — again, if witness testimonies are to be

believed — took full advantage of their positions of power and attempted to impose their will for financial gain or political power.

Chapter 4, incidentally, also discusses priestly performance, specifically which accomplishments priests routinely recognized as their most notable achievements in the line of duty. As I point out in Chapter 5, however, these accomplishments contrast sharply with the allegations of priestly neglect and abuse that plagued parish priests during the first two decades of this study.

CHAPTER 4 PRIESTLY EDUCATION AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

For young men dedicated to the priestly vocation, ordination and formal education usually went hand in hand. It was not uncommon for priests of low academic accomplishment to become ordained and have successful careers,¹ but an overwhelming majority of clerics who worked in the Diocese of La Paz from 1680 to 1730 held advanced degrees from either a *colegio* (secondary school), a university, or both. In large part, *colegios* and universities founded in the Americas were designed to train professionals to service, in essence, the Spanish crown and the Catholic Church. Hence, educators and educational curricula placed much emphasis on training individuals to become efficient doctors, lawyers, and priests, who in all likelihood would work for the state at some point in their careers. Education in the Americas was thus both practical and scholastic: practical in the sense that high marks and academic distinction usually translated to better jobs and professional success, and scholastic since the structure of learning and teaching in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries still borrowed

¹Usually these priests were ordained *a titulo de idioma* (by title of competence in language), meaning in the case of the Diocese of La Paz, facility in Quechua or Aymara. Many of the more educated priests were also wealthier, and in contrast were ordained *a titulo de capellania* (by title of endowment) which guaranteed a usually modest yearly stipend tied to the commercial output of a particular estate or small farm.

heavily from medieval codes, dominated of course by the scholastic traditions of the Church.²

For those clerics applying for the more lucrative or desirable positions (which included, of course, the Cathedral and the other parishes in La Paz), an impressive academic career was a considerable bonus, and parish priests did not hesitate to boast of their accomplishments in their petitions for orders and employment.³ A statistical analysis of the different levels of education completed by members of the secular clergy is difficult to assemble because the data are incomplete and ambiguous, and no comprehensive report of academic achievements of diocesan priests exists in the archival record. Furthermore, whereas bachelor, licentiate, master,⁴ and doctor are all distinguishing titles reflecting different levels of education, in many reports the bishops were seemingly uncertain of the academic accomplishments of a given priest, and placed the honorific and indefinite "don" before his first name. The title "don" was, in effect, no indication at all of one's educational level, and thus could refer to a priest with no advanced degree, as well as to a

²Scholasticism is defined as "the search for devout contemplative understanding of the divine mysteries, or as understanding the intellect sought within faith by using all the resources of human reason." *The Encyclopedia of Catholicism*, vol 1, s.v. "scholasticism."

³On the difference between creole and peninsular *relaciones*, Mario Góngora writes "Creoles seeking ordination or a benefice, in particular, tended to highlight in their *relaciones* their prior academic standing and achievements in an effort to distinguish themselves from peninsular rivals who emphasized social and familial background in their petitions for jobs." *Colonial History of Spanish America*, 187.

⁴The title of *maestro* (master) was not an educational title per se, since it refers not to an earned degree, but rather to the appointment as an instructor at a *colegio* or university. Quite a few men who eventually went on to become priests in the Diocese of La Paz served as teachers at schools in Cuzco, La Paz and Lima before entering the priesthood, and thus identified themselves in official documents as *maestros*.

bachelor or a doctor. For example, in a 1725 official report to the King, Bishop Fernando de Rojas y Acebedo referred to Pedro Ygnacio de Foncueba as simply "Don Pedro." In subsequent documentation, however, it is clear that the man graduated with a licentiate degree in Moral Theology from the Colegio de San Francisco de Borja in Guatemala City. Notwithstanding the confusion surrounding the title "don," some conclusions can be made about the academic achievements of parish priests from the two reports filed by Bishop Queipo de Llano Valdés in 1690 and by Bishop Fernando de Rojas y Acebedo in 1725.

The 1690 report on thirty-five diocesan priests revealed a highly educated group of men, surprising perhaps considering La Paz had no university and the fair distance of the capital city from the major colonial cities of Cuzco, La Plata and Lima. Five curas held baccalaureate degrees, and six parish priests were *licenciados*. Five men identified themselves as masters, and ten priests used the title of doctor. Of the nine men whose designation was simply "don" in the 1690 report, further research revealed that one was a bachelor, six were licentiates, and the educational levels of two men, Juan de Mosquera and Juan Antonio de Eguáres y Pasquier (Bishop Queipo de Llano Valdés' visitor-general), cannot be ascertained.

In the 1725 report of fifty-five priests employed in the diocese that year, only five men were identified as bachelors, seven had licentiate degrees, three priests used the title of master, and thirteen were doctors. Of the twenty-nine parish priests who received the ambiguous title of "don," further research revealed that four held bachelor's degrees, three were masters, fourteen were licentiates, and one was a doctor. The educational level of the remaining seven priests remains unknown. This might reflect their relatively low academic accomplishments.

The 1690 and 1725 *informes* indicate, in sum, that many curas who worked in the Diocese of La Paz from 1680 to 1730 held advanced university degrees, although having a doctorate was not always a ticket to better employment, as indicated, for example, by the career of the parish priest of San Antonio de Esquilache, Diego de Peralta y Ayala. Doctor Diego was active in all twelve of the *concursons* of the 1680s and the early 1690s, yet was unable to land a new position before his death in 1693, which proved to be the only way out of working in San Antonio, a notoriously difficult and dangerous place to work according to various priests' testimonies.⁵

If the secular clergy of the Diocese of La Paz from 1680 to 1730 was, by and large, an educated group, what type of schooling did they receive in the Spanish American secondary schools and universities? No monographs have been written about the school most attended, the Colegio de San Gerónimo in La Paz, so it is difficult to state with full confidence the curriculum most future priests of the diocese followed. But in all likelihood, prior to the Bourbon reforms of the mid-eighteenth century, academic life and instruction varied little from one *colegio* or university to the next, and thus a student in the Andes received roughly the same training as his peers in other parts of Spanish America.⁶

⁵See footnote number 25, Chapter 2, for an account of the inhospitality of San Antonio de Esquilache as a place to live and work.

⁶See Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred*; Ganster, "A Social History of the Secular Clergy of Lima during the middle decades of the Eighteenth Century;" and John Tate Lanning, *Academic Culture in the Spanish Colonies* (London: Oxford University Press, 1940) for an overview of academic life and priestly education during the colonial period. For a complete review of all major universities founded during the colonial era in Spanish America, see Agüeda María Rodríguez Cruz, *Historia de las Universidades Hispanoamericanas* (Bogotá: Imprenta Patriótica del Instituto Caro Y Cuervo, 1973).

In his study of parish priests in Mexico, Taylor contends that boys throughout the Americas typically began their formal education between the ages of ten and twelve,⁷ although most had some sort of private tutorial education at an earlier age. The scant data from the Diocese of La Paz on early education confirms this point, as boys who applied for grants to attend the Colegio de San Gerónimo were on average twelve years old. The content of the *colegio* and university curricula followed a medieval plan of study, with students spending the first five years completing the minor subjects of grammar, rhetoric, and philosophy.⁸ The grammar course consisted of writing, reading and instruction in the pronunciation of Latin, while the series of rhetoric courses concentrated on both Spanish and Latin texts, syntax, and the art of debate. Indeed, throughout their educational careers, top students engaged in public debates, often honing their oratory and argumentative skills, valuable tools obviously for a career in the priesthood. Juan Manuel de Figueroa, cura of Sorata in the 1720s, first studied grammar at the Colegio Real de Nuestra Señora de la Asunción in Guatemala City, then spent three years at that same city's Universidad Real de San Carlos where, "with high marks from my professors I gave a public presentation of logic with various conclusions."⁹ On the value of these public

⁷On the question of formal education and age, Laura Escobari Quejerazu reports that as early as the age of four, boys attending the Colegio San Borja in Cuzco received schooling in "prayers, the catechism, and...the first rudimentary lessons on reading, writing and singing." Laura Escobari Quejerazu, "La Evangelización por medio de la Educaciones: Los Jesuitas y el Colegio San Borja del Cuzco," in *La Evangelización del Perú, Siglos XVI-XVII*, 207.

⁸Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred*, 90.

⁹ACCFLM, Tomo 27, fol. 148.

lectures, Taylor contends, "in the [higher educational] process they became veterans of public display of their knowledge - in sermons, lecture, disputations, examinations of various kinds, and the publication of literary works."¹⁰

For students who wished to pursue an advanced degree or who sought ordination and a career in the priesthood, additional course work (taking on average three years to complete) in theology, law, Aristotelean logic, various sciences and mathematics was beneficial. Theology, of course, was the main focus for future priests, and as Mario Góngora points out, students entering either a *colegio mayor* (upper-division secondary school) or a university focused less on the scriptures than on scholasticism, contemplating the teachings of theological philosophers such as Duns Scotus and more importantly, St. Thomas Aquinas.¹¹

This pattern was certainly followed by priests of the Diocese of La Paz. A student of the Colegio Real de San Martín (Lima), Doctor Fernando Suárez y Montenegro "won the approval of his teachers"¹² so they awarded him a grant to pursue advanced studies in Sacred Theology, where he "defended in a distinguished presentation (*acto*) the entire first part of St. Thomas."¹³ Students who completed this final stage of course work in the

¹⁰Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred*, 91.

¹¹Góngora, *Studies in the Colonial History of Spanish America*, 188.

¹²Of the teachers of future priests, Góngora writes: "In theology, however, the teachers preferred the system of dictation, in order to gain continuing support for their own opinions or the views of particular schools of thought regarding current topics of controversy." *Ibid.*, 189.

¹³ACCFLM, fol. 283. Tomo 26. On the curricula and public presentations, Lanning writes: "In the Arts courses, in which the majority of undergraduates enrolled, the logic, metaphysics, and physics of Aristotle dominated until the late eighteenth century... On Saturdays and Wednesdays, a student championed a thesis. These 'acts,' when they became formal, were known as conclusions in which one or more students defended a given thesis

colegio were awarded a bachelor's degree in either Arts or Philosophy, but only after passing an oral examination before a panel of at least three teachers.¹⁴

If the 1725 survey of priests in the Diocese of La Paz is any measure, many bachelors went on to receive even more schooling to earn their licentiate and doctoral degrees. According to Taylor, once a student dedicated himself to the priesthood and was on track to become ordained, he typically advanced to study one of two types of theology: dogmatic or moral. A good student could earn a licentiate degree in roughly four years in one of these theological disciplines or in canon law. Students who wanted a doctorate typically spent another two to four years specializing in some aspect of theology before graduation.¹⁵

The path to ordination and the pursuit of an advanced degree were usually simultaneous, even if the conference of orders and graduation were handled by separate administrative entities. A few years into their formal educations, prospective priests typically began applying for minor orders through the bishop's office. The first stage of ordination was first tonsure, whereby students as young as seven years of age, but usually thirteen or fourteen, took first vows and had a portion of their heads shaved in preparation for entering the priesthood. The second stage, that of *órdenes menores* was conferred upon recommendation of the student's pastor and one of his teachers, although the bishop's office made the final decision depending on the candidate's qualifications. Taylor reports that "normally, future priests would have begun the minor orders at age fourteen

as a step toward the baccalaureate, licentiate, or doctorate." Lanning, *Academic Culture in the Spanish Colonies*, 43.

¹⁴Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred*, 90.

¹⁵Ibid., 91.

after completing the grammar course and demonstrating knowledge of Christian doctrine and the mysteries of the faith."¹⁶

Once reaching the age of twenty two, according to Church rules, future priests could seek promotion to the major orders of subdeacon, deacon, and finally, presbyter, each level with the appropriate periods of probation (called *intersticios*) required between promotions. The Council of Trent specified the minimum ages for these orders, although the various bishops of La Paz routinely pushed through waivers of these requirements due to - according to a number of testimonials - the *inopia* (lack) of ordained priests in the region. In any case, technically the minimum age for subdeaconship was twenty two. Deacons had to be at least twenty three, and fully ordained priests were required to be, at a minimum, twenty-five years of age.¹⁷

Taylor and Lanning point out that by the time candidates for the priesthood finished a baccalaureate degree and subsequent theology courses, they were on average about twenty-three or twenty-four years old, within a year then, of minimum age for the priesthood. The archival record for the Diocese of La Paz supports this claim, as most candidates for presbyter were deacons who had received their bachelor's degree and thus had applied for final orders shortly after graduation. These deacons were, on average, twenty-three years old. For men who entered the priesthood with higher degrees, such as a licentiate or doctorate, it was customary for them to complete their studies before seeking full ordination. Some priests, like Roque Rutal y Marquina - a frequent candidate for job

¹⁶Ibid., 93.

¹⁷Ibid., 93-94.

vacancies in the late 1680s and 1690s - waited to apply for first tonsure until after he finished his bachelor and licentiate degrees from the Real Universidad de Cuzco in 1688.¹⁸

Of the one hundred and thirty-two priests of the sample group, at least thirty attended, at some point in their academic careers, the Colegio Real de San Gerónimo, La Paz' seminary school. More than half of these students attended the Colegio de la Compañía de Jesús in La Paz¹⁹ either prior to, or in some cases, at the same time as their enrollment in the Colegio Real. Studying Latin grammar and undergoing language (Quechua and Aymara) training with the Jesuits, while taking courses in the Arts and theology at San Gerónimo, was apparently a common practice at least among students originally from the diocese. The *paceño* Gaspar de Herrera's educational career was typical of many young men applying for minor orders. He wrote to Bishop Queipo de Llano y Valdés in 1686: "I am a seminary student in the Colegio de La Paz [San Gerónimo]. . . . I have served this *colegio* and the [Cathedral] Church for more than seven years, continuing my studies in the Compañía de Jesús of this city."²⁰ Three years later, Joseph Noguera y Olasaval received a grant to enter the Colegio de San Gerónimo based

¹⁸ACCFLM, Tomo 13, fol. 329.

¹⁹On the importance of Jesuit instruction in the Audiencia of Charcas, Lanning writes: "they anticipated royal authorization [to teach] . . . [and] in their realization that through the mastery of the native tongues they [could] evangelize the aborigine. . . . The drift was plainly to Charcas as the center of Jesuit spiritual and intellectual domination, for the capital was within reach of a large indigenous population, wrapped in a perennial spring, and conveniently close to the wealth of Potosí." Lanning, *Academic Culture in the Spanish Colonies*, 22.

²⁰ACCFLM, Tomo 9, fol. 79.

on his superior work and behavior as a student in the Jesuit *colegio*, where he studied grammar and lived "with total modesty and composure."²¹

Twenty-eight of the clerics of the sample group attended school in Cuzco,²² which was, according to Lanning, a significant center of learning because of its "ancient and renowned importance."²³ At some point in their academic careers, sixteen of these men took classes at the Colegio de San Bernardo, founded in the sixteenth century by the Jesuits, who later formed the University of San Ignacio de Loyola for the *colegio's* top graduates. Five priests from the sample group held advanced degrees from this Jesuit-administered university.

The Jesuits did not completely control higher education in Cuzco, however, as twelve future priests of the Diocese of La Paz attended the Colegio de San Antonio Abad, the first Spanish American school established in Cuzco founded by friars of the Dominican order.²⁴

²¹ACCFLM, Tomo 5, fol. 25.

²²There are two excellent compendiums of primary sources on many aspects of social, economic, political, and educational life in colonial Cuzco. Edited by Horacio Villanueva Urteaga, *Cuzco en 1689: Economía y sociedad en el sur andino* (Centro de Estudios rurales andinos, "Bartolomé de las Casas," 1982) is a collection of reports generated by order of Doctor Don Manuel de Mollinedo y Angula, the Bishop of Cuzco in the late 1680s. The *colegios* and universities of San Bernardo, San Antonio de Abad, and San Francisco de Borja are referenced throughout the compilation. Also see Diego Esquivel y Navia's important work entitled, *Noticias cronológicas de la Gran Ciudad del Cuzco* (Lima: Fundación Agustín Wiese, 1980).

²³Lanning, *Academic Culture in the Spanish Colonies*, 27.

²⁴*Ibid*, 27. On the competition between the religious orders for students, Lanning writes: "Rivalry between the Jesuit institutions and San Antonio de Abad was natural, for students of the latter had to make the trip to Lima or succumb to a Jesuit examination at home. The furor excited by the situation led to the creation, in 1692, of a second and rival

Doctor Antonio Sabater's (an ordained priest who worked in the diocese in the 1720s) academic career was typical of many of the more educated clerics who, as natives of the diocese, first attended schools in La Paz then ventured west to Cuzco for an advanced degree before returning home to practice their vocation. In the early 1700s, he attended the Colegio de la Compañía de Jesús in La Paz, where he studied Latin before moving on to Cuzco's Universidad de San Ignacio. From the University he received a bachelor's degree in Science, and later, after finishing a course in the Arts ("with the requisite end-of-the-year public lectures before the faculty"²⁵) he earned a master's degree in that discipline. After three more years of schooling and additional public lectures, the University found him "worthy and deserving"²⁶ of the degrees of licentiate and doctor, which were conferred on the 11th of October 1709. He then returned to La Paz and within a few years completed the ordination process and first competed for jobs in the *concurros* of 1712.

Some future priests, such as Bernardo de Peñaranda, were born in the Diocese of La Paz, went west to begin their formal educations in Cuzco, only to return to La Paz to complete higher degrees. As a descendent of "one of the first families of this city [La Paz],"²⁷ Don Bernardo attended the Colegio de San Antonio Abad in the 1700s before returning to the Colegio Real de San Gerónimo. While a student there, he applied for and

institution called the University of San Antonio de Abad with the power to give degrees." Ibid.

²⁵ACCFLM, Tomo 30, fol. 187.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷ACCFLM, Tomo 27, fol. 54.

received minor orders in February of 1710. There is no record of Don Bernardo's service in the diocese after this date, but it is possible he was an assistant to his older brother, Vicente de Peñaranda, who worked as parish priest in Viacha in the 1710s and 1720s.

A fair number of parish priests from the sample group completed their studies in Lima before moving to the Diocese of La Paz to start their careers. This trend is not surprising - and not necessarily representative of the secular clergy of the diocese as a whole - since the retainers Bishop Rubio y Auñón brought with him from Lima tended to file detailed *relaciones* and were included in the sample for this reason. A total of twelve future priests who applied for orders or jobs in the Diocese of La Paz - at some time during their academic careers - attended either the Colegio San Martín, the Universidad de San Marcos, or the Colegio de la Compañía de Jesús in Lima.²⁸ Such was the case of Licenciado Nicolás de Mexía de Vargas, a *limeño* whose life served as an example of not only the mobility of parish priests, but also of the variety of professional positions priests held in service to the crown and the Church.

Born in Lima, Don Nicolás entered Lima's Jesuit *colegio* at the age of twelve, where he studied grammar and rhetoric. After completing these courses, he matriculated at the University of San Marcos, and, after "having defended various confessionals,"²⁹ he earned his bachelor's degree with full approval from his instructors. Don Nicolás continued his studies at the University, focusing mostly on aspects of canon law, before being appointed conciliator of the rectory. Later, he served as a lawyer before the Real

²⁸See Chapter One of Lanning's *Academic Culture in the Spanish Colonies*, for information on the founding and administration of these *limeño* institutions.

²⁹ACCFLM, Tomo 29, fol. 170.

Audiencia of Lima, and as Judge Advocate-General of War in His Majesty's Royal Service, all before being ordained by the Bishop of Buenos Aires. Don Nicolás went on to have a long and industrious career in the Diocese of La Paz, serving as rector of the seminary school, and as parish priest in Sorata and Laza in the 1710s and 1720s.³⁰

Indeed, the spectrum of schools represented among just the sample group indicates a striking degree of mobility among parish priests who worked in the Diocese of La Paz from 1680 to 1730. Young men literally moved from one urban center to another in search of advanced degrees, a trend which reveals to some extent the wealth of at least some of the families who sent off their boys for training. In addition to the aforementioned schools in La Paz, Lima, and Cuzco, parish priests from the Diocese of La Paz attended the following *colegios* or universities: the Colegio San Borja in Cuzco,³¹ the University of San Francisco Xavier, the Colegio de la Compañía de Jesús, and the Colegio de San Juan Baptista in La Plata; the Colegio de San Francisco de Borja in Guatemala City; the University of Guamanga, Perú; and finally, the University of Toledo in Spain, where Bishop Rubio y Auñón's brother, Don Pedro Morcillo Rubio, was educated.³²

In addition to their noble lineage, alleged poverty, and notable educational achievements, a majority of clerics working in the Diocese of La Paz also boasted of their

³⁰Ibid.

³¹For a brief analysis of the importance of the Colegio de San Borja del Cuzco during colonial times, see Escobari Quejerazu, "La Evangelización por medio de la Educación: Los Jesuitas y el Colegio San Borja del Cuzco," in *La Evangelización del Perú, siglos XVI-XVII*.

³²Twenty-five of the one hundred thirty-three men profiled did not mention where they had received instruction, and well over half of these were young boys seeking first tonsure and thus probably had no formal training up to that point.

special dedication to their jobs and their parishioners. Every petitioner for orders and most priests applying for job vacancies from 1680 to 1730 noted at the very least their spiritual devotion to the Church and their unabashed loyalty to their local church or Cathedral.³³ Describing his worthiness for orders, for example, a seminary student named Ysidro Brabo commented in 1709 that he was "possessed with the spirit of serving God . . . and the ecclesiastical profession, and for the good of my conscience, I have devoutly served this Sacred Cathedral Church."³⁴

If every applicant for ordination provided as part of his petition for orders a usually brief description of achievements in service of their local church, parish priests frequently specified in long detail particular experiences which they hoped would separate them from their colleagues. One common way for a priest to distinguish himself was to highlight the favorable results of a recently completed pastoral visita. Commenting on the bishop's positive final sentences from the 1725 and 1728 series of visits, Br. Juan García de Arriaga (cura of San Miguel de Hilave in the 1720s) reminded the bishop:

[I] was declared a good priest, having been vigilant in [my] ministry, being exemplary in all operations, careful in governance, quick and active in the teaching of [my] parishioners, lending a helping hand to the wretched (*miserables*) Indians.³⁵

³³As part of their admission into the seminary, students had to perform certain volunteer duties assisting the parish priest of the Cathedral. See Chapter Five of Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred*, for an analysis of seminary students and their responsibilities in the Diocese of Guadalajara and the Archdiocese of Mexico.

³⁴ACCFLM, Tomo 26, fol. 241.

³⁵AGI, Charcas 414, 3 January 1731.

As priests of Indian parishes, most secular clerics of the Diocese of La Paz singled out their special dedication to the instruction and care of their indigenous parishioners, rarely expressing any anxiety about either their effectiveness as teachers or the Indian's ability to accept the Catholic faith as their own. Indeed, at least during job competitions, priests tended to portray their parishes as ideal Christian communities. Miguel Cayetano de Avendaño (parish priest of the Indian village of Chuma in the 1710s and 1720s), for instance, bragged that he never had to answer to complaints (*capítulos*) made against him by any of his Indian parishioners. In fact, he reported that the *corregidor* of the Province of Larecaja, Benito Goncálvez de Santalla, had issued a favorable report on his behalf, claiming, among other things, that

because of the fervor and compassion he shows for the suffering, as well as for the conservation of the Indians of his region . . . he (the *corregidor*) did not doubt that he would continue in the future in all that concerned their well-being and relief [from suffering].³⁶

Athanasio Calvo also won praise for his devotion to the Indian members of his parishes,³⁷ but his primary merit - as expressed in his *relación* - had to do with the variety of posts he had held within the diocesan bureaucracy. In addition to his appointments as cura of Mocomoco in 1706 and then Puno in 1712, Don Athanasio held the positions of vicar-judge (*vicario juez eclesiástico*) in both of those ecclesiastic jurisdictions; church

³⁶AGI, Charcas 412, 24 November 1721.

³⁷"And other notable qualities which Don Phelipe Athanasio Calvo possesses, in addition to his merits, titles, academic marks, and his exemplary character, include the diligence he has in the fulfillment of his priestly obligations. In all of his tasks he has been very careful and had much success getting the most out of the congregations where he has worked. . . . He has served with total and continual patience, virtue, and provided a good example, never failing to hold confession and or be available at the pulpit at whatever hour of the day." AGI, Charcas 414, 30 January 1718.

attorney before the Audiencias of Lima and La Plata; synod examiner (*examinador sinodal*) and general examiner (*examinador general*) of the Diocese of La Paz; Apostolic Commissary (*commissario apostólico*) of the *Tribunal de la Sagrada Cruzada de la Inquisición* for the Province of Puacarcolla; and finally, visitor-general of all the oratories and chapels in the area.³⁸

Some priests, like Doctor Matheo de Narvaja, managed to attain administrative distinction and also be recognized for their exemplary work in the field. Don Mateo held a more advanced degree than Don Athanasio, but was appointed to roughly the same administrative posts as his colleague.³⁹ In his view, however, he deserved special appreciation for his extensive service in many of the Indian villages in the diocese. By 1722, only twelve years after becoming ordained and getting his doctorate in Sacred Theology from the Colegio de San Bernardo in Cuzco, Don Matheo had served as parish priest in Tiahuanaco, Calamarca, Vilque, Moho, Tiquillaca, Puno, Cohoni and Collana.

In contrast to Don Matheo, who clearly sought to impress his superiors by emphasizing the number of parishes in which he had worked, some priests hoped longevity in the diocese would convince the bishop of their worthiness for a promotion. A perennial assistant, Antonio Joseph de Cárdenas, somewhat sarcastically pointed this out in his appeal for a beneficed position in either Hilave or Challana: "my merits are only having

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹During his career, Don Matheo served as vicar-judge of the ecclesiastical districts of Cohoni and Collana, and San Pedro and Santiago Extramuros of La Paz; synod examiner; and finally visitor-general of the Diocese of La Paz.

served in various parishes in the administration of the Sacred Sacraments, preaching and teaching the Christian doctrine [catechism] to the Indians for the last forty-three years."⁴⁰

Many younger priests and those seeking ordination, while perhaps lacking in experience and sacerdotal training, sought to gain favor from the bishop by highlighting their language skills.⁴¹ Indeed, parish priests working in the Diocese of La Paz during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had to pass a series of language examinations which proved their proficiency in at least Aymara, and in some cases, Quechua as well.⁴² Pedro de Noguera in his appeal for minor orders in 1693 justified his request by pointing out the lack of church functionaries in the diocese and "because I am a language specialist" (*por ser lingüarez* [sic]).⁴³ In 1709, Joseph Savater sought ordination *a titulo de lengua* on account of being an "expert" (*perito*)⁴⁴ in the native languages of the region, while his colleague, Marcos de Herrera (an assistant priest who worked in the parish of San Pedro

⁴⁰ACCFLM, Tomo 32, fol. 127.

⁴¹Constitución III of the Second Ecclesiastical Council of Lima (1565-67) read, in part: "priests should learn with total diligence their language, so that they can instruct them with better proficiency." Aparicio Quispe, "Estudio Preliminar" in *La Evangelización del Perú en los siglos XVI-XVII*, 58.

⁴²During the course of every examination of candidates for a job vacancy, a language specialist of the examining board (usually a Jesuit) "had them translate an epistle used in mass in Aymara, and he would ask them how he would explain to the Indians in that language the mysteries of the Catholic faith." ACCFLM, Tomo 22, fol. 108. On the existence of Quechua-speaking enclaves in the region of the Diocese of La Paz, Crespo Rodas reports that Charasani is just one example of a "region strongly Quechuanized (*quechuizado*)."
La ciudad de La Paz: su historia, su cultura, 332.

⁴³ACCFLM, Tomo 22, fol. 270. Don Pedro was probably a specialist in Aymara, the Indian language referred to throughout these documents as the *lengua materna* of the Diocese of La Paz.

⁴⁴ACCFLM, Tomo 26, fol. 258.

de Extramuros in the 1710s) acknowledged his shortcomings and strengths when he remarked:

Although I do not possess the best credentials compared to other subjects of this diocese . . . I am sufficiently qualified for the benefices [of Hilave and Palca] on account of my notable facility with the language of the Indians, such that I can administer the Sacred Sacraments and preach the Sacred Scriptures in their maternal language.⁴⁵

For those aspiring priests who were not talented linguists or notable scholars, it was important to highlight some other aspect of their priestly experience which might impress their superiors. One easy way to get the attention of the bishop or *cabildo eclesiástico* (the cathedral chapter, a governing body which oversaw appointments and other administrative details) was to build or rebuild churches and chapels, and to furnish these holy buildings with expensive ornaments. Indeed, a physical inspection of the parish church and church property was the first item of business during an official visit, and several priests drew the sharp criticism (and sometimes monetary fines) from the visiting official for shabby upkeep of the church or chapel.⁴⁶

Of the eighty-seven clerics of the sample group who held the position of parish priest at some point in their careers, more than half mention in their *relaciones* their dedication to construction and the outfitting of the parish church.⁴⁷ Licenciado Agustín de

⁴⁵ACCFLM, Tomo 29, fol. 187.

⁴⁶See Chapter 2 for an account of how Bernadino de Hernani Bonifaz was warned by Bishop Queipo de Llano Valdés to take better care of the physical property of the church in the district of Combaya.

⁴⁷Of the parish priests of late-colonial Mexico, William Taylor writes: "By law, the cura and other local notables were expected to contribute what they could to the construction, reconstruction, and outfitting of the parish church, and the crown expected any repairs to be covered by the 8.33 percent of the tithe designated for *fábrica*. But the

Barroeta y Guilléstegui (cura of Mollebamba, Palca and Caquiavire in the 1710s and 1720s) reported in a 1729 *relación*, for example:

As a result of a limb that fell on the Church of the Conception . . . the altarpiece burned down, so [I] rebuilt it at [my] own cost, better than it was before. In this effort and for ornaments and carved silver (*plata labrada*), which I have donated to this church, I have spent more than six thousand pesos of my own money.⁴⁸

Obviously, parish priests were particularly proud when they could cite exact amounts of their own money used for an addition or new project. In such cases, the priests were usually specific about the quality of work done and the effort necessary for completion. Doctor Juan Ruiz de Garfias, cura of Calamarca from 1708 to 1724,

repaired the crack that threatened the roof of the primary chapel replacing it with a new one; I have also built a large tower; and ordered the foundation for a chapel in the name of Santa Bárbara, a vestry . . . for this church, and at the present time the baptistry is being rebuilt. . . . In addition I have adorned the church with many ornaments of carved silver and other gems . . . all for the decency of the church.⁴⁹

Many priests commented not only on repairs, improvements and new projects they had initiated in their current parishes, but also contributions they made to churches they served earlier in their careers. Manuel Feliz de Agüero must have considered his building accomplishments throughout the diocese of first and foremost importance, since he only

bishops traditionally had reserved this fund for maintaining the cathedral building, not for parish churches. Late colonial builder-priests therefore won considerable favor with bishops and dignitaries of the cathedral. Every cura who could do so, consequently, presented himself as a builder." *Magistrates of the Sacred*, 103.

⁴⁸AGI, Charcas 412, 12 May 1729.

⁴⁹ACCFLM, Tomo 30, fol. 186r.

briefly mentioned his parents, educational background, and prior jobs before launching into a lengthy and detailed account of his current and past construction projects.

In the mines of Merenguela I have served for the last twelve years with reputable attention to the ministries of my charge, taking care of . . . the Divine Cult by repairing at my own cost the church of the mines whose tabernacle was only half done before I finished it . . . [and, in fact] I improved it and the sanctuary too . . . adorning it with gems of silver and [other] ornaments. . . . I built from the very first foundations the church of Santiago [where I served before] . . . complete with doorways of cut stone and a tower also of cut stone, and in which I put two large bells.⁵⁰

Later in the *relación*, Don Manuel commented on his equal dedication to aesthetics in his first job in Ytalaque, where he also sculpted a stone doorway for the church and furnished the church with "ornaments and other necessary ornaments of silver."⁵¹

Repairing damaged roofs and adorning altars with silver certainly impressed bishops and other ecclesiastical officials, but the adequate fulfillment of the primary duties of every parish priest (to administer the Sacred Sacraments and teach the principles of the Catholic faith to the Christian masses) was also essential for promotion.⁵² Of particular importance was the baptism and subsequent spiritual care of recently converted Indians, many of whom lived in remote areas of the diocese. Priests who served these potentially dangerous regions (the northern and eastern zones of the Diocese of La Paz were considered by curas to be the least civilized areas) often highlighted the risk of working in

⁵⁰ACCFLM, Tomo 29, fol. 175.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Throughout the documentary record for the Diocese of La Paz, priests brought up on charges of not administering diligently the Sacred Sacraments to their parishioners were said to be neglecting *la primera obligación de su cargo*.

such conditions and were not reluctant to remind the bishop of their courage in the face of adversity.

Bartolomé de Salas y Valdés and Joseph Francisco Avendaño were two such priests. Br. Salas y Valdés served in the Diocese of La Paz in the 1680s and 1690s, spending most of his time as either an assistant priest or a beneficed cura in the villages of Los Mohos and Charasani, both located in the northernmost sector of the diocese. According to his 1688 *relación*, Don Bartolomé repeatedly challenged members of the notorious *Chunchos* tribe to convert to Christianity.⁵³ Nevertheless, and undaunted by the risks to his life such an endeavor posed, the curas informed the bishop that he simply did his job:

In the aforementioned region [Los Mohos], [myself] and twenty Christianized Indians who are familiar too with the laws of the Caribs - the infidels - advanced into Chuncho territory and more than thirty of them [Chunchos] [submitted to us] and received all the waters of baptism.⁵⁴

Joseph Francisco Abendaño worked in the eastern region of the diocese for most of his career, spending most of his years (during the 1700s and 1710s) in the parish of Chulumani, which he describes as the "*frontera de los Indios Bárbaros*" (frontier of the barbaric Indians).⁵⁵ Don Joseph allegedly completed all the duties of his position, serving

⁵³The Chunchos were a rebellious group who resisted Inca sovereignty prior to the arrival of the Spanish. For a brief account of early European contact with the Chunchos, see María Luisa Soux et al. *Apolobamba, Caupolicán, Franz Tamayo: Historia de una región paceña* (La Paz: Universidad Mayor de San Andrés, 1991).

⁵⁴ACCFLM, Tomo 19, fol. 92.

⁵⁵AGI, Charcas 414, 2 March, 1718.

the Indians as well as his Spanish parishioners, most of whom were soldiers sent there to guard the village from hostile Indian incursions. Of his predicament in 1718, he wrote:

I have continued [my duties] . . . with great zeal and vigilance in the administration of the Sacred Sacraments, in service of the newly reduced [converted] Indians as well as the Spaniards, who are here along this Frontier of the Infidel to guard us and the church. Preaching, and indoctrinating in the Sacred Scriptures . . . [is] a real challenge because the infidels constantly mingle with the recently converted. . . . This task is insurmountable, in part due to the close proximity of such groups.⁵⁶

Threats from human sources were not the only obstacles which parish priests working in the Diocese of La Paz in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries had to overcome. Indeed, several clerics commented on the physical challenges of their appointments, and how they still managed to fulfil their priestly obligations despite the risks to their very lives the physical environment often presented. In the case of Doctor Manuel Rodríguez de la Espada, that threat came from the "harshness" of the land, which forced him to walk "at least one hundred and fifty leagues a year"⁵⁷ instead of riding a mule to serve Indians living beyond the parish village of Challana. In 1714, Don Manuel appealed to the bishop for a different appointment, complaining:

For fifteen years I have labored here with considerable fervor, even with the ruggedness of the territory which requires me to travel more by foot than by mule, I have given spiritual sustenance (*pasto espiritual*) to my parishioners, penetrating their inaccessible wilds (*montañas*), and uneven mountain chains (*fragosas cordilleras*).⁵⁸

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷ACCFLM, Tomo 30, fol. 179r.

⁵⁸Ibid.

In addition, parish priests frequently cited poor health in their *relaciones* and requests for transfers (*permutas*), and they nearly always blamed the harsh physical conditions for their troubles.⁵⁹ In the tropical region of the Yungas Chapes (east of La Paz), Bernardo de Chábes complained he had endured thirty-six years of working in pain: "the rigorous weather has taken away my health . . . [but I still] have the vigilance to administer the Sacred Sacrament [to my flock]."⁶⁰ For his part, Licenciado Joseph Ortiz Foronda (cura of Suri in the 1710s) hoped for a promotion to either Guaqui or Cohoni, asserting that he might have to renounce his benefice due to poor health. He informed the bishop in 1715, "in Suri I have had serious health problems, [which cause] a risk to my life on account of the weather which is so damaging to my [bodily] constitution."⁶¹

The epidemics of the early eighteenth century also tested several priests' physical and mental resolve. In the 1720s, Miguel de Piérola worked as assistant or parish priest in Indian villages throughout the diocese - "in places that have worn down my health and [posed] risks to my life."⁶² In 1728 Bishop Rojas y Acebedo appointed him as the interim priest in Paucarcolla, where he "experienced the same bad health, [and] due to the general

⁵⁹Of the nine transfers which took place from 1680 to 1730, all had to do with priests' poor health.

⁶⁰ACCFLM, Tomo 30, fol. 180. On the remoteness of the Yungas Chapes regions, Crespo Rodas states: "the Yungas were outside of all administrative control." *La ciudad de La Paz: su historia, su cultura*, 67.

⁶¹ACCFLM, Tomo 30, fol. 149.

⁶²ACCFLM. Tomo 36, fol. 261.

epidemic (*común epidemia*), other grave dangers in my effort to fulfill my ministerial duties."⁶³

Commenting on the plagues, some priests, including Juan Baptista de Moya y Villacorta, bragged of their fortitude and munificence in the face of such terrible conditions. As parish priest of Carabuco in the 1720s, Don Juan served

without fault to the duties of serving God, primarily during this epidemic which ran through that region [Carabuco] from the first days of October of the past year, administering the Sacred Sacraments to more than fifteen hundred sick people, withstanding rains, glaring suns, and high winds . . . [to conduct] confessions both within and outside the town, experiencing incredible inconveniences [getting] to the hamlets of the Indians, most of the time dragging myself there, carrying in my arms those [suffering] from the strongest and harshest diseases . . . routinely leaving as late as four or five in the afternoon to do confessions, and sometimes as late as midnight.⁶⁴

Summary

The men who staffed the diocesan churches of the Diocese of La Paz from 1680 to 1730 were, by and large, educated men of academic distinction and notable professional qualities. While a majority received their schooling in local *colegios* and universities, some came from as far as Central America and Spain to serve in the diocese after finishing their educations. Without question, those who earned bachelor, licentiate, and doctoral degrees had greater opportunities for advancement within the hierarchy of the Church, but some of the most successful men (i.e. those who gained employment in La Paz and in the Cathedral Chapter) were men of modest academic achievement.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴ACCFLM, Tomo 36, fol. 270.

For those dedicated to the priestly vocation, applying for ordination usually coincided with various levels of educational training. Boys as young as eight and nine could apply for first tonsure, and by the age of twenty-three, most of the men who eventually served in parishes in the Diocese of La Paz had earned at least one of the major orders. Once a subdeacon or deacon reached the age of twenty-five, he was ordinarily finished with school and active in the numerous *concur sos* held throughout the period under review.

Priests who sought promotion generally boasted of their exemplary dedication to the Church and their clean record of service. In many instances, their professional *resumés* resembled life as they hoped it would be. In an effort to increase their bargaining power before religious officials and gain an upper hand in negotiations for advantage — political or otherwise — over village leaders, they frequently wrote of their undying devotion to their parishioners, their indefatigable commitment to fulfilling the obligations of their ministerial charge, and their proficiency as language experts and as managers of construction projects which benefitted local churches and chapels. Indeed, if judged by their *relaciones* alone, the image of the Diocese of La Paz from 1680 to 1730 would be one of a supremely dedicated priesthood in service to dutiful congregations of loyal, and learning, new Christian adherents.

Indeed, as I discuss in the next three chapters, however, this idealistic image of the thriving Christian community was, if judged by parishioner testimonies, an illusory one. From 1680 to 1700, a majority of witnesses who appeared before ecclesiastical officials complained that their parish priest was either neglectful in his religious duties or involved in conduct unbecoming to a man of the priestly vocation. In fact, for this twenty year

period, visita witnesses accused over half of the priests who stood trial before the visiting bishop or visitor-general of omission or misconduct. The nature of these complaints, and how priests and the presiding Church officials responded to what were often serious allegations of priestly impropriety, are the focal points of the next two chapters.

CHAPTER 5
THE VILLAGE VOICE: WITNESS TESTIMONIES, 1680-1700

During the last two decades of the seventeenth century, parishioners testifying before visita officials accused a majority of the parish priests who worked in the Diocese of La Paz of either not doing their job or behaving in ways unbecoming to men of the cloth. Conflicts between priests and their mostly native parishioners during this period ranged from petty disagreements about the duration of Sunday mass to more serious clashes which threatened communal accord. In the most severe instances, these controversies may have jeopardized the very survival of some native communities which were already strained by the exploitation of labor, tax demands, disease, and the flight of tributary Indians from their ancestral homes.¹

This climate of hostility and animosity existed, I argue, as a result of three prevailing conditions. First, many village leaders during the 1680s and 1690s were proactive, and energetically defended their communities against what they perceived to be excessive demands or unfair treatment at the hands of their parish priest or the colonial system on the whole. Second, the two bishops during these two decades, Juan Queipo de Llano Valdés and Bernardo Carrasco de Saavedra, were assiduous administrators who

¹This pattern of *originario* flight from their ancestral villages has been discussed by several scholars. For the Andes, see Larson, *Colonialism and Agrarian Transformation in Bolivia: Cochabamba 1550-1900*; Chapter Four (entitled "Flee toward the Enemy: Seventeenth-Century Migration Patterns,") of Karen Powers, *Andean Journeys: Migration, Ethnogenesis and the State in Colonial Quito*; and Larson and Harris, eds., *Ethnicity, Markets, and Migration in the Andes*.

supervised regular series of episcopal visitas designed specifically to curtail abuses committed by the clergy. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, a majority of parish priests working in the diocese at this time were apparently willing to test the legal and moral boundaries of acceptable behavior, or compromise their good standing in the community by engaging in political alliances which favored one village faction over another.²

It is possible, even likely, that relations between priests and parishioners in the Diocese of La Paz were equally contentious in preceding and subsequent decades. The primary data in particular *visita y escrutinio* records, however, distinguish these final decades of the seventeenth century as certifiably controversial ones. Of the one hundred and fifty-four visitas conducted during these years, over half (50.6 percent) resulted in some allegation of priestly malfeasance. In other words, the average priest during this era was either authentically corrupt, or involved — no matter how tangentially — in local power struggles and consequently implicated in wrongdoing. Either way, village strife in

²Many scholars have addressed village factionalism and intracommunity rivalries in the context of colonial Spanish America. William Taylor examines the issue in various publications, including his book *Landlord and Peasant in Colonial Oaxaca* in which he finds that caciques usually squabbled over elections to public posts, office holdings, and land disputes. He states: “The Indians frequent recourse to litigation, often at great expense, is one of the most striking aspects of their adjustment to colonial rule.” William Taylor, *Landlord and Peasant in Colonial Oaxaca* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972), 53. Taylor acknowledges in his article entitled “Conflict and Balance in District Politics: Tecali and the Sierra Norte de Puebla in the Eighteenth Century,” that priests often held a stake in these factional conflicts, since they were usually allied with one group or another. He writes: “the cura had traditional responsibilities that brought him into the public affairs of his parish. . . . His role as judge and protector of the Indians extended into what today would be considered civil and political matters.” William Taylor, “Conflict and Balance in District Politics: Tecali and the Sierra Norte de Puebla in the Eighteenth Century,” in Simon Miller and Arij Ouweneel, eds., *The Indian Community of Colonial Mexico* (Amsterdam: CEDLA, 1990), 284.

the diocese, at least as seen through the lens of the episcopal *visita*, reached its peak in the 1680s and 1690s, and engendered a climate of conflict and turmoil which surely affected the religious mission of the Church in this particular colonial setting.

In this chapter and the next, I will evaluate the behavior and performance of the parish priests active in the Diocese of La Paz during these decades by examining the myriad of social and political relationships between members of the secular clergy, their parishioners, and the two bishops who served during this era. I focus exclusively on these final decades of the seventeenth century because they define the final era of full and representative participation in the *visita* process. Indeed, for nearly a thirty year period from 1697 to 1725, as I discuss in Chapter 7, parishioners no longer had frequent dialogue with higher ecclesiastical officials, and the conduct and performance of parish priests working in Indian villages throughout the diocese went virtually unchecked. In that chapter, I will discuss some of the possible the explanations for, and ramifications of, this administrative lapse.

These central chapters rely chiefly on three types of documentary sources: (1) witness testimonies; (2) letters of self-defense written by priests accused of wrongdoing; and (3) the bishop's or the visitor-general's final sentences. The most abundant and descriptive record of priestly behavior comes from the multitude of witness testimonies³. These court transcriptions represent the visions and the voices of the demographic majority, since most of the witnesses who appeared before the *visita*'s chief prosecutor were indigenous parishioners under the spiritual leadership of the priest on trial.

³The number of witnesses who appeared before the two chief prosecutors of the diocese during these years totaled 1,046.

Witness statements generally fell into two categories. The first type was testimony which absolved the priest of any and all misconduct, commended him for performing his duties according to the rules of the Spanish crown and the Catholic Church, and, in rare cases, praised him for special acts of charity or benevolence. These testimonies tended to be formulaic and provided little information about local conditions and social dynamics beyond that requested in the specific inquiry.

Far more instructive and useful for historical analysis are the many parishioner responses which recounted certain activities and forms of behavior which placed the priest at odds with local citizens, royal authorities, and colonial laws. Among other things, these cases provide clues to understanding how religious life was organized on the local level; what parishioners perceived as rights and privileges *vis-à-vis* their parish priests; and how witnesses of the 1680s and 1690s took full advantage of the pastoral visita to combat the cycle of exploitation which they believed endangered their cultures and communities.

For the purposes of this study, parishioners' testimonies also help to define their understanding of what was, and what was not, acceptable priestly behavior. Given the centrality of the parish priest to local life, I would also argue these cases tell us more. By examining the content of what witnesses said in the course of their interrogations, it is possible to determine to some extent how parishioners managed to make sense of their place in the often grave and burdensome world that surrounded them. In the process of incriminating their parish priests, moreover, visita witnesses inadvertently or consciously identified themselves with a social and moral order which — although always changing

and adapting to different situations — governed the decisions they made and the steps they took to survive in an increasingly perilous colonial landscape.⁴

Over a thousand witnesses testified before ecclesiastical officials for and against their parish priests in the episcopal visitas of the 1680s and 1690s. Eight hundred and eleven, or 76.4 percent, were monolingual Indians who either spoke Aymara or Quechua. Ninety witnesses (8.5 percent) were classified as *Indios ladinos*, bilingual Indians who spoke Castillian and their native tongue. Thus, the total number of indigenous parishioners testifying in visita courts during these two decades was nine hundred and one, or 84.9 percent of the total witness pool. The remaining testimonies came either from persons who were not identified racially (less than 1 percent) or from Spaniards (one hundred and forty five, or 14.6 percent), seven of whom were parish priests brought in to testify against their colleagues.

Given such a large sample, some generalizations about these testimonies can be made. By and large, witnesses tended to depict priestly behavior as either satisfactory, unambiguously unacceptable, or somewhere in between. A statistical analysis of the 1680 and 1690 visitas shows that a good many priests (49.4 percent) emerged from the trials entirely unscathed; their performance, as measured by both witnesses and the presiding ecclesiastical official, was deemed adequate and untainted by any form of controversy. In

⁴Indian Identity has been the subject of much recent scholarship. Two of the better anthologies on the topic are John Kicza, ed., *The Indian in Latin American History: Resistance, Resilience, and Acculturation* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1993), and Steve Stern, ed., *Resistance, Rebellion and Consciousness in the Andean Peasant World, 18th to 20th Century* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987).

1683, for example, a parishioner named Mateo Moreno de Vayas, a forty-year old village leader of Paucarcolla, described Br. Tomás de Alda Pasamontes as a man who:

treats his parishioners well with total affection (*con todo cariño*) and charity. . . . He teaches the catechism personally to all the Indians every Sunday. . . . He goes out punctually to the outlying farms (*estancias*) to administer the Sacred Sacraments without charging the Indians anything at all for this service nor does he require the sick to come to town to avoid going out to them to administer last rites. . . . He does not name officials (*alféreses*) nor does he oblige the Indians to give him regular donations (*camarico*), and anything they do give him he receives graciously. . . . He does not charge more than the allowable amount for funerals, at least the Indians have never complained about this to me. . . . He has paid Indians in money, not in kind, for any services or food he receives from them . . . [and finally] He has served as a fine example to the congregation with his life and customs.⁵

Indeed, parishioners in nearly half of the visita trials of the period portrayed their parish priest in these laudatory terms. The uniformity of style and language from one favorable testimony to the next implies that witnesses merely followed the cue of the question in their responses, or answered with a simple “yes” or “no,” leaving the *secretario* to complete the longer version of the response in his account of the proceedings. Answers such as “No, the aforementioned priest has not had a suspicious woman in his house,”⁶ and “Yes, he has faithfully announced festival days so that his parishioners do not work [those days],”⁷ appear literally hundreds of times throughout the documentary record for these years.

⁵ACCFLM, Tomo 3, fols. 202-205r.

⁶ACCFLM, Tomo 3, fol. 23.

⁷Ibid.

The majority of visita witnesses, however, were not so complimentary, and often used their time before ecclesiastical officials to make known the hardships they faced as overtaxed subjects of the Spanish crown or as victims of the parish priest's bad temper and corrupt ways. Because the visita itself focused on the behavior of the parish priest, he usually was the primary subject of their denunciations, and the comprehensive register of complaints and accusations is extensive, and often constitutes a running narrative of political conspiracies, village factionalism, personal rivalries, and sexually charged intrigue.

Not surprisingly perhaps, Indian witnesses seemed most perturbed by issues of material loss and gain, particularly when money or the exchange of valuable goods was involved.⁸ As William Taylor reports for Bourbon Mexico, Indians in all parts of the diocese in the 1680s and 1690s seemingly had no tolerance for priests who did not comply with regulations regarding prompt payment for either services rendered — like supervising a priest's herd of sheep or housekeeping — or for food and other items purchased and

⁸Taylor writes extensively on parishioner complaints of priestly greed in Bourbon Mexico. Comparing his own findings to the vision of priests provided by the colonial legal commentator Juan de Solórzano Pereira, he states “cases of avarice and obsessive preoccupation with personal wealth were well known in the eighteenth century, if not typical...Solórzano Pereira thought that material greed was a common vice among priests and the root of all evil, and that the complaints of curas’ ‘black greed,’ ‘insatiable avarice,’ and ‘excessive attachment to possessions,’ ...indicated an overactive involvement in worldly affairs that left them open to criticism.” Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred*, 182. John Frederick Schwaller, in his study of secular priests in sixteenth-century Mexico, acknowledges that allegations of extortion and graft were common in ecclesiastical courts. Citing the typical case of a priest named Fabián de la Peña, he writes: “The petitioners charged that Peña demanded alms for the celebration of special feasts; that he engaged in commerce; that he sold merchandise, wine and other items to his parishioners; that he forced the Indians to build an addition on his house; that he took money from them to have an altar built; and that he stole land from the Indians, keeping some for himself and giving the rest to his concubine and her husband.” John Frederick Schwaller, *The Church and Clergy in Sixteenth-Century Mexico*, 178.

delivered by Indian laborers on his behalf.⁹ In fact, of the seventy-eight cases which included testimony denouncing some aspect of the priest's attitude or performance, thirty-three (42.3 percent) contained allegations of priestly greed and the exploitation of Indian labor.¹⁰ In 1683, for example, Don Phelipe Ninacanchi, a *cacique* and *gobernador* of the *ayllu* Canchis in Ytalaque, accused Licenciado Mateos del Torres of treating the *mayordomos* of the church as "*chuzmas*,"¹¹ or slaves. A subsequent witness agreed with this assessment, and stated further "he never pays the *Yndios Pongos*¹² for the personal work they do for him and those whose names I can remember are Lorenzo Zochoque and Pedro Patana, both residents of this town."¹³

⁹Bishop of Quito Alonso de Peña Montenegro's famous *Itinerario para párochos de Yndios*, published first in 1662, was an instructive guide that priests of the Diocese of La Paz used at this time. It contained several thousand references to royal decrees and other Spanish laws pertaining to priests and their behavior, and was cited a few times in the visita trials of the 1680s and 1690s. The prohibition against forced labor and failing to pay Indians for personal service was addressed by Bishop Montenegro in Book Two, Treatise Ten, Section Three. Don Alonso de Peña Montenegro, *Itinerario para párochos de Yndios* (Amberes: Hermanos de Tournes, 1754). On the importance and function of this guide for colonial priests, Taylor claims that the "*Itinerario* placed the priest squarely into the public life of the parish the keeper of community morality, glossing over the boundaries between spiritual and temporal affairs. . . . It provided detailed descriptions of the responsibilities of priests in Indian parishes and what they needed to know to meet these responsibilities." Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred*, 153.

¹⁰Unless otherwise stipulated, all of the statistics in this chapter are based on the number of cases which involved some allegation of priestly wrongdoing (i.e. seventy eight), not the total number of visitas conducted during these decades, which totaled one hundred and fifty four.

¹¹ACCFLM, Tomo 6, fol. 187r.

¹²*Pongos* was a designation for a class of Indians who ran personal errands for the priest or who supervised his herd of domesticated animals. In other words, they were forced day laborers.

¹³Ibid.

Payment in hard currency was important to Indian parishioners as well; first because they needed coinage to satisfy their tribute obligations, and secondly because it was easier to pay one's way out of the Potosí *mita* with coins rather than kind. The *cacique* Carlos Canasa from Guancané complained to ecclesiastical officials that Br. Juan de Argote generally did not pay Indians in coins for any of the work they did for him. The few instances when he did compensate workers, "he only gave them coca, food, and *chicha* (maize beer)."¹⁴ Furthermore:

he only pays one real for each chicken, which costs Indians two reales a piece, and for every pig that costs three pesos, he pays them only two, and for a young bull (*torillo*) that costs two pesos, he pays them one. And he never pays them anything for the kitchen work they do. Indians thus suffer great distress as they search through their homes for things to bring to the priest for his kitchen. All of us are so afflicted and dejected that many have left and are currently fleeing from this town to avoid his abuse.¹⁵

Accusations such as these are found throughout the 1680 and 1690 visita records, and no part of the diocese was immune from these types of priestly demands of money and valuable goods. Indeed, parishioners from at least three towns in each of the region's seven *corregimientos* complained of labor abuse and the priests' accompanying unwillingness to pay Indians according to the established, and clearly well-known royal laws on the matter.¹⁶ Parishioners in four of the five towns of the *corregimiento* of

¹⁴ACCFLM, Tomo 11, fol. 320r.

¹⁵ACCFLM, Tomo 11, fol. 323r.

¹⁶There are literally hundreds of *cédulas reales* which addressed the issue of proper payment for goods and services rendered by native Americans to Spaniards in the New World during the colonial period. Bishop Montenegro discussed the issue at various points in Books One and Two of his *Itinerario para párochos*. For a comprehensive list of royal decrees which pertained to the treatment of Indians by Spaniards in colonial America see Richard Konetzke, *Colección de Documentos para la Historia de la*

Omasuyos specified priestly greed as particularly damaging to communal accord, and Indian witnesses from the village of Zapaqui, located about sixty kilometers southeast of La Paz, denounced labor exploitation and the priests' refusal to pay for work in each of the three *visita* trials held in the town in the 1680s and 1690s.

Priests accused of these violations were nearly always also implicated in related crimes which entailed the illegal or excessive exaction of money or other assets. Indeed, among the most common complaints registered by parishioners during the 1680s and 1690s were overcharging for the administration of religious services,¹⁷ the manipulation of wills, forcing members of the community to assume costly civic posts, and demanding steady donations to fulfill the many financial obligations these positions required.¹⁸

The first of these charges — overcharging for religious services — was almost as widespread as allegations of priestly greed and abusing Indian labor.¹⁹ Parishioners in

Formación Social de Hispanoamérica, (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1953).

¹⁷Fees for the administration of various religious services were governed by the *arancel eclesiástico*, a schedule of fees periodically updated and approved by the local bishop or archbishop of a particular jurisdiction.

¹⁸This is a reference to the forced appointment of citizens as *alféreses*. These positions required individuals to take financial and organizational responsibility for various Church-sponsored festivals (*alferasgos*) held throughout the year. Bishop Montenegro addressed this issue in Book Two, Treatise Ten, Section Three of his *Itinerario para párochos*, which broadly outlined various obligations and prohibitions priests must abide by if they worked in Indian villages.

¹⁹Taylor, Brading, and Schwaller discuss in their respective studies the frequency of conflict parochial fees caused between priests, parishioners and, in the case of Brading, the Liberal politicians of the early national period. Taylor devotes an entire chapter (Chapter Seventeen) to *arancel* disputes, and states that “the most common and persistent source of friction between parish priests and Indian parishioners in the late colonial period was the fees for spiritual services that curas treated as an indispensable part of their

twenty-five trials (32 percent) reported that priests frequently exceeded the customary (and officially prescribed) fees for the performance of religious services. In other words, Indian witnesses were well aware of the appropriate charges for burials, baptisms, marriages and other Church-sanctioned rituals, and did not hesitate to denounce the priest if he ignored official guidelines. This practice, after all, affected parishioners in an immediate and presumably profound way, and many were later beneficiaries of financial restitution ordered by the bishop or visitor-general in his final sentence.

According to local Church rules, salary-paying *tributarios* either had to pay a minimal amount (one or two pesos) or nothing at all for burial expenses, except for those extra masses designated by the deceased in his or her last will and testament.²⁰ *Forasteros* — depending on the *arancel* being enforced at a given time — were required to pay between four and six pesos for each burial.²¹ But as Antonio Canabire and all the

living.” Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred*, 424. Brading contends that priests of the early nineteenth century in Mexico were persistent in their application of the colonial *arancel* despite governmental pressure. This conflict led to a direct challenge of customary episcopal authority, and was part of the general atmosphere of distrust and suspicion which characterized relations between the Church and State during the post-Independence period in Mexico. Schwaller claims that charges of overcharging for religious services, along with other allegations of financial greed and extortion, were “well-founded only about half of the time.” Schwaller, *The Church and Clergy in Sixteenth-Century Mexico*, 178.

²⁰Promotor Fiscal León frequently referred to this custom of charging nothing at all or only what the tributary Indians could afford for burials in his reports to the bishop or the visitor-general.

²¹I was unable to locate any copies of the *arancel eclesiástico* used by priests of the Diocese of La Paz during these years. However, the bishops or the visitors-general in their final sentences frequently referred to these amounts as acceptable and customary charges for *forastero* funerals during this era. Taylor discusses the origins of the division of clerical fees in Chapter Seventeen of his study on Bourbon Mexico. After stating that the Council of Trent paved the way for the legality of charging fees for spiritual purposes,

witnesses who testified after him pointed out, Juan Diez de Fuenmaior of Combaya did not exempt tributary Indians from this obligation and frequently overcharged *forasteros* depending on their ability to pay.

Along with his *ayudante*, Licenciado Don Francisco de Arratia, he [Lic. Fuenmaior] charged three or four pesos a piece for the burial of tributary infants (*criaturas*). And for the babies of *forasteros*, they charged one peso, and for adult *forasteros* from ten to twenty to fifty pesos. The relatives of the deceased had to pay these amounts to them.²²

Tributary Indians from all social ranks complained of these unfair charges in the visita trials conducted during these two decades.²³ One of the best examples involved

he writes: "As early as 1538, the crown called on provincial councils of prelates in the Indies to draw up *aranceles* for masses, funerals, and other spiritual services in collaboration with the highest colonial governors. From 1560 to the 1640s, royal cédulas and legal commentaries reiterated that parish priests were to follow *aranceles* for 'funerals, marriages, baptisms, and all the rest.' . . . Divided into descending charges for (1) españoles, (2) negros, mulatos, and mestizos, (3) *Indios de cuadrilla* (Indian laborers residing on private estates), and (4) indios de pueblo, *aranceles* were published by the dioceses of New Spain on various occasions in the early seventeenth century." Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred*, 427. This practice of charging different ethnic groups different amount drew the ire, according to Brading, of nineteenth-century Liberals, since they deemed that the clergy "played a central role in perpetuating the ethnic distinctions" that plagued their new nations. Brading, *Church and state in Bourbon Mexico*, 144.

²²ACCFLM, Tomo 3, fol. 15.

²³In some of the most contentious trials, women filed affidavits complaining mainly of having to pay excessive amounts usually for the burials of their dead husbands. To cite just one example, of the nine separate affidavits filed in the case against Don Fadrique Sarmiento de Sotomayor — parish priest of San Juan de Acora in the 1680s and 1690s — six were written by widows. Mencía Orcoma, Ysabel Picho, María Yllagama, Ana Arcoma, María Parpa, and María Yura Choncoya all complained that they paid at least ten, and usually thirty pesos for the burials of their kin. Ana Arcoma, according to her testimony, paid eleven pesos for the burial of her *tributario* husband despite having to care for and feed nine children. She stated, "I have been in hiding for nine days, on account of the organist who is looking for me to take me prisoner, the reasons for which I have no idea. ACCFLM, Tomo 12, fol. 122.

Antonio de Vivero,²⁴ parish priest in the 1680s of Ancoraymes, a predominantly indigenous village situated on the northern banks of Lake Titicaca. According to several witness testimonies, Don Antonio regularly expropriated parishioners' domesticated animals to add to his own herd of sheep and cattle. Another secular priest, Br. Juan Hidalgo Laso, testified that Don Antonio habitually overcharged for burial and baptismal services, and in one instance, stole several cows from the widow of a recently deceased *alcalde mayor*. He claimed that,

soon after the funeral, the cura sent two young men (*mozos*) to the house . . . of the deceased and they brought back with them twenty-four or twenty-six head of cattle and calves which amounted to the widow's only assets which the dead husband had left for her and his children, and they brought the cows to this town and joined them with his own [the priest's] herd.²⁵

As a statement of the priest's utter disrespect for his parishioners and their ultimate well-being, Br. Hidalgo Laso reported with disgust that Don Antonio did not even provide a decent burial for the dead man.

The accused priests, for their part, almost always cited in their response to the allegations that the deceased called for such endowments in their final wills. Ecclesiastical officials were most concerned with priests who personally applied pressure to dying

²⁴A full account of the contentious trial against Antonio de Vivero is included in the last section of Chapter 6 of this dissertation.

²⁵ACCFLM, Tomo 5, fol. 316. Don Antonio allegedly possessed a herd of cows and sheep that numbered in the hundreds, an asset specifically prohibited by royal laws. In his summary of the charges, Visitor-General Eguares y Pasquier commented, for example, "it is prohibited by royal decrees and rules of this bishopric that priests have in their districts more cattle than is necessary for their sustenance. In contravention of these royal decrees . . . [Don Antonio] has . . . a large herd of Castilian sheep and many cows." ACCFLM, Tomo 5, fol. 352.

parishioners to change their wills to pay for extra funeral masses (*missas y possas*) and yearly prayers and services (*ofrendas y rezos del cabo del año*) in his or her name, and to allocate special funds for the local church. In most cases, however, parishioners accused lay assistants of the priest for this type of coercion.

Licenciado Fadrique Sarmiento de Sotomayor, cura of San Juan de Ayata in the 1680s and 1690s, apparently got his rapacious organist, referred to only as "*Juan el Organista*,"²⁶ to do most of his dirty work for him. A female parishioner named Mencía Orcoma of the *ayllu* Choque in Ayata, told officials in her affidavit that the abusive musician repeatedly harassed her for the ten pesos her husband allegedly willed to the priest upon his death: "he threatens me with whippings, telling me to not report [this conflict with the priest] to Your Majesty."²⁷ In another typical example, an *Indio ladino* parishioner from Chucuito named Raphael Ynga Charala told Promotor Fiscal León in his testimony against Manuel de Alcalá in 1683:

I have heard it said among some irritated Indians that the priest's sacristans (*sacristanes*) visit the dying to record their final wills (*memorias*), and they advise them to leave money to pay for funeral novenas and demand payments just for recording the final will. I do not know if these individuals do this on their own or at the behest (*por institución*) of the parish priest.²⁸

Again, just like in the cases which involved priests not paying laborers and overcharging parishioners for the administration of religious services, witnesses in the trials of the 1680s

²⁶ACCFLM, Tomo 12, fol. 113.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸ACCFLM, Tomo 4, fol. 23r.

and 1690s did not tolerate the manipulation of wills and repeatedly informed the visiting officials of the financial burdens these exactions meant for their families.

Among Indian witnesses of higher social rank (specifically *caciques* and *gobernadores*), however, the most despised and damaging form of graft perpetrated by parish priests involved their forced appointment as *alféreses*, a position which required them to assume financial and administrative responsibilities for Church festivals to be held throughout the year.²⁹ Indeed, it was not uncommon for *caciques* to classify the *alferasgo* and the accompanying involuntary donation of gifts — called alternately the *camarico* and *ricuchicu* in this part of the Andes — as the "most objectionable inconveniences"³⁰ they had to deal with as leaders of their communities.

In the town of Palca, for example, all five *caciques* questioned during the 1684 visita trial against Francisco de Carrión y Cáceres used slightly different words to express the same general opinion that the *alferasgo* and the *camarico* were "injurious customs (*costumbres perjudiciales*) that caused grave harm to the general public."³¹ According to

²⁹Because they were considered more reputable than ordinary *tributarios* and *forasteros* and dealt more directly with the parish priest, village leaders (*caciques* and *gobernadores*) constituted a sizable percentage (58 percent) of the overall witness pool in the 1680s and 1690s, so the fact that these two traditions were continually denounced is not surprising. For Bourbon Mexico, Taylor only cites a few instances when parishioners complained about the expenses and appointments associated with Church-sponsored festivals. In fact, he reports that the central source of conflict stemmed not from excessive charges or forced appointments, but rather on the tendency of some priests to introduce unwanted fiestas to supplement their salaries.

³⁰ACCFLM, Tomo 5, fol. 14r.

³¹ACCFLM, Tomo 8, fol. 55.

their testimonies, the Church sponsored three celebrations in Palca per year, and Don Francisco demanded that each *alférez*

give [to the Church] twelve pesos for the mass on the day of the celebration. And he charges them as part of the *camarico* one bottle of wine, two pesos worth of bread, [various] cheeses, two sheep, a leg of beef, salt, and aji peppers, and he strongly persuades and even obliges them to give him these things. . . . On occasion these festivals turn into drunken parties . . . all of which has the Indians disgusted with the consequences and costs which ensue.³²

The practice of overcharging for burials and manipulating wills occurred in all parts of the diocese, but parishioners in the *corregimientos* of Sicasica and Larecaja seemed most affected by these particular types of abuse. In the jurisdiction of Sicasica during these decades, just under half (eight of seventeen, or 47 percent) of the visita trials included allegations of overcharging or taking advantage of the dying, and in Larecaja, parishioners cited these specific violations more than any other in their testimonies.³³ Moreover, every priest who worked in the village of Yanacachi in the 1680s and 1690s had to defend himself against charges of exceeding the *arancel*. In the normally tranquil parish of San Pedro de Ayata the only complaint in each of the three visitas conducted during these decades against the long-term priest, Tiburcio de la Rea, stemmed from his practice of illegally charging *tributarios* four pesos for burials.

Allegations of priests appointing citizens as *alféreses* against their will and forcing them to donate gifts to the church as *camarico* contributions occurred in twenty-three of

³²ACCFLM, Tomo 8 fol. 54r-59r.

³³Parishioners in eleven of the seventy-eight trials, or 14 percent of the total number of cases, alleged some sort of priestly corruption involving overcharging or manipulating wills.

the seventy-eight visitas (29 percent) that involved allegations of priestly misconduct. Parishioners from each *corregimiento* in the diocese reported these customs as harmful to their communities, and in Sicasica, *caciques* and *gobernadores* in nine of the seventeen trials highlighted the particularly damaging effect the *alferasgo* had on attitudes about service to the Church. In Yanacachi and Zapaqui alone, ecclesiastical officials had to warn priests no less than six times (indeed in every visita held during the 1680s and 1690s) to discontinue this detrimental custom.

If parishioners were indeed not reluctant to expose priests who engaged in activities which compromised their financial well-being, they were only slightly less likely to accuse priests of physical and verbal abuse.³⁴ In twenty-nine (37 percent) of the seventy-eight episcopal visitas which involved allegations of priestly misconduct, witnesses appearing before the *promotor fiscal* recounted usually emotional scenes that proved, at least in their eyes, that some priests were simply too mean and violent for the profession.³⁵

A sample of ten of these trials reveals that parishioners who accused priests of physical and verbal mistreatment were from all ranks of society, both male and female, and

³⁴Bishop Montenegro addressed the issue of whippings in Book Two, Treatise Four, Section Five of his *Itinerario para Párochos*. He noted that a public whipping was a permissible form of punishment for a variety of sins, particularly disrespecting the parish priest and practicing idolatry. While excessive brutality and verbal punishment, however, was strictly forbidden, the *Itinerario*, according to Taylor, “regarded the whip as key to Indian devotion, decency and good order.” Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred*, 216.

³⁵Corporal punishment is one of the central features of Taylor’s analysis of priest/parishioner relations. He claims, as a rule, that “colonial magistrates accepted the whip as a standard instrument of control.” Taylor points out as well that the frequency of whipping as tool of sacerdotal discipline provided native elites with a convenient mechanism to strengthen their position against a particular parish priest, since higher Church officials of the late colonial period often were receptive to such complaints. *Ibid.*, 215.

young and old. Generally, they seemed discouraged that the priest did not treat them with the love and charity that his position called for, and attributed outbursts of anger and acts of violence to his bad nature (*mal natural*) and his harsh disposition (*recia condición*). In other words, most priests, at least according to the parishioners, did not show contrition for their contemptuous behavior, and it was not uncommon for witnesses to request — like Francisco Tintala did in Carabuco in 1690 — for the priest's transfer based on this criterion alone.

Don Francisco, a cacique from Carabuco, and Juana Machu, identified as an *Yndia natural*, both complained in their affidavits against the priest's assistant, Marcos del Barco, that he regularly terrified local citizens with his evil ways. The cacique pleaded with religious authorities for a replacement: "I beg and request that if possible, for you to appoint a different *ayudante* and if not — for the love of God — notify Don Marcos that in the future not to do these things to us."³⁶ In her account, Juana told Promotor Fiscal Joseph Erasmo de la Torre:

I hereby lodge this complaint against Br. Marcos del Varco . . . because for an instant his worker left the house, and his friend — a woman named Masala whom he keeps inside his house — grabbed me and hit me with a stick (*me pegó una buelta*). Afterwards I left to go look for the worker, who is also my husband, and I bumped into the *ayudante* on my way out, so he grabbed me by the hair and dragged me across the floor and delivered to me so many kicks, blows, and punches that I have suffered much from that beating. . . . Plus he has threatened often to whip me without any just cause. This is not [testimony] out of malice, I swear to God. . . . And [my husband] left his house because he never pays him any money for his work . . . and all the workers flee this town because of his cruel mistreatment. . . . For the love of God, remedy the situation.³⁷

³⁶ACCFLM, Tomo 18, fol. 75r.

³⁷ACCFLM, Tomo 18, fol. 74.

As seen in this example, just cause to punish someone physically was an important issue. Indeed, priests could and often did whip parishioners who disrespected them or did not comply with certain church requirements, like attending mass regularly or failing to come to town for yearly confessions.³⁸ Taylor claims that in Bourbon Mexico, Indians, in fact, “did not object to clerical whipping in principle. . . . They accepted moderate whippings that related directly to spiritual obligations — for failing to attend mass, memorize the catechism, confess, and take communion.”³⁹ But in each of the allegations of corporal abuse in the Diocese of La Paz in the 1680s and 1690s, witnesses hastened to distinguish the particular priest's behavior as unwarranted and excessive.⁴⁰

Such was the case of Licenciado Bernardo Meléndez, *cura coadjutor* of Zapaqui in the 1690s. A Spanish *vecino* and four Indians, including the self-titled *Ylustrísimo Señor* Agustín Chábez, complained in depositions of the priest's avarice and dishonor, and of his tendency to mistreat his parishioners physically and verbally “without the authority of justice.”⁴¹ Pedro Núñez Vela, a local *hacendado*, argued that Don Bernardo inappropriately meddled in secular affairs by accompanying the *corregidor* on a visit to his *hacienda* to

³⁸Taylor discusses the variety of priestly justifications for public whippings in pages 215-221 of *Magistrates of the Sacred*.

³⁹Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred*, 217.

⁴⁰Commenting on parishioner complaints of unwarranted corporal punishment, Taylor states: “What they did object to was excessive cruelty, unwarranted punishment, or humiliation. . . . Cruelty had to do with the number of lashes, the force applied, and the sounds inflicted. The sense of what was an appropriate number of lashes changed dramatically with time. Where in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, curas normally ordered 50 lashes, such severity seemed excessive to curas, as well as Indians, in the eighteenth century.” *Ibid.*

⁴¹ACCFLM, Tomo 20, fol. 184.

discuss a land dispute he had with an Indian named María Sisa. The priest, according to Don Pedro,

got belligerent with me and disgraced me (*biturándome*) with his hateful words which he hurled at me in shouts of rage and contempt. He then shoved me and punched me in the chest, all the while meddling in affairs outside his jurisdiction. All this has caused me to have hatred and bad will [towards him].⁴²

Don Bernardo's lone defender among the witnesses was Balthasar Fernández, who identified himself as the caretaker of the chapel (*maestro de capilla*) and therefore presumably dependent on the priest. He argued that the priest's surly disposition was, in fact, warranted (*es por cosas justas*), and that "he never beats the Indians, rather he just slaps them around sometimes."⁴³

Parishioners seemingly had less tolerance for whippings or beatings carried out by relatives of the priest or by his retinue of personal assistants. An *hilacata* of the *ayllu* Marcalocca in Moho named Francisco Aleho pointed out that sometimes the priest, Alvaro López de Soria y Abréu, "punishes the Indians and treats them badly with his words."⁴⁴ But he and subsequent witnesses were clearly more upset that his brother abused local natives for no apparent reason. Alonso de Aliaga, a sixty-five year old Spanish *vecino* of Moho, testified that "the priest has a brother in [nearby] Conima, and I have heard it said among many Indians that he regularly beats up Indians [of this town]."⁴⁵

⁴²ACCFLM, Tomo 20, fol. 184r.

⁴³ACCFLM, Tomo 20, fol. 194r.

⁴⁴ACCFLM, Tomo 5, fol. 266r.

⁴⁵ACCFLM, Tomo 5, fol. 269r.

As the case against Br. Marcos del Barco reveals, relatives of priests were not the only ones who were accused on malevolence and physical mistreatment. The woman implicated in Don Marcos' trial was later identified as his mestiza cook with whom — according to some witnesses — he not only conspired to punish any Indians who did not comply with his wishes, but also had sexual relations.⁴⁶ Francisco Chachasaca, an *Yndio principal* of the Urinsaya district of Carabuco, claimed Masala "was harmful towards the Indian women,"⁴⁷ and Lorenzo Yana, the *alcalde mayor*, stated that she frequently "mistreated all the Indians"⁴⁸ of the village.

Cocineras of the parish priest, indeed, were often the objects of incriminating testimony. According to every witness in the visita trial held in Laja in 1690, the female cook of Licenciado Lorenzo Vásquez de Castilla coerced young women to stitch and weave tapastries for the church, and constantly harassed them for not working efficiently enough.⁴⁹ Not to be outdone, a majority of witnesses in the case reported the two priests under scrutiny in these trials were equally rapacious. In addition to dragging the aforementioned Juana Machu across the floor and then beating and kicking her, Don Marcos also allegedly tied up and whipped the wife of Manuel Tintapa just because she

⁴⁶The vow of celibacy, of course, called for men of the faith to lead celibate lives "for the sake of the Kingdom of heaven." Mat. 19:12.

⁴⁷ACCFLM, Tomo 8, fol. 78r.

⁴⁸ACCFLM, Tomo 8, fol. 79r.

⁴⁹The rules on young single women stitching and weaving articles for the Church were ambiguous. It appears that in some instances it was permissible, so long as priests were not overly taxing in their demands and the women were treated well. If the priest ever required the women to make cloth for his own personal use, he was required to pay them for their service.

owed the priest one peso worth of wax and four *reales* worth of salt; indeed, "he tied her up by the hands and whipped her."⁵⁰ Don Lorenzo, similarly:

mistreated by word and action his parishioners, including Don Miguel Quino and Don Pedro Vilca, by having demanded they pay one hundred pesos a piece for the burial of their wives. Even as poor men . . . [they managed to] scrounge up fifty *pesos*, but they both fled this town to Guaqui in order to avoid his [additional] demands, just as Salvador Paxsi did . . . and also Pedro Ancara, who fled to Potosí on account of the vicious treatment he received from the priest simply because he did not bring him some provisions that he had ordered.⁵¹

Don Lorenzo's cruel behavior, according to one witness, was so infamous in the *altiplano* region around Laja that "Indians from all over would not come to mass for fear that he would beat them."⁵²

One final example of alleged priestly cruelty comes from the complicated case against Br. Juan de Argote of Guancané, whose predatory behavior separated him from even his most evil of peers. Apparently recognizing the best way to bring attention to their plight, several parishioners presented signed affidavits to Visitor-General Eguares y Pasquier in which they highlighted the damaging effect the priest's malicious behavior had on their ability to satisfy the Spanish crown's tax requirements. In all, ten Indian *caciques* denounced Don Juan's excessive demands and treatment, and called upon the bishop — whom one craftily referred to as the "Father of the Poor"⁵³ — to step in and relieve them of their misery.

⁵⁰ACCFLM, Tomo 18, fol. 80.

⁵¹ACCFLM, Tomo 16, fol. 158.

⁵²ACCFLM, Tomo 16, fol. 159.

⁵³ACCFLM, Tomo 18, fol. 188.

"There has never been one [a priest] equal to him," an *Yndio natural* named Diego

Apasa lamented in 1690.

On account of our fear of his whippings and other treatments which my *cura* constantly gives, I have been unable up to this point to hand in any tax payments, and so I ask with tears in my eyes for your Majesty to have him return the pesos that he took from me...for I am a poor man burdened with five children, to whom I have nothing to provide for their survival.⁵⁴

Other witnesses were similarly disheartened:

We have been forced out of town, leaving behind all of our poor relatives and fields. . . . Your Excellency will decide if it is just for tributary Indians [like us] to be kicked out of town, and rendered unable to pay any royal taxes. . . . He worked two Indians nearly to death constructing the *pila* (baptismal fountain) and with no fear of God, he refused to pay even one real for all of this work.⁵⁵

By the time the trial convened, Br. Argote had been accused of forcing nearly all the tributary Indians to flee Guancané due to his threats and violence,⁵⁶ confiscating Indian

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵ACCFLM, Tomo 18, fol. 190.

⁵⁶Alonso Tipula stated in his affidavit: "I cannot enter into my own town. I will go to the royal audiencia capital to ask the President [to be appointed to another] town so I can [reassume] my life as a *tributario* with all of my children, because the town of Guancané has been abandoned on account of the priest. All of the tributary Indians are in other provinces." ACCFLM, Tomo 18, fol. 192.

property after they had fled the town in fear,⁵⁷ and depriving Indians the right to tend to ailing relatives, and then overcharging them for the burials of their dead kin.⁵⁸

Like those who informed the visiting officials of the priest's avarice and rancor via signed affidavits, witnesses before Promotor Fiscal Erasmo de la Torre testified in 1690 that the priest was simply too cruel for the priestly profession. One parishioner, Bartolomé Machicao recounted an incident which occurred during the construction of the chapel, for which he has been assigned as the foreman in charge.

I spent more than one hundred and fifty pesos on the job . . . and at the entrance of the chapel, just because he despises me so, he ordered me out of there because I was confused [about a detail of the work] and he whipped me on my feet with thirty lashes until a Spaniard arrived and found me near death.⁵⁹

These types of accusations, involving different victims and witnesses, continued throughout the visita trial against Don Juan. Unlike most cases, no parishioners came forward to testify on the priest's behalf, and considering that this was the second trial in Guancané in which the priest had been accused of numerous physical and verbal assaults, it appears from the testimony that parishioners simply had had enough. By the end of the trial, over twenty witnesses, including four Spaniards, had corroborated the allegations of

⁵⁷A group of Indian litigants led by Gerónimo Tipula, a principal of Guancané, claimed: "Don Juan de Argote has established our parcels of farmland as an investment from whence we use to pay royal taxes to Your Majesty and satisfy the demands made on our town. Now the whole town has to sell guano to raise money." ACCFLM, Tomo 18, fol. 190.

⁵⁸Tipula later declared: "and my priest buried my mother for one hundred and ten pesos, and stole all of my things from my house." ACCFLM, Tomo 18, 192.

⁵⁹ACCFLM, Tomo 18, fol. 202.

priestly cruelty, and sought definitive punishment — to include banishment from the territory — for the maligned priest.

Parishioners from the *corregimiento* of Pacajes, which was comprised of altiplano towns west of La Paz, were generally satisfied with the priests working in their villages in the 1680s and 1690s, yet those from the parish of San Andrés de Machaca complained in successive visitas in 1683 and 1687 of physical and verbal abuse by two different priests. Indeed, other than not paying Indians for the work they performed and overcharging for burials, parishioners in Pacajes and the *corregimiento* of Omasuyos mentioned this type of priestly mistreatment more often than any other complaint in their testimonies. In the *corregimiento* of Sicasica, furthermore, no less than nine trials involved allegations of priestly cruelty, and Indian witnesses from the village of Zapaqui alone brought charges against four men (three priests and an *ayudante*) in a span of seven years from 1684 to 1691. In other words, this type of allegation was not confined to any specific region or towns. Rather, parishioners from all parts of the diocese were seemingly convinced that the methods of discipline employed by many priests were extreme and unwarranted.

Less common, but surely no less dramatic and controversial were the cases that challenged authorities to investigate and discipline priests who had allegedly broken their sacred vow of chastity.⁶⁰ Statistical data indicate that the majority of priests working in the diocese in the 1680s and 1690s managed to avoid such controversies, but parishioners

⁶⁰Sexuality, including that of priests, has been a topic of much recent scholarship. Two of the better sources are Ann Twinam, *Public Lives, Private Secrets: Gender, Honor, Sexuality, and Illegitimacy in Colonial Spanish America* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), and Asunción Lavrin, ed., *Sexuality and Marriage in Colonial Latin America* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989).

accused eleven priests (nearly 16 percent of the total number of priest who served during these decades) of some sort of sexual misconduct.⁶¹ In each of the eleven trials, religious authorities tended to act diligently and thoroughly to recover specific details of the alleged dalliances, so inquiries were generally more focused and witness testimonies longer and more detailed than usual.⁶²

Despite obvious differences, trials involving priests accused of having sexual affairs had some things in common. All the cases involved females (I found no cases which linked priests to any homosexual activity) and parishioners uniformly noted that the priest's conduct had caused serious public scandal (*escándalo público*). A Spanish witness named

⁶¹Scholars of the secular clergy in colonial Latin America have devoted much attention (perhaps a disproportionate amount considering the infrequency of such allegations compared with other forms of misconduct) to the topic of sexual misconduct by parish priests. Schwaller chronicles several cases which reached the Inquisition, including that of Fabián Jiménez, who frequently gave confessionals to women in their bedrooms at night: "he would often lay his hands on the woman, not in a healing fashion but rather in a caressing manner." Schwaller, *The Church and Clergy in Sixteenth Century Mexico*, 172. Brading discusses in Chapter Eight of *Church and state in Bourbon Mexico* how royal authorities used allegations of priestly sexual activity as a tool to strengthen their position against a particularly defiant priest. Taylor goes so far as to say that "Despite the clerical vow of celibacy and exhortations to misogyny, heterosexual relations were common among parish priests, especially monogamous unions involving long-time *vicarios* and *curas* in remote second- and third-class parishes." Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred*, 185.

⁶²Unlike in Bourbon Mexico, ecclesiastical officials of the Diocese of La Paz took these allegations seriously and never dismissed the claims out of hand or because of indifference. Taylor writes: "The most striking aspect of the documentation on clerical incontinence is how little concern parishioners and the ecclesiastical courts were with discreet violations of celibacy. Heterosexual activity and fathering children were not in themselves regarded as particularly scandalous or worth prosecuting, and a priest known to have broken his vow of celibacy did not necessarily weaken his position as spiritual leader in the eyes of his parishioners." *Ibid.* This last point about the ability of priests to maintain good standing as the spiritual leaders of their communities despite apparent incidents of priestly neglect or misconduct is however, and as I point out below, a common characteristic of the *visita y escrutinio* trials of the 1680s and 1690s.

Diego de Villareal, for example, testified against the parish priest of Charasani, Pedro de Cañizares e Ybarra, and in a fashion similar to the other cases, stated: "it is public knowledge and notorious that the priest has set a poor example [for the community] because of the illicit affairs he has had with different women."⁶³ In addition, allegations of sexual misconduct never stood alone in the testimony; that is, parishioners in all eleven trials registered a variety of complaints against the parish priest, and although his illicit affairs usually dominated the interrogations, witnesses seemed more upset by other priestly violations, such as not paying Indians or overcharging for burials.

Most commonly, parishioners accused priests of preying on Indian women of the congregation who served the priest in some capacity, as either cooks or pantrywomen (*dispenserías*). A typical case occurred in the hamlet of Chulumani in the Yungas valley, where Pedro Pérez Patón served as parish priest in the late 1680s. In addition to managing a *repartimiento de mercancías*, exploiting Indian labor for his own commercial projects, almost beating a parishioner to death with a stick, and running a vast commercial network that extended from Chulumani to La Paz and other *altiplano* settlements, Don Pedro allegedly engaged in nefarious sexual activity.⁶⁴ According to a *cacique* named Diego Ypina, Licenciado Pérez Patón

lives in his house with his women friends with whom he has lewd relations. . . . About a month and a half ago when he was in La Paz he sent some flannel cloth, ropes, woolens, blankets and wine to an Indian woman named Josepha Cuti, with whom he is also having an illicit affair. . . . She sells

⁶³ACCFLM, Tomo 3, fol. 296.

⁶⁴Bishop Montenegro discussed in his *Itinerario para párochos* the issue of priests engaging in trade. Book One, Treatise Three, Section Three is entitled "Las penas que tienen los curas que tienen tratos y contratos."

[these items] out of his house. . . . He also has had two other women from this town, an Indian named Malucha with whom he has a child, and another named Joaneta, who is also an Indian with whom he has a baby boy. Both have worked as cooks in his house. . . . These forbidden relationships have caused much scandal.⁶⁵

Indeed, in over half of the cases which involve allegations of sexual misconduct, the priest on trial was accused of having relations with more than one woman, engendering offspring, and allowing his mistress (or mistresses) to mistreat the local Indians. To cite a few examples, parishioners claimed Catalina — the alleged concubine of Joseph de Arellano (parish priest of Carabuco in the 1680s) — had several children by the priest, and Esteban Prado de Zerguera, an *ayudante* in Zapaqui in the same decade, had three children by two concubines that he regularly kept in his house. According to one witness in the trial against Miguel Feliz de Agüero, cura of Hilabaya in the 1690s, the priest “has in his home a woman [named Ynez] who serves as his cook and who treats *Yndias mitayas* with cruelty in both actions and words.”⁶⁶ And the Spanish mistress of Br. Juan de Argote “routinely treats with contempt the Indian women who come to serve the priest.”⁶⁷

As a result of the priests’ persistence, women parishioners in three of the eleven cases claimed they were forced to leave town to avoid further harassment. Juan Canavi and Bartolomé Choque, witnesses in the trial against the *ayudante* Esteban de Prado y Raya also from Zapaqui, reported that “they had heard from their wives that he regularly lures young women of reputable backgrounds (*de buena cara*) to his house in order to

⁶⁵ACCFLM, Tomo 10, fols. 70-71r.

⁶⁶ACCFLM, Tomo 24, fol. 235.

⁶⁷ACCFLM, Tomo 24, fol. 236r.

sleep with him,"⁶⁸ and so several had fled to other towns, leaving their families and homes behind. Perhaps the best example of a priest chasing women away with his sexual advances involved the embattled Pedro de Cañizares of Charasani. According to several witnesses, Don Pedro committed a whole series of abuses against his parishioners, but Joan Silligui, a *principal* of the *ayllu* Hilcata, seemed most angered by the effect the priest's insatiable lust for sex had on the unity of his community. He stated in his testimony before Promotor Fiscal Francisco de León in 1683:

He chases the *Indias mitayas* — both married and single — in hopes of engaging them in lewd acts, just like he did with María Quispe and María Orcoma, and in every one of the Aymara farms (*estancias*) he has courted and solicited women, and so to void his terrible disposition (*terrible condición*), they have fled and thus this village has been deserted — by both men and women — who have gone to La Paz and to other parts of the territory."⁶⁹

Over 80 percent of the cases which involved allegations of sexual impropriety by priests occurred in the *corregimientos* of Sicasica, Omasuyos, and Larecaja. This is in part due to the sheer number of *visitas* held in these regions in the 1680s and 1690s — indeed, there were more trials held in villages in these territories than in any other areas of the diocese during these decades. Nevertheless, in terms of the total number of *visitas* held in the diocese in these two decades, allegations of sexual misconduct by the parish priest were fairly common, especially in the *corregimientos* of Larecaja (9 percent) and Omasuyos (15 percent). In fact, in Omasuyos the only complaints which outnumbered incidents of sexual malfeasance were overcharging parishioners for burials and physical and verbal abuse.

⁶⁸ACCFLM, Tomo 14, fol.377r.

⁶⁹ACCFLM, Tomo 3, fol. 310.

Crimes of passion and the other types of priestly behavior discussed so far in this chapter have dealt mainly with issues of the material, physical world. Even if the resulting social relations between priests and parishioners affected a cleric's legitimacy as an agent of the Catholic Church and, in fact, of God himself, the majority of parishioners tended to regard even the most corrupt priests as competent in their religious functions. In other words, though a majority of parishioners testifying in the 1680s and 1690s complained bitterly of the earthly weaknesses and excesses of their particular parish priest, in general they judged him fit to instruct and lead their communities spiritually.

In fact, in almost every *visita y escrutinio* held during these years — even in those which were most controversial — parishioners usually began their testimony by stating that the priest had fulfilled the duties of his ministerial charge and had been a good priest and vicar (*a sido buen cura y vicario*). For example, Diego Guara, the first witness who testified against Br. Heredia of Challana, started his testimony by commending the priest's general performance of priestly duties. He even added "I know that Br. Juan de Eredia has lived with complete honesty and has provided a proper example to the community."⁷⁰ By the end of the interrogation, however, Don Diego had accused the priest of extortion,

⁷⁰ACCFLM, Tomo 5, fol. 12r.

conducting an illegal and costly *repartimiento de mercancías*,⁷¹ chronic absenteeism,⁷² and forcefully appointing *alféreses* against their will, among other things. This apparent ambiguity is, indeed, a common trait of these particular visita records, and this example and many others from the era indicates that parishioner assessments of priestly behavior operated on a variety of different levels. In other words, it was apparently possible — even likely — for priests who worked in the diocese from 1680 to 1700 to be judged as sacerdotally capable, yet corrupt in many of their non-religious duties. Taylor discusses this phenomenon at length throughout Part Two of *Magistrates of the Sacred*, and generally attributes the ability of parishioners to separate the secular and religious behavior of priests to the latter's "special spiritual . . . powers" and the fact that "the magical power of religious images was in his hands."⁷³ So, in other words, despite whatever worldly activities priests may have been involved in, their sacerdotal powers were usually strong enough to diminish any challenge to their religious authority.

The most common complaint parishioners made regarding the ecclesiastical performance of parish priests had to do with their unwillingness or inability to administer

⁷¹Hundreds of *cédulas reales* and *consultas del consejo de Indios* address the issue of priestly involvement in *tratos y contratos*. A royal decree issued from Buñol on 21st of February, 1604, for example, expressly prohibited *corregidores* and ecclesiastics from mingling in secular commercial businesses, a practice which allegedly caused "*grandes molestias*" to the Indian population." Richard Konetzke, *Colección de Documentos para la Historia de la Formación Social de Hispanoamérica*, 107.

⁷²Bishop Montenegro devoted an entire treatise to the subject of negligent absenteeism among priests. Book One, Treatise Two is entitled: "De la residencia que deben tener los doctrineros."

⁷³Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred*, 221.

punctually confession and last rites to the dying.⁷⁴ In a total of forty-one trials — or 26.6 percent of the total number of visitas conducted during these decades — parishioners cited this form of priestly neglect as damaging to the general welfare of their communities. Moreover, witnesses seemed to exhibit genuine concern for the eternal fate of their dying friends and relatives, and they often provided the *promotor fiscal* with relevant names, dates, and locations. It is possible, however, that parishioners recognized the seriousness of this offense in the eyes of the Church and concocted at least some of their claims — which they knew in advance disturbed ecclesiastical officials immensely — as a tool to fortify their position against the parish priest.

Parishioners most commonly cited laziness as the source for this type of spiritual neglect. According to witnesses in the trial against Francisco Sarmiento de Sotomayor, the priest usually attended to the sick, but rarely arrived in time to administer the Sacred

⁷⁴Throughout the archival record of the Diocese of la Paz, to administer the Sacred Sacraments, including last rites to the dying, and to teach the catechism were considered “*las primeras obligaciones*” of each parish priest. Bishop Montenegro cited decrees from the Council of Trent and the Second Lima Ecclesiastical Synod of 1565-67 in his lengthy discussions of these responsibilities in the first two books of his *Itinerario para Párochos*. Taylor and Schwaller cite similar incidents of Mexican parishioners who implicated priests for neglecting their priestly obligations to administer the sacraments punctually and upon request. Taylor, as usual, offers a litany of archival examples of priests who allegedly failed to perform these duties, and found that the Church’s concern for these types of violations understandable considering the contemporary belief that “the priest’s first public duty was sacramental...it was through him that the sacraments of the church were offered and the promise of salvation was kept alive.” Ibid. 164. Again using the case against the sixteenth-century priest Fabián Peña as an example, Schwaller states: “the complainants claimed that Peña refused to use the new prayer book; that he often raised the host too many times; that he said Mass without praying the canonical hours; that he refused to administer extreme unction to dying Indians; that he refused to marry those who requested it and forced others to marry against their will; that he allowed two Indian children to die without baptism; and that he kept the sacred elements, such as chrism and other ritual items, under his bed rather than safely locked away.” Schwaller, *The Church and Clergy in Sixteenth-Century Mexico*, 177-178.

Sacraments and take final confession. Martín Pacoacagua, identified as an Indian of the ayllu Platero, reported that “he goes out when he is called, but not punctually, and he never goes out if it is approaching night time, so many people have died without receiving the Sacred Sacraments.”⁷⁵ Another witness claimed:

He does not go out to the farms [at the moment] when he is called to administer the Sacred Sacraments . . . just like the three weeks ago, more or less, when they asked him to give confession to Domingo Apasse’s wife who lived in the hamlet of Sinca. . . . He [Don Francisco] decided to go there several days later, and while he was en route, they returned to notify him that she had already died.⁷⁶

The problem was so severe in Ayata that Promotor Fiscal León compiled a comprehensive list of people who had died without last rites, and included it in his report to Visitor-General Eguares y Pasquier as proof of Don Francisco’s blatant disregard for his ministry and for Church policy.⁷⁷

Parishioners in Laja complained in 1688 that Lorenzo Vásquez de Castilla and his *ayudante*, Agustín Gisbert, frequently ignored parishioners when they appealed for the priests to attend to dying neighbors. According to one witness, Bartolomé Esquíá, members of the congregation living outside the town usually had to rely on the priest’s assistant for the administration of religious services. In the case of Andrés Mamani, Don

⁷⁵ACCFLM, Tomo 12, fol. 129r.

⁷⁶ACCFLM, Tomo 12, fol. 133.

⁷⁷According to this “Memoria de los Yndios muertos sin confesión”, the following individuals perished without the benefits of extreme unction due to the neglect of Don Francisco: “Juan Acencio, the Indian of Don Juan de Belasco; Joseph de Quiros, a miner employed by Don Juan de Cabrera y Pabeco; Luís Barca, a potter employed by Don Phelipe; Bárbara Choncoya, the wife of Pedro Choque; Ana Mejía, the wife of Juan Quispe; the son of Pedro Poma; María Racocho, the widow of Martín Callisaya; Alonco Cama; Pedro Mulline; Ysabel Ancama, the wife of Lorenzo Chambi; and María Chuquima.” ACCFLM, Tomo 12, fol. 101.

Agustín waited a full two days before leaving town to visit and care for him. By the time he arrived, Andrés was already dead, and his relatives inconsolable at the thought of his purgatory. Another parishioner reported that Don Lorenzo occasionally worked alone, and that this was especially troubling for rural parishioners because he invariably required them to bring their sick friends and relatives to Laja instead of going out to them. This routine resulted in a number of deaths unaccompanied by last rites, including those of “María, Phelipe Quispe, and Miguel Osco from the hamlet of Guallaquire, and Pedro Maldonado of the *ayllu* Collataca, and Lorenzo Quispe from the hamlet of Pulato.”⁷⁸ “They all died,” lamented Don Bartolomé, “without confessing their sins.”⁷⁹ To make matters worse for those parishioners who lived outside Laja, whenever Don Lorenzo visited their settlements, he demanded chickens, lambs, and other valuable goods in exchange for his services.

Some priests apparently based their decision to visit dying parishioners on the probability of profit. Witnesses in several cases claimed that the parish priest on trial gave preferential treatment to wealthier parishioners, while slighting poorer members of the community because they would likely be unable to pay for his services. Charity for the poor — if these parishioner testimonies are to be believed — was not a particularly common trait of many priests who worked in the diocese at this time, including Antonio de Agramonte y Zaldivar, parish priest of Yanacache in the 1680s.

⁷⁸ACCFLM, Tomo 16, fol. 158r.

⁷⁹Ibid.

In his visita trial, witnesses uniformly testified that Don Antonio routinely required the sick to travel to town, rather than go out to them to hear confession and administer last rites. Andrés Camblega, a principal and *Yndio tributario*, testified:

he orders them to bring [the dying] to town, and this has resulted in many people dying without the Sacred Sacraments. . . . It is also common for the priest to go out and service Indians he knows to be rich, but for those who are poor, he never leaves town.⁸⁰

Witnesses also claimed that many priests simply were unable to hear final confessions and administer the Sacraments because they were frequently out of town (usually witnesses accused priests of tending to personal business in La Paz) and thus incapable of servicing the sick. Indeed, in nearly half of the forty-one cases involving allegations of neglect of priestly duties, parishioners accused the priest of chronic absenteeism.⁸¹

Martín Choque, a *gobernador* of the town of Songo in the 1680s, revealed in his testimony that Licenciado Silvestre Alfonso Fernández often left town for fifteen to twenty days at a time without arranging for a temporary replacement. As a result, the congregation

⁸⁰ ACCFLM, Tomo 7, fol. 77r.

⁸¹ On the same problem encountered by parishioners in Bourbon Mexico, Taylor writes: "Even though more priests were in parish service in the late eighteenth century, complaints of absenteeism and inadequate spiritual care were common. The lapse was understandable in parishes with large territories, steep mountain paths and rushing streams, and small, widely scattered populations. It was impossible for a cura, even with assistants, to be everywhere he was needed, and special trips to remote corners of the parish were exhausting, dangerous, and often unrewarding, either spiritually or financially." Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred*, 183.

not only failed to have mass on Sundays and festival days, but “in the *cocales* some people died without giving final confession, although I cannot remember their names.”⁸²

This type of allegation, indeed, was common in the *visitas* of the 1680s and 1690s, and generally witnesses provided specific information to support their case. Carlos Gudina, a ninety-year old *Yndio natural* from Songo reported that Bartolomé Machicado y Zárate (parish priest in Songo before Don Antonio in the early 1680s) often left the village for up to a month. “On one occasion,” he stated,

an Indian woman named Catalina Taicho died without receiving the Sacred Sacraments. . . . And another time when the Bachiller was absent, four young children died, two before being anointed with chrism and oil, and the other two without baptismal water.⁸³

Moreover, Don Carlos grieved, Don Bartolomé coerced the distraught widower of Catalina Taicho to pay for two funeral masses, and charged him thirty baskets of coca and four jewels (*tembladeras*) for the burial. “And when the husband resisted, [the priest] threatened him.”⁸⁴

In every region of the diocese in the 1680s and 1690s, parishioners reported at least on one occasion that the parish priest on trial had neglected some aspect of his religious duty. But witnesses from the *corregimientos* of Larecaja and Sicasica stood out in terms of their steady dissatisfaction with their parish priests’ ministerial capabilities. In sixteen of the twenty interrogations held in Sicasica during the twenty year period under review, parishioners complained that the particular priest on trial or his *ayudante* had failed to

⁸²ACCFLM, Tomo 5, fol. 92.

⁸³ACCFLM, Tomo 5, fol. 161r.

⁸⁴ACCFLM, Tomo 5, fol. 162

administer last rites to the dying at some point during their careers. In Larecaja, witnesses cited this violation eleven times — more than any other complaint — and Indians from the town of Songo protested in each of the three trials conducted in the 1680s and 1690s that the presiding priests had routinely required relatives and friends to bring the dying to town.

Summary

The majority of *visita* witnesses who appeared before ecclesiastical officials in the *visitas y escrutinio* trials of the final two decades of the seventeenth century implicated their parish priests in some sort of misconduct or work-related negligence. Their allegations, of course, were not confined to those already discussed in this chapter. Indeed, parishioners also complained, for example, that some priests did not teach the catechism every Sunday, Wednesday, and Friday, and that they sometimes failed to sing the *Salve* — one of the prayers sung in praise of the Virgin Mary — on Saturday mornings as stipulated by royal laws. Parishioners accused a fair number of priests of operating illegal businesses and treating them unfairly in the marketplace in violation of various ecclesiastical statutes prohibiting such behavior. And in several instances witnesses informed the *promotor fiscal* that their parish priest — usually because of his laziness — consented to relationships which were unsanctified by the rite of marriage, and thus, condoned behavior deemed immoral in the eyes of the Spanish Crown and the Catholic Church.⁸⁵ In sum, most of the parishioners who testified in *visita* courts during the 1680s and 1690s spoke of their parish priests as if they were ordinary, common men who were possessed by many of the same secular (social, economic, and political) concerns and

⁸⁵In his *Itinerario para párochos*, Bishop Montenegro devoted an entire section (Book Three, Treatise Nine) to the *Sacramento del Matrimonio*.

desires as their lay friends and neighbors. Even if priests openly stood up against corruption, they — if the bulk of the parishioners' testimonies are to be believed — like other colonial agents of control, abused their positions of authority for personal gain or political advantage.

But as we will see in the next chapter, those priests implicated in committing serious crimes against their communities turned the table on their detractors, and depicted *themselves* as the victims of false testimony. In every instance, they defended their actions as just and proper, especially considering what they claimed to be the uncivilized and disobedient nature of most of the members of their congregations. In their responses to the charges, most priests singled out the duplicity and treachery of rival village leaders, specifically particular *caciques*, *principales* and *gobernadores* who, according to the priests, blackmailed or threatened other citizens to testify against them before visita officials. In their final rulings, as we will also see in Chapter 6, the presiding ecclesiastical authorities had to weigh the evidence for and against the priests, and more often than not, sided with their colleagues, even if they occasionally reprimanded accused priests for disrupting communal harmony and the religious mission of the Church by their actions.

CHAPTER 6 REACTIONS AND RULINGS, 1680-1700

We have seen thus far that even with the “weight of habitual deference behind them,” as William Taylor puts it, a majority of parish priests from villages throughout the Diocese of La Paz during the final two decades of the seventeenth century engaged in public disputes with their parishioners over both material and religious issues.¹ I have argued that Indian witnesses, through their testimonies, helped define boundaries of acceptable behavior and exploitation, and — with a seemingly clear understanding of colonial legal procedures — used the episcopal *visita y escrutinio* as an instrument in their collective bargaining for relief, respect, financial gain, and political advantage. As we will see in this chapter, however, priests did not stand idly by to allow their reputations and professional records to be sullied by what they referred to as “false allegations” and “sinister plots” against their characters.² Indeed, with energy and equanimous focus, they defended their actions and morality, and challenged visita authorities to see through the lies and deceit which, they alleged, characterized the testimonies against them.

Priests on Defense

When priests were accused of committing serious violations against their communities, ecclesiastical officials required them to defend themselves against the

¹Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred*, 236.

²ACCFLM, Tomo 5, fol. 22.

charges.³ In addition to addressing the contentious issues at hand, most priests who filed rebuttals commented on other aspects of village life, to include any political or social problems which may have contributed to their predicament. In addition, they nearly always confirmed their deeply religious convictions and devotion to the Church, and they often spoke of personal goals and ambitions, and of the pressures they faced as agents of the Spanish crown living in remote, predominantly indigenous communities.

Just as witness testimonies help to elucidate what parishioners expected from their parish priests and how priestly involvement in secular matters complicated their standing before ecclesiastical officials, priests' reactions to the charges against them depict a cohesive and orderly understanding of their role within colonial society and the liberties they felt entitled to as the spiritual and moral leaders of their parishes. More specifically, these depositions reveal prevailing attitudes as to what, and what did not, constitute

³Schwaller and Taylor discuss at various intervals in their studies of parish priests in colonial Mexico the protocol of court cases involving priests. Unfortunately, Schwaller dedicates most of his attention to cases before the Holy Office of the Inquisition, which according to his description, varied considerably from the types of procedures used in the visita trials in the Diocese of La Paz. For example, priests testifying before authorities of the Holy Office were not officially informed of the charges against them at the beginning of the trial. It was hoped they would implicate themselves in the course of the questioning. Priests accused of wrongdoing in the Diocese of La Paz, on the other hand, either were given a list of the charges at the beginning of the interrogation, or had to respond in writing to each of the *capitulos* raised during the interrogation of witnesses. Also, Schwaller describes torture as an alternative inquisitors could use to extract a confession; nothing similar appears anywhere in the archival record for the Diocese of La Paz. Taylor also does not specifically address variances of trial protocol. But throughout Part Two and Three of *Magistrates of the Sacred*, he discusses various ways priests dealt with the charges levied against them by parishioners and district magistrates. From the numerous examples, it appears that Church authorities in Bourbon Mexico handled controversial cases in a fashion (i.e. calling witnesses, confronting the maligned priest with the charges, hearing his rebuttal, determining a proper final sentence, etc.) similar to the way trials were conducted in the Diocese of La Paz.

acceptable priestly conduct as priests themselves saw it. As I illustrate in Chapter 7, a few priests paid a considerable price for their convictions, but they always defended their actions, however controversial they may have been, as legitimate and just.

As a matter of policy, priests were confined to their quarters during the interrogation of witnesses. This requirement ostensibly protected parishioners from being influenced by the presence of the man against whom they were testifying. Certainly, the goal of visita authorities was to keep the identities of witnesses secret, although it is obvious from subsequent reports filed by priests that they were often aware of which villagers would be called to appear before the chief prosecutor. In other words, priests were usually mindful that old enmities might surface during the course of the visita trial.

The parish priest did not appear again before the bishop or visitor-general until after all the witnesses had completed their testimonies. In all but twenty-seven of the one hundred and fifty-four trials held in the 1680s and 1690s, the presiding Church official informed the priest of his final sentence and collected any fees associated with the stay, before departing for La Paz or the next village on the visita tour. Thus, 82.5 percent of the episcopal inspections concluded without any written statements by the parish priest under review. All priests who received favorable final sentences, and even some who received unfavorable reviews, were not obliged to contribute directly to the documentary record in any way. Notwithstanding their *relaciones de méritos y servicios* (see Chapters 3 and 4), the persuasions, sentiments, and opinions of the vast majority of parish priests who worked in the diocese at this time remains, therefore, regrettably unknown.

Nevertheless, those twenty-seven priests who did have to respond to allegations of serious pastoral misconduct, as intimated earlier, often gave lengthy and graphic accounts of their activities. Priests either submitted written rebuttals which addressed specific accusations of improper behavior, or testified directly before the *promotor fiscal*. In the event that they were required to compose written responses, they were generally given between two to four hours to submit their answers.

The following analysis of the attitudes and visions of the parish priests who worked and lived in the Diocese of la Paz in the 1680s and 1690s is based, then, on some of the most contentious episcopal visitas of the era. All of the cases involved multiple witnesses who testified that the parish priest in question committed a variety of violations which directly threatened the parishioners' well-being, communal accord, and the religious mission of the Church in that particular parish. As a result, the range of offenses under consideration was broad, and usually meant that the indicted priest had to address a variety of controversial issues in his response.

In most cases, priests dealt with the charges point by point; their defensive posture and attention to detail signified the severity of the situation as they saw it, although it was not uncommon for priests to elaborate fully on issues which they felt able to prove as unfounded, while only furtively answering questions which they may have wanted to avoid. Accused priests, for example, tended to respond succinctly and vaguely to inquiries which questioned their fidelity to the vow of celibacy. The priest's assistant Marcos del Barco's only remark concerning the accusation that he had numerous affairs was, for example: "it is a spurious accusation and against all truth. . . . I was sick, and I got her to

nurse me back to health, and after having completed her work she left for her home in Coate.”⁴

Priests from each of the region’s seven *corregimientos* are represented among the group of men who filed appeals. Visitor-General Eguares y Paquier required written responses from priests working in the *corregimiento* of Sicasica a record nine times, the most of any territory in the diocese for this period (1680-1700). Priests from the Indian village of Yanacache alone had to defend themselves against serious accusations no less than four times, indeed in each of the *visitas* held there in the period under review. Parish priests from the *corregimiento* of Omasuyos are the least represented. Don Marcos, in fact, was the only priest from that region who had to respond to charges of misconduct, all of which, in typical fashion, he flatly denied.⁵

In each of the twenty-seven rebuttals, priests defended themselves either by pointing out that the accusations against them were categorically false, or true, but justified according to Church laws or local customs. Not once in the over one hundred pages of testimony did a priest admit to having consciously broken a rule or regulation, or behaving in a way that was not completely warranted considering the allegedly uncivilized and disrespectful nature of his congregation. Indeed, most of the implicated priests

⁴ACCFLM, Tomo 18, fol. 86.

⁵ACCFLM, Tomo 18, fol. 90. Don Marcos claimed he had been a responsible and diligent assistant to Christóbal Salto y Frías, who incidentally, testified on his own behalf that he had no knowledge of Don Marcos’ sexual affair “because of the fact that I do not walk from house to house scrutinizing the personal lives of my parishioners. . . . I just make sure that they all live in fear of, and in service to, God.” ACCFLM, Tomo 18, fol. 90.

offered images of their Christian communities which deviated sharply from the idealistic visions the Catholic Church and the Spanish crown espoused in colonial policies.

Priests active in the 1680s and 1690s made all sorts of excuses to justify their actions, but none was more common than portraying their parishioners as stupid, ignorant, and barbaric people who had little knowledge of the Christian faith or civilized decorum of any kind.⁶ By this admission, many priests unwittingly cast themselves as failures in terms of their attempts to indoctrinate Indians and lead them to a life of virtue. In addition, they often contradicted themselves in their rebuttals by indicating that their parishioners, despite their torpidity, were crafty in the art of deception and wily in the ways of legal procedure. Taylor captures the essence of this dichotomy in his discussion of the often conflicting views priests had of their Indian parishioners. He points out that the vocabulary priests of Bourbon Mexico used to describe members of their congregations “clustered around two inconsistent notions: Indians as simple, timid, obedient, perhaps stupid, innocents; and Indians as deceitful, malicious, and cunningly disobedient subjects — Children of the Seven Deadly Sins.”⁷ Priests, in any event, never took direct responsibility for any ministerial failures, and they apparently saw no inherent incongruity in their descriptions of Indian parishioners. In general, then, priests accused of misconduct

⁶Colonial officials and commentators frequently made mention of the mendacity and duplicity of their Native American subjects. In Book Five, Treatise Two, Section Five (entitled “De la prudencia que debe tener el Visitador en averiguar los capítulos que ponen los Indios a los Curas”) of his *Itinerario para párochos*, Bishop Montenegro stated “it is an irrefutable fact, proven with countless examples, that the Indians are collectively a bunch of liars, and with the upmost vulgarity, they have the proclivity to falsely accuse.” Montenegro, *Itinerario para párochos*, 647.

⁷Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred*, 173.

frequently depicted their parishioners as incorrigible children,⁸ brutish animals, and “people so irrational”⁹ (*gente tan irracional*) that their grievances should be ignored.

Br. Juan de Argote — one of three priests working in the Diocese of La Paz in the 1680s and 1690s who had to defend himself before visita officials more than once — denied the numerous charges made against him and considered his parishioners to be nothing more than “evil Christian rebels, [who are] insubordinate”¹⁰ to any form of authority. He admitted that he often got angry with many of the local Indians because “they only want to live like savages,”¹¹ and that he occasionally had to whip a butcher named Juan Condori in the main plaza to set an example for others.

I blame the disparaging assessments of my character on the fact that I have to punish him. In spite of these haughty and false accusations, I try to change their [the parishioners'] delinquent ways with the help of God — this truth does not escape Our Lord Jesus Christ.¹²

⁸Taylor makes much of the priestly obligation — especially during the Hapsburg era — to be the “spiritual father” “committed to the spiritual directions of his children.” He bases this analysis on the central influence of Bishop Montenegro’s *Itinerario*, which, he says, instructed priests to “lead by example, edifying his parishioners with good works and high standards of personal conduct . . . and see that the Indians obeyed his teachings.” Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred*, 152-153.

⁹ACCFLM, Tomo 13, fol. 228. Don Pedro de Bustamante, a priest active in the diocese for over thirty years (he spent most of his time working in Laja and San Sebastián de las Piezas in La Paz) offered this appraisal of his Indian parishioners in a written statement filed in his trial in 1688.

¹⁰ACCFLM, Tomo 11, fol. 344r.

¹¹*Ibid.*

¹²*Ibid.*

Marcos del Barco, likewise, blamed any negative comments directed at him on the necessary toughness he had to use to fulfill his religious duties. He reasoned:

They say that I treat them cruelly because they need to be forced to congregate to learn the catechism, the Sacred Gospels, and their prayers, and to confess on time, and to civilize themselves — to all these things they are viciously opposed and uninterested. Each day they lose respect for us, and are adamant enemies of hearing mass, giving confession, and the Word of God. . . . [Because] I attempt to get them to do these things, they say I am ill-tempered and heartless.¹³

Nearly all of the twenty-seven priests who claimed innocence before charges of misconduct cited Indian character flaws as the main source of their unwarranted discontent. Silvestre Alfonso Fernández, cura of Songo in the 1680s, accused Indians of orchestrating a conspiracy “filled with deceit.”¹⁴ Responding to a litany of charges which included failing to hold Sunday mass, charging *tributarios* up to one hundred pesos a piece for burials, and forcing Indians to work a plot of land he owned near town, Antonio de Agramonte Zaldívar stated that “any and all declarations are malicious,”¹⁵ and considered them unfair “given the good reputation I have always had in the service of God.”¹⁶ Francisco de Carrión y Cáceres of Palca blamed any deaths of his parishioners

¹³ACCFLM, Tomo 18, fol. 86.

¹⁴ACCFLM, Tomo 5, fol. 97.

¹⁵ACCFLM, Tomo 7, fol. 124. “Malicious” was the most common adjective used by priests to describe Indians who testified negatively against them. This was also the case, apparently, in Bourbon Mexico. Taylor states that “malice essentially meant ill-will, but it could be used in various senses: to designate ill-will toward Spanish authorities or toward other Indians; to describe particular acts of ill-will or to draw a deeper conclusion about psychological motivation.” Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred*, 173.

¹⁶ACCFLM, Tomo 7, fol. 124.

unaccompanied by last rites on their own “neglect and carelessness (*omisión y floxedad*).”¹⁷ And Bernardo de Meléndez, *cura* of Sapaqui in the 1690s, defended himself by arguing that most of the time he could not understand his parishioners. This lack of communication did not result, so he testified, from any language deficiencies on his part, but rather because local Indians frequently had so much coca in their mouths that anything they said was unintelligible. On the charge that he failed to attend to a dying man in a nearby farm, Don Bernardo stated:

an *Indio Pongo* and Doña Francisca Pacheco called on me to give confession to him, but I could not understand them because their mouths were full of coca, I ordered them in no uncertain terms to spit it out. . . . Later I went out to the house and as I entered I tripped over the body of the dead man, who they said had died that morning. That night I went back to the house to ask why they had not called me out earlier, and Doña Francisca said that it was on account that I hated her. . . . Upon hearing this, I was much distressed.¹⁸

In addition to the Indians’ personal defects and irrationality, parish priests also highlighted personal conflicts with different parishioners — usually village leaders — as common causes for witness dissatisfaction.¹⁹ Political controversy, indeed, was a common theme in the *visita* records from this era, and implied a certain rivalry for the top position

¹⁷ACCFLM, Tomo 8, fol. 147.

¹⁸ACCFLM, Tomo 20, fol. 210.

¹⁹Robert Haskett examines facets of village factionalism in colonial Mexico in his book entitled *Indigenous Rulers: An Ethnohistory of Town Government in Colonial Cuernavaca* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991). He states, like Taylor, that partisan elections was one of the principal manifestations of factional strife between Indians. The main cause for village political dissent appears to be, according to Haskett, rivalry between the traditional hereditary elite and the newly powerful, i.e. those who had climbed the social and political ranks due to financial success.

within Indian villages. In some cases, however, it is difficult to tell how involved parish priests were in village politics. In some of the more contentious cases, for example, priests claimed that political pressures and village factionalism were the key ingredients of the existing dispute (rather than his behavior), and that he had little to do with the issues at hand. In these more ambiguous cases, it certainly appears possible that allegations of priestly abuse or neglect were the result of political posturing on the part of angry and opportunistic native elites, who may or may not have had honest grounds for their accusations against the priest on trial. In these instances, these *caciques* and *governadores* may have considered the *visita y escrutinio* as an open arena for voicing their particular cause against a rival group or individual, and if they had to implicate their parish priest of malfeasance to get their message across, they did it. The parish priest, in other words and in some cases, appears to have been caught in the middle of what Taylor refers to as "contests for pueblo leadership,"²⁰ many of which he argues, were incidental to the priest implicated of wrongdoing.²¹

As discussed in Chapter 5, when priests openly acknowledged their involvement in personal feuds, dissension usually had to do not so much with their sacerdotal performance, but rather with how priests figured into the social, economic, and political

²⁰Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred*, 373.

²¹Chapter Fifteen of *Magistrates of the Sacred* deals extensively with the theme of village politics and political sources of dissension between priests, parishioners, and district governors. In the end, Taylor finds, like I do for the Diocese of La Paz, that late colonial priests in Mexico often considered the suits against them to be frivolous attempts by "factions of ambitious or vengeful men who seized the initiative in the name of the community and occasionally gained wide support." *Ibid.*, 376.

fabric of the communities they served. In other words, squabbles with village leaders and caciques over usually non-religious matters often evolved into political struggles for power, the technicalities and spirit of which were uncovered during some of the visita trials of the era.

In the parish of San Juan de Acora, for example, Fadrique Sarmiento de Sotomayor greeted Visitor-General Eguares Pasquier on the morning of September 4, 1687, at the entrance of town, and handed over a letter advising him of the “calumnies and planned objections of the Catacoras,”²² a local family of Indian nobility. In this statement, he refuted in advance several of the allegations he suspected would arise during the visita interrogations, including the claims that he did not speak Aymara well enough to teach the catechism and say mass, and that he frequently left town without appointing a qualified priest to serve during his absence. He also disputed that he had ever harassed Carlos Catacora. He argued that he often had to defend local Indians from the family’s excessive demands for tribute. He pointed out that he had endured threats by members of the Catacora clan during the thirty or so years he had worked in the region. And finally, he claimed that this family had contrived to undermine his authority and incited others to testify against him. In his words, the Catacoras planned to use the episcopal visita as a tool “to victimize me . . . with their offenses.”²³

True to his suspicions, all but one of the parishioner testimonies and affidavits (which, incidentally, did not include any direct testimony from anyone with the surname

²²ACCFLM, Tomo 12, fol. 96.

²³ACCFLM, Tomo 12, fol. 97r.

Catacora) recounted stories of spiritual neglect, physical and emotional abuse, and violations of priestly authority. In his response to the charges, Don Fadrique stressed that all accusations were “false [and] utter lies.”²⁴ Citing his earlier claims that personal quarrels with various members of the Catacora family had evolved into a larger conflict, he acknowledged “I have had many disputes with the Catacoras because I have defended the Indians of this town from their mistreatment . . . facts which can be supported by documents already submitted to the Royal Government and the Viceroy.”²⁵

In San Andrés de Machaca, Bernardo de Balboa denied in his appeal that he overcharged *tributarios* for burials, manipulated wills to favor himself and the local church, and failed to teach his Indian parishioners the catechism. He told Visitor-General Eguares y Pasquier

I am not overly demanding of Indians when it comes to political issues because I do not meddle in such things, just like they do not involve themselves in the instruction of the catechism, or in issues of Our Sacred Faith and Reason (*La Razón*). I have to answer to these charges simply because I am exacting in my demands that they learn the catechism, attend mass and [listen to] the liturgy. . . . The cacique is the one who avoids mass the most. . . . I have not seen him since the celebration of Corpus Christi until now. . . . Once I told him he was just a drunk, and I tried to correct his vices.²⁶

Don Bernardo later blamed any negative comments on his character on the “bad will”²⁷ of the unnamed cacique, and attributed the general attitude of disrespect among the Indians

²⁴ACCFLM, Tomo 12, fol. 154r.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶ACCFLM, Tomo 21, fol. 152.

²⁷ACCFLM, Tomo 21, fol. 152r.

(whom he referred to as “*ignorantes*”²⁸ at one point in his rebuttal) to the “bad seed [i.e. the cacique] who inspires those who have stayed here.”²⁹

As Don Bernardo alluded to in the previous example, priests often claimed that parishioners aired false grievances against them just because they assiduously performed the duties which their jobs as spiritual leaders required. Indeed, priests frequently claimed that any harsh words or physical punishments they handed out were necessary for the Indians to become good, God-fearing Catholics. Put differently, priests categorized what some parishioners believed to be unfair or cruel treatment as justifiable, and even essential for the cultivation of Christian virtues and civilized behavior. This was certainly the spirit espoused in Bishop Montenegro’s influential *Itinerario*, which, according to Taylor, “held that the priest as judge could punish his parishioners in order to protect their souls and control sin.”³⁰

Antonio de Agramonte y Zaldívar admitted in his deposition that he did not show lenience to any parishioners who chose not to notify him promptly to come to administer last rites to dying neighbors. He adamantly denied any wrongdoing in this regard, and emphasized:

I have publicly announced that people should not hesitate to call me when there is a sick person. . . . [In the past] I have had to punish Indians with whippings and Spaniards with monetary fines. . . . This [accusation] is especially upsetting to me considering how many instances in which I have

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred*, 156.

risked my life on these treacherous roads, and as sick as I have been at times.³¹

Similarly, and without any tone of apology, Lorenzo Vásquez de Castilla of Laja conceded that twice he imprisoned a *cacique* named Martín for being — somewhat ambiguously — “bad and insolent,”³² and it was true that he “wounded the *sacristanes* and members of the choir (*les e erido*)”³³ for not completing some work he had assigned.

Br. Juan Diez de Fuenmaior y Olasaval of Calacoto confirmed also that he punished without remorse an *alcalde ordinario* named Juan Mamani for failing to provide him with a mule he had commissioned to rent from the man for a trip to La Paz. According to the priest’s version of the story, Don Juan rented the mule in order to travel to the city to purchase some ornaments he planned to display in time for the current visita.

Despite his obligation, it took him several days to bring the mule to me. This malicious neglect caused me some troubles. . . . [Because of] his disobedience . . . I had to shove him around, and I punished his cacique too on account of the little respect that he has for me, [a quality] I have seen in other Indians as well. They are also arrogant and haughty (*altibos y soberbios*), despite the suffering, patience and reason I exhibit in all [my dealings with them].³⁴

The fascinating case of Alvaro López de Soria y Abréu perhaps represents the best example of priestly beliefs in just cause for punishment of recalcitrant Indians. Among other things, witnesses in Yanacachi accused Don Alvaro of chronic absenteeism,

³¹ACCFLM, Tomo 7, fol. 124.

³²ACCFLM, Tomo 16, fol. 169.

³³Ibid.

³⁴ACCFLM, Tomo 21, fol. 79.

overcharging for burials — some of which he did not even perform — not holding mass on Sundays, and allowing his nephew and his black slave, Esteban, to torment the town's Indian citizens.³⁵ In his rebuttal, Don Alvaro expended a great deal of effort in defending the behavior of his companions, whose actions, so he believed, were perfectly justified given the truculence of some of the Indian parishioners. The priest began his defense by pointing out that "I am not God, I cannot be in all places at once."³⁶ He then doubted that either his nephew or Esteban had unjustly mistreated anyone, but even if they did, the Indians pursued a solution to the problem in an inappropriate way. He claimed:

The accusation that my black slave treats the Indian men and women with contempt is false and sinister, and nothing more than an example of their imaginative minds . . . even if [his actions were unwarranted], they should have come to me so that I could remedy the situation. [At the very least] when they went to La Paz they should have executed an official complaint so that Your Excellence could report it to the [Captain] General, Don Juan de Mesa.³⁷

In addition to these excuses, priests argued repeatedly that their ability to complete their many duties was often hampered by sprawling jurisdictions, scattered (and floating) populations, and treacherous roads and other natural obstacles which impeded travel.³⁸ As

³⁵Only a few scholars have studied slavery in colonial Alto Perú. A few of the better, albeit outdated, monographs include Alberto Crespo Rodas, *Esclavos Negros en Bolivia* (La Paz: Academia Nacional de Ciencias de Bolivia, 1977), and Max Portugal Ortiz, *La Esclavitud Negra en las épocas coloniales y nacionales de Bolivia* (La Paz: Instituto Boliviano de Cultura, 1977).

³⁶ACCFLM, Tomo 20, fol. 29.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Most scholars who have written about the secular clergy in colonial Latin America have pointed out that parish priests often complained of the hardships they endured in the course of their work. Brading cites several cases of priests bemoaning the

seen in Chapter 4, some priests complained bitterly about the hardships they endured in the sometimes inhospitable environments of the southern Andes. In fact, over a third of parish priests accused of misconduct in the 1680s and 1690s denied any conscious neglect on their part by highlighting the challenges that the natural landscapes, high altitudes, and weather presented.

Francisco de Carrión y Cáceres responded to charges of priestly neglect in *visita* trials held in 1684 and 1691 by pointing out that his numerous efforts to hire an assistant to work the rugged *tierra adentro* (interior lands) had failed. In his defense against allegations that hundreds of people had died in his district without the benefit of extreme unction, Don Francisco reported in 1684:

A creole born in the hamlet of Santiago in the *tierra adentro* named Licenciado Francisco de Manzaneda came to work there [after his ordination], but because of the roughness and difficulty [of the land], and poverty of the Indians, he could not persist. . . . So consequently I hired Licenciado Thomás de Carbajal, but he too could not survive on account of the poverty of even the most wealthy of men there. Then Provisor Doctor Don Bartolomé de Zifuentes . . . appointed Don Matheo [illegible] . . . who also could not survive . . . Later the President of the Real Audiencia

rural isolation and tropical climate of some of the districts of Michoacan in the late eighteenth century. Jose Vicente de Ochoa, parish priest of Irimbo, for example, hoped for a transfer in 1792 since he “suffered terrible solitude where bitterness has been my bread both day and night, all to suffer and feel, accepting it all with patience and offering until His Majesty wills better times.” Brading, *Church and state in Bourbon Mexico*, 115. Taylor dedicates an entire subsection of Chapter Eight of *Magistrates of the Sacred* to the theme of priestly hardships. The complaints made by priests from the Diocese of Guadalajara and the Archdiocese of Mexico were similar in many respects to those made by priests in the Diocese of La Paz. Taylor writes that “When parish priest described their work, they usually mentioned travel, often involving great distances, foul weather, terrible roads, and physical deprivations.” But, as he rightly points out, “Perhaps not so many souls passed away in the dead of night; nor was there always bad weather to brave. The burden of the work was partly in the eye of the beholder and varied according to individual circumstances and conscience.” Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred*, 196-197.

ordered me to submit a report to find out if the benefice [of Palca] was too vast, and I stated [in that report] that indeed it was necessary to have an assistant there. . . . So I hired Licenciado Joan de Lossa, who managed to hold out for only thirty days during Lent because he said he had no provisions and nothing to live on, so now I have hired Fray Joan de Vera of the order of San Agustín to work there.³⁹

Seven years later, Don Francisco had apparently still not solved the problem.

Responding to charges of chronic absenteeism, not keeping proper records of confessions, and failing to hire extra *ayudantes* to serve the dispersed settlements of the region, the priest repeated the claim that no one could “persist”⁴⁰ (*persistir*) in the interior lands, and that he could afford to hire only two other assistants to satisfy the demands of his many other parishioners. Moreover, he stated, “the *tierra adentro* is virtually uninhabited now . . . save a few Spaniards who are served by some Augustinians.”⁴¹

Juan Diez de Fuenmaior expressed similar frustration when questioned about allegations that he forced Indians of Calacoto to lend him (without compensation) mules for trips he routinely made to outlying communities of his jurisdiction. His district was so large, he claimed, that walking was simply not an option, and he contended that parishioners freely gave him their mules and horses on that account. In his statement, he argued:

³⁹ACCFLM, Tomo 8, fol. 147r. Visitor-General Eguares y Pasquier concluded that this arrangement was unsatisfactory, and ordered Don Francisco to appoint a secular priest to serve Santiago because, technically, Fray Juan was not licenced to administer the Sacred Sacraments in the Diocese of La Paz.

⁴⁰ACCFLM, Tomo 20, fol. 132.

⁴¹ACCFLM, Tomo 20, fols. 132-132r.

I use mules so that I can cover — with pastoral enthusiasm — the twenty-five leagues of my territory and not be endangered or risk the loss of souls. . . . Many times I have offered them money . . . but the owners will not take any from me because they consider this [my job] as sacred and pious. . . . In the rainy season I have risked my life several times crossing the shallows of two rivers by night with only candles [to guide me].⁴²

Second to accusing Indian parishioners of being, by nature, dishonest and deceitful, the most common excuse priests used in their respective self-defenses had to do with their adherence to local customs.⁴³ Indeed, parish priests from all parts of the diocese throughout the 1680s and 1690s regularly cited their simple obedience to tradition as the basis for their actions and decisions. Not surprisingly, and as intimated in Chapter 5, parishioners also complained about priests who failed to honor old, customary arrangements. When taken as a whole, these statements represent, I contend, some of the terms of the evolving, yet essentially consistent view of social norms and obligations which governed and shaped social relations between villagers and priests in the Diocese of La Paz at this time.⁴⁴ In Chapter 5, I discussed several sources of conflict between

⁴² ACCFLM, Tomo 21, fol. 80.

⁴³In effect, the monographs by Brading, Farris, and Taylor on late colonial Mexico deal precisely with this issue of adherence to customs (albeit in a different context) and of how parish priests responded to the Bourbon reforms which threatened their authority. Each of these authors — with the exception of Taylor who examines all these relationships in detail — is more interested in relations between the state and the members of the Mexican Church, rather than the dialogue and negotiating for advantages which took place between priests and their parishioners. Essentially, however, these scholars discuss the issue of resistance and reaction to change, just as parishioners and priests from the Diocese of La Paz bargained for their own prosperity and well-being as changes took place on the local level.

⁴⁴As I discuss in the Introduction, E.P. Thompson's idea of "moral economy of the poor" is, I think, germane to colonial Andean society since individuals and certain classes of people (i.e. priests and parishioners) seemed to have operated within, and behaved

parishioners and parish priests, and argued that the *visita y escrutinio* was an institutionalized mechanism native elites used in the 1680s and 1690s to define the terms and conditions of their participation in colonial society. If that is true, the episcopal *visita* gave equal opportunity for priests to define the boundaries of their involvement in the moral economy of village life since they were similarly interested in protecting their privileges and positions of power and authority.

To cite a few examples, Antonio de Agramonte y Zaldívar admitted that he required local *forasteros* to pay him for religious services in *pesos ensayados*, a practice specifically prohibited throughout the diocese due to the value of the coins compared with other types of currency.⁴⁵ Don Antonio responded:

I say that this has been a custom from time immemorial (*a sido costumbre inmemorial*) in this district. . . . All of the priests who preceded me required the same for the administration of the Sacred Sacraments, and to marry, bury, and baptize the Indians.⁴⁶

Don Antonio had used this excuse before. In 1684 when parishioners accused him of committing a whole series of violations, he claimed with notable irritation:

To prove my good works, my predecessors charged up to a thousand pesos for burials, and you accuse me of acting tyrannically for charging

according to, a social and moral order which regulated, however informally, social, economic and political attitudes and expectations between different colonial groups. Thompson, "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century," 79.

⁴⁵See footnote 60, Chapter 2, for a discussion of the difference between assayed coins and other forms of currency.

⁴⁶ACCFLM, Tomo 14, fol. 162.

thirty or forty pesos. . . . Looking at what they [former priests who worked in Yanacache] did, I should not be punished, but commended.⁴⁷

He argued further that he did not force *camarico* contributions from wealthy Indians, rather “it is customary here for them to give these amounts to the priest.”⁴⁸ The practice of paying in *pesos ensayados* was also an “ancient custom” (*antigua costumbre*).⁴⁹

Fadrique de Sarmiento y Sotomayor pointed out in his deposition before Promotor Fiscal León that urging parishioners to give periodic offerings to the church was customary, as was persuading dying Indians to allocate money for yearly masses to be said in their names. Similarly, Bernardo de Balboa of San Andrés de Machaca argued that any *camarico* contributions made by Indian parishioners were voluntary (“I only receive what they give me voluntarily”⁵⁰), and that upon arrival in this town, he simply allowed the practice (established by his “*antecedentes*”⁵¹) to continue because of “their desire to display their wealth (*ostentación*)”.⁵²

The best example of a priest using this justification as a tool of defense involved Francisco de Carrión y Cáceres of Palca. During his direct interrogation, Don Francisco vehemently reacted to the charges of misconduct by citing specific royal *cédulas* and

⁴⁷ACCFLM, Tomo 7, fol. 124r.

⁴⁸ACCFLM, Tomo 7, fol. 125.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰ACCFLM, Tomo 21, fol. 152r.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Ibid.

manuals of conduct,⁵³ which he argued, contained rules which condoned his behavior. He apparently acted according to different principles at different times, however, because usually in the same breath he turned to local traditions — many of which were officially forbidden by the Church — to account for his actions. On the allegation that he allowed his sacristans, singers, and treasurers to bury people in his absence, for example, Don Francisco retorted: “I have always perceived that this is traditional and customary (*es uso y costumbre*) in this Kingdom.”⁵⁴ On the issue of forcing offerings at the end of the calendar year, he argued:

I have found that in this benefice it is a custom that they make end-of-the-year donations. I was told this by the *Governador* Don Miguel Fernández de Borja and the other caciques that it was an expression of their devotion to give silver, and other products [to the Church]. . . . Services for the redemption of souls from purgatory were, likewise, customary . . . not forced.⁵⁵

Finally, Don Francisco pointed out that he had nothing to do with the appointments of various citizens as officers (*alféreses*) or as managers (*mayordomos*) of the *cofradías* and that any contributions they made to the Church were in accordance with local customs.

This is the way it is in this bishopric. We have three hundred candles in the sacristy of the Church . . . which must be purchased by the *mayordomos*. . . . I always give them a receipt for these . . . and having taken control of

⁵³One of the references Don Francisco made in his appeal was to Bishop Montenegro’s *Itinerario para párachos*. In his statement, the priest said “I was just following the advice of the Doctors, and principally that of The Most Illustrious Lord the Bishop of Quito [who discusses these issues] in his summary guide for this Kingdom.” ACCFLM, Tomo 8, fol. 150.

⁵⁴ACCFLM, Tomo 8, fol. 150r.

⁵⁵ACCFLM, Tomo 8, fol. 151.

this they have furthered the divine cult (*culto divino*) which is well-established in this Sacred Church.⁵⁶

Final Judgements

As discussed in Chapter 2, the bishop or the visitor-general completed each visita with a final sentence, in which he essentially graded the priest and recorded any other observations which he felt might improve his job performance and sense of religious duty. These documents sometimes contained data on particular successes or failures, but more often were formulaic, and thus provided few direct details of priestly values or conduct. Nevertheless, the tone, style and conclusions of these documents are important to any study of priests' behavior in the Diocese of La Paz since they reveal the attitudes of the high clergy, and more generally, the expectations of the Catholic Church in this particular part of the colonial Andes. In addition, these final sentences illustrate the way bishops handled potentially explosive situations, and thus represent a sample of the actions and attitudes of a colonial bureaucracy that tended to favor rhetorical admonitions and minor fines rather than drastic penalties for crimes of authority.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ACCFLM, Tomo 8, fol. 152.

⁵⁷The theme of bureaucratic lenience, as it pertained to the punishment of royal officials found guilty of crimes of authority, has been the topic of considerable attention by historians of colonial Latin America. Some of the better explanations for how the Hapsburgs in particular promoted the nonobservance of Spanish colonial law can be found in John Leddy Phelan's monograph entitled, *The Kingdom of Quito in the Seventeenth Century: Bureaucratic Politics in the Spanish Empire*. In terms of Church history, Taylor acknowledges at various points in Parts Two and Three of *Magistrates of the Sacred* that priests generally benefitted from the administrative laxity that characterized the early eighteenth century, and responded negatively to later Bourbon initiatives which sought to curtail their spirit of independence and local authority.

During the 1680s and 1690s, Visitor-General Eguares y Pasquier wrote nearly all of the final sentences, so the method, language, and format of the documents remained consistent through the end of the century. In fact, judging from the similarity of style of later examples, it is likely that the standard set by Eguares y Pasquier influenced the bishops and visitors-general from the 1700s, 1710s, and 1720s. In any case, these documents provide a useful measure to gauge how priests were regarded professionally, and in the end, what factors defined the limits — as far as the bishop's office was concerned — of acceptable and unacceptable priestly behavior.

All but four of the one hundred and fifty-four *visitas* conducted during the 1680s and 1690s were complete, in the sense that they contained the bishop's edict announcing the goals of the *visita*, the list of the chief prosecutor's questions, a record of the physical inspection of the premises, witness testimonies, the chief prosecutor's report, and the final sentence which officially closed the investigation. The four *visitas* which are incomplete lack only the final judgement, and it appears that they were either lost, misplaced or inadvertently destroyed since the cases they would have complimented were indistinct in every way.⁵⁸

One hundred and twenty-eight of the final sentences were favorable; that is, the bishop or the visitor-general determined that the priest on trial performed his job either satisfactorily, or acceptably contingent on his improvement in one or more areas of his

⁵⁸In other words, I do not feel that the final sentences for these cases were postponed or passed on to another agency, like the Sacred Office of the Inquisition for example, since the cases were generally normal and did not involve priests engaged in any egregious activity.

work. For instance, it was fairly common for the presiding ecclesiastical official to issue a commendatory final sentence, with the provision that, for example, the priest keep better books or start Sunday mass in the afternoon so people from outlying farms would have time to make it to town. For the purposes of this study, I consider all such final sentences to be favorable and distinguish them from unfavorable judgements which either resulted in fines, suspensions, or expulsions.

Seventeen of the one hundred and fifty final sentences from the 1680s and 1690s were somewhat favorable, but also included sharp words of rebuke and a financial penalty for various violations.⁵⁹ In other words, while the bishop or visitor-general may have approved of some aspects of the priest's work, in other areas he deemed him as overly abusive or negligent and thus deserving of a monetary fine. These final sentences were of two types. Less common were those which were highly critical of the priest's job, threatened serious penalties for continued abuse or mistreatment, and imposed fines of several hundred pesos. It was more likely for the bishop or visitor-general to punish priests with a minor fine and warn them to abstain from whatever behavior or activity had been reported. These cases usually involved fines of fifty pesos or less.

⁵⁹Because most scholars of parish priests in colonial Latin America have not focused explicitly on the episcopal visita, no comprehensive study of how priests fared in these trials has been written. Taylor, of course, has included as part of *Magistrates of the Sacred* an abundance of contextual examples from different cases and forms of punishment priests received as a result of being found guilty of inappropriate or neglectful conduct. In general, he argues that despite provisions spelled out in the *Recopilación de leyes de los reinos de las Indias* that "Indians shall be favored and protected by the ecclesiastical and secular courts," ecclesiastical judges tended to favor their colleagues when they had disputes with Indians over religious and non-religious matters. Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred*, 396.

Visitor-General Eguares y Pasquier suspended three priests during the twenty year period under review. His final sentences in these cases implied that the levels of hostility between the priests and parishioners endangered social peace, and that the priest was thus incapable of being an effective agent of the Church and state at that particular time.⁶⁰ In these three instances, he ordered the suspended priest to travel to La Paz to serve a period of penance under the supervision of the bishop's office.

The last category of final sentences involved two priests from the same village who were both fined and suspended from active service for an unspecified amount of time. Neither priest reappeared in the documentary record of any parish in the diocese after their respective trials, so it is fair to assume that their careers in the priesthood ended with their suspensions and fines in 1688. The final section of this chapter includes a narrative of the crimes these men committed and the punishments they received at the hands of Visitor-General Eguares y Pasquier and Bishop Queipo de Llano y Valdés.

Easily the most common type of final sentences featured priests who had received favorable testimonies from their parishioners, took proper care of church premises, and kept orderly parochial books. For example, after being described by witnesses as “a

⁶⁰There were no examples from the Diocese of La Paz (1680 to 1730) of conflicts between priests and parishioners which led to violent resistance. Taylor, on the other hand, writes about twenty-three such cases that occurred between 1743 and 1809 in the Diocese of Guadalajara and the Archdiocese of Mexico. He reports that when physical confrontations between priests and parishioners ensued, “it was always in response to a provocative act by the priest.” *Ibid.*, 367.

learned, God-fearing man”⁶¹ who “knows all parishioners by name,”⁶² and “shields the Indians as if they were his children from the burdens and oppressions that the *corregidores* impose on them,”⁶³ Gerónimo de Cañizares, while serving as parish priest of Hilabaya, received a favorable final judgement from Visitor-General Eguares y Pasquier in 1683. It read, in part:

We find that Licenciado Don Gerónimo de Cañizares e Ybarra has been good, diligent, punctual and careful in his responsibilities as priest and vicar, having his parishioners very well indoctrinated and instructed in the mysteries of Our Sacred Faith . . . having preached the Sacred Gospel to all of his parishioners with extreme care, and having lived with the decency and virtue that his position requires. . . . For all this we declare him to be an exemplary priest and vicar . . . [and] thus worthy of Your Majesty’s, the King’s, recognition and promotion to a dignitary position in one of the Cathedrals of this Kingdom.⁶⁴

Don Francisco de Fur of San Andrés de Machaca, likewise, benefitted from parishioner testimonies that depicted him as an especially devoted priest who took care of the sick, charged less for burials than stipulated by the *arancel*, and was the dedicated architect and benefactor of the local church. In his final sentence, Visitor-General Eguares y Pasquier noted that Don Francisco had, among other things, “lived virtuously and

⁶¹ACCFLM, Tomo 4, fol. 273.

⁶²ACCFLM, Tomo 4, fol. 271r.

⁶³ACCFLM, Tomo 4, fol. 274r.

⁶⁴ACCFLM, Tomo 4, fols. 285-286. For Taylor’s perspective on model priests, see his section entitled “The Late Colonial Model of the Parish Priest,” in Chapter Seven of *Magistrates of the Sacred*. He rightly points out that reciprocity between priests and parishioners had much to do with how well these two groups of people got along. He states: “From a number of lawsuits between parishioners and curas, it is clear Indians believed their priests were bound by a reciprocal set of duties.” Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred*, 169.

honestly . . . [and] fulfilled the obligation to administer the Sacred Sacraments to the healthy and the sick.”⁶⁵ In addition,

in his job as steward of church construction, he has applied himself with great zeal. . . . And for the improvement of the Divine Cult, he has built this church from its first foundations up to the point that it is now finished. . . . This sumptuous [building] . . . is adorned with hanging pictures and ornaments for the sacristy, he having spent eight hundred and ninety-eight *pesos* of his own money for them. . . . And the total amount he has spent on construction is five thousand, nine hundred and seventy-four *pesos*.⁶⁶

As mentioned above, favorable final sentences sometimes contained recommendations or provisions which the bishop or the visitor-general ordered to be carried out. While Bernardino de Hernani Bonifaz, for example, had performed his job well, it became clear during the interrogations that the sheer size of the district of Combaya — along with the yearly advent of seasonal rains — diminished his ability to service some parishioners who lived in remote areas. Eguares y Pasquier noted that Don Bernardino and his four *ayudantes* had, in fact, “been good priests and lived according to the obligations of their positions,” but also ordered the priest to

follow through on the mandate to have one of his assistants in residence [in the outlying region] during the months of December and January every year since these are the months of heavy rains so that he can administer the Sacred Sacraments . . . to the many people of that district.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ACCFLM, Tomo 4, fol. 123.

⁶⁶ACCFLM, Tomo 4, 123r. Taylor refers to priests who sought to distinguish themselves through their prowess and initiatives in Church construction as “colonial builder priests.” Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred*, 103.

⁶⁷ACCFLM, Tomo 4, fol. 135-135r.

While favorable testimonies always led to favorable sentences, fifty-one priests who were accused of some wrongdoing also found themselves on the receiving end of positive final rulings. So, of the seventy-eight priests against whom parishioners filed complaints during the 1680s and 1690s, 65.4 percent were exonerated of their alleged crimes through the bishop's or visitor-general's final sentence. It is true that some of these final judgements decisively cautioned the priest against further illegal or immoral behavior, but, in the end the vast majority of these priests survived the episcopal visita with their jobs, if not their reputations, intact.

Alvaro López de Soria y Abréu, for example, stood accused of serious violations in both of the visitas held in Moho in 1683 and 1691, only to be congratulated for his exemplary duty in each of the Visitor-General Eguares y Pasquier's final sentences. In the 1683 trial, parishioners accused Don Alvaro of forcing *camarico* contributions, overcharging for burials, mistreating parishioners, obliging the dying to donate money to the Church in their wills, and not keeping proper books of confession. In his final sentence, however, Eguares y Paquier concluded that Don Alvaro had been a good priest who treated his parishioners "charitably" (*charitativamente*).⁶⁸ Further, he had "served as a good example [to the community] with his life and customs . . . and fulfilled all the duties of his charge."⁶⁹

Eight years later, parishioners from Yanacachi complained bitterly about Don Alvaro's excessive charges for burials, forced *camarico* contributions, chronic

⁶⁸ACCFLM, Tomo 5, fol. 273r.

⁶⁹Ibid.

absenteeism, and his habit of not saying mass every Sunday. In other words — if the parishioner testimonies from Moho and Yanacachi were to be believed — Don Alvaro's behavior changed little despite his change in residence. In the final sentence, Bishop Queipo de Llano Valdés first acknowledged that Don Alvaro had been a good priest and could continue serving in the parish, but “on account of his advanced age and failing vision,” he was ordered to relinquish control of most parish duties in favor a *cura coadjutor* to whom he would have to pay a reasonable salary.⁷⁰

Indian and Spanish witnesses in Calacoto and San Andrés de Machaca in 1688, similarly, grieved that their respective parish priests, Juan Diez de Fuenmaior and Bernardo de Balboa, engaged in various forms of misconduct, including verbally abusing parishioners, failing to administer the Sacred Sacraments to dying Indians, absenteeism, forcing women to stitch and weave tapestries for the church, and overcharging for burials. Yet in his final sentences, Bishop Queipo de Llano Valdés reported that Don Juan “had been very punctual in the administration of the Sacred Sacraments . . . and treated parishioners well with his actions and words.”⁷¹ Don Bernardo, likewise, was commended for his diligence and “works of charity,” and for “being a role model with his life and customs.”⁷² The bishop went on to state that Don Bernardo's Indians were well instructed in the catechism: “I have found them well versed in it and not only the young men, but

⁷⁰ACCFLM, Tomo 20, fol. 69.

⁷¹ACCFLM, Tomo 21, fol. 85.

⁷²ACCFLM, Tomo 21, fol. 158.

also the young women and the older people as well.”⁷³ In both of these cases, the final sentences made absolutely no mention of the numerous charges that parishioners had made in their testimonies. On the contrary, the bishop specifically noted that each priest had fulfilled all the obligations of his charge, even the duties which all the witnesses who testified agreed they had neglected to perform.

Usually, however, the bishop or visitor-general included as part of these otherwise favorable sentences warnings which addressed particular problems that had surfaced either during the witness testimonies or in the priest’s own response to the allegations. Visitor-General Eguares y Pasquier informed Licenciado Mattheos de Torres of Ytalaque, for example, that while he had been a good priest who “had fulfilled the obligations of his position,”⁷⁴ he had also failed to preach regularly the Sacred Gospel and teach the catechism. In addition, he had “continued the insidious custom of the *camarico*,” but, so ruled the visitor-general: “due to the poverty and the benevolence [of the Church] we will not fine him in any way. We order, however, that in the future he act according to the rules stipulated by the Sacred Councils and synods of this bishopric.”⁷⁵

It is evident that in some cases, the bishop clearly sided with the priest and considered the accusations against him to be false or unproven. Visitor-General Eguares y Pasquier, for example, apparently determined that the much maligned Juan de Argote from

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴ACCFLM, Tomo 6, fol. 194.

⁷⁵ACCFLM, Tomo 6, fol. 194r.

Guancané was merely a victim of political wrangling.⁷⁶ Villagers affiliated with the Condori family, in this instance, used the opportunities that the episcopal visita afforded them to damn the priest and any of his colleagues (i.e. their town rivals) as abusive, exploitive, and hateful individuals who had run most of the *tributarios* out of town. Among other things, Don Juan had to answer to charges that he was overly “cruel and harsh,”⁷⁷ required excessive contributions from *alféreses* he forced into office, regularly beat Indians who did not do what he demanded, and refused to pay fair prices for any goods the Indians brought to him. Apparently believing the testimonies of a handful of witnesses who defended the priest and Don Juan’s lengthy response to the charges, Visitor-General Eguares y Pasquier agreed with the chief prosecutor that he was “a supremely capable man of singular talent,”⁷⁸ and that the only reason witnesses complained was because he was relentless in his demands for them to become good Christians.

Eguares y Pasquier recorded in his final sentence that Br. Argote had

lived honestly and virtuously according to the obligations of his position. . . . We declare as well that he has been a good steward of Church construction. . . . And he is deserving of a promotion to a prebendary in one of the Churches of this Kingdom . . . or at least to better positions.⁷⁹

⁷⁶Other scholars who have written about village factionalism in Indian towns during the colonial period include Woodrow Borah *Justice by Insurance: The General Indian Court of Colonial Mexico and the Legal Aides of the Half-Real* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), and Nicolás Sánchez-Albornoz *Indios y Tributo en el Alto Peru* (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 1978).

⁷⁷ACCFLM, Tomo 11, fol. 331.

⁷⁸ACCFLM, Tomo 11, fol. 339r.

⁷⁹ACCFLM, Tomo 11, fol. 352.

As mentioned above, seventeen priests incurred fines as a result of their activities and behavior as parish priests in the Diocese of La Paz in the 1680s and 1690s. Witness testimonies from these trials most often denounced the priest for a variety of offenses, but some priests were fined minor amounts for only one or two transgressions. These priests seemed relatively unconcerned by the penalties compared to those who were fined significant sums of money. Indeed, priests who were fined two hundred pesos or more nearly always appealed the rulings, yet no archival records indicate that the bishop or the visitor-general ever reduced any of the original fines handed down in the final sentences.

In either case, whether the fine was major or minor, the presiding ecclesiastical official stated in his final sentence that the priest had been found guilty of the charges made against him, and that the penalty fitted the crime or crimes committed. In general, priests of the first category were notified by the bishop or visitor-general that they “had not fulfilled the duties of [their] ministerial charge,”⁸⁰ “had not been...good priest[s],”⁸¹ or “had been remiss in [their] obligations”⁸² before specifying the particular faults. In June of 1683, for example, Visitor-General Eguares y Pasquier noted first that Licenciado Juan de Heredia had done a poor job as priest. He then declared:

for that reason, we determine that we should punish and condemn him — and using the mercy [of the Church] — first for the continued absences, the result of which has meant death without confession for several parishioners. . . . [For this] we fine him one hundred *pesos* [*de a ocho*]. For

⁸⁰ACCFLM, Tomo 5, fol. 26.

⁸¹ACCFLM, Tomo 8, fol. 156.

⁸²ACCFLM, Tomo 20, fol. 134.

his business dealings and contracts which he has had in contravention to the Sacred Council's regulations, we fine him one hundred pesos [*de a ocho*].⁸³

In the end, the Visitor-General ordered Don Juan to pay four hundred pesos in fines for these and other offenses. He mandated, in typical fashion, that the fine be split into thirds, with equal parts going to the Order of the Sacred Cross, to ongoing construction projects of the local church, and to whatever the bishop wished: "and the other third to the wishes (*voluntad*) of the Majestic Lord Bishop Juan Queipo de Llano Valdés."⁸⁴ In his appeal, Licenciado Heredia admitted to some personal "shortcomings," but argued "any faults . . . were not caused by my neglect, rather the impossibilities that exist of being able to service this vast jurisdiction . . . whose impassable roads . . . stretch for more than thirty leagues."⁸⁵

Br. Joseph de Peñalosa, similarly, was ordered to pay a major fine for a variety of violations, most of which had to do with his failure to perform religious duties. According to Visitor-General Eguares y Pasquier's final sentence of September 10th, 1688, the majority of Don Joseph's problems stemmed from his incompetence in the local language, Aymara. This, of course, hindered his ability to teach the Sacred Gospel, explain the mysteries of the Sacred Faith, and hear confessions, among other things. In addition, Eguares y Pasquier directed Don Joseph to get rid of his cook, "an old Indian woman named Josepha," who, according to the allegations, repeatedly harassed and whipped

⁸³ACCFLM, Tomo 5, fol. 26.

⁸⁴ACCFLM, Tomo 5, fol. 26r.

⁸⁵ACCFLM, Tomo 5, fol. 28.

parishioners for no good reason.⁸⁶ In the end, Don Joseph was given six months to learn Aymara or be replaced by another priest, and in the meantime — due mainly to the many deaths unaccompanied by last rites — he was fined five hundred pesos to be paid within eight months of the ruling.

If judged by financial penalties, the most delinquent priest to serve in the Diocese of La Paz from 1680 to 1730 was Francisco de Carrión y Cáceres of Palca. In his trial in 1683, the proven charges against him included, among other things, failure to perform the Sacred Sacraments (referred to in Promotor Fiscal León's report as "*la omisión tan notoria*"⁸⁷), chronic absenteeism, not saying mass regularly, not teaching the catechism, overcharging for burials, failing to bury Indians with proper respect, manipulating wills, and requiring Indians to work his fields for little or no pay. At the end of his report, Promotor Fiscal León advised Visitor-General Eguares y Pasquier that Don Francisco "should be punished severely for having neglected all matters relevant to his priestly duties," and reported that as a result of his laziness and indifference, "this congregation has diminished considerably in number."⁸⁸ In his final sentence, Eguares y Pasquier cited the leniency of the Church before handing down a three hundred pesos fine. He also threatened Don Francisco with a two year suspension if he did not comply with the order to assign an assistant to the neglected *tierra adentro* region of the district.

⁸⁶ACCFLM, Tomo 12, fol. 249.

⁸⁷ACCFLM, Tomo 8, fol. 143.

⁸⁸ACCFLM, Tomo 8, fols. 144r.

Eight years later, in 1691, Bishop Queipo de Llano y Valdés led the visiting party to Palca, and discovered that many of the problems specified in the 1683 final sentence had yet to be resolved. In his report to the bishop, Promotor Fiscal Erasmo de la Torre stated that many infants in the district were dying without last rites, Don Francisco had still not hired an assistant to service various areas of the territory, the priest had kept sloppy books, and had, among other things, left Palca without approval from the bishop's office on numerous occasions. The bishop's final judgement read, in part:

we declare that Br. Francisco de Carrión y Cáceres has not fulfilled the obligations of his position as priest by not being punctual in the administration of the Sacred Sacraments. . . . The result of which many people have died without confession. . . . He has also not complied with the mandate to hire an assistant to serve the interior lands. . . . He also does not keep proper records which has meant that many of his parishioners have not confessed [in years]. . . . We thus punish him for his many and very serious crimes . . . five hundred pesos for not hiring an assistant . . . and another two hundred pesos for all the other violations. . . . This is our final and definitive sentence.⁸⁹

The final sentences of priests who received minor fines were considerably less threatening than those which called for more severe penalties. Bartolomé Machicao Zárate, *cura coadjutor* of Songo in 1683, for example, had to defend himself against several charges of neglect and abuse of authority but was fined only ten *pesos* for having left the village twice without getting approval to do so from the bishop. In other words, the other issues were either dealt with privately, ignored, or dismissed, and in the end,

⁸⁹ACCFLM, Tomo 20, fols. 134-134r.

Visitor-General Eguares y Pasquier reported that Don Bartolomé “had been a good priest who had fulfilled the responsibilities of his post.”⁹⁰

Other priests who received minor fines stood guilty as charged, but were pardoned due to their extreme poverty and the benign mercy of the Church. Bishop Carrasco Saavedra noted in his final sentence for Licenciado Pedro Pérez Patón of Laja that the priest had indeed engaged in scandalous behavior. “We condemn him,” the bishop declared, “for his many and very serious offenses, but showing our mercy, we fine him only fifty pesos which will be used for the construction of this church.”⁹¹

In his final sentence for Licenciado Bernardo Meléndez Valdés, Bishop Queipo de Llano Valdés congratulated the priest for performing his religious duties with diligence and care, but reprimanded him for the cruelty which he sometimes exhibited towards his parishioners. “It has been proven,” the judgement read, “that you have injured some members of the congregation with your harsh words and dissonant, angry, and furious tones of voice.”⁹² Further, the bishop stated, “I order you to contain your rage, and in no instance are you to disrespect your Indians.” The financial penalty, so it turned out, had nothing to do with the claims of mental cruelty, but rather because Don Bernardo allegedly beat Doña Francisca Pacheco with a stick and dragged her across the floor by

⁹⁰ACCFLM, Tomo 5, fol. 171.

⁹¹ACCFLM, Tomo 23, fol. 175.

⁹²ACCFLM, Tomo 20, fol. 219r.

the hair. “Because she is a Spaniard,” the final sentence noted, “we fine you thirty *pesos* [*de a ocho*].”⁹³

Other than Antonio de Vivero, whose case is chronicled in detail in the next section, Lorenzo Vásquez de Castilla was the only priest in the 1680s and 1690s to be suspended for the many crimes he allegedly committed against his community. The trial was contentious and complicated, but essentially Promotor Fiscal León decided after examining all the evidence that Don Lorenzo was guilty of six major violations which ranged from mistreating Indians by word and action — which resulted in over half the population fleeing the district to avoid contact with the priest — routinely jailing *alféreses* and other local officials who did not comply with his many demands, forcing *camarico* contributions, and being so lazy and remiss in his religious duties that many people had not been baptized and had died without confession and last rites.⁹⁴ Don Lorenzo categorically denied all allegations against him, stating at one point that “if I had done the things I am accused of, I would be a bad Christian, a bad and tyrannical priest.”⁹⁵ In his surprisingly brief final sentence, however, Bishop Queipo de Llano Valdés seemed certain of Don

⁹³ACCFLM, Tomo 20, fol. 220.

⁹⁴Taylor considers, with adequate contextual support, that flight, and even the threat of flight, was “a negotiating tool” Indians used to resist colonial policies which they deemed unfair or overly exploitive. He states: “Since colonial order as the Spanish conceived it depended on Indians residing in a settled community under the supervision of royal magistrates and taking the sacraments in their home parish, the many actual desertions gave bite to such threats and could serve as a strategy for subsequent negotiation, as well as gesture of protest and as an escape from punishment or further abuse.” Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred*, 364-365.

⁹⁵ACCFLM, Tomo 16, fol. 169r.

Lorenzo's guilt. After accounting for his many abuses and his generally "surly disposition," the bishop suspended him "for his entire life from serving in this benefice...or in any other of this bishopric."⁹⁶

Three Case Studies

In this final section, I review the cases of three men whose trials were among the most controversial in the Diocese of La Paz in the 1680s and 1690s. In the previous and current chapters, I have tried to avoid citing examples from these *visitas*, so most of the information detailed below has not been used in other parts of the dissertation. These case studies offer a more contextualized view of the *visita* proceedings as they progressed from start to finish. In addition, they reveal the nuances of ecclesiastical protocol and procedure. The fact that these three priests received three of the harshest final sentences for the twenty year period under review complements the preceding section on final judgements.

Antonio de Vivero: Parish Priest of Ancoraymes

The first morning of the *visita y escrutinio* trial against Antonio de Vivero began innocently enough. Visitor-General Eguares y Pasquier complimented the priest on his upkeep of the church and a recent construction project which improved the altar. In addition, Don Antonio gave no indication of concern in his initial report which informed officials that there were no *cofradías* or other secular priests residing in the district of Ancoraymes, and that the two *viceparroquias* (outlying chapels) of San Martín and Santa Lucía were well kept.

⁹⁶ACCFLM, Tomo 16, fol. 173.

Don Juan Hidalgo Laso, a fellow priest, appeared as the first witness before Promotor Fiscal León. His testimony set off a string of events which culminated in universal condemnation of the priest's behavior. The priest began his testimony by pointing out what he believed to be the most egregious of Don Antonio's violations:

Don Antonio de Vivero has had inside his house for the past seven years a woman named Cecilia who carries herself like a Spaniard, causing notable harm and scandal to his parishioners. . . . And although the aforementioned Cecilia is not in his house presently, the priest has her sheltered in his hacienda of Coromata, providing a bad example and lacking the decency and honesty that his position [as priest] requires.⁹⁷

Don Juan went on to report that this illicit relationship had started while Don Antonio was working in Laja in the early 1670s, and that he had been ordered by the presiding bishop at that time, Don Gabriel Guilléstegui, to transfer and stay away from the woman.

An allegation of sexual impropriety was usually not enough to stimulate a full-scale investigation into specific abuses of power. But in this case, nearly every inquiry generated a scathing review of Don Antonio's personal behavior and job performance, so Promotor Fiscal León called in more witnesses than usual and asked leading questions which tended to focus the testimony on specific details of previously reported misconduct.

One of the most serious allegations had to do with the cura's primary duties as parish priest — to administer the Sacred Sacraments to his flock and to teach his parishioners the catechism. A witness informed the *promotor fiscal*, "by neglect and laziness, many have died without the benefit of the Sacred Sacraments . . . and he does not

⁹⁷ACCFLM, Tomo 5, fol. 313r-314.

teach the Christian doctrine to the Indians . . . rather he entrusts [this task] to an *Yndio Biejo* named Ticona."⁹⁸ Moreover, according to Br. Hidalgo Laso,

he does not keep an annual record (*padrones anuales*) of those who have confessed . . . only confessing those who come voluntarily. . . . And I have born witness and heard it said among the Indians of this district that because of the fear they have of the cura, and the mistreatment and punishments he routinely inflicts, they [the Indians] have stopped coming to this town to fulfill their duties to this church, and that many have fled this region.⁹⁹

Crimes of religious nature were many and elaborately detailed by each of the seven witnesses who came before the ecclesiastical board. Among other things, Don Antonio prayed and held Bible study with his parishioners only on Sundays, and not Wednesdays and Fridays as required by law; he left Ancoraymes for weeks at a time without a qualified priest serving in his place to say mass and administer other religious ministrations; and he routinely required relatives of the dying to come to town instead of going out to them, resulting in many deaths unaccompanied by the rite of confession and extreme unction, thus imperiling the soul and condemning it to a likely stint in purgatory.

If the ecclesiastical officials were presumably more concerned with reports like these which involved Don Antonio's spiritual neglect, Indian caciques denounced vehemently the priest's earthly abuses. Of course it is impossible to measure with any accuracy the sincere religious beliefs of any of Don Antonio's parishioners, Indian or Spanish. But it is probable, if not likely, that Indian leaders were more concerned about

⁹⁸ACCFLM, Tomo 5, fol. 314.

⁹⁹ACCFLM, Tomo 5, fol. 314r.

the physical abuses and financial burdens which Don Antonio imposed on their people compared to, for example, the purification of venial sins.

Joan Luqui, governor and *cacique* of the *ayllu* Guancasco of Ancoraymes, gave perhaps the most damaging testimony of Don Antonio's unscrupulous conduct towards members of his church. No allegation seemed to irritate Promotor Fiscal León more than the *cacique's* claim that many Indians had fled because of the cura's mistreatment:

and due to the abuses, two Indians from my *ayllu*, Lorenzo Choque and Martín Chamaque, and many others from different *ayllus*, have fled. . . . And furthermore, I know that because of the absence of these Indians, the royal taxes (*reales tasas*) have diminished and I have thus been obligated to make up for them at my own cost, using profit from my own hacienda [for that purpose] and to rebuild the local jail.¹⁰⁰

In this same jail, Luqui lamented, several of his Indians had unjustly served time for either reporting late for the priest's work detail, or for not being able to pay punctually the exorbitant fees Don Antonio charged for the performance of various religious services. The *cacique* took particular offense to Don Antonio's unfair and excessive demands on a class of Indians he called *aguatines*, an Aymara term used for workers who either ran errands for the priest in other villages, or supervised the priest's cattle or sheep. According to the *cacique*, the replacement cost for any animals who might have died or were lost came at the expense of these poorest of the Indians.¹⁰¹ If they could not make the payment, Don Antonio threw them in jail. An *aguatin* by the name of Baltasar

¹⁰⁰ACCFLM, Tomo 5, fol. 333r-334.

¹⁰¹Book Two, Treatise Two, Section Seven of the *Itinerario para párochos* specifically mentions that Indian shepherds are not obligated to repay (or replace) (*no están obligados a restituir*) Spanish landowners for any lost sheep, cows or mules under their supervision. Montenegro, *Itinerario para párochos*, 212.

Quellca, who worked on the priest's hacienda of Coromata (the same estate which allegedly housed the cura's mistress, Cecilia), so claimed Don Joan, "fled . . . on account of the fear he had of the severity (*rigor*) of the priest."¹⁰²

Don Antonio's sizable herd of cattle and sheep, according to all the witnesses appearing before the ecclesiastical board, comprised part of the priest's far-flung commercial enterprise, which also placed him at odds with crown and Church policy. The priest employed Indians from Ancoraymes, a troop of forty mules, and a mestizo supervisor named Andrés de Cañizares to carry and sell wine from Arequipa to cities and villages around Lake Titicaca. The eastern extension of the network (the fertile Yungas valley) concentrated on the lucrative coca industry. Don Antonio allegedly used goods produced on his hacienda near Guarina as items of exchange:

[the Indians] carry a quantity of wine each from Arequipa and sell it in La Paz and the surrounding area. . . . And from his *estancia* called Coromata he ships out beef, and jerked and dried meat to the Yungas where he exchanges these products for coca, part of which is sold to the Indians of this district.¹⁰³

In addition to these abuses, both Indian and Spanish witnesses pointed to the burdensome tradition of the *alferasgo* as generally harmful to the welfare of the community. Not only was the forced appointment of citizens to these positions against church and crown policy, the *alferasgo* in addition placed onerous financial burdens on Indians which they struggled — sometimes to the point of desertion — to fulfill. According to Br. Hidalgo Laso, Don Antonio charged each *alférez* one hundred and six

¹⁰²ACCFLM, Tomo 5, fol. 334r.

¹⁰³ACCFLM, Tomo 5, fol. 317.

pesos a year to pay for the celebratory mass, and another forced donation of gifts (*camarico*) which would be used to feed and provide beverages for the revelers. The standard *camarico* for Ancoraymes in the early 1680s consisted of an annual per-person contribution of one bottle of wine, one calf, twelve lambs, twenty-four chickens, eggs, butter, pork bacon, fruit, and a "load of flour."¹⁰⁴ These violations aside, each Spanish witness highlighted that the church-sponsored festivals invariably led to inappropriate behavior on the part of the town's less refined citizens, most notably of course, the Indians. Joan Ortíz de Monasterios, a *vecino* and *hacendado* in the region, claimed that "from these [parties] originate drunken festivities (*borracheras*) and the Indians tend to get together and have illicit [sexual] relations in grave offense to My Lord God."¹⁰⁵

If Spaniards were, on the one hand, concerned with the general conduct of Indian citizens and the socio-religious consequences of their drunkenness, they were also troubled by the effect these parties had on Indian work habits — habits which of course directly affected hacienda profit and the ability of Indians to pay taxes and thus maintain good standing with local Spanish officials. For all these reasons, the four Spanish witnesses testifying against Don Antonio united in their appeal for change and carried themselves off as defenders of the Indian parishioners, whom they depicted as benighted victims of the priest's exploitive conduct.

¹⁰⁴ACCFLM, Tomo 5, fol. 317.

¹⁰⁵ACCFLM, Tomo 5, fol. 317r. In Section Five of Book Two, Treatise Seven, Bishop Montengero addressed the issue of Indian drunkenness and the steps priests must take to avoid the "*pecado de gula*" which plagued the natives. He states: "Drunkenness is a vice so common among the Indians that it is rare to find one without wine or beer in his hand." Montenegro, *Itinerario para párochos*, 255.

A few hours after the interrogation of witnesses, Promotor Fiscal León submitted to Visitor-General Eguares y Pasquier his summary of the charges, using language which he clearly felt befitted the crimes. Among other things, Don Francisco called for the priest "to be punished severely"¹⁰⁶ for his numerous abuses; wrote of his "negligence and tyrannies"¹⁰⁷ against his people; declared "the *cura* should be condemned to grave penalties"¹⁰⁸ for failing to obey his primary duties as priest; argued that the priest should be suspended for "reprehensible" sexual conduct.¹⁰⁹

The next day, Visitor-General Eguares y Pasquier filed an official report which repeated many of Promotor Fiscal León's indictments and called on the priest to answer to all of the allegations within four hours. In particular, he voiced his disapproval of Don Antonio's physical mistreatment of Indian men and women. As a result, "people have left, men have separated from their wives, which causes tremendous corporal and spiritual hardships for the Indians and the royal coffers."¹¹⁰ On the matter of the old Indian named Ticona teaching the Christian doctrine in the priest's stead, Visitor-General Eguares y Pasquier conveyed the Church's apprehension of Indians as competent lay ministers when

¹⁰⁶ACCFLM, Tomo 5, fol. 347.

¹⁰⁷ACCFLM, Tomo 5, fol. 346.

¹⁰⁸ACCFLM, Tomo 5, fol. 347.

¹⁰⁹ACCFLM, Tomo 5, fol. 346r.

¹¹⁰ACCFLM, Tomo 5, fol. 349.

he condemned the priest for "entrusting material of such importance to the incapacity of an Indian."¹¹¹

Typical of priests who were charged with serious crimes against their parishioners, Don Antonio pledged in his response that the entire case was nothing more than a diabolical plot to oust him from his parish. "I say that all the allegations are spurious because I have behaved with total diligence and execution of my office."¹¹² He warned the officials that an Indian named Sebastián Cayssa had induced all the witnesses to deceive the *promotor fiscal* on account of a personal schism which resulted from the priest just trying to do his job. He stated: "My asperity stems from the fact that I have to compel my parishioners to attend mass and learn the catechism, and to dissuade them from becoming drunks, and due to this, I have had to deal with their truculence."¹¹³

Don Antonio, in fact, offered a compelling case for his innocence. He pointed out, first of all, that the tributary Indians of this district had left over fifty years ago and never returned, thus Ancoraymes was inhabited only by

forasteros who are so gypsy-like (*son tan jitanos*) that they do not have homes, unless they want to hang around for long enough to get drunk and fornicate, and as soon as I ask them to confess their sins and get together as Christians they flee.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ACCFLM, Tomo 5, fol. 349r.

¹¹²ACCFLM, Tomo 5, fol. 353r.

¹¹³ACCFLM, Tomo 5, fol. 354.

¹¹⁴Ibid.

On the issue of the *alferasgo* appointments and the drunkenness which accompanied the festivals, Don Antonio claimed the *caciques* organized all activities and duties — "they have refused any assistance and as a result I do not meddle in their affairs," and "I have always pled with them not to get drunk"¹¹⁵ but to no avail. The least convincing rebuttal of allegations concerned the priest's account of his business affairs. In short, he argued that he purchased wine from Andrés de Cañizares and Juan Pinto Mosos, his clerical assistants, and they were the ones who made all the trips and conducted all transactions. "And if I have sent some beef to Coroico [Yungas] it has been for provisions to stock a hacienda that I have there. From this hacienda, they [Cañizares and Mosos] may bring me fruit for my own use and for this reason I do own some mules."¹¹⁶ Don Antonio flatly denied he had a herd of six hundred sheep, admitting only that he possessed barely enough to "give me sustenance."¹¹⁷ He stated he had no more than thirty cows. Finally, he opposed all claims that he was having an illicit relationship with a woman named Cecilia, although he was conspicuously brief in his explanation of the affair. The priest asserted "concerning the friendship with the woman, it is false on account of the fact that my [old] age and illnesses do not allow the [type of] behavior I am charged with."¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ACCFLM, Tomo 5. fol 354r.

¹¹⁶ACCFLM, Tomo 5. fol. 354.

¹¹⁷ACCFLM, Tomo 5, fol. 355r.

¹¹⁸Ibid.

The unconciliatory cura ended his declaration of innocence by stating: "Your Majesty should absolve and free me of all charges."¹¹⁹

Upon review of Don Antonio de Vivero's responses, Visitor-General Eguares y Pasquier concluded that because of its severity, the case deserved the direct attention of Bishop Quiapo de Llano Valdés.¹²⁰ The trial, the report announced, would be moved to La Paz to be held at a later date. The visitor-general promptly issued a report to the bishop which set the guidelines for further proceedings and ordered Don Antonio to leave his benefice and report to the city within four days. On arrival, he should consider a block in the seminary as his jail, and if he left La Paz for any reason, he would be fined one thousand pesos.

In addition, the visitor-general enjoined the *corregidor* of Omasuyos, Don Joan Baptista de Oquendo, to send out a search party to find "a woman named Cecilia that resides in the hacienda of Coromata."¹²¹ On the 4th of August approximately three weeks after the initial interrogation in Ancoraymes, a pair of ecclesiastical officials including Don Antonio's own brother, Br. Luis de Vivero (cura of nearby Achacache), arrived in Coromata and interrogated several Indians on the whereabouts of Cecilia. They uniformly responded that it had been several weeks since she had been seen there, and that they had no idea where she now resided.

¹¹⁹Ibid.

¹²⁰ACCFLM, Tomo 5, fol. 356.

¹²¹ACCFLM, Tomo 5, fol. 356.

Papers for the case do not resume until March 1684, when Visitor-General Eguares y Pasquier sent a letter to Don Antonio, now confined to a home his family owned in La Paz, stating that he must present himself every morning and afternoon to the choir of the Cathedral to pray, and that he report to the Secretary at 10 a.m. and again at 3 p.m. to find out if any new decisions have been reached in the case. No new correspondence was filed until the 10th of May that same year, when Don Antonio wrote to Bishop Quiepo de Llano Valdés telling him he had heard that the *cura coadjutor*, Don Juan Diez de Fuenmaior, did not speak Aymara and thus he was incapable of providing the spiritual sustenance that his parishioners deserved. In ironic fashion, the jailed priest contended:

he has not preached nor has he taught the catechism as is his obligation. Neglecting to do these things is a significant matter, and as proprietary priest of that district, I am compelled to inform Your Illustrious Majesty of this, and it would serve you to appoint either a new coadjutor or return me to my beneficed post on account of having been punished adequately in accordance with my many errors.¹²²

In mid July 1684, the case against Don Antonio de Vivero concluded. The only financial penalty was recompensatory; Bishop Quiepo de Llano Valdés ordered the priest to return forty sheep that he had confiscated from an Indian named Diego Ticoná and to pay him and his wife for the four months they had supervised his flock of sheep. In addition, the bishop announced that Don Antonio had been forced to sell his herd of cattle to a *vecino* from Cochabamba, Don Joan Barela de Ulloa. There is no indication that any monies generated by that transaction were used to pay episcopal fines. Finally, Bishop

¹²²ACCFLM, Tomo 5, fol. 387.

Quiapo de Llano Valdés ordered that contingent to his restoration as parish priest of Ancoraymes he must find Cecilia Montalbo and send her to La Paz to undergo her own trial before the ecclesiastical court. On the 27th of July, from his home in Ancoraymes Don Antonio reported that he had done just that — "I told her to leave my district and to travel to La Paz to be judged before the Bishop of La Paz."¹²³

In the end, Don Antonio de Vivero returned to Ancoraymes and worked there as parish priest until his death in 1688. A visita held a year earlier concluded that he "has fulfilled the obligations of his position and office, treating all his parishioners well."¹²⁴ Indeed, all witnesses claimed that Don Antonio had led an exemplary life since his return; even the Indian cacique Juan Luqui attested "he has lived honestly and virtuously, setting a positive standard for the community."¹²⁵ Perhaps Don Antonio somehow experienced a change of spirit as a result of his brief suspension and made amends for his past wrongdoings; or maybe his detractors in 1683, true to the priest's accusations, conspired against him and after things cooled down, he was able to continue his work as the community's spiritual leader. In all likelihood, however, Don Antonio and diocesan officials came to an accommodation with both sides agreeing to a new unwritten contract of sorts which placed greater restrictions on the priest's future secular activities. Or perhaps Don Antonio and local Indian leaders reached a *convivencia* which both sides pledged to obey. In any case, the suspension he served and the slight financial restitution

¹²³ACCFLM, Tomo 5, fol. 391.

¹²⁴ACCFLM, Tomo 5, fol. 295r.

¹²⁵ACCFLM, Tomo 5, fol. 302.

Don Antonio was forced to pay apparently were sufficient punishment to create communal accord between priest and parishioners in Ancoraymes a few years after his contentious trial of 1683.

Curas of Sapaqui: Bernardo de Pacheco y Zerguera and Esteban de Prado y Raya

The case against Licenciado Bernardo de Pacheco y Zerguera, cura of Sapaqui in the late 1680s, began with a series of private letters submitted by a few parishioners who supported the priest and several others who condemned his behavior as harmful to the overall well-being of the community.

The first affidavit was filed on behalf of Juan Chábes, Pedro Guanca, Lorenzo Achocalla, and Agustín Pascual, Indian *principales* from the remote hamlet of Chanca where members of the *ayllu* Huchinca resided. In spite of their wishes to be good Catholics, the authors claimed, Don Bernardo neglected his duties to such an extent that they continued to live as *bestias* (beasts) without the advantages of the Christian faith — "We go on this way like animals, without knowing any better because there is no one around to teach us, and in this wide barren upland (*paramo*) there are many like us."¹²⁶ Promotor Fiscal León was clearly troubled by the testimony that the inhabitants, especially the elderly, had not confessed in years, had not attended mass even once a year for some time,¹²⁷ and that all recently deceased Indians from this *estancia* had died without the

¹²⁶ACCFLM, Tomo 14, fol. 352.

¹²⁷The group testified: "we spend all our years — as old women and men — unable to walk very far to hear mass, even once a year.." Ibid. The requirement to confess at least once a year, preferably during Easter, was outlined in the prologue of Book Four, Treatise Three, of Montenegro's *Itinerario para párochos*.

sacraments. ("they all die without confession like beasts"¹²⁸). To make matters worse, Don Bernardo forced them to pay for burials unattended by any sanctioned Church official, and required them to work without compensation on construction projects for the Church and as field hands on one of the *cura's* wheat and corn fields nearby.

In a separate appeal, Sebastián Sigarra wrote that the parish priest had a daughter in La Paz, and that he frequently sent ten to twelve Indians to Chuquiabo (La Paz)

with all of our pitchers, pots and ingredients to work (*hacer mita*) and tend to his daughter . . . there in La Paz. She makes us . . . knead bread and then orders us to sell it, and if one does not sell or somehow losses it, he forces us to pay him back.¹²⁹

The priest, according to Sebastián, never paid Indians for this service, and did not even provide any food during the course of their trip. He lamented to Promotor Fiscal León: "only God sustains us."¹³⁰ Sebastián summed up his complaint by highlighting the priest's abuse of power, his neglect of the spiritual duties of his office, and his general disregard for the village — "as a powerful man (*poderoso*) of this town, he neglects his obligations and inflicts such harm and abuse that the entire community suffers."¹³¹

¹²⁸Ibid. To give credibility to their claim, the authors provided the names of several men and women who had died without confession, including, among others: Diego Yucra, Pedro Chama, María "the widow of Pedro Chaqueca," Pedro Ysidro, Pedro Guanca, Pedro Chacacha, María Sumpi, and María Ypuama "mother of Juan Chábes." ACCFLM, Tomo 14, fol. 353.

¹²⁹ACCFLM, Tomo 14, fol. 364.

¹³⁰Ibid.

¹³¹Ibid.

In the case against Don Bernardo, Doña Luisa Pati Alvarado, an alleged member of the local Indian nobility, was one of the priest's harshest critics.¹³² In addition to the physical and verbal mistreatment village Indians received from the priest,¹³³ according to Doña Luisa, Don Bernardo also violated his vows of chastity, which brought shame to the town and to the priestly profession as a whole.

Showing little fear of God or of the people here, he provides a poor example [to the community] with his scandalous life. . . . He has had women inside his house since the moment he came to this village, with no respect for his position as priest and as a father of souls, duties he is charged to uphold. . . . He and his children molest the poor defenseless Indians taking [even] their poverty away from them.¹³⁴

As noted, not all of Sapaqui's citizens lined up in opposition to the priest. A group of seventeen Indian leaders filed three separate affidavits which called the allegations against Don Bernardo sinister and spurious. Pablo Rengifo, Felipe Churata, Juan Mamani, Pascual Cuallo, and Agustín Coro were among those who declared the case a hoax orchestrated by a faction of truculent outsiders bent on discrediting the priest with false claims. They identified themselves as "children of Don Bernardo Pacheco," and referred to the dissidents as "*Yndios forasteros*...who have made fraudulent allegations . . . [against] our father."¹³⁵

¹³²She identified herself as a cacique, which may mean she was either a leader of the community or from one of the leading families.

¹³³"I hereby state that I complain civilly and criminally against my priest...and that I have suffered considerably [because of him]. He has harassed and offended me and my children with his abusive ways." ACCFLM, Tomo 14, fol. 418.

¹³⁴Ibid.

¹³⁵ACCFLM, Tomo 14, fol. 361.

The priest's supporters selectively attacked some of the troublemakers' claims. They argued that the reason people had perished without the benefit of the Sacred Sacraments was because they had not called the priest out to the *estancia* ("*porque no abisan al cura*"), and despite the pleas of Don Bernardo for them to attend Sunday mass, they never came — "because of their brutishness they do not want what is good."¹³⁶ Moreover, the parish priest paid them promptly one peso a day for any services rendered or trips made to La Paz on his behalf.¹³⁷ The written testimonials do not include any reference to Don Bernardo's alleged daughter in Chuquiabo.

To support the priest's claims of innocence, these Indians characterized Don Bernardo as a loving and dutiful man whose assiduous nature had led to the spiritual growth of the community. In stark contrast to the priest's detractors who were "sinister," "malicious" and "deserved to be punished,"¹³⁸ Don Bernardo possessed all the qualities a man of the cloth should have. Among other things, he: "provides relief to the town by discouraging [the commitment of] sins,"¹³⁹ was "such a Christian and pious man that we feel guilt and deserve punishment each time we do not comply with his wishes,"¹⁴⁰ "proceeds like a saint . . . and never leaves his house except when he needs to administer

¹³⁶Ibid.

¹³⁷"We have not received any bad treatment or endured other sufferings. We have the obligation and the service to serve our priest, and he pays us personally in coins." ACCFLM, Tomo 14, fol. 355.

¹³⁸ACCFLM, Tomo 14, fol. 361.

¹³⁹Ibid.

¹⁴⁰Ibid.

the Sacraments;"¹⁴¹ and finally "is so charitable and favorable (*faborecedor*) to his poor parishioners that as a result of his presence here, we are a stable village because of his goodness and piety."¹⁴²

By the time the trial started, the ecclesiastical visitors were clearly embroiled in a full-scale standoff between rival Indian factions, with the parish priest on one side and the center of controversy. A total of twelve witnesses — two Spaniards and ten Indians — appeared before Promotor Fiscal León. All but one witness, Pascual López Guerra, spoke out against the priest and his assistant of ten years, Esteban de Prado y Raya.

Most of the direct testimony, in fact, focused not on the abuses and transgressions of Don Bernardo, but rather the behavior of Don Esteban, who, as it turned out, was primarily responsible for priestly ministrations in the hamlet of Chanca. The two Spaniards, Capitán Francisco Barroeta y Guilléstegui¹⁴³ and Maestro Pedro Gómez de la Varquera (parish priest of the San Marcos de Mollebamba in the valley or Caracato located in the southern part of the diocese) both highlighted the priest's lack of diligence in correcting violations committed by his assistant. According to the captain, this was Don Bernardo's only crime; otherwise, he "proceeds with the decency and persistence his position requires."¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ACCFLM, Tomo 14, fol. 363.

¹⁴²ACCFLM, Tomo 14, fol. 355.

¹⁴³The captain is probably a relative of Gabriel Barroeta y Guilléstegui, who served as parish priest of Guaquí, Tiahuanaco, Sapaqui, and the Cathedral chapter from the 1680s to the 1710s.

¹⁴⁴ACCFLM, Tomo 14, fol. 365r.

Maestro Pedro also disapproved of Don Bernardo's careless supervision, but added that the priest had committed a few offenses of his own: "In the outlying chapels there is much disorder and the priest does nothing to remedy the situation"¹⁴⁵ because of his frequent absences. Furthermore, he left the spiritual care of the parishioners to the irresponsible Don Esteban "who does not go out to the *estancias* when he is called . . . and I have heard from the *theniente* [*de corregidor*] that eight or nine people have died" without confession.¹⁴⁶

The testimonies of the two Spaniards and all the Indians who followed — including the lone defender of Don Bernardo, Pascual López Guerra — criticized fervently the behavior of Don Esteban, whom they depicted as abusive, exploitive, and sexually depraved. Among the many complaints were that the *ayudante* physically and verbally abused the Indians; routinely overcharged for priestly services; only administered the Sacred Sacraments to those who lived in Sapaqui; forced Indians to assume the costly civic duties of the *alferasgo* and *camarico*; and did not pay Indians for personal service. Don Esteban's most serious violation, however, involved an illicit relationship (which had produced at least three children) with a woman whom parishioners referred to as his wife. All twelve witnesses cited the *ayudante's* scandalous affair as harmful to the spiritual

¹⁴⁵ACCFLM, Tomo 14, fol. 368.

¹⁴⁶ACCFLM, Tomo 14, fol. 367.

growth of the Christian community.¹⁴⁷ Balthasar Mamani, cacique and governor of Sapaqui, stated:

I know that he has had in his house a Spanish woman¹⁴⁸ with whom he has two grown children, and an infant still nursing (*uno del pecho*) and that I do not know her name and she fled the town a month ago. This illicit relationship of Don Esteban de Prado y Raya's is well known (*es voz pública*) by all in the district.¹⁴⁹

According to a number of testimonies, Don Esteban's behavior served as a bad example which many parishioners in the town followed. Capitán Barroeta y Guilléstegui complained that as a result of the licentious atmosphere created by the priest's assistant, four married local caciques frequently had concubines living inside their homes. Several of the subsequent witnesses gave specific names of men and women involved in affairs outside of marriage; one woman, identified as Theresa, allegedly was Don Esteban's grown daughter and, according to Don Balthasar, was having an affair with Joseph de Uriarte, a married man from another village. The cacique claimed:

I have heard it said that the daughter, named Theresa, of the aforementioned assistant, has an improper relationship with Joseph de Uriarte . . . a married man. . . . He comes often to this town without having

¹⁴⁷Witness López Guerra stated: "I know that Don Esteban de Prado y Raya has had here a Spanish woman and that at times she has lived with him in his house." ACCFLM, Tomo 14, fol. 374r..

¹⁴⁸The woman is described by another witness as "a petite Spanish woman. . . . This woman lives in the highlands of San Francisco of the city of La Paz and she comes to and goes from this town [frequently]...and when she is here, she stays in the house of . . . Don Esteban." ACCFLM, Tomo 14. fol. 372-373.

¹⁴⁹ACCFLM, Tomo 14, fol. 369r.

any other business being here, and that in the house of the priest where Theresa lives, they stay there together.¹⁵⁰

A few of the Indian witnesses, most notably Juan Canavi and Juan Ajata, substantiated Doña Luisa Pati Alvarado's claim that Don Bernardo also engaged in illicit relations with local women, namely two Indian sisters, Antonia and María Orcoma. According to Don Juan, the priest had numerous affairs: "I have heard it said that the priest often brings [into his house] women of good standing (*de buena cara*) to sleep with him...setting off bad rumors which rumble through town."¹⁵¹

In the end, Visitor-General Eguares y Pasquier and Promotor Fiscal León faced a potentially hostile situation as they sifted through the detailed and sometimes conflicting evidence. Ultimately, they brought in Don Bernardo and Don Esteban for direct questioning, an uncommon procedure since accused priests usually had to file only written responses to complaints, but which was apparently deemed necessary in this case due to the complexity of the testimonies. In the end, the ecclesiastical visitors charged each cura with seven counts of priestly neglect. Those not previously cited included: not keeping proper parochial records; failing to teach the Gospels every Sunday; and perhaps most seriously, not fully investigating idolatries committed by two elderly Indian women Promotor Fiscal León referred to as *brujas* (witches).¹⁵²

¹⁵⁰Ibid.

¹⁵¹ACCFLM, Tomo 14, fol. 377r.

¹⁵²This final accusation of witchcraft does not appear in the documentary record until Promotor Fiscal León mentioned it in his summary report to Visitor-General Eguares y Pasquier. Thus, the news of possible idolatrous activities must have reached the visitors from a source outside the visita process. The Church's preoccupation with and responses

Don Bernardo and Don Esteban, with equal energy, denied all the accusations levied against them. Written transcriptions of their testimonies maintained that the conspiracy theory was true; a small group of recalcitrant Indians, led by the *forastero caciques* of Chanca, hated the priest and his assistant for their diligence and thus influenced others to testify against them.¹⁵³ In response to the allegation that people had died without confession, Don Bernardo defended Don Esteban and stated flatly that every time they received notification of someone dying in Chanca or anywhere else for that matter, they left town promptly to administer the Sacred Sacraments. The parish priest partly admitted to overcharging for priestly services: "it is true that tributary parishioners pay four *reales* and *forasteros* six for baptisms but all dividends go to provide candles for the chapel."¹⁵⁴ Moreover, Don Bernardo claimed he did not, in effect, charge the

to perceived Indian idolatries has been the subject of much recent scholarship. See Diana Luz Ceballos Gómez, *Hechicería, Brujería, e Inquisición en el Nuevo Reino de Granada: Un duelo de imaginarios* (Bogotá, Colombia: Editorial Universidad Nacional, 1994) for a recent discussion of Indian witchcraft and punishment in northern South America. An invaluable colonial source is Pablo José de Arriaga's famous *La extirpación de la idolatría en el Perú*, first published in 1621, but available in English as *The Extirpation of Idolatry in Peru*, trans. and ed. by L. Clark Keating (Lexington, Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 1968). Bishop Montenegro, for his part, devoted an entire section (Book One, Treatise Four) of his *Itinerario para Párochos* to idolatry and witchcraft.

¹⁵³"The Indians that have said these things have been induced by the current cacique and his predecessor. . . . [I know this] because they kicked me out of a meeting they arranged in the village of Chanca before, and on the day of, the celebration of Corpus Christi" ACCFLM, Tomo 14, fol. 391.

¹⁵⁴ACCFLM, Tomo 14, fol. 394.

parishioners for this service, rather the Indians paid voluntarily as was customary ("*ser costumbre*") in this region of the diocese.¹⁵⁵

When questioned about forcing Indians to work without pay on his wheat and corn fields, Don Bernardo reminded the visitors that Doctor Don Antonio de Castro (Bishop of La Paz in the 1640s and 1650s) — on account of the abject poverty of the Indians of Sapaqui — had granted the parish priest of the village permission to cultivate these fields (*chacras*) and assigned the *forasteros* of Chanca to work it. Don Bernardo explained:

during the course of his visit here, the tributary Indians of this village, because of the meager stipend they could provide, asked that a chacra be donated to the Church and that the Indians of the *estancia* of Chanca . . . be required to cultivate its harvest. . . . So from that time forward, parish priests of this village have had this privilege.¹⁵⁶

Not as well argued was Don Bernardo's explanation of his and Don Esteban's sexual behavior. He alleged he did not even know an Indian named María Orcoma, but did admit that Antonia Orcoma was a washerwoman (*lavandera*) brought to Sapaqui by the priest's mother. After hearing rumors around town of possible sexual improprieties, Don Bernardo testified he removed the woman from his house, but that she still worked for him tending to his chickens. The priest denied any knowledge of illicit affairs by his *ayudante* or any other members of the community, stating unequivocally "that if I had known, I would have punished [the adulterers] severely as I have done in the past."¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁵ACCFLM, Tomo 14, fol. 394r.

¹⁵⁶ACCFLM, Tomo 14, fol. 395-395r.

¹⁵⁷ACCFLM, Tomo 14, fol. 393r.

Finally, in response to Promotor Fiscal León's inflammatory allegations of permitting idolatries in the district, Don Bernardo offered a sensible explanation.

On the assertion that it was public knowledge that in this district, there are male and female witches, superstitions and idolatries . . . and that as vicar [I] should have brought them up on charges and punished them as numerous laws dictate. . . . I say that I deny not having executed the orders. . . . I have always inquired into the specifics and people involved in these [types of] crimes. . . . And on two occasions I have brought to town two old ladies, one alive and the other already deceased, along with their armadillo shells (*quirquichos*)¹⁵⁸. . . in which they hide their talismans . . . which I burned, and afterward, because the Indians were so old I punished them with only six or eight lashes [with the whip].¹⁵⁹

For his part, Don Esteban was less specific about the details of his innocence, except regarding allegations of sexual misconduct. The alleged mistress, so the *ayudante* claimed, was an old mestiza named Mariana who came there with his niece, Doña Juana Criales. Unconvinced by his testimony, Promotor Fiscal León repeatedly implored Don Esteban to admit his guilt and to account for the living proof of this illicit affair — the three children. The assistant continued to deny all charges and stated that parishioners must have taken his nieces and nephew to be his own children.

Promotor Fiscal León's summary of charges betrayed his complete lack of sympathy for either man; he reiterated in detail all the allegations and beseeched Visitor General Eguares y Pasquier to “proceed against the accused with supreme severity and

¹⁵⁸According to the *Diccionario de la Lengua Española* published by the Real Academia Española, the word *quirquincho* is a derivative of the Quechua term *qquirquinchu* meaning “some type of armadillo.” In all likelihood, this reference was to the shell of an armadillo which was used as some sort of vessel or container. *Diccionario de la Lengua Española*, 5th ed., s.v. “quirquincho”.

¹⁵⁹ACCFLM, Tomo 14, fol. 392-392r.

impose the most serious penalties . . . to make them pay for the crimes of neglect and scandal they have committed and for which they have been convicted."¹⁶⁰

Visitor-General Eguares y Pasquier obliged, and not only suspended Don Bernardo indefinitely (but at least for a year) on account of his careless attention to the priestly duties of confession and care for the dying, but also fined him two hundred pesos for other violations. To punish the priest for allowing witches to practice their idolatries in his jurisdiction, the visitor-general ordered the demolition of the chapels where they practiced their witchcraft and closed up ("with a stone dry wall"¹⁶¹) all the local *viseparroquias* until further notice. Finally, he directed Don Bernardo to repay all Indians for any previous personal service and to seek authorization from the bishop's office for all future labor assignments involving the Indians of the hamlet of Chanca.

Don Esteban received a harsher penalty. As a result of the crimes committed against the people of Sapaqui and the poor example he set by violating his vows of celibacy, Visitor-General Eguares y Paquier fined the assistant fifty pesos and permanently suspended him from serving in any of the diocesan parishes outside La Paz. He concluded the trial:

because of your guilt we suspend you for all the days of your life and you can never work again as an *ayudante* in any of the parishes of this diocese. . . . We also suspend your license to confess for a period to be decided by [the bishop]. . . . We find you only capable of serving within the confines of

¹⁶⁰ACCFLM, Tomo 14, fol. 405. It is possible, if not likely, that bishops and visitors-general consulted Montenegro's *Itinerario para párochos* before handing out sentences. Book Five, Treatise Two, outlines extensively the obligations and rights of the ecclesiastical visitors, as well as the appropriate fines and other judgements of guilt.

¹⁶¹ACCFLM, Tomo 14, fol. 412r.

La Paz in one of the parishes of that city, so we give you licence to work only there.¹⁶²

Summary

Priests clearly regarded allegations that they were corrupt or neglectful as serious threats to their good standing within their communities and to their careers in the priesthood in general. Just as the majority of witnesses who appeared before ecclesiastical officials in the visita trials of the 1680s and 1690s were impassioned in their claims of priestly malfeasance, with equal energy parish priests tried to convince the bishop or the visitor-general that the charges against them were either categorically false, or partly true, but certainly justified given the unscrupulousness of their parishioners or the difficult demands of their jobs.

Many times, priests claimed, they were simply on one side of a local political controversy, and pledged that any and all allegations made against their reputations were logical consequences of favoring one village faction over another. In this regard, I find their reasoning, on the whole, believable, since priests were generally more specific and consistent in their testimonies compared to their opponents. On the other hand, they had much more to lose than their detractors, and that their rebuttals were ardent, focused, and certifiably defensive should not be surprising.

The final sentences issued by the presiding visita official constituted the legal end of the proceedings and, in many ways, represented the bishops' efforts to maintain priestly morale and social peace in what were sometimes turbulent situations. They had the

¹⁶²ACCFLM, Tomo 14, fol. 414r.

difficult task of determining which group was telling the truth, and of defining the limits of what was, and what was not, acceptable priestly behavior. As I point out in the next chapter, the bishop or the visitor-general generally dealt with these potentially explosive cases with patience and prudence. They were, after all, colonial bureaucrats working in an imperfect socio-legal system which required flexibility, accommodation, and compromise. They clearly sought, on the one hand, to maintain order and limit the degrees of exploitation priests engaged in, but they also seemed to recognize the need to keep the more powerful and influential sectors of colonial society (certainly to include parish priests) satisfied, and in firm control of subject groups.

CHAPTER 7
PRIESTS, PARISHIONERS, AND THE PASTORAL VISITA, 1680-1730

As the preceding chapters indicate, religious and social life in the southern Andes during the colonial period circulated in many ways around the parish priest and the local church. Especially in the more remote settings, the church was one of the main places where social and personal transactions took place; where friends and neighbors met to discuss local events; where news and gossip was passed from one person to the next; and where people ostensibly practiced the Catholic faith and established an everlasting relationship with God. The parish priest, whether he enjoyed his job or not, stood at the focal point of this colonial institution, and thus frequently found himself at the heart of many of the social and political conflicts which plagued colonial Spanish American society. Commenting on the “points of union and conflict among colonial priests and parishioners,”

William Taylor states:

An array of mutual obligations, expectations, and changing associations made American Indian parishioners active participants in this history of consent and struggle. Points of friction were inevitable. Most parishioners lived directly from the land; the priests did not. Priests found their parishioners too concerned with propitiation, the profane, and miraculous images that spilled beyond clerical control, and too little interested in sin and confession. As a rule, priests were educated outsiders who promoted their understanding of orthodoxy and were expected to maintain a distance from parishioners, a distance that could widen when they attempted intimacy or collected fees.¹

¹Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred*, 6.

In Chapters 5 and 6, I provided an abundance of contextual examples to prove that friction and bad faith were hallmark qualities of village life in the Diocese of La Paz during the final two decades of the seventeenth century. Indeed, taken at face value, the majority of parishioner testimonies, and all of the priests' rebuttals from the 1680s and 1690s, depict a colonial setting rife with conflict, controversy, and internal dissension. Many parishioners represented themselves as victims of the priests' avarice and ungodly customs. Implicated priests defended their actions as ethical and just, and proclaimed that their predicament was due either to the unscrupulousness and mendacity of their detractors, or to factors beyond their control. For their part, the bishops and visitors-general conveyed a more settled, less turbulent image of parishioner/priest relations in their final sentences. They had the benefit, however, of being outsiders, and were thus probably more objective, or at the very least, less emotionally involved in the problematic issues at hand.

Certainly in many instances parishioners were, in fact, victims. But some were surely conspirators who constructed schemes to get their parish priest in trouble with visita authorities. Some priests, the documentary record strongly suggests, were greedy opportunists whose thirst for money and power exceeded their dedication to the Church. But many others were surely diligent in their ministerial duties and had to defend themselves against claims of abuse just for doing their jobs, or because they were aligned politically with one group of villagers and not others. The majority of final sentences, in all likelihood, were carefully composed and judicious in their conclusions. But some — so stated a fair number of fined or suspended priests — were biased and failed to reflect the

preponderance of the evidence. The facts, therefore, of who lied and who told the truth, and whether or not a final sentence was just or unjust, are largely matters of conjecture.

Since it is true, however, that a majority of the 1680 and 1690 pastoral visitas exposed a high level of hostility and rivalry between priests and their parishioners, an effort must be made to explain why these groups acted the way they did at this particular moment in the region's history. In this chapter, I first examine some of the general characteristics of the one hundred and fifty-four visitas conducted during these decades in order to understand the motives, methods and consequences of popular action taken against parish priests. I also attempt to account for the social and legal standards under which priests and visita authorities operated, and I explore how the visita system itself may have contributed to the high rate of dissension between priests and their parishioners during these two decades. The second half of this chapter looks at the episcopal visitas conducted from 1700 to 1730, and offers some possible explanations for the ostensible decline of village controversy after 1697. I compare in particular the litigious decade of the 1680s to the visita records from the 1720s, when parishioner complaints and unfavorable final sentences were virtually non-existent.

Bargaining by Complaint and Self-Defense, 1680-1700

Witness complaints during the 1680s and 1690s were not random, arbitrary reactions to the pressures people individually experienced as parishioners of the local priest or as subjects of the Spanish crown. I argue, to the contrary, that in the course of their testimonies, parishioners identified themselves with a standard of social and moral conduct which, when violated or exceeded, resulted in serious indictments of the priests'

character and behavior. This does not mean, of course, that all parishioners had exactly the same expectations of priestly performance, or that Indians and Spaniards, for example, had the same principles and equal appreciation for what priests ought to do and what they actually did. Certainly, individuals appearing before ecclesiastical officials possessed distinct beliefs as to what was, and what was not, ethical behavior. But the popular consensus — by this I mean the collective voice of the majority of witnesses who testified in the *visita* trials of the 1680s and 1690s — expressed concern over their diminishing demographic and economic resources, and consequently used the *visita* as a tool to legitimize their customary view of social norms and obligations. In sum, I argue that through their testimonies, Indian parishioners in particular sought to defend their “traditional rights and customs,”² even when that meant they had to accuse — wrongly or not — their parish priest of malfeasance.

To begin, I turn to the decade of the 1680s to review some of the basic details of the *visita y escrutinio* records from that period. By this time, the tradition of the pastoral *visita* was a well-established point of interaction between parishioners and higher members of the secular clergy. While there is no documentary evidence that earlier *visitas* assumed the comprehensive format which characterized the trials of the 1680s and 1690s, several sources — including an important summation of the history of the diocese compiled in 1651 by Bishop Antonio de Castro y Castillo — alluded to the episcopal *visita* as a trademark institution which dated back to the first bishop of the diocese, Domingo

²Thompson, “The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century,” 78.

Valderrama.³ As further proof, the Archive of the Indies in Seville contains several examples of pre-1680 pastoral visitas, including a fairly complete series from the 1630s written by the diocese's third bishop, Feliciano de la Vega.⁴ In any case, by the 1680s, parishioners from most social ranks and economic classes participated as witnesses in the *visita y escrutinio* trials.

As noted in Chapter 5, monolingual Indians comprised the clear majority (76.4 percent) of visita witnesses during the first two decades of this study. When *Indios ladinos* are added to the equation, the total percentage of indigenous parishioners appearing before visita chief prosecutors was nearly 85 percent of the total witness pool. When assessing the nature of antagonism which existed between the majority of

³Bishop Castro y Castillo, describing Bishop Valderrama's first inspection of the territory in 1610, reported an amazing incident which occurred in San Andrés de Machaca. According to the Bishop's account, Don Domingo and his retinue of ecclesiastical visitors entered the town and were greeted by "two young men (*muchachos*) dressed in scarlet-colored hoods." Fascinated by the sophistication and bright color of the textiles, Bishop Valderrama then asked the men where they had procured the hoods. They responded that they came from their ancestors. Unable to get further information, the bishop threatened to send them to the Viceroy in Lima if they did not divulge more details. Valderrama then, according to Bishop Castro y Castillo, guessed that "such rare and antique vestments must be of Jewish or English origin." The men eventually told the bishop the names of two *ayllus* in San Andrés — achacanalevita and choquelevita. Valderrama reasoned that these names sounded conspicuously Jewish, and when he learned that the surname of a cacique in the village was Machera, he responded: "that too is a Jewish name." Bishop Castro y Castillo then goes on to recount how this incident became the source of much controversy as to whether or not the residents of San Andrés de Machaca were descendants of the Lost Tribe of Isreal. AGI, Charcas 138, 3 March, 1651.

⁴I located four visita accounts from Bishop Vega's tenure as the Bishop of La Paz, which lasted from 1634 until his promotion to the Archbishopric of Mexico in 1639. Pre-1680 pastoral visitas from the Diocese of La Paz can be found in the following AGI files: Charcas 138, Charcas 141, Charcas 147, Charcas 149, and Charcas 150.

parishioners and their parish priests, these statistics are significant for a number of reasons, not the least of which had to do with this group's declining socio-economic position in colonial society. In my opinion, willingness on the part of Indians to testify was one of *the* essential qualities of these particular visitas. In all but five of the one hundred and fifty-four trials (96.8 percent) conducted during this twenty-year period, at least one Indian was represented among the witnesses.⁵ In most cases, Indians were the only parishioners who testified; Santa Barbara de Hilabi, San Pedro de Acora, Viacha, Guaqui, Cohoni, Camata, Zongo, Hayo Hayo, and Italaque were a few of the villages whose witness pools were entirely composed of indigenous parishioners.

During the twenty-year period under review, it was customary for the chief prosecutor to call between five and seven witnesses per trial. The average number of Indian witnesses in the first decade was 6.2; for the 1690s, the average dropped, but not significantly, to 5.4. In some cases, upwards of twenty Indian citizens participated in the visita process either by testifying directly before ecclesiastical officials, or through the submission of affidavits. To cite a few examples, in the trial against Juan de Argote of Guancané, twenty-three Indian parishioners provided testimony of some kind in the course of the three-day trial. Thirteen parishioners denounced the priest as malicious and cruel and called for his removal, while ten people claimed the accusations were part of a hoax

⁵Three of these visitas were held in San Antonio de Esquilache, a mining town west of La Paz which was populated by Spanish entrepreneurs and free wage laborers of mixed ethnicities. One Spanish miner referred to San Antonio as nothing more than a collection of private mines with a church; "There are no *alferasgos* here . . . [nor] does the priest receive any services from the Indians," he recalled, "since this is not an Indian town." ACCFLM, Tomo 4, fol. 15.

orchestrated by a crooked cacique whom the priest had punished for various acts of disrespect. Twenty Indians from Yanacache and the surrounding area gathered at the main church to testify against Alvaro López de Soria y Abréu and his *ayudante* Bernardo de Chábez in July of 1691. In the end, seventeen accused the priest of some sort of misconduct; only three parishioners — all of whom traveled from the “frontier zone of Yanacache” — “spoke favorably of the priest.”⁶

Not only did Indians testify in large numbers, many were visita veterans who participated every time ecclesiastical officials came to town. Indeed, the same village leaders appeared repeatedly throughout this period as witnesses. To cite just a few examples, in Laja — the town most visited by ecclesiastical officials in the 1680s and 1690s — three Indian witnesses, Martín Fernández, Miguel Quino and Baltasar Ticuna, testified against Doctor Pedro de Bustamante in 1683. All but Baltasar Ticuna appeared again at least twice before Promotor Fiscal León to testify against the newly appointed parish priest, Lorenzo Vásquez de Castilla, starting in 1687. An Indian *cacique* named Bartolomé Yzquia first testified in 1687, then appeared in every visita held in Laja after this date except for the one conducted in 1697, when he would have been sixty-four years old and well beyond the average life expectancy for indigenous men living in the southern Andes at that time.

It is also reasonable to assume that even if the same people did not testify more than once or twice, any new witnesses were knowledgeable to some extent of the process though either association, kinship, or simply because episcopal visitas were so regular that

⁶ACCFLM, Tomo 20, fols. 19r-20.

most eligible men were acquainted with its objectives and procedures. In Combaya, which was visited by ecclesiastical officials five times during these years, the same ten witnesses appeared in both trials held in 1683. In the subsequent *visitas*, Pedro Ninaja and Pedro Chimasti served as witnesses three times each from 1687 to 1694, and Juan Tamuna testified a record four times starting with his testimony against Bernardino Hernani Bonifaz in 1683. In terms of association or kinship (fictive or not), Combaya parishioners with the surnames Mendoza (José and Ysidro), Tamuna (Juan and Francisco), Sosa (Juan Martín and Miguel), and Quispe (Sebastián and Juan) appeared at least twice in the *visita* trials from these decades.

If parishioners from the 1680s and 1690s were, in fact, *visita* veterans, or at least knowledgeable of the purpose and methods of the process, they also seemed eager to tell their stories to visiting Church officials. Judging by the number of *visita* participants, Indians in particular took advantage of the opportunity to voice their concerns or grievances before men whom they thought capable of making changes to improve their lives. Indeed, rather than dread the arrival of Church superiors who — in addition to observing the priest's record of conduct — would surely judge their own progress as new Christians, a majority of Indians who testified before the *promotor fiscal* or who submitted signed affidavits seemed genuinely impassioned about the polemics at hand, and hopeful that dividing issues might be resolved. This hope was certainly not offset by the very real chance that they might benefit or gain advantage, financially or otherwise, by incriminating their parish priest. But the expectations parishioners had of priestly behavior, it seems reasonable to assume, also motivated their decision to vent publicly

their frustrations, as did their expressed belief that justice — that stalwart theme so conventional in Spanish legal rhetoric — would indeed be served.⁷

In terms of the language and style she used, a grievance filed by an Indian from Charasani named María Lotaca was typical of the numerous affidavits submitted by parishioners throughout the 1680s and 1690s. It read, in part:

I, María Lotaca, a native of this town of Charasane, appear before Your Most Excellent Lord . . . like I have done in the past to complain about Licenciado Don Pedro de Cañizares . . . who beat me up in his own house. Because I resisted his passions, he treated me with contempt just because I did not let him have his way with me. . . . He also threw me out of the church once. . . . All that I say is public knowledge, and I can provide witnesses if you like. . . . Please do not allow him to return to this town since the priest we [currently] have is a saint. . . . And so, I beg and plead with Your Excellency to recognize these truths . . . and by doing that, I will achieve justice in this case. . . . I declare that this complaint is not borne out of malice, rather in the name of justice, I swear before God.⁸

An Indian cacique from Acora named Carlos Pérez de San Juan expressed similar expectations in his appeal from 1688. He wrote in his letter to Visitor-General Eguares y Pasquier:

Sir, according to my obligation as Protector in this province I am obligated to give Your Excellency notice that in the hamlets and mines of Ypauco and Cacachara and the adjacent valleys and mineral mills . . . many parishioners are dying without confession and last rites. . . . I can assure

⁷A few notable sources on the Spanish colonial legal system are Victor Tau Anzoátegui, *La Ley en América Hispana del descubrimiento a la emancipación*, and Mario Gongora's two classic works, *El estado en el derecho indiano, época de Fundación* (Santiago: Universidad de Chile, 1951), and *Studies in the Colonial History of Spanish America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975). A lucid, albeit outdated, narrative summary of Spanish notions of justice and legal bureaucracy can be found in Clarence H. Haring, *The Spanish Empire in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947).

⁸ACCFLM, Tomo 3, fol. 322.

Your Excellency with all truth and as a Christian, that Don Fadrique de Sarmiento y Sotomayor . . . does not adequately attend to this parish or to his ministerial duties. . . . I ask for justice in this case . . . and appear here at the feet of Your Most Excellent Lord in the name of justice.⁹

Indians actively participated in the episcopal visitas of the 1680s and 1690s in large numbers, appeared multiple times before visiting officials, and made their appeals for justice because, in some instances, they felt their parish priest was corrupt and manipulative. In other cases, and often concurrently, their participation was motivated by the prospect that their actions might grant some personal or group advantage, or perhaps relief from the many burdens their people endured as overworked and overtaxed subjects of the Spanish Crown. In terms of mitigating their social and economic decline, many witnesses testifying in the 1680s and 1690s expressed their hopes that visita authorities would indeed provide some relief from their distress. It was especially common for Indian parishioners who submitted affidavits to conclude their statements with the appeal “please, we ask you to relieve our suffering,” as the cacique of Charasani, Martín Serena, did in his 1683 indictment of Pedro de Cañizares.¹⁰

Frequently witnesses highlighted their poverty and dire straits, and women in particular told visita officials of the many difficulties they faced trying to provide for their families and, at the same time, to satisfy the priest’s many demands. María Yllagama, for example, wrote in her appeal of 1688 that Fadrique Sarmiento y Sotomayor had unjustly jailed her husband, and “Now I am dying of starvation, and so are my four children whom

⁹ACCFLM, Tomo 12, fol. 165.

¹⁰ACCFLM, Tomo 3, fol. 299.

I have to support. . . . I ask for relief (from these burdens).”¹¹ Sometimes in the course of these petitions, parishioners revealed their cognizance of legal procedure and protocol. Eight *principales* from the Tipula family, for instance, appealed to Bishop Queipo de Llano y Valdés to intervene, employ justice, and reduce their many hardships:

We are currently outside our town of Guancané on account of our priest, Don Juan de Argote. . . . He frequently enters our homes (*patria*) threatening us with whippings . . . and so we have been forced us to go in search of judges, and thus we have left our poor ones behind, as well as our farms. I ask Your Excellency to look at this situation and tell us if it is just that *tributarios* like us have to leave their villages and fail in our tax obligations to the King, Our Lord...[Don Juan has done these things] without any fear of God or Royal Justice. . . . We ask for justice and for you to order him not to threaten us so often. . . . If he does not stop [this behavior] we will go to the Royal Audiencia to make our appeal before the President. . . . Please relieve us from our many burdens.¹²

In some cases, it seems that parishioners were so eager to testify not necessarily to accuse the parish priest of misconduct, rather to articulate their position *vis-à-vis* local rivals. On these occasions, the parish priests frequently found themselves in the middle of petty squabbles, and whether willingly or not, became aligned with one group versus another. Sometimes the parish priest on trial was the *de facto* center of the controversy, but in these instances, the testimonies revealed pre-existing antagonisms between different members of the community.

In Chapter 6, I reviewed the contentious trial involving Bernardo de Zerguera, the parish priest of Sapaqui in the late 1680s. In this case, the number of witnesses totaled thirty four and consisted of two Spaniards and thirty-two Indians of different social and

¹¹ACCFLM, Tomo 12, fol. 120.

¹²ACCFLM, Tomo 18, fols. 190-190r.

political ranks. Two women parishioners filed affidavits, but did not actually appear before Promotor Fiscal León to give their depositions. Witnesses in this trial were equally divided. Seventeen came out in support of Don Bernardo. They depicted him as a gentle and kind priest whose charitable deeds enlivened the Christian spirit of the village and fostered attitudes of fellowship within the congregation. Seventeen testified that he and his assistant, Esteban de Prado y Raya, were contemptible men who behaved and treated them in ways completely unbecoming men of the religious vocation. They argued, furthermore, that he was an evil and wicked man who rarely attended to his sacerdotal responsibilities.

Almost all of the testimonies and affidavits filed by Don Bernardo's supporters dealt little with his performance as parish priest. Rather, they focused on the decadent and debauched nature of his adversaries. Referring at one point in their appeal that the priest's enemies were "brutish . . . *Yndios forasteros*," a group of *caciques* wrote:

We . . . Pascal Cuallo, Joseph Joáres, Agustín Coro, Pedro Chuqui, Diego Pati, and Pedro Colla in the name of our Indians . . . are aware that some *forasteros* and *tributarios* have presented false claims against the honor of our priest. . . . These people are so disgraceful, and this is why they do not come to church. . . . This entire case [against Don Bernardo] is fraudulent and malicious. . . . And to think they go around criticizing such a good and pious Christian.¹³

More often, however, parishioners were more subtle in their criticisms of their neighbors, and often used the controversy surrounding the parish priest to get their message across. In the protracted case against Pedro de Cañizares of Charasani, for example, the priest was clearly at the center of the conflict, but tensions between different

¹³ACCFLM, Tomo 14, fol. 361.

Indian factions were equally evident . In 1683, an ethnically mixed group of fifteen witnesses denounced Don Pedro as neglectful in his duties and hateful towards all his parishioners. Martín Serena reported a long list of criminal and civil abuses, including allegations that the priest ran a costly *repartimiento de mercancías* in the district, forced *alféreses* to donate fourteen large sacks of wool to pay for each village festival, and “assaults and disrespects everyone, including caciques and *alcaldes*. . . . He has no respect at all for the royal staff (*la real barra*).”¹⁴ Similar to the charges made by supporters of Don Bernardo in Sapaqui, the four men who came to the defense of the priest declared that he was innocent, and that a contingent of village leaders had banded together to tarnish his name and enjoy the benefits of any restitutions or restrictions Visitor-General Eguares y Pasquier might place on his secular activities. The priest’s supporters came from the *ayllu* Cata, two of whom served as *fiscales mayores* in town. Juan Cata claimed that “I do not believe that any of these allegations is true, rather they are the result of some caciques who have ill will towards to priest because he once made an Indian pray in public.”¹⁵ “They just hate him” claimed the next witness, a cacique named García Coareti, “he is a good man who behaves according to his duties as parish priest and vicar.”¹⁶

In Guancané, it appears again that the parish priest, in this case Br. Juan de Argote, stood at the center of a village controversy between rival groups. Ten supporters of Don Juan testified before Promotor Fiscal León that all eleven witnesses who had

¹⁴ACCFLM, Tomo 3, fol. 298.

¹⁵ACCFLM, Tomo 3, fols. 386r-387.

¹⁶ACCFLM, Tomo 3, fol. 288.

denounced the priest were allied with a dissident faction led by a cacique named Juan Condori, and a local *encomendero*, Pedro de Erasmo. These men — so they claimed — coordinated a plan to deceive Visitor-General Eguares y Pasquier just because Juan Condori had been publicly punished by the priest, and because Br. Argote had apparently admonished the *encomendero* for overworking Indians and for not allowing them time off to attend church. Onofre Ynga Larico, a *ladino* cacique from the village, reasoned that “what has happened is that because they and others do not comply with their obligations as Christians, and because they live in such sin . . . the priest punishes them with ardor.”¹⁷ In particular, he later noted, Br. Argote had singled out Juan Condori on a number of occasions since he did not abide by the priest’s orders to bring to him single men and women who had been accused of fornicating. An affidavit signed by a group of *principales* including Don Onofre, Pedro Inga Luqui, Juan Chipana, Sebastián Mamani, and Alonso Tipula, alleged, furthermore, that the *encomendero* “attempted to persuade us to complain to Your Excellency against our priest. . . . [He wanted us to say] that he was of loathsome character and that Indians fled from this town on account of him.”¹⁸ All the Indians who had testified against the priest, the affidavit claimed, were lowly “*Yndios ordinarios*”¹⁹ who should not be trusted. In addition, these witnesses had either been bought off by Erasmo or threatened by Condori to testify against the priest. In the end, Br.

¹⁷ACCFLM, Tomo 11, fol. 331r.

¹⁸ACCFLM, Tomo 11, fol. 342.

¹⁹Ibid.

Argote's supporters claimed they could not indict such a "charitable"²⁰ man, and that they would not allow this group of malcontents — whom they charged had caused much disturbance in the region for years — to disparage the good priest's name any longer.

Usually in cases involving rival village factions, roughly an equal number of witnesses testified either in support of the parish priest or against him. In the trial of the embattled Fadrique Sarmiento y Sotomayor of San Juan de Acora, however, only one man defended the priest's behavior and basically accused all the prominent members (specifically the caciques of the Anansaya district of Acora) of the town of being malicious conspirators. In what must have been an especially intimidating, dangerous environment, the cacique and governor of the *parcialidad* Urinsaya, Damián Churaticona, claimed that all the accusations were a result of the Anansaya leadership's efforts to usurp the priest's authority. Claiming that his statement represented the "voice of the common people of this town,"²¹ his fascinating, albeit disjointed testimony read in part:

Don Fadrique Sarmiento y Sotomayor has been so good for our souls and our bodies. . . . Please do not take him away from us as the Catacoros suggest. They have circulated the rumor that we will all be taken as prisoners to La Paz and if we participate in this visita. They will surely kill us as they have in the past. Our only relief is our priest. Look upon this town with the eyes of a father, because for so many years in this land we worked without any respite, and now we can work and eat, and we have been like this for about a year — ever since Your Excellency stripped them [the Catacoros] of their *casicasgo*. Before we worked only for them without any pay. The Catacoros walk through the flatland — their relatives, sons-in-law, and mestizos — talking to the Indians, threatening them, and giving them wine so that they will testify against our priest . . . and inform Your Most Excellent Lord of his offenses. . . . Those you have

²⁰ACCFLM, Tomo 11, fol. 342r.

²¹ACCFLM, Tomo 12, fol. 112.

here [as witnesses] are not his friends. . . . They [the Catacoros] have them closed up in their homes, filling them up with wine, and deceiving them to think that they are going to be taken to La Paz as prisoners. . . . They have even rounded up people from other towns to come here as witnesses. We do not even know them, and neither do the Catacoros. . . . I, Don Damián Churaticona, ask — for the love of God and in his name, as well as in the name of our priest — that you recognize the evil of all this. . . . The Catacoros are enemies of our priest who cause us much suffering and who take away our lands so that we have no place to farm.²²

Thus far in this chapter, I have highlighted a few factors which led some parishioners to complain to ecclesiastical authorities about the behavior and dispositions of their parish priests. First of all, caciques and regional governors (who constituted, by the way, 58 percent of the total witness pool for this period) in the 1680s and 1690s knew they could count on the episcopal visita as an outlet to voice their criticisms. Many were also experienced witnesses who understood Spanish legal procedures and recognized the most effective means to gain advantage and legitimacy, and to ameliorate living conditions for themselves and for the people they represented. Parishioners, in a perceptible way, appreciated the notions of justice and natural liberties, and called upon visiting officials to exercise prudence and fairness in their final rulings. Finally, witnesses saw the visita as a medium to bring outside help for their side in village politics — a dangerous game for sure — and one which frequently involved the parish priest due to his central role in the community. Parishioner reactions against their parish priests were, in sum, logical, well-organized, self-conscious, and disciplined efforts either designed to preserve the common weal, expose corrupt priests or bargain with them, defend traditional rights and customs, or to speak out against rival groups.

²²Ibid.

The remarkable qualities of these protests were not violence and chaos, rather restraint and order. Not once in the seventy-eight trials which included allegations of religious neglect or priestly mistreatment did an accused priest state that his life was in danger as a result of his confrontations with parishioners. This restraint and order, I argue, served a legitimizing function, in the sense that the majority of witnesses who testified before ecclesiastical officials during these two decades acted not spasmodically because they were abused, rather they were either attempting to preserve social and economic privileges, or determined that complaining via the *visita* system was the best avenue to undermine political opponents, and thus gain personal or group advantage.²³ In any case, through the *visita y escrutinio* process, witnesses were able to establish their identity, legitimize their place (however unstable it may have been) in colonial Andean society, offer testimony which may have helped to improve their immediate conditions, and define, they hoped, limits of future exploitation. Parishioner testimonies were thus calculated and coherent, and, I contend, either represented a sectional consensus as to

²³ Much has been written about the Andean social order and the system of reciprocal obligations and duties. That Indian parishioners who lived in the Diocese of La Paz from 1680 to 1700 shared at least partly in these traditions is without question. But my focus here is not specifically on the kinship systems and patterns of mutual respect and deference characteristic of traditional Andean societies. These attributes are certainly important, however, and relate directly to how parishioners perceived their rights and obligations *vis-à-vis* their parish priest. My favorite source on Andean morality comes from Catherine Allen, *The Hold Life Has: Coca and Cultural Identity in an Andean Community*. A few Spanish sources on Aymara social systems are two books by Xavier Albó, *La paradoja aymara: solidaridad y faccionalismo* (La Paz: Centro de Investigación y Promoción del Campesinado, 1977), and *Raíces de América: el mundo del Aymara* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial. Sociedad Quinto Centenario, 1988), and the excellent recent survey published by Roberto Choque Canqui entitled *Sociedad y Economía Colonial en el Sur Andino* (La Paz: HISBOL, 1993).

which individual or group should enjoy privileges and power, or embodied a broader consensus which sought to define what was, and what was not, acceptable priestly behavior.

An equally important factor to consider when assessing witness complaints from this period has to do with the very nature of the episcopal visita as it was practiced in this particular region. I posit that even if a priest's behavior was, in fact, acceptable in terms of his fulfilment of religious duties, if other extenuating circumstances existed which threatened the parishioners' or the community's well-being — like being overtaxed and overworked — witnesses objectively viewed the situation, then decided to act against the parish priest simply because it was convenient to do so. The episcopal visita, after all, raised issues which were immediately pertinent to ordinary people's lives away from the Church, and if social, economic, or political conditions were dire enough, they used the most logical resource available to gain advantage or lessen their suffering, i.e. the attention of a bishop or visitor-general who was capable of imposing fines, reducing their financial obligations to the church, and enacting other restrictions on priestly demands. This possibility certainly lends credence to every priests' claim that he was the victim of circumstance, and that all the charges against him were false and maliciously contrived. In addition, and as I illustrate in Chapter 5, many parishioners who spoke out against a particular priest reported at the beginning of the interrogation that in fact he had been a "good priest and vicar who behaves accordingly," before incriminating him for various crimes which were intimated by visita authorities during the investigation.

In other words, since neither the accused priest nor any parishioner who alleged priestly malfeasance ever admitted guilt or to providing false testimony, the actual truth of what happened in these seventy-eight cases is, by and large, irrelevant. Friction, in any case, existed, and so either the priest indeed did violate traditional customs as identified by parishioners, or was an incidental victim. Either way, a majority of witnesses directed their popular action against the parish priest on trial, and regarded the pastoral visita as a type of concession which, at times, should simply be exploited to advantage.

The notion of traditional rights and customs is a complex issue. It is certainly possible to scrutinize, as I have done in previous chapters, the most frequent sources of conflict between priests and parishioners who lived in the Diocese of La Paz from 1680 to 1700. In summary, the most common complaints (in order of frequency) centered around the priest not paying Indians for personal service, overcharging for burials and manipulating wills, being negligent in the administration of the Sacred Sacraments (in particular final confession and last rites), forcing members of the community to assume costly civic duties, physical and verbal abuse, chronic absenteeism, and engaging in sexual relations with women. The Catholic Church regarded all these transgressions as violations of the law, so the official position of the bishop or the visitor-general was, in most instances, clearly articulated, if not always observed. But for parishioners, and Indians in particular, these concerns — especially those dealing with finances — struck at the very heart of their survival as communities and their livelihoods as individuals.

The parish priests, for their part, participated with equal energy in the visitas of the 1680s and 1690s, but their role was obviously different since they were the subjects of

pastoral inquiries and were only required to contribute to the written record when their alleged abuses were extreme. As I point out in Chapter 6, priests uniformly defended their actions as just and warranted, and never conceded — at least in the initial hearings — that their behavior was anything short of ideal. They did acknowledge, however, that tensions existed in their communities, and that their multiple functions as spiritual guides, village authorities, and agents of the Spanish crown often led to strained relations with some factions within the village.

It can be argued that priests behaved the way they did, and defended themselves with such intensity before charges of neglect, because they too sought to preserve privileges and entitlements they felt they deserved. This would help explain, at the very least, why so many priests cited their simple obedience to local practices and traditions as justification for their actions. Indeed, the subtle message behind many of the priest's rebuttals was, as Francisco de Carrión y Cáceres put it in his letter to the bishop, "This is the way it is done in this bishopric."²⁴

Controversy and having to account for one's behavior, in addition, were not uncommon occurrences for priests who lived and worked in the diocese in the 1680s and 1690s. Even if they did not actually thrive on conflict, this generation of priests was certainly skilled in the strategies of self-defense and did little, by their own admission, to assuage village dissent. In their depositions and affidavits they depicted themselves, on the contrary, as active supervisors of ethics and morality, as diligent adherents to the religious vocation, and as privileged members of local society whose many responsibilities

²⁴ACCFLM, Tomo 8, fol. 152.

included disciplining their adherents and promoting the progress of the Christian community at any cost. To be sure, parish priests were also cognizant of the power they possessed, and of the many opportunities their positions of authority granted — political, religious, financial, and otherwise. Just as surely, as a majority of the witnesses claimed, some took advantage of these benefits.

In the end, just as parishioners fought for their rights and privileges, so did parish priests. Unlike their rivals, however, statistical data from these two decades indicate that they may have fared better in the long run since 68 percent of all priests who stood accused of improper activity were eventually exonerated. This is perhaps due to their professional standing in colonial society, as well as their race, reputations, and the consensus opinion among Spanish authorities — to include religious officials — that Indians in general were untrustworthy and disingenuous by nature. It is also probable, on account of their cultural and familial ties, that priests were more informed about the nuances of Spanish government which, as I discuss at length below, tended to overlook, or at least diminish the importance of, abuses committed by its royal subjects. In any case, if parishioners viewed the *visita* as a concession to be taken advantage of, perhaps priests recognized that their concessions came in the form of favorable final rulings. It certainly seems that as a group, parish priests understood their rights and prerogatives in colonial society, and they based many of their decisions on whether or not the risks of serious punishment outweighed the potential for profit, increased political power, and social mobility. Indeed, it appears that diocesan priests from these two decades, like their village rivals, constantly jostled and bargained for advantages and privileges, and if that

meant that they had to defend themselves and their behavior in ecclesiastical courts, they were confident in their abilities to do so.

Firm and passionate accusations of malfeasance, however, likely did not come without a price regardless of which percentage of priests received favorable final sentences. It is probable that many accused priests sought accommodation with their accusers to avoid further troubles, and thus made out less well than the statistics from the final judgements suggest. The case against Antonio de Vivero highlighted in Chapter 6 seems to be a good example of a priest who may have had to settle for less power, privilege and profit, in order to keep his job and maintain peace with his parishioners. Somehow — to recall a few of the details of the case — less than four years after one of the most contentious trials of the era that involved allegations of excessive cruelty, blatant sexual misconduct, and rampant sacerdotal neglect, he and his parishioners found a way to iron out their many differences and get along. In all likelihood, village leaders and Don Antonio reached some informal agreement or unwritten social contract that outlined boundaries of exploitation and misbehavior. In this way, just as Eric Hobsbawn has talked of “bargaining by riot,” parishioners from the Diocese of La Paz from 1680 to 1700 may have negotiated for advantage and relief by accusation, or even the threat of accusation.²⁵

Crimes, Final Sentences, and the Colonial Bureaucracy

The documentary record clearly shows that visita authorities exercised restraint and patience when it came to handing out punishments in controversial cases. During the

²⁵See Eric Hobsbawn, *Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (New York: Norton Press, 1965).

course of the visita trials, they worked diligently to uncover facts, interviewed as many witnesses as they deemed necessary, and managed to maintain order and professional decorum in even the most hostile of situations. Statistical data comparing the numbers of visitas held, and the verdicts handed down by presiding visita officials are, on the surface, self-evident. As already indicated, one hundred and twenty-nine of the one hundred and fifty-four final rulings issued at the conclusion of the 1680 and 1690 visitas were favorable. So nearly 84 percent of priests active in the diocese at this time were congratulated for doing their jobs well, having their parishioners well-instructed in the catechism and the mysteries of the Catholic faith, and conducting themselves according to the obligations and requirements of their vocation. In other words, while parishioners implicated over 50 percent of parish priests of some sort of misconduct or spiritual neglect, the bishop or the visitor-general punished only twenty-five of them. Of this twenty-five, moreover, eleven men received fines of less than one hundred pesos. Of the six priests who served suspensions, four eventually returned to their parish or were assigned to other posts in the diocese.

If judged by the final sentences alone, then, the record of priestly impropriety for the Diocese of La Paz during these years would seem average, if not unimpressive. It seems clear that visita officials, in many instances, either did not believe the allegations made by parishioners, or determined that enough reasonable doubt existed in the case against the priest, and so no overt punishments were handed down. It is likely that at least some of the fifty-three priests who were initially indicted and eventually exonerated received informal warnings to do a better job, treat parishioners with more patience and

charity, or correct whichever aspect of their ministry parishioners had complained of. Any side agreements or informal warnings were, unfortunately, not a part of the documentary record, and thus unverifiable for these decades. But in their final sentences, bishops and visitors-general of the diocese in the 1700s, 1710s, and 1720s commonly employed this approach when dealing with accused priests under their supervision, so it is not unreasonable to assume that ecclesiastical officials did the same in preceding decades.²⁶

In any case, it is my opinion that the bishops and the visitors-general practiced tolerance and employed flexibility when it came to applying the written law to the many controversial visita trials of the 1680s and 1690s. If so, what historical precedents or legacies empowered them to do so? I argue, like John Leddy Phelan did in his seminal work, *The Kingdom of Quito*, that some of Max Weber's concepts of modern bureaucracy are relevant to colonial Spanish America, and in particular to the system of lax government which tended to supervise loosely its lower royal officials. Parish priests were, after all, employees of the Spanish crown, and although held to different standards of conduct than *corregidores* and *alcaldes mayores* (two groups of men who have received considerable

²⁶The best example of the technique practiced in the 1720s that cautioned priests against committing further abuses comes from the trial against Bernardo Carrasco del Sar, parish priest of Santiago de Machaca. In this case, parishioners accused Don Bernardo of a variety of offenses, including overcharging for burials, forcing *alféreses* to pay exorbitant sums of money for village festivals, manipulating wills, and requiring relatives of the dying to bring them to town, which resulted in many deaths unaccompanied by last rites. The final sentence in this case was complimentary, and mentioned none of the alleged transgressions. Instead, in the margins of the transcriptions of various witnesses' testimonies, the secretary wrote next to the allegation the words: "*se rremedió.*" This pattern continued throughout the trials of the 1720s, and no priest who served during this decades received an unfavorable final sentence. ACCFLM, Tomo 33, fol. 152.

attention from historians as colonial agents of social control and economic exploitation), were likewise members of the colonial bureaucracy.²⁷

Weber defined three principal models of bureaucratic development that have occurred over historical time: charismatic; traditional; and legal.²⁸ The Spanish colonial government, including the hierarchy of the Catholic church in America, exhibited characteristics of political and social control in a bewildering amalgam of these three conceptual paradigms. Charismatic domination, Weber posited, initially arose in moments of crisis and involved a leader who legitimized his authority through personal appeal and the successful recruitment of loyal followers. Subsequent generations of leaders dominated less because of any individualized charisma than by an institutionalized and depersonalized form of control which was handed down through aristocratic families. Such is the case with the Hapsburgs and later, the Bourbons in colonial Spanish America. Phelan contends that the "mystique of the monarchy...served to buttress the loyalty that the magic symbol of the crown evoked in the Indies, [and] along with the monarch, the Spanish Catholic

²⁷For a discussion of the intermediary roles *corregidores* and *alcaldes mayores* played in colonial society, see Karen Spalding, *Huarochiri: An Andean Society under Inca and Spanish Rule* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1984), and John Chance, *Race and Class in Colonial Oaxaca* (Stanford: Stanford University Press), 1978.

²⁸Weber discussed the particularities of these concepts of bureaucratic development in many of his books and essay. See his extensive analysis of these themes in his books entitled *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, trans and ed. A.M. Henderson and Talcot Parsons (New York: The Free Press, 1947), and *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, trans. and ed. by H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946).

Church... was the other institution that was primarily responsible for preserving stability in that society where disruptive forces were not lacking."²⁹

From all indications, the preservation of stability, at least in the case of the Diocese of La Paz, depended on a lax enforcement of the rules. Policy and practice in the Spanish colonial world, and certainly within the Church, were obviously at odds; to work through the chaos and constant turmoil generated by a corrupt society, colonial rulers and subjects gained strength through close identification with a monarchy and a Church they viewed as “magical” “supernatural” and “inspirational.”³⁰ Indeed, that the colonial Church had such a difficult time compelling its priests to behave while maintaining control, by and large, of community politics for almost three hundred years, underscores the significance of the charismatic strength — and of the pragmatic flexibility — emanating from Madrid and Rome.

If institutionalized charisma gave the monarchy and the Church an innate and divine source of legitimacy, Weber's concept of traditional domination fortified the Spanish bureaucratic style of lax government with its insistence on the ruler's arbitrary nature of power, limited always by “the sanctity of immemorial traditions.”³¹ The

²⁹John Leddy Phelan, *The Kingdom of Quito in the Seventeenth Century*, 322. For an excellent biography of Weber, see Reinhard Bendix, *Max Weber: An Intellectual Portrait* (Garden City, NJ.: Doubleday and Company, Inc. 1960).

³⁰Weber, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, 296. Weber discusses the instability of charismatic authority, i.e. monarchical governments, in his chapter entitled “The Sociology of Charismatic Authority,” of this same book.

³¹Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, 328. Bendix claims that Weber identified sacred traditions to be “certain built-in safeguards of its [a society's] own identity, which result from the beliefs in the legitimacy of the relation between ruler

seemingly random correlation in the Diocese of La Paz between crime committed and punishment served was thus a distinctive characteristic of Weber's patrimonial state (a subset of the traditional model). All seventy-eight priests who held the top position in their churches from 1680 to 1700 knew the rules of the game (sacred traditions), and most successfully walked the fine line to be regarded as acceptable priests rather than ones who pushed their personal agenda of exploitation too far and were significantly fined, suspended or expelled. Parish priests in the Diocese of La Paz, using this logic, used their positions of authority to their ultimate advantage, whether that meant being lazy or remiss in the administration of the Sacred Sacraments, amassing wealth at the expense of parishioners, or parlaying their power to favor one village faction over another. While the bishops of La Paz constantly sought to improve priestly performance through legislation and a regular series of *visitas*, the archival record reveals a secular clergy seemingly content, in the end, with minor fines and rhetorical admonitions.

Phelan points out that Spanish styles of government were constantly evolving during the colonial period, alternating between older charismatic and patrimonial forms of rule and newer legal forms of administration that emerged throughout Europe at the end of the Middle Ages.³² The key characteristics of Weber's legal model of bureaucratic

and ruled." Bendix, *Max Weber*, 299-300. On the issue of arbitrary power, Phelan notes: "The administration of law is on an *ad hoc* basis from case to case. Justice becomes a series of individual decisions, not necessarily as interpretations of 'law' but as gifts of grace from the ruler that do not create binding precedents." Phelan, *The Kingdom of Quito*, 325.

³²*Ibid.*, 328. Perhaps Weber's most acclaimed and long lasting sociological theories deal precisely with the power of bureaucracy and the transition to legal forms of authority and power. He examines this topic extensively in Chapter Eight of *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, and Part Three of *The Theory of Social and Economic*

development were the implementation of written laws and the high degree of flexibility ruler's enjoyed in the enforcement of them. The patrimonial tradition of arbitrary rule combined with a new spirit of legalism to create in colonial Spanish America a more efficient administrative body complete with hierarchies of authority and rights of appeal. Bookkeeping, as well as promotions, royal decrees, and other appointments, were handled by literate administrators who recorded all transactions in written form. The final product was a government and Church replete with paperwork; and this, coupled with the unclear jurisdictions between political entities inherent in the older patrimonial model, resulted in a sluggish bureaucracy which tended to tolerate (or at least act slowly to remedy) corruption. Ironically then, limited rule kept the colonial system running, and certainly blurred the distinction between how parish priests in the Diocese of La Paz should have behaved and how they actually did.

The Decline of the Pastoral Visita after 1700: Some Ramifications and Explanations

The bottom line of priest/parishioner relations during the last two decades of the seventeenth century was that parishioners accused over 50 percent of parish priests who worked in the diocese of some sort of priestly neglect or misconduct. As we have seen, less than a third of these priests were punished by visita officials, and only nine men suffered what might be considered major penalties (fines of two hundred and fifty pesos or more, suspension, or expulsion) for their crimes. In the preceding section, I discussed various explanations for these results, and argued that during these two decades, a social pattern developed whereby more visita witnesses complained than did not, parish priests

Organization.

defended themselves when they had to, and ecclesiastical officials handed down final judgements which — with notable exceptions — generally favored their ordained colleagues. In other words, as active contributors to and actors in the moral economy of village life in the Diocese of La Paz from 1680 to 1700, most *visita* witnesses bargained for advantage by complaint, accused priests negotiated for redemption by defending themselves against the charges or by seeking accommodation with their accusers, and *visita* authorities sought to avoid further hostilities and excessive exploitation by admonishing maligned priests and perhaps, by imposing a negligible fine or temporary suspension.

On the documentary surface, this socioreligious paradigm, and the *visita* system itself, underwent significant changes after 1697 when Bishop Bernardo Carrasco de Saavedra died suddenly while supervising a *visita* trial in Guaicho in August of that year.³³ A statistical analysis of the primary data reveals that after this date, priests were (I emphasize here that this is taking place on a superficial level) increasingly less the centers of village controversy, and concomitantly more respected and admired by their Indian and Spanish parishioners. These findings are tempered considerably by the very real chance that village elites found other ways (through the *corregidor*, perhaps) to negotiate boundaries of acceptable conduct and relations with village priests.

Nevertheless, starting with the first decades of the eighteenth century, the percentage of allegations of priestly misconduct in relation to the total number of pastoral visits decreased significantly. During the 1700s, only thirteen *visitas* were held (all in

³³López Menéndez, *Historia de la Diócesis de Nuestra Señora de La Paz*, 11.

1701), and parishioners complained about the behavior of three priests, so the rate of alleged malfeasance was 23.1 percent, compared to 51.1 and 50 percent for the 1680s and 1690s respectively. Episcopal *visitas* picked up again in the 1710s, as fifty-three priests were subject to review. The percentage of protestations per visit dropped again, to 20.8 percent (11 of 53). The 1720s, in terms of the number of *visita* trials, surpassed the busy decade of the 1680s, but the percentage of allegedly delinquent priests plummeted to 5.6 percent (5 of 89).

The reasons for this precipitous decline in the number and degree of claims against parish priests are obviously important to any analysis of the role these individuals played in village life during this particular period in this location. First of all, the *visitas* themselves were not conducted at regular intervals after 1697. Bishop Juan Queipo de Llano Valdés set a high standard by sponsoring regional tours that encompassed every village in the territory during his twelve year tenure starting in 1682. Indeed, either he or his visitor-general, Juan Antonio de Eguares y Pasquier, visited every parish in the diocese in their regional tours of 1683-84, 1687-88, and 1690-91. Queipo de Llano Valdés' successor, Bishop Bernardo Carrasco Saavedra, personally participated in the only pastoral *visita* (1697) of his administration; he managed to visit sixteen parishes before his untimely demise in Guaicho as he made his way back to La Paz from the northern sector of the diocese.

The next regular series of *visitas* occurred in 1701, but the *provisor* in charge of the bishopric during the *sede vacante*, Gerónimo Cañizares Ibarra, conducted only thirteen trials, four of which took place in La Paz. No village in the diocese was visited again until

1710, when Bishop Diego Morcillo Rubio y Auñón (1707-1712) supervised a fairly extensive *visita* tour which covered forty-two parishes. Mateo Villafañe Pandaño served as bishop of the Diocese of La Paz for eight years from 1714 to 1722, but managed to visit only eleven villages — all in 1717 — during his tenure. It was not until 1725, under the direction of Bishop Alejo Fernando de Rojas y Acebedo that a systematic review of priestly behavior resumed in the diocese, but even then in an altered form which marginalized the most critical voice of previous discontent, that of monolingual Indians. Bishop Rojas y Acebedo took office in 1723, and held regional *visitas* in 1725 and 1728-29. By the time of his death in March of 1730, Fray Alejo or his visitor-general, Licenciado Diego Pérez Oblitas, had conducted eighty-nine episcopal inspections, and had visited all but four diocesan parishes (Combaya, San Juan de Merenguela, Calacoto, and Guaqui).

In other words, the *visita y escrutinio* ceased, after 1697, to be an institution parishioners could dependably rely on until 1725, a span of nearly thirty years. In fact, it could be argued that the pastoral *visita* began its decline as a meaningful and reliable tradition after Queipo de Llano Valdés left office in 1692, since his successor, Bishop Carrasco Saavedra, only conducted trials in sixteen villages in 1697. But before I examine the ramifications of this decline, two factors stand out which may help explain why pastoral *visitas* became so sporadic after 1697.

First, from 1697 to 1709, the diocese was essentially bishop-less, since the only man to be appointed to the top post during these years — Nicolás Urbano Mata y Haro —

died the day after his arrival to La Paz in 1704.³⁴ So the chief administrating official in charge of managing the day-to-day business of the diocese during this eight year span was the *provisor*, Gerónimo Cañizares e Ybarra. Don Gerónimo, judging from his record of service, was an accomplished and dedicated member of the secular clergy. He began his career in 1683 in the Indian village of Hilabaya, located near Sorata northeast of Lake Titicaca. He later served briefly in San Miguel de Ilabe, before being appointed as parish priest, vicar, and ecclesiastical judge of San Pedro de Extramuros in La Paz in 1688. This was probably an important indicator of his professional success and potential, since a move in any capacity to the capital city was considered a significant promotion.

Sometime prior to 1697, Don Gerónimo earned a prebendary post (*canónigo doctora'i*) in the Cathedral, yet another sign that he was progressing up the corporate ladder of the Church. A letter to the King of Spain written by Bishop Carrasco de Saavedra in July of 1697 indicated that Don Gerónimo had been named *provisor*, so in addition to his duties as canon, he also was the chief ecclesiastical judge of the diocese. No documentary records of any sort indicated that this man was anything but an accomplished scholar, dedicated priest, and capable administrator, save this same letter, which provided the first evidence that Don Gerónimo was not wholeheartedly a man of diligence and singular quality. Indeed, Bishop Carrasco de Saavedra spoke bitterly of his personal deficiencies, suspended him as *provisor* for six months, and reported to the King that he should be punished accordingly for his many crimes against the community and the Church. "In obedience to Your Majesty's order" the dispatch began:

³⁴López Menéndez, *Historia de Arzobispado de Nuestra Señora de La Paz*, 12.

As I am about to depart on a pastoral visita of this diocese . . . [I notify you] of the tremendous disorder (*desorden grande*) that exists concerning the tax and property collections, a job that pertains to Doctor Don Gerónimo de Cañizares Ybarra. . . . On account of his negligence and carelessness, [monies] have been lost. . . . I have charged him with negligence and poor administration, and for failing to fulfill those duties to which he is obligated as a dignitary of this Church, to the extent that we are so behind in payments and without any income. . . . I also point out the chaos of his [personal] behavior and scandalous life, since he has had inside his house [his own] children. . . . According to a visita conducted thirty years ago, he has continued with this unsavory lifestyle, and [has thus] failed in the obligations of his duties and of the dignity of the priesthood. . . . this city is in turmoil on account of the severity of his bad disposition [*mal natura*], since he involves himself in secular affairs . . . [to the extent that] my predecessors had to order him not to enter notary offices.³⁵

The bishop concluded his report by pointing out that Don Gerónimo, indeed, “has more than he deserves,”³⁶ meaning of course that he possessed neither the character nor the qualities of a man of his distinction.

It is possible that this letter was the result of a disagreement or quarrel between Don Gerónimo and Bishop Carrasco de Saavedra. It is also possible that some of these accusations were true. What cannot be disputed is that within a month, the bishop was dead, and Don Gerónimo served as the top administrating official in charge of the Diocese of La Paz. If judged by his record of pastoral visitas alone, he was an unequivocal failure, since he only supervised thirteen inspections in the eight years of his administration. More significant, I argue, is the fact that he discontinued a tradition which had been an important point of connection between higher Church officials and the region’s ordinary citizens. Concomitantly, he ushered in an era (1698-1725) whereby the pastoral visita ceased to be

³⁵AGI, Charcas 138, 30 July, 1697.

³⁶Ibid.

an institution that parishioners, particularly Indians, could rely on to voice their displeasures about their living conditions or the behavior of their parish priests.

Careless administration on the part of presiding ecclesiastical officials, however, only partly accounts for the decline of the *visita* as a dependable institution and as convenient medium of dialogue between priests, parishioners and higher Church authorities. Indeed, a number of primary records indicate that a series of epidemics plagued the region in the late 1700s and throughout the 1710s, and thus hampered the ability of religious officials to tour parts of the diocese. This appears to be especially true for Bishop Mateo Villafañe Pandaño's term from 1714 to 1722, when — as mentioned above — only eleven *visitas* were conducted. Unfortunately, I have been able to locate only a few sources apart from the *visitas* of the 1720s which mentioned the plagues and the ruinous effect they had on the region's demographic make-up. The best and most authoritative account, written by Bishop Alejo Fernando de Rojas y Acebedo in 1725, explicitly acknowledged that the epidemics made it impossible for his predecessors to carry out their *visita* duties. Moreover, he sadly noted, the region and the people under his jurisdiction had suffered tremendously. Having just completed a seven-month tour of the diocese, the bishop compared the state of the diocese to the fall of Jerusalem to the Gentiles:

It has been thirteen years since anyone has visited [the diocese] on account of various events which have occurred to impede it [i.e. the pastoral *visita*], namely the general epidemic which spread through all of these Provinces, from which ensued universal hunger for the ordinary citizens [and] fruitless harvests. This has left the towns so deserted, and it is a deplorable shame to see such desolation, for the majority of the homes are in ruins, because they have no one to live in them. . . . The pain of my heart as I contemplate

all this is reminiscent to that of the first and true Father when he pondered the desolation of Jerusalem.³⁷

Over half of the parishioners interviewed by ecclesiastical officials during the *visitas y escrutinios* of the 1720s mentioned the epidemics in their testimonies. In every case, they discussed them in the context of how the priest on trial reacted to the desperate situation. The responses unanimously praised the priest concerned. Francisco de Torres, a Spaniard from Ambaná stated, for example, that Licenciado Antonio de Sigorondo had made sure that “none of the faithful lacked anything in this benefice,”³⁸ a notable accomplishment indeed considering the poverty of the region. Lucas Cordero, another *vecino* from Ambaná reported that:

I only know that there have been no complaints by the parishioners that he has persuaded them [to donate things to the Church] because in this respect he behaves himself righteously. . . . I say this because of his actions during the unfortunate years of the pestilence and starvation which plagued this area, [when] he took people — many poverty stricken — into his house, maintaining them at not an insignificant cost.³⁹

In his final sentence, Visitor-General Diego Pérez Oblitas confirmed that Don Antonio had performed his priestly duties with diligence and zeal, and noted that “he gives them, particularly the poorest ones, such care and charity . . . providing for them food in his own house . . . chiefly during the regrettable era of the plagues which affected this province.”⁴⁰

³⁷AGI, Charcas 376, 6 November, 1725. The reference to the *visitas* held thirteen years earlier must be to those conducted in 1710, when Bishop Morcillo Rubio y Auñón supervised forty-two *visitas*.

³⁸ACCFLM, Tomo 33, fol. 172.

³⁹ACCFLM, Tomo 33, fol. 175.

⁴⁰ACCFLM, Tomo 33, fol. 179.

Other priests, such as Br. Diego Machicao of Carabuco, apparently converted abandoned village homes into health care centers to service the poor during these difficult decades. A Spanish witness named Juan Gil Negrete told the visitor-general that “Don Diego did away with some of the corrupt practices from which the unfortunate Indians of the past suffered...he has treated them with love and pity, especially during the general epidemic which in years past plagued this area, providing hospital service at considerable costs.”⁴¹ Another parishioner, Simón de Urbanza, claimed that Don Diego was the primary source of aid to the Indians during the epidemic:

He treats all of them with fatherly love, and always seeks to alleviate [their suffering] and help them with the things that they need, just as he did during the plague. . . . He founded two hospitals, from which he dispensed — at considerable cost — medicines . . . and other necessities of life. When famine set in, he provided the Indians with continuous support, and sustained an infinite number of poor people who came to his house to look for food. These acts of charity, along with many others, exemplify his noble spirit and religious piety.⁴²

These were not isolated incidents. Marcos de Aparicio of Ancoraymes, according to all the witnesses who testified, “piously served the poor with his assistance during the era of the plagues and famine which devastated these lands;”⁴³ Juan Antonio Ybañez de Muruzabal of Yunguio “looks upon the parishioners with care and assistance, for they are

⁴¹ACCFLM, Tomo 33, fol. 185r

⁴²ACCFLM, Tomo 33, fol. 187.

⁴³ACCFLM, Tomo 33, fol. 274r.

needy. And no one returns from his house without having received relief and solace, especially during the years of the epidemics;⁴⁴ and Doctor Andrés de Lizárraga exhibited

mercy towards all his parishioners, mercy which was manifest during the famine which affected these regions. He dedicated himself to gathering up many poor people who could not find relief in other territories, and he maintained them here, spending much money from his own assets.⁴⁵

Regardless of any explanations for the decline of regular pastoral visitas in the 1700s and 1710s, the fact remains that many villages in the Diocese of La Paz were not visited by religious officials for decades. A few notable examples were the Indian towns of Laza and Chulumani — both located in the Yungas valley east of La Paz — whose parishioners had to choose a different outlet for their grievances, or survive without one altogether, for thirty-seven and thirty-eight years respectively. In the case of Laza, the last pastoral inspection of the seventeenth century took place in 1688; the next time a bishop visited the town was in 1725. Visitor-General Eguares y Pasquier visited Chulumani in 1687; almost four decades elapsed before Bishop Fernando de Rojas y Acebedo included the village in his general tour of 1725. These particular examples are not special by any means. After Queipo de Llano Valdés left office in the mid 1690s, and especially after the series of 1697 visitas, many parishes such as Suri, Santa Bárbara de Hilavi, Tiahuanacu, Sepita, Caquiaviri, and Caracato — to name just a few — were not visited again until the 1720s. Even among those villages visited in 1710 and 1717, the majority had not hosted a

⁴⁴ACCFLM, Tomo 34, fol. 77r.

⁴⁵ACCFLM, Tomo 34, fol. 108.

visiting bishop or visitor-general for — at the very least — thirteen years, and would not see another visit by ecclesiastical officials for another fifteen to eighteen years.

The ramifications of this institutional decay were many and widespread. Unlike their ancestors, as I have argued, parishioners of the 1700s, 1710s, and 1720s could not rely on the pastoral visita as a dependable channel of communication between themselves and higher Church officials. They were, as a result, probably less sophisticated in the nuances of visita protocol and the unique form of power they possessed as trial witnesses. Until the inspections of the 1720s, parishioners rarely participated more than once as witnesses before the chief prosecutor. Indeed, almost all the Indian parishioners who testified in the 1710s and 1720s were appearing for the first and last time in their lives, and thus the witness pools differed significantly compared to the 1680s and 1690s. Looking at the two most visited towns between 1697 and 1725, for example — Ayata and Quiabaya — only two witnesses (the caciques Francisco Sanca and Simón Chalco both in 1701 and 1710) appeared before the *promotor fiscal* more than once in Ayata, and Juan Guanca was the only parishioner from Quiabaya to testify twice (in 1701 and 1710).

Not only were visita witnesses appearing more irregularly and less often, the ethnicity of the witness pools changed significantly as well. If the decades of the 1680s and 1720s can be viewed as mirror opposites in terms of rate of accusations per trial, the question of who was testifying in these respective decades seems germane. The total number of Indian witnesses appearing before the *promotor fiscal* in the 1680s was, as previously pointed out in Chapter 5, 85.8 percent (78.2 percent monolingual Indians, and 7.6 percent *ladinos*). In contrast, only 25 percent of the witnesses from the 1720 were

monolingual Indians. *Ladinos* in the later decade constituted 13.1 percent of the witness pool, so 38.1 percent of the total number of witnesses testifying in the 1720s were racially classified as Indians. This is a drop of nearly 50 percent when compared with the percentages from the 1680s. The number of Spanish witnesses, accordingly, rises. Whereas they constituted a mere 13.9 percent of the witness pool in the 1680s, they now made up almost half of the total number of witnesses — 110 of the 236, or 46.6 percent.⁴⁶

These numbers reflect the gradual but considerable marginalization of native American leaders in the *visita y escrutinio* process as it was practiced in the Diocese of La Paz over a fifty year period from 1680 to 1730. As the system became infrequent and weak, in other words, many Indian leaders understood that to initiate changes or to articulate their position *vis-à-vis* colonial officials (to include parish priests) or other village rivals, they had to turn elsewhere to lodge their complaints. In any case, that this marginalization coincided with a drastic reduction in the number of allegations of priestly abuse as reported to visita officials, is not, I argue, coincidental. It seems clear that since the least disenfranchised members of colonial Alto Peruvian society — those of Spanish descent — were now the majority of the visita witnesses, and considering that those Indians who did testify in this decade were doing so for the first time in their lives, it is not surprising that the percentages of alleged priestly malfeasance drop so noticeably.

⁴⁶Bishop Alejo Rojas y Acebedo and his visitor-general, Diego Pérez Oblitas, were generally more relaxed about recording personal data on witnesses compared to their seventeenth-century predecessors. Apart from their names, the *secretarios* for these men did not record any other information for 15.3 percent of the witnesses who appeared in visita courts.

Some numerical comparisons regarding the ethnicities and numbers of witnesses from the 1680s and 1720s are revealing. In the villages of Ytalaque and Guaicho, ten Indian witnesses appeared before ecclesiastical officials in 1687, compared with six Spanish *vecinos* in 1725 and 1728. In Moho and Carabuco, sixteen monolingual Indians testified in visita courts in 1684 and 1687 respectively, compared to six Spaniards in 1725. The ratio increased even more in towns like Mocomoco, where nine of the twelve witnesses were Indians in 1687, compared to the three Spaniards who testified in 1725.

The argument that the primary voice of discontent was gradually marginalized or turned elsewhere to voice its grievances gains more support when two other factors relating to the visitas of the 1720 are considered. First, despite the fact that more trials were held in the 1720s — eighty nine compared to eighty-eight for the 1680s — the number of witnesses decreased from six hundred and thirty two to two hundred and thirty six. This is a difference of almost four hundred, which means that roughly 4.5 fewer witnesses testified per trial compared to the earlier decade. In fact, only rarely did the number of witnesses in the pastoral visitas of the 1720s exceed three, and as indicated, most of these parishioners were Spanish *vecinos*. As I point out earlier in this chapter, even if the parish priest was competent in all of his duties, he was sometimes involved in village feuds and controversies which occasionally led to charges of priestly abuse. In this regard, it seems logical to presume that less participation — particularly by Indian witnesses — meant less opportunity for parishioners to bring village politics and factionalism into the visita interrogations. In sum, the bargaining, the system of give and take, and the overt interpositioning that took place in the 1680s and 1690s for advantages

and power probably continued between parish priests and village leaders, but the *visita y escrutinio* was no longer, by the 1720s, the main instrument of these negotiations.

Another peculiar difference between the *visitas* of the 1680s and those of the 1720s had to do with where the trials were actually held. In the 1680s, ecclesiastical officials conducted almost all (over 95 percent) pastoral *visitas* on site. That is, when the parish priest of Cohoni was subject to review, the visiting team of authorities traveled to Cohoni to interrogate witnesses, inspect Church grounds, and generally assess the spiritual environment that the priest had established. This arrangement, of course, was most convenient for all the local parties, particularly for parishioners, since they could stay at home (no travel costs) — and presumably gained confidence from being on their familiar home ground — and still testify against their parish priest.

In the 1720s, in contrast, more than half of all *visitas* were either held in La Paz or the principal towns of the district (*cabeceras*). For example, Licenciado Joseph de Rojas y la Madriz and three Indian witnesses traveled in 1725 all the way from Sapaqui, located eighty-one kilometers from La Paz, to the capital city to give their testimonies. In 1728, priests and parishioners from Laza and Songo — two towns nearly 100 kilometers away from La Paz — spent nearly a month making their way to the city, and that same year, Casimiro Segarra and three Indians traveled one hundred and twenty kilometers from their homes in Chulumani to appear in La Paz before ecclesiastical authorities. In terms of trials held in *cabeceras*, a whole series of *visitas* took place in Sorata in 1728, and in the east, priests and parishioners routinely travelled to Puno from villages such as Ilabe, Acora, Chucuito, and others along the southern banks of Lake Titicaca to give their testimonies.

Just as conducting *visitas* sporadically and calling in fewer witnesses (particularly Indians) to testify decreased the likelihood that allegations of priestly impropriety would arise, so, I argue, did establishing a standard whereby most parishioners had to travel elsewhere, and to more Spanish venues, to give their testimonies before Church officials. First of all, how likely was it that priests would willingly bring along recalcitrant witnesses to testify against them before the bishop or visitor-general? Secondly, how many Indians could now afford — after the epidemics and famine of the 1700s and 1710s — to make the trip, not only in terms of travel money, but also time spent away from work? In sum, there was much less incentive for Indian leaders to use this vehicle (the pastoral *visita*) for protest or bargain for their own or their community's well-being.

The *visita* record regardless of these speculations, however, supports the idea that priests and parishioners indeed got along better in the 1720s compared to the contentious decades of the 1680s and 1690s. The nature of the questioning certainly remained the same, as did the custom of inspecting Church properties and parochial books. In many ways, in fact, those trials from the last two decades of the seventeenth century which included no allegations of improper behavior were analogous to the favorable testimonies given by nearly all the witnesses testifying in the 1720s. As seen in the citations on priestly behavior during the epidemics, parishioners often spoke of the benevolence of the parish priest, confirmed his devotion to the community and to the religious vocation at large, and verified that he faithfully administered the Sacred Sacraments to his flock, taught his parishioners the catechism, and explained in understandable language the mysteries of the Catholic Faith. All but five priests during the decade, as previously noted,

survived the visita trials completely unscathed by allegations of neglect and abuse, and of those five, only Licenciado Carrasco del Sar and Joseph de Marichalar of Calamarca were accused of numerous offenses. Bishop Rojas y Acebedo and his visitor-general, Diego Pérez de Oblitas, incidentally, eventually acquitted both priests in their final sentences.⁴⁷

As a result of the nearly unblemished visita records of the 1720s, no priests who worked in the Diocese of La Paz during the 1720s had to file rebuttals to charges of priestly neglect or misconduct. This is, for the purposes of the current study, an unfortunate consequence, since the voices and visions of the priests themselves remain mysteries. It is certainly possible that given their clean records, they lived comfortably and, on the whole, were less bothered by the political antagonisms which affected their predecessors. But in all likelihood, the same types of complaints that their colleagues had to address in the 1680s plagued them as well, but the documentary records confirm that visita officials by the 1720s no longer served as the mediators of these disputes.

For their part, Bishop Rojas y Acebedo and Visitor-General Pérez Oblitas conveyed an equally sublime image of priest/parishioner relations in their final sentences. As I mentioned above, all final rulings of the 1720s were favorable, and so no priest was fined, suspended or expelled as a result of bad conduct or errors in judgement. In three ways, the final sentences differed significantly from the favorable final sentences of the 1680s and 1690s. First, the ecclesiastical official was, as seen earlier, specific in his tributes as to how priests responded to the epidemics and famine of the 1700s and 1710s.

⁴⁷Parishioners accused Don Joseph of overcharging for burials and not paying parishioners for personal service.

Second, the bishop or visitor-general congratulated a majority of the priests for reducing the burden on Indians by pardoning them at least some portion of the charges for the administration of religious services. Parishioners in the trial versus Licenciado Pedro de Uriarte of Caquingora in 1728, for example, emphasized that they gained much relief from the priest's lenience when it came to burying their dead. Visitor-General Pérez Oblitas' final sentence reflected his appreciation for Don Pedro's good deed.

He has proceeded with vigilance . . . and has met the obligations of the profession . . . specifically for charging less than the *arancel* stipulates for the administration of the Sacred Sacraments. . . . Because of his efficiency and laudable and exemplary performance, he is deserving of an appointment to a prebendary post in one of the Cathedrals in this Kingdom.⁴⁸

Finally, the final sentences of the 1720s tended to stress any achievements or progress the particular priest had made concerning Church construction and Church adornment. Whereas bishops and visitors-general from earlier decades sometimes mentioned priestly accomplishments as builders and decorators, nearly all of the final rulings from the later decade praised priests for their ability to raise funds and complete construction projects. Diego Mexía Hidalgo's church in Ayata, according to Visitor-General Perez Oblitas' final judgement, "has been in ruins [until] he raised it and built additions so that God Our Father can be praised;"⁴⁹ Licenciado Joseph Juan de Vera of Cohoni "has decorated his Churches with the utmost decency [in honor of] the Divine

⁴⁸ACCFLM, Tomo 34, fol. 60r.

⁴⁹ACCFLM, Tomo 34, fol. 10.

Cult,⁵⁰ and Doctor Diego de Alarcón y Contreras of San Sebastián de las Piezas in La

Paz:

has been an ideal and vigilant minister of God Our Father, for in his honor and to improve the quality of worship he has taken pains to adorn this church, and at his own expense he has endowed this Church with precious ornaments and expensive gems. His piety has not been insignificant in the sense that he has protected his parishioners, especially during the general epidemics that plagued these provinces as all the witnesses have avowed.⁵¹

To conclude, the first and most likely explanation for the decline of parishioners allegations of sacerdotal neglect and impropriety after 1700 had to do with native leaders seeking a different outlet for their grievances. One alternative to this view — however doubtful it may be — is that the priests of the early eighteenth century were, in fact, more devoted and less corrupt than their colleagues of the seventeenth century. They were after all, a new generation of professionals living in a different time under different social and political conditions, and the documentary record clearly shows that the old order (i.e. those priests active during the tenure of Bishop Queipo de Llano Valdés) had basically died off by the late 1710s.⁵²

⁵⁰ACCFLM, Tomo 34, fol. 29.

⁵¹ACCFLM, Tomo 33, fol. 97r.

⁵²Only one priest, Antonio de Sigorondo, survived long enough to be the subject of pastoral visitas in four different decades. He served in Carabuco in 1697, Ayata in 1710 and 1717, and Ambaná in 1725. Looking at the documentary data as a whole, fifty-four of the one hundred and sixty-six priests (32.5 percent) who stood trial between 1680 and 1730 accounted for seventy-three of the ninety-seven claims of priestly neglect and abuse (78.3 percent). Over 80 percent of these priests were active in the first two decades of this study. These data support the idea that as the corrupt group of priests were replaced and died off, a new clergy emerged that was more professional, more law-abiding, and less likely to cause controversy on the local level. This conclusion is plausible enough, but of course impossible to prove, and there are certainly better explanations (seeking other

Another explanation for the decline of priest/parishioner hostilities (at least as seen through the lens of the *visita y escrutinio*) has to do with the demographic disasters of the 1700s and 1710s. It is possible that the record of priestly behavior improved in the 1720s because Indians were so poor they were no longer exploitable. In this scenario, priests had fewer opportunities to take advantage of local Indians due to the paucity of resources, and may have been sufficiently wealthy considering the many benefits they now enjoyed as heirs of Indian wills and as providers of costly religious services (i.e. funerals). This argument too, is hard to prove, and is further complicated by the fact that diet often improves for the survivors of epidemics, and so living conditions and the ability of Indian parishioners to work would have possibly been enhanced.⁵³

Another explanation that would account for the drop in allegations of priestly negligence and abuse stems from the possibility that rivalries for the top spot in village politics decreased in intensity and number after the epidemics and famines of the 1700s and 1710s. It is conceivable that with the gradual disintegration of the cohesive Indian communities (caused by the epidemic and the general trend to flee the *tributario* system as the colonial period progressed) that dotted the map in the 1680s and 1690s, surviving priests now assumed a less controversial role in local politics since they had, in effect, fewer native rivals. Of course, this too is impossible to prove. But it is important to point

outlets to air grievances, for example) for why the percentage of accusations dropped so suddenly.

⁵³See Woodrow Borah and Sherburne F. Cook, *Essays in Population History: Mexico and the Caribbean* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970).

out that while on average of five and six caciques testified in trials of the 1680s, it was rare to have more than two appear before ecclesiastical officials in the later decade.

If it is true that priests indeed had less competition for the top political position in Indian villages throughout the diocese, they could certainly exercise greater control of the local population. With greater control, of course, came fewer accusations of malfeasance and thus, less controversy when, and if, *visita* officials came to town. In the end — and using this logic — if the *visita y escrutinio* records constitute, in part, a history of one group's struggle (parish priests) versus another (Indian leaders) for power and the authority to dominate local political and religious life, the members of the secular clergy of the Diocese of La Paz emerged, by the 1720s, as victorious.

Summary

By any standard, the twenty-year period from 1680 to 1700 signified an era of conflict and controversy between parish priests and their parishioners in the Diocese of La Paz. Indigenous village leaders established themselves as a formidable voice of opposition to what they viewed as unfair or excessive treatment at the hands of parish priests, while the latter group defended their actions — and the decisions they made to preserve their privileges and entitlements — as entirely appropriate and even necessary for the maintenance of public order. The visiting bishops and the visitors-general active during these years, for their part, made the *visita y escrutinio* a meaningful institution that gave ordinary citizens an opportunity to raise issues immediately relevant to their increasingly imperiled lives. The final judgements notwithstanding, the mere fact that a few members of

the upper clergy made regular visitations to the diocesan parishes legitimized the goals and the spirit of the Catholic mission in this particular colonial setting.

I have argued, further, that the *visita* system as a whole as it was practiced during the last two decades of the seventeenth century, served a legitimizing function since parishioners were able to express their needs and concerns, and because it gave priests an opportunity to clarify their motives and express the anxieties they faced as representatives of the crown and as the spiritual leaders of their communities. In other words, because of the effectiveness and thoroughness of the 1680 and 1690 pastoral *visitas*, it is possible to judge, to some extent, why popular action took the course it did during these years, and to measure how these respective groups (parishioners and priests) bargained for the socioeconomic and political advantages at stake at this particular moment in the region's history.

The *visita y escrutinio* system, and more importantly what it represented as the chief instrument of mediation between these three groups (priests, parishioners and *visita* authorities), ceased after 1697 to function as a significant tool of negotiation. No longer were *visitas* regular and frequent; Indian parishioners in particular became marginalized from the *visita* process or were forced to find other outlets for their grievances; and the style and format of *visita* itself changed in ways which seemed to favor conciliation over conflict. It is possible, of course, that the plagues of the 1700s and 1710s bred a new generation of priests more devoted to spiritual guidance and less interested in secular concerns of wealth and political power. It is equally conceivable that parish priests had fewer rivals for the top spot in village politics as native leaders died off or fled their

communities to avoid the burdens of tribute, forced labor, and the priest's demands of payment for religious services. But people's actions and attitudes rarely change in such a short span of time, even in the fairly turbulent society of the southern Andes during the mid-colonial period. In all likelihood — and on a scale comparable to their predecessors — priests and parishioners of the early eighteenth century engaged in negotiations for power, prestige and advantage, but they did it in a different way and through a different medium.

CHAPTER 8 CONCLUSION

Catholic priests living in rural communities have played a prominent role in the formation of Spanish American social, political, and economic institutions for over five hundred years. In the Andean countries, parish priests have constituted a material and ideological link between an urban, chiefly European-oriented culture, and a provincial, predominantly indigenous way of life. During the colonial period, members of the secular clergy working in Indian villages throughout the region were, on the one hand, agents of Spanish dominance who effected extraordinary changes to indigenous customs. In this capacity, as the archival documentation from the Diocese of La Paz suggests, a sizable percentage of these men used their positions of authority for personal gain or political advantage.

The documentary record also indicates, however, that many priests staunchly defended the Christian communities they sought so energetically to create and maintain amidst severe population decline and economic exploitation. Most priests, I suspect, did both of these things at one point or another during their careers. In any case, whether a priest was mostly good, average, or sometimes bad, whether he allegedly extorted money from his parishioners or protected them from the wrath of rapacious *corregidores*, secular priests serving in rural districts in the colonial served a vital role as the chief point of contact between the subject Indian majority and the dominant Spanish minority. Priestly

involvement in mediation, of course, did not stop at this diplomatic level. Priests were also integral members of the communities they served. Indeed, they were often friends, always neighbors, and sometimes enemies and rivals of the people they saw daily, or at least once a week for Sunday mass.

“Community,” Lotte de Jong writes, “is a matter of mediations and reciprocities. What makes a community possible is the fact that it involves a series of mediated relationships.”¹ James C. Scott in his many books on peasant resistance has examined the complex terms and conditions of these mediated, often contested relations between the rich and poor in contemporary Malaysian villages.² In short, Scott has argued that in their contacts and dealings with the conservative and progressive orders and with members of the dominant class, peasants employ strategies to defend their interests and rationalize their behavior. Peasants act as they do and resist encroachments from the outside in part because as people who live constantly on the edge, they are obsessed with survival, and thus they must devise ways not to comply with power. Generally the oppressed recognize, however, that resistance has its limits, and are thus usually reluctant to jeopardize their

¹Lotte de Jong, “Community Discourse: A Family Conflict in Eighteenth-Century Coyotepec, Oaxaca,” in Simon Miller and Arij Ouweneel, eds., *The Indian Community of Colonial Mexico: Fifteen Essays on Land Tenure, Corporate Organizations, Ideology, and Village Politics* (Amsterdam: CEDLA, 1990), 26.

²See James C. Scott, *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Subsistence and Rebellion in Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976); “Hegemony and the Peasantry,” *Politics and Society* 7 (1977): 267-96; “Protest and Profanation: Agrarian Revolt and the Little Tradition,” *Theory and Society* 7 (1977): 1-38; *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); and *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

lives and livelihoods by staging violent revolts and riots. Scott states: “The goal, after all, of the great bulk of peasant resistance is not directly to overthrow or transform a system of domination, but rather to survive — today, this week, this season — within it.”³ When it assumes a repetitive and consistent form, he contends further, peasant resistance can have a seriously restricting effect on Antonio Gramsci’s concept of hegemony, which involves a “proletariat more enslaved at the level of ideas than at the level of behavior.”⁴

Here I have in mind the ordinary weapons of relatively powerless groups: foot dragging, dissimulation, desertion, false compliance, pilfering, feigned ignorance, slander, arson, sabotage, and so on. . . . It is my guess that just such kinds of resistance are often the most significant and the most effective over the long run.⁵

Even if foot dragging and arson were not necessarily forms of resistance used by parishioners of the Diocese of La Paz during the mid-colonial period, it can be argued that their utilization of the pastoral visita to complain about priestly abuses and neglect represents a type of not so passive resistance to colonial authority. In fact, many of the conceptual ideas Scott raises about the nature of contested relations between classes, the shifting boundaries of domination, and modes of resistance are, I think, relevant to the present study. I have argued in this dissertation that Indian parishioners living in the Diocese of La Paz in the 1680s and 1690s used the pastoral visita, on the one hand, as a tool to protest conditions and forms of behavior which they felt violated the social and

³James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*, 301.

⁴Ibid., 39. See Antonio Gramsci *Selections from Prison Notebooks*. Transl. and ed. Quinten Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971).

⁵Ibid., xvi.

moral standards of their communities. Furthermore, some witnesses who testified during these decades capitalized on the opportunities that the pastoral visita presented, and used their time before ecclesiastical officials to condemn the priest or his associates for acts which were, in fact, largely unrelated to his priestly ministry. In these instances, the *visita y escrutinio* served as a forum for rival factions to express their displeasure over issues which divided the community or threatened sectional interests. These disputes frequently involved parish priests because of their central role in pueblo politics. In either case, it is my opinion that native leaders in particular who were active in the 1680s and 1690s bargained by complaint in an effort to legitimize their place in colonial society, and to attempt to preserve whatever advantages and privileges to which they felt themselves or their communities entitled.

Priests, as seen in their responses to the charges of neglect, did not stand idly by to let their reputations be sullied and their careers jeopardized by what they believed to be false incriminations. In short, they too fought for their rights and privileges, and also for the entitlements they felt they deserved as local leaders and as poorly-paid agents of the Church and Spanish Crown. Just as their parishioners resisted infringements on their liberties, priests throughout the 1680s and 1690s challenged the repeated attacks on their character, behavior, and job performance.

Visita authorities, as I point out in Chapter 6, acted as bureaucrats and arbiters in these local struggles for advantage and dominion. The application of law, as it pertained to priestly conduct, punishment, and victims' rights, was, as John Leddy Phelan among others have pointed out, a flexible apparatus in colonial Spanish America, and the bishops

and visitors-general of the Diocese of La Paz typically exercised restraint, stressed order to avoid confusion, and handled cases with the ultimate goal of maintaining the proper balance of power between priests and their parishioners. To be sure, they implicitly sanctioned corrupt behavior by priests by imposing such minor fines and penalties; of the ninety-eight cases that involved allegations of priestly malfeasance or sacerdotal neglect from 1680 to 1730, only ten priests had to pay fines of two hundred and fifty pesos or more, or were suspended or expelled from the diocese. Each of these priests, by the way and as I discuss in Chapter 7, were active in the diocese during the last two decades of the seventeenth century.

The documentary record suggests that unhappy parish priests, parishioners and visita officials frequently resorted to accommodation to iron out the many social, political and economic conflicts which plagued village society. Visitor-General Eguares y Pasquier and Bishop Queipo de Llano y Valdés constantly admonished priests in the 1680s and early 1690s to follow the *arancel* when they charged for religious services, to pay Indians for their personal service, and to discourage the continuance of the *alferasgo* and *camarico* if local Indians found the obligations too onerous and time-consuming. Rarely did priests receive fines for any of these transgressions, and this system of warnings usually worked since subsequent visitas to previously troubled parishes were almost always without incident. For the 1720s, the written archival evidence even confirms that grievances were commonly dealt with on informal level by the inclusion of the words “*se rremedió*” (it has been corrected) next to the point of contention. Indeed, and in all likelihood, conflicts between priests and parishioners throughout the period under review

probably ended, or at least were temporarily solved, through compromises and pledges of good faith which took place well beyond the scope of the visita trials.

In a visible way, this pattern of parishioners complaining, priests vehemently defending themselves against the charges, visita authorities using tolerance and pragmatism to decide cases, and the practice of accommodation by all parties to resolve disputes, engendered a type of social and moral equilibrium in village life in the 1680s and 1690s. In other words, parishioners viewed the visita as a concession that should be taken advantage of, and so they complained more often than not. Priests either were vindicated by favorable final sentences, compromised with their accusers, or paid minor fines for their alleged transgressions. And visita authorities legitimized the symbolic power and functionality of the Church by appearing every few years to make sure that peace, however tenuous, prevailed, and that the mission of God had not been seriously undermined.

After 1700, however, the pastoral visita ceased to be a regular and reliable point of contact between parishioners and visita authorities. Whether due to the indolence or administrative inefficiency initiated by Provisor Gerónimo de Cañizares Ybarra, or the destitution of the villages after the epidemics of the 1700s and 1710s, the bishops who served after Bishop Bernardo Carrasco de Saavedra (1694-97) inadvertently severed the connective ties which had linked higher Church officials to the rural and usually remote parishes. Parishioners in some districts, such as Suri and Laza, in fact, went nearly four decades without hosting visita authorities. If it can be argued that the pastoral visita was more than just a point of contact — that in fact it served as one of the main tools of

negotiation for privileges, rights and advantages between priests and their parishioners in earlier decades — then after 1700 it probably served as nothing more than a “public transcript”⁶ of social relations, which, as Scott points out, frequently gives a false impression of harmony, and hides the truth about sentiments and expectations between dominated and subject groups.

It is possible, as I discuss in Chapter 7, that priests and parishioners in fact did get along better in the later decades of this study. Perhaps priests behaved according to the many rules and regulations which strove to limit the degrees of their corrupt ways. Perhaps parishioners no longer enjoyed the authority and power that the cohesive communities of the late seventeenth century somehow managed to maintain due to *tributario* flight and demographic decline. Perhaps native elites realized that the pastoral visita no longer served as an effective mediating tool, and so they sought different avenues of complaint. Whatever the explanation for the ostensible lack of conflict in the first three decades of the eighteenth century between priests and parishioners, negotiations for power and privilege, as well as priestly corruption, likely did not suddenly end after 1697. In this regard, the first two explanations are less tenable, for, as Scott and others have convincingly argued, “corruption, like violence, must be understood as a regular, repetitive, integral part of the operation of most political systems.”⁷ This certainly

⁶Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, 2.

⁷James C. Scott, *Comparative Political Corruption* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1972), viii.

included the Spanish Empire in colonial America since it was a system founded on profound social, political, economic, and racial inequalities.

To conclude, Scott posits that domination is a constant negotiation, sometimes one side pushing hard, sometimes the other. He describes, for example, the realm of struggle between the rich and poor in post-colonial Malaysia as:

a constant process of testing and renegotiation of production relations between classes. On both sides — landlord-tenant, farmer-wage laborer — there is a never-ending attempt to seize each small advantage and press it home, to probe the limits of the existing relationship.⁸

Boundaries of authority and power, in other words, constantly shift, as do the means and methods to gain advantages, and to negotiate and bargain with rival groups. The 1680s and 1690s seem to represent a moment in the history of the Diocese of La Paz when the *visita y escrutinio* was a main tool used in the negotiations between parish priests and their parishioners. Perhaps parishioners before 1680 utilized a different method to protect their privileges and defend their “traditional view of social norms and obligations.”⁹ While the documentary record of the Archivo Central is notably lacking for information from this period, I suspect — given the tone and tenor of contested relations evident in the early 1680s — that both parishioners and priests were adept in the nuances of *visita* protocol and utilized their time before higher Church authorities to defend their personal or community interests. After 1700, clearly the pastoral *visita* lost some of its authority and ceased to function as it had earlier. Only further research and analysis of the ample body of

⁸Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*, 255.

⁹Thompson, “The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in Eighteenth-Century England,” 78.

post-1730 archival data located in the Archivo Central can resolve the question of whether or not the pastoral visita would again serve as a window into the social and political conflicts which surely existed between parish priests and their native parishioners as the colonial period moved onto its last century in this northern sector of Alto Perú.

APPENDIX A
DIOCESAN PARISHES IN 1627

In his report, Bishop Valencia listed each parish, its *advocación* (dedication to a patron-saint), as well as the respective yearly stipend (in pesos *ensayados*) of the resident priest in employment. The names of the villages contained in this appendix are spelled exactly as they appeared in the original document. Some parishes - most notably those under non-secular administration - were staffed by more than one priest. I point out that distinction by including the number of priests working in a given parish when that number exceeds one.

Corregimiento de Pacajes¹

Viacha	San Agustín	800 <i>pesos ensayados</i>
Caquingora	Santa Bárbara	700
Calacoto	Santiago	700
Machaca	Santiago	700
Machaca	San Andrés	700
Machaca (Jesús de)	Jesús	700
Caquiaviri	La Concepción (two)	1400
Guaqui	Santiago	700
Tiaguanaco	San Salvador	700

¹Bishop Valencia stated: "In this *corregimiento* there are three parishes in the villages of Callapa, Julloma, and Cuiaguara which were taken from this bishopric at the time when it was divided [in 1605]. [This action goes] against all justice on account of the fact that this *corregimiento* [Pacajes] is under the jurisdiction of this city. This issue is currently under appeal in the *consejo [de Indias]*." AGI, Charcas 138, 10 January, 1627.

Corregimiento de Caracollo²

Calamarca	Santiago	700
Hayo Hayo	San Salvador	700
Palca	Asunción de Nuestra Señora	700
Cohoni/Collana	San Bartolomé	700
Yanacachi	Santa Bárbara	700
Zapaqui	San Joseph	500
Lassa	San Pedro	500
Suri\Circuata	Santiago	700

Corregimiento de Omasuyo³

Achacache	San Pedro (two)	1400
Copacabana	Nuestra Señora de La Gran Veneración y Milagros	700
Carabuco	San Francisco	700

²Previously this *corregimiento* was referred to as Sicasica. It is unclear why Bishop Valencia choose the name Caracollo for this district, but it appears from the few extant records that the towns under the jurisdiction of the *corregidor* of Sicasica and Caracolla were the same. At the end of this section, Bishop Valencia wrote: "In the valley of Caracato works a *capellán* (chaplain) who is paid by the *hacendados* (of that district). From this *corregimiento*... (and) from this bishopric they took away in the division (the towns of) Luribaya, Mohosa, Cicacica and Caracollo...this is also under appeal." Ibid.

³Next to the entries of Copacabana, Guarina, and Pucarani, Bishop Valencia made notations which read: "they do not pay *seminario ni quarta*," references to monetary contributions to the *colegio seminario* of San Gerónimo in La Paz and a compulsory donation to the bishop's office of a quarter of monies collected for funeral services. Additionally, he described Copacabana as a place "where there is an image and sanctuary in honor of Our Lady of the Grand Veneration and Miracles. It is serviced by friars of Saint Augustine." Two friars of the Mercedarian order staffed the church in Guarina, and Pucarani - where "there is an image of many miracles" - was serviced by two Augustinian priests. Ibid.

Guarina	Nuestra Señora de la Merced (two)	1400
Ancoraymes	Santiago	700
Guaycho	Santiago	700
Pucarani	Nuestra Señora de la Encarnación (two)	1400
Laxa	San Pedro	700

Corregimiento de Larecaxa

Zorata	La Magdalena	700
Hilavaya	San Francisco	700
Cumbaya	San Francisco	700
Quiabaya	San Pedro	700
Ambana	Santiago	700
Ytalaque	San Miguel	700
Chuma	Asumpción de Nuestra Señora	700
Charasani	Santiago	700
Camata	Santiago	700
Songo	La Candelaria	700
Challana	Santiago	700
Mocomoco	San Pedro	700

Corregimiento de Paucarcolla⁴

Moho	San Pedro	700
Vilque	San Miguel	700
Guancane	Santiago	700
Puacarcolla	San Pedro	700
Tiquillaca	San Francisco	700
Ycho/Puno	San Juan	700
Coata/Capachica	Nuestra Señora de la Merced	1400

Gobernación de Chucuito⁵

Chucuito La Mayor	San Pedro	1000
Chucuito	San Pablo	780
Chucuito	San Domingo	780
Chucuito	Los Reyes	780
Acora	San Pedro	770
Acora	San Juan	770
Acora	La Concepción de Nuestra Señora	770
Hilavi	San Miguel	770
Hilavi	Santa Bárbara	770
Hilavi	La Concepción	770
Juli	San Pedro	770

⁴Bishop Valencia included the notation "*no pagan seminario ni quarta*" next to the entry of Coata/Capachica, along with the acknowledgment that friars from the Mercedarian order managed this parish. Ibid.

⁵Next to the Juli entries, Bishop Valencia wrote in the margin "*no pagan seminario ni quarta*." Further, he noted that the Jesuits serviced the parishes in Juli and that the three churches in Pomata were under the supervision of the Dominicans. (Ibid.)

Juli	San Juan Baptista	770
Juli	La Asunción	770
Juli	Santa Cruz	770
Pomata	Santiago	770
Pomata	San Martín	770
Pomata	San Miguel	770
Yunguyo	Santiago	770
Yunguyo	La Magdalena	770
Cepita	San Pedro	770
Cepita	Sancta Fé	770
Cepita	San Sebastián	770

APPENDIX B THE VISITA INTERROGATION

The following is a *verbatim* transcription of the questions Promotor Fiscal Francisco de Truxillo León asked visita witnesses in the trial against Bachiller Juan de Heredia conducted in June, 1683. The general content of these inquiries changed little in the fifty year span from 1680 to 1730, even if the language and the format varied slightly from one chief prosecutor to the next.

“Por las preguntas siguientes examinen los testigos que presentase el Promotor Fiscal en la ynformación y pesquisa secreta que se hace contra el Br. Don Juan de Heredia Cura Propia de esta Doctrina de Guaqui y contra Sus Ayudantes de sus costumbres y administración de su oficio desde la última visita-

1. Primeramente se an preguntados por el conosimiento de las partes y noticia desta visita-

Gen. - De las generales de la ley y que hedad tienen-

2. Y si saben que el dicho Cura y sus Ayudantes an procedido y proceden con la decencia que require su estado-

3. Y si saben que el dicho Cura y sus Ayudantes an tratado mal a sus feligreses y ynjuriándolos de obra o de palabra digan-

4. Y si saben que el dicho Cura y sus Ayudantes an administrado los Sanctos Sacramentos con puntualidad a sus Feligreses sin que por su culpa se an muerto alguno sin ellas digan-

5. Y si saben que el dicho Cura a administrado el Santo Sacramento de la penitencia y el de la comunión anualmente a sus feligreses haciendo padrones para ello y si a los que no cumplen con el precepto castiga severamente digan-

6. Y si saben que el dicho Cura enseña la Doctrina Christiana a sus feligreses todos los Domingos-

7. Y si saben que el dicho Cura a dicho missa todos los días de fiesta a hora competente y si a predicado el Santo Evangelio los Domingos explicando los misterios de nuestra Santa Fee a los Yndios en su idioma natural digan-

8. Y si saben que el dicho Cura a cantado la Salve todos los Savados solemnamente como fue obligado-

9. Y si saben que el dicho Cura a ido con puntualidad a las estancias a administrar los Sanctos Sacramentos, y por la ida lleva a los Indios gallinas, guebos, u otros generos, y si por escusar el trabajo hace traer los enfermos al Pueblo digan-

10. Y si saben que el dicho Cura ynduce a los enfermos a que otorguen sus memorias y testamentos ante los Sacristanes, Cantores, y otras personas de su afecto - Y si con mano de Cura añade en los testamentos legitimamente otorgados missas, possas, pendones o lugar de sepultura - o si obliga a los herederos a que pongan ofrendas en los cavos de año y días definados y despúes de pasados sale por las estancias a cobrar ofrendas por dicha razón digan-
11. Y si saben que el dicho Cura nombra violentamente los alferazgos llevando a los Indios el camarico y de ellos se siguen borracheras de que se originan muchos pecados digan-
12. Y si saben que el dicho Cura a tenido en su doctrina Padre Madre parientes o amigos y cõn esta ocasión an recevido los Indios algunos agravios digan-
13. Y si saben que el dicho Cura lleba más derechos de los que señala el arancel eclesiástico digan-
14. Y si saben que el dicho Cura a tratado o contratado en algunos generos mesclándose con los seculares digan-
15. Y si saben que el dicho Cura a hecho hilar o texer a las Indias depositándolas en su casa aunque sea para la Iglesia digan-
16. Y si saben que el dicho Cura a consentido algún amancebimiento público que por respectos humanos ocasionando con el ejemplo que vivan otros en mal estado digan -
17. Y si saben que el dicho Cura a tenido en su casa alguna muger de sospecha causando escándolo digan -
18. Y si saben que el dicho Cura publica los días de fiesta para que no travajasen sus feligreses y la vigalias para que ayunen digan-
19. Y si saben que el dicho Cura a casado algunos sin preceder las ynformaciones, moniciones y demás requisitos, y si las ynformaciones an sido por escrito digan-
20. Y si saben que el dicho Cura como Vicario a defendido la inmunidad eclesiástica, y si las causas que ante el pasaron las despacho sin hacer agravio a las partes ni llebar cohechos digan-
21. Y si saben que el dicho Cura a faltado sin licencia de su beneficio y si con ella a dejado en su lugar sacerdote aprovada para la administración de su oficio digan-
22. Y si saben que el dicho Cura lleba a los Indios forasteros el pesso ensayado de más de los derechos digan-
23. Y si saben que el dicho Cura a hecho la bendición de la Pila el Savado Santo digan-
24. Y si saben que el dicho Cura ayuda bien morir a los enfermos quando es llamado digan-

25. Y si saben que el dicho Cura paga en plata a los Indios su servicio personal y lo que le traen para su sustento por su justo precio y si tienen chacras o casa de juego digan-

26. Yten de público y notario pública voz y fama digan-¹

¹ACCFLM, Tomo 5, fol. 12-14r.

APPENDIX C
THE *SENTENCIA FINAL* OF PEDRO DE MONTESDOCA

The following is a *verbatim* transcription of the final sentence issued in the case against Pedro de Montesdoca in June of 1687. It is positioned on this page in approximately the same format as it appears in the original document.

“en la caussa de Vissita que ante nos a pendido y pende de oficio de la Justicia eclesiástica que administramos a pedimento del promotor fiscal de dha Vissita contra el Licenciado Don Pedro de Montesdoca cura de esta Doctrina de Ambaná y Vicario de esta Provincia sobre la aberiguación de su vida y costumbres y el usso de su oficio de cura y Vicario.

Visto Nuestro,

Hallamos atento a los Autos y méritos de la caussa que devemos declarar y declaramos que el dho Licenciado Don Pedro de Montesdoca a ssido buen cura y Vicario de esta doctrina por constar de la Ymformación sumaria que a pedimiento del Promotor Fiscal de esta dha Vissita por nos se recibió aver vivido onesta y virtuosamente conforme a su estado sacerdotal dando buen ejemplo con su vida y costumbres y aver ssido muy puntual en la administración de los Santos Sacramentos sin que por su culpa aya muerto algún sin ellos, ni dejado los de recevir todos los años para cumplir con los preceptos de Nra Santa Madre Yglesia haciendo padrones de toda la feligrecía y llamando por ellos a los que no vinieron dentro del término y castigándolos hasta que todos cumplieron con los dhos preceptos en desirles missa los Dominos y fiestas de guardar a ora competente que pudiesen averse juntado todos para oirla, en predicarles y haserles la doctrina en su lengua a los indios, y que a ssido muy caritatibo tratántandolos a todos bien de obra y de palabra sin llebarles obenciones por fuerza ni por las voluntarias excedido a lo que manda el Arancel y que les a pagado en plata su trabajo personal y lo que le an traydo para su sustento por su justo precio ajustándose en todo a la obligación de su oficio declaramos lo assi y le damos las gracias y lo bien que a obrado y por el selo con que asiste al Culto Divino y le encargamos lo continue para que en todo haga el servicio de Dios Nuestro Señor en desconseulo de la Real conciencia y nuestra y por esta nuestra sentencia sea difinitiva jugando assi lo pronunciamos y declaramos. Juan Obispo de la Paz.”¹

¹ACCFLM, Tomo 11, fol. 172-172r.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

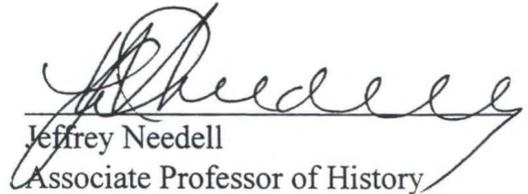
Caleb Paul Stevenson Finegan was born in Tucson, AZ, in 1966, and has attended schools in Medford, OK, Oklahoma City, OK, Galveston, TX, Nashville, TN, Madrid, Spain, and Gainesville, FL. He earned his B.A. (1988) in Spanish and M.A. (1993) in Latin American Studies from Vanderbilt University. He earned his Ph.D. from the University of Florida in History in 1999. He is married to Beth Huson Finegan and has a one son, Noah Lewis Finegan.

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy



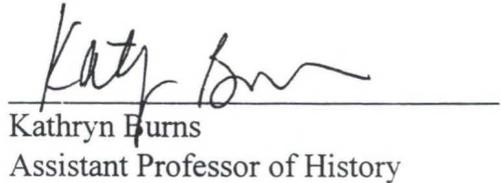
Murdo MacLeod, Chair
Graduate Research Professor of
History

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy



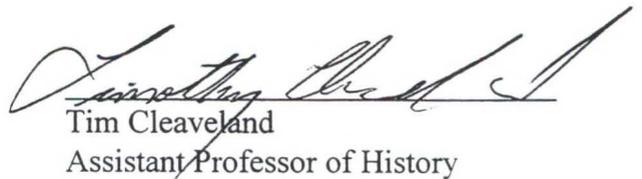
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Kathryn Burns
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Tim Cleaveland
Assistant Professor of History

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anna Peterson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Anna Peterson
Associate Professor of Religion

This dissertation was submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Department of History in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and to the Graduate School and was accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

December 1999

Dean, Graduate School