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# Las Casas and Serra as Representative Figures of the Beginning and the End of the Spanish Colonial Missionary Enterprise

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## Zusammenfassung

Diese vergleichende missionswissenschaftliche Studie untersucht die geistige Formung von Bartolomé de Las Casas OP und Junípero Serra OFM; sie zeigt, dass die unterschiedlichen Epistemologien und Praktiken beider Bettelorden ihre Evangelisierungsmethoden und ihre Antwort auf die Zeichen ihrer Zeit beeinflusst haben. Las Casas hatte seine Ausbildung in der dominikanischen Tradition des strengen Studiums und der thomistischen Intellektualität erhalten, und so trat er für eine Methode rationaler und friedlicher Bekehrung ein, die den Verstand durch Wort und Beispiel gewinnen sollte. Serra seinerseits übernahm eine Bekehrungsmethode, die darauf abzielte, den Willen durch ein diszipliniertes Leben in Missionsstationen zu »schulen«.

## Schlüsselbegriffe

→ Bartolomé de Las Casas  
→ Junípero Serra  
→ Bettelorden  
→ Scholastik  
→ Mission

## Abstract

This comparative missiological study examines the intellectual formation of Bartolomé de Las Casas OP and Junípero Serra OFM to argue that the differing epistemologies and praxes of their mendicant orders influenced both their methods of evangelisation and their responses to the signs of their times. Formed in the Dominican tradition of assiduous study and Thomistic intellectualism, Las Casas espoused a method of rational and peaceful conversion that informed the intellect by word and example. Formed in the Franciscan tradition of radical poverty and Scotist voluntarism, Serra adopted a method of conversion that »schooled« the will by a disciplined life on mission compounds.

## Keywords

→ Bartolomé de Las Casas  
→ Junípero Serra  
→ Mendicant orders  
→ Scholasticism  
→ Mission

## Sumario

Este estudio de misiología comparativa analiza la formación intelectual de Bartolomé de Las Casas OP y de Junípero Serra OFM. El estudio muestra que las diferentes epistemologías y prácticas de los dos órdenes mendicantes han influenciado sus métodos de evangelización y su respuesta a los signos de los tiempos. Las Casas recibió su formación en la tradición dominicana del estudio severo y de la intelectualidad tomista; por ello defendía un método de conversión racional y pacífica, que gane al entendimiento por la palabra y el ejemplo de vida. Serra por su parte asumió el método misionero que conducía a educar la voluntad por medio de una vida disziplinada en las poblaciones misioneras.

## Conceptos claves

→ Bartolomé de Las Casas  
→ Junípero Serra  
→ Mendicantes  
→ Escolástica  
→ Misión



## Introduction

Among the many missionaries who worked in the New World, few are more lauded or derided than Bartolomé de Las Casas OP (1484–1566) and Junípero Serra OFM (1713–84).<sup>1</sup> Although not contemporaries, these two missionaries represent both ends of the Spanish colonial missionary enterprise in the Americas. Las Casas worked during the initial sixteenth-century military conquest, civil colonisation, and religious evangelisation of the Indies in the circum-Caribbean – especially on the islands of Hispaniola and Cuba, the peninsula of Cumaná, and then in the regions of Guatemala, Oaxaca, and Chiapa.<sup>2</sup> Serra laboured during the eighteenth century in central New Spain as well as in Baja and Alta California during the final phase of this colonial missionary religious endeavour, which by that period had extended to California's northern region.<sup>3</sup>

However, the differences in their participation in the missionary enterprise were not limited to the periods and territories in which they toiled. Their different approaches in this evangelising endeavour were also derived from the distinctive intellectual formation they received from the particular mendicant Order to which they belonged: Las Casas, as a Dominican, was a member of the Order of Friars Preachers; Serra, as a Franciscan, was a member of the Order of Friars Minor. While as mendicant friars, these men had much in common, their respective Orders differed in their missiology, or theology of mission.<sup>4</sup> While missiology studies the common foundation of mission, which is the divine mandate to proclaim the Gospel to all nations, all religious institutes – including the mendicant Orders – have a distinctive foundation or charism, which contours how that particular religious institute witnesses to the divine mandate.<sup>5</sup> According to Christian belief, charisms are special callings and aptitudes given by the Spirit of God to the Church in order that the Gospel may be proclaimed in ways appropriate for and in response to the changing needs of different historical periods.<sup>6</sup> In addition to the study of these common and distinctive foundations of mission, missiology also studies mission *praxis*, which is how the particular religious institute carries out the enterprise of evangelisation. As will be seen, the missiologies of the Dominicans and Franciscans differed – both in their particular foundational charisms as well as in their mission praxis.

1 For a brief summary of Las Casas's critics, see Fray Bartolomé DE LAS CASAS, *Brevisima relación de la destrucción de las Indias*, ed. Isacio Pérez Fernández, Madrid 1999, 917–38. Scholars who praise Las Casas include the following: Manuel Giménez Fernández, Lewis Hanke, Manuel M. Martínez, Vicente D. Carro, Marcel Bataillon, André Saint-Lu, Helen Rand Parish, Isacio Pérez Fernández, Gustavo Gutiérrez, among others. Current scholarship about the California missionary enterprise of the Franciscans ranges from the Edward D. Castillo's negative assessment to Francis F. Guest's more positive interpretation. See James A. SANDOS, *Converting California*, New Haven, CT 2004, ix.

2 These latter regions would later correspond to the modern regions of northern Venezuela, Central America, and Mexico.

3 The modern-day locales of Serra's labours include the state of Querétaro in Mexico and of California in the United States.

4 In Christianity, the word »mission« is derived from the Latin *mitto* – meaning »I send,« and refers to the sending of someone to preach the Gospel to those who have not yet heard it. In the New Testament, »mission« also reflects the Greek word, *apostello*. An »apostle« was thus someone who was »sent« by Jesus with the message of salvation. For four meanings in Catholic usage of the concept of »mission,« see M. N. I. COUVE DE MURVILLE, *The man who founded California: the life of Blessed Junípero Serra*, San Francisco 2000, 42–3, (hereinafter cited as *Man who founded*).

5 Hans-Jürgen FINDEIS, *Missiology*, in: Karl MÜLLER/Theo SUNDERMEIER/Stephen B. BEVANS/Richard H. BLIESE (Hg.), *Dictionary of mission: theology, history, perspectives*, Maryknoll, NY 1999, 299–303.

6 An example of charism as a response to the needs of the time was the establishment of renewed monasteries of monks in thirteenth-century Europe. The need for internal Church reform and for alternatives to the anti-clerical and anti-institutional Waldensian movement as well as to the dualistic heresies of Albigensian Manichaeism generated a renewal of monasticism as a means of individual salvation. Monks, such as the Cistercians (and the Benedictines since the fifth century), followed a rhythm of daily life centered on prayer, community life, and manual work within the confines of the monastery and its property, as well as on living the three evangelical vows. Monks also professed a vow of stability – that is, they vowed to live out their lives in the monastery they entered. There was a call to imitate the life of the contemplative Christ – rather than to an active apostolic life as is the call for mendicant Orders and other apostolic religious institutes.



Mendicant Orders transmitted their distinctive missiology to their candidates through an initial period of intellectual formation in the novitiate and the *studium*. During the first year or the novitiate, study of the particular history of each Order would have enculturated the candidates in the Order's mission *praxis* and in the ministerial expressions of its particular mendicant charism. During the second and following years or the *studium*, study of certain philosophic-theological thought would have schooled the candidates in their respective Order's epistemology of mission and, particularly, in the kind of scholasticism that the Order espoused. Given these considerations, the formation that Las Casas received from the Dominicans and that Serra received from the Franciscans differed.

To understand these differences, this study first presents the kinds of intellectual formation that Las Casas and Serra received in their pre-entrance experiences, as well as those of the novitiate and *studium*. Then this study addresses two distinctive differences in their intellectual formation as friars. The first pertains to ministerial expressions of the mendicant charism that were generated by the historical traditions of their respective Orders. The second derives from their scholastic training – from the differing Thomist and Scotist perspectives on the relationship between intellect and will; these perspectives were discernible in each friars' approach to the process of conversion. This study argues that these differences significantly shaped the friars' participation in the missionary enterprise as they responded to the »signs of the times« in the different eras in which they lived.

### Pre-entrance Experiences

The intellectual formations of Las Casas and Serra prior to entering their respective mendicant Orders were, in part, a function of both geographic and socio-economic location. As such, their pre-entrance experiences reflected differences in opportunities, which, in turn, influenced their choices both of a mendicant Order and of the kind of priesthood they sought.

Bartolomé de Las Casas was born in 1484 into the middle-class merchant family of Pedro (Peñalosa) de Las Casas and Isabel de Sosa in the southern Spanish Andalusian city of Seville.<sup>7</sup> Two hundred and twenty-nine years later – in 1713, Miguel José Serra was born into the working-class peasant-farmer family of Antonio Nada Serra and Margarita Rosa Ferrer in the municipality of Petra, located on the island of Majorca – the largest of the Balearic Islands off the Mediterranean coast of Spain.<sup>8</sup>

Yet more than time and geography differentiated these two well-known missionaries. Their linguistic opportunities and geographic mobility also varied. Since Spain was a highly regionalised realm comprised of areas such as Castile, Catalonia, Galicia, and

7 Manuel GIMÉNEZ FERNÁNDEZ, Fray Bartolomé de las Casas: A Biographical Sketch, in: Juan Friede and Benjamin Keen (eds), *Bartolomé de las Casas in history: toward an understanding of the man and his work*, DeKalb, IL 1971, 67-9 (hereinafter cited as »Biographical Sketch«); Isacio PÉREZ FERNÁNDEZ, *Inventario documentado de los escritos de Fray Bartolomé de las Casas*, revisado por Helen Rand Parish, Madrid 1981, 92-7, (hereinafter cited as *Inventario*).

8 Martin MORGADO, Junípero Serra's legacy, Pacific Grove, CA 1987, 3; John H. LOTH, *Catholicism on the march: the California missions*, New York 1961, 19, (hereinafter cited as *Catholicism*); Francisco PALÓU, *Relación histórica de la vida y apostólicas tareas del venerable Padre Fray Junípero Serra*, prefacio e introducción por Miguel León-Portilla, Mexico 1970, 13, (hereinafter cited as *Relación histórica*); Ernest INGOLD, *The house in Mallorca*, San Francisco, CA 1950, 3.

9 GIMÉNEZ FERNÁNDEZ, »Biographical Sketch«, 68-9; COUVE DE MURVILLE, *Man who founded*, 13-4; Don DENEVI and Noel Francis MOHOLY, *Junípero Serra: the illustrated story of the Franciscan founder of California's missions*, San Francisco, CA 1985, 13, (hereinafter cited as *Illustrated story*); Maynard J. GEIGER, *The life and times of Fray Junípero Serra, OFM or the man who never turned back (1713-1784)*, Richmond, VA 1959, 284, (hereinafter cited as *Life and times*);



Navarre, a variety of languages characterised this Iberian dominion. Accordingly, Las Casas's mother tongue was *castellano*; Serra's was *mallorquín*, a dialect of *catalán*. In time, Las Casas learned Latin, as did Serra; in addition, the Mallorcan also mastered *castellano*. Later in life, Serra learned the *Pames* indigenous language and possibly French; Las Casas studied the rudiments of an indigenous tongue while in Guatemala. During his youth, Las Casas also crossed regional borders to study in another urban centre (Salamanca), while in contrast Serra remained on an island of peasant villages, farmlands, and one urban centre (Palma).<sup>9</sup>

The early academic training of both Las Casas and Serra further reflected the effects of geographic and class differences on opportunity. During the five years (1493-1498) that Las Casas's well-connected and broadly-travelled father was in the Indies working as a provisions merchant, Bartolomé studied »Latin and letters« in his home city of Seville at the cathedral school of San Miguel, which was founded by the famous Latinist and grammarian Antonio de Nebrija.<sup>10</sup> Serra, whose parents could neither read nor write and who desired a better education for their small-of-stature son, was educated at the friary school of the Franciscans of San Bernardino in the town of Petra. There Serra learned to read and write, as well as studied Latin and mathematics. The young Miguel also mastered the catechism and music – especially Gregorian chant, which was used at Mass and in singing the Divine Office.<sup>11</sup>

Their formal studies in preparation for the priesthood also differed. Las Casas was fourteen years of age when he told his father in 1498 that he wanted to become a secular (or diocesan) priest. Having returned to Spain as part of the second voyage of Columbus, and having garnered newfound wealth in the New World, Las Casas's father sent Bartolomé to study the academic discipline of canon law in preparation for the priesthood at Salamanca – the best university in Spain at the time.<sup>12</sup>

Serra was almost sixteen years old when, in 1729, he told his parents of his desire to become a »regular« or »religious« priest. To bring their son's desire to fruition, his financially-struggling parents arranged a barter agreement with a canon (cleric) stationed at the cathedral in Palma, the capital of the island. In return for payment of room and board at the priest's house, the cleric supervised Serra's moral and religious activities as well as tutored him in the recitation of Divine Office in choir. During this year at the cathedral, Serra also studied philosophy at the convent of San Francisco in Palma. This Franciscan school prepared their candidates for the religious priesthood, and also those studying for the diocesan priesthood and for secular professions. In 1730, having completed the prerequisite preliminary studies for regular clergy, Serra requested admission into the Franciscan mendicant Order. He was seventeen years old.<sup>13</sup>

Las Casas did not request admission into the Dominican mendicant Order until 1522. Instead, in 1501, at the age of seventeen, Las Casas received minor Orders as well as

Rafael Heliodoro VALLE, »Fray Junípero Serra and his apostolate in Mexico,« *The Americas* iii (1950), 279.

<sup>10</sup> Manuel GIMÉNEZ FERNÁNDEZ, »Bartolomé de las Casas en el IV centenario de su muerte,« in: *Arbor* lxxv (1966), 269-329, 273; Isacio PÉREZ-FERNÁNDEZ, *Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas: Brevisima relación de su vida, diseño de su personalidad, síntesis de su doctrina*, Burgos 1984, 20.

<sup>11</sup> Even though peasant farmers, his parents were so well thought of by the clergy that those stationed at the Church of Petra accepted their son, Miguel, for gratuitous instruction in Latin, music, and the techniques of »the holy profession.« COUVE DE MURVILLE, *Man who founded*, 15; Loth, *Catholicism*, 19.

<sup>12</sup> Bartolomé de LAS CASAS, *The only way*, ed. Helen Rand Parish, trans. Francis Patrick Sullivan, New York 1992, 13.

<sup>13</sup> COUVE DE MURVILLE, *Man who founded*, 15-20; Loth, *Catholicism*, 19.



the tonsure in Seville, and then left Spain in early 1502 to work in Hispaniola for five years as a provisioner, farmer, and catechist.<sup>14</sup> However, in 1506, he returned to Spain where, in the following year, at the age of twenty-three, he was ordained in Rome – thus achieving his goal of becoming a secular priest. During this time, he also furthered his intellectual formation by resuming studies in canon law autodidactically. In this and other branches of learning throughout his life, Las Casas was disciplined in thought and action, as was Serra.<sup>15</sup>

In 1507, Las Casas returned to the New World as a gentleman-cleric, and also became a »good« *encomendero* – intent on being »a man of peace in the face of any violence.«<sup>16</sup> This desire became powerfully focused after his alleged prophetic conversion experience in 1514, and his subsequent renunciation of his *encomienda*. As a consequence – from 1516 to 1520, Las Casas lobbied vigorously for more equitable and just treatment of the indigenous peoples by means of memorials, projects, and proposals presented to the Spanish court. In addition, his intellectual pursuits during these years in Spain included earning a *Bachillerato* and a *Licenciado* in canon law as well as studying under, and consulting with, royal canonist preachers and Dominican scholastics. In 1522, after attempting unsuccessfully to employ rational and peaceful means to evangelise the indigenous communities surrounding Cumaná, Las Casas requested admission to the Dominican mendicant Order.<sup>17</sup> He was thirty-eight years old.

These pre-entrance experiences of Las Casas and Serra differed in both content and duration. Las Casas's pre-entrance intellectual formation consisted of rigorous formal and persistent autodidactic study in his pursuit of the priesthood and of expertise in canon law – both of which were facilitated by his well-honed skill as a Latinist.<sup>18</sup> Serra's pre-entrance intellectual formation was less formal and specialised. However, his early studies in Latin, mathematics, and philosophy did constitute an initial step toward his future scholarship as a Franciscan friar and university professor.<sup>19</sup>

The most significant difference in their pre-entrance experiences was the kind of priesthood that each sought. Las Casas achieved his goal of the diocesan priesthood, and functioned as a secular cleric in the Indies and Spain for eighteen years; only after this, in 1522, did he decide to become a Dominican friar and, as such, would embrace the life of a regular cleric in the religious priesthood. Initially, as a secular cleric, Las Casas was under the direct jurisdiction of the local bishop, to whom he made a promise of obedience and of adherence to the discipline of celibacy, but he was not bound by vows (either simple or solemn) to the observance of the Rule of a religious institute. In contrast, Serra aspired to become a regular cleric or religious priest. Accordingly, the teenaged Serra entered the Franciscan mendicant Order, where he first professed the

14 GIMÉNEZ FERNÁNDEZ cited Las Casas's own account stating that he received the tonsure in 1501 shortly before going to the Indies; Giménez Fernández believed that Las Casas received the tonsure at that time because of his knowledge of Latin. See his »Biographical Sketch«, 70. Both Helen Rand Parish (interview, 12 February 2001) and Giménez Fernández contended that Las Casas received minor Orders (sacristan, lector, exorcist, and Church custodian) prior to his first trip to the Indies. Pérez Fernández contended that it was later. PÉREZ FERNÁNDEZ, *Inventario*, 183-8.  
15 DENEVI and MOHOLY, *Illustrated story*, 33.

16 LAS CASAS, *The only way*, 15. Borges, who studied different conceptions of the secular priesthood in the sixteenth century, maintained that Las Casas simply chose the ecclesiastical state over a purely secular state in society. PEDRO BORGES, *Quién era Bartolomé de las Casas*, Madrid 1990, 40-4.

17 For details concerning Las Casas's pre-Dominican life and labours, see LAS CASAS, *The only way*, 1-37; Manuel GIMÉNEZ FERNÁNDEZ, *Bartolomé de las Casas: delegado de Cisneros para la reformatión de Las Indias 1516-1517*, Madrid 1984; Lewis HANKE and Manuel GIMÉNEZ FERNÁNDEZ, *Bartolomé de las Casas*

1474-1566: bibliografía crítica y cuerpo de materiales para el estudio de su vida, escritos, actuación y polémicas que suscitaron durante cuatro siglos, Santiago de Chile 1954, 1-42; Manuel GIMÉNEZ FERNÁNDEZ, *Bartolomé de las Casas: capellán de S. M. Carlos I, poblador de Cumaná (1517-1523)*, Madrid 1984, 1222-3, (hereinafter cited as *Las Casas: capellán*); Henry RAUP WAGNER and Helen RAND PARISH, *The life and writings of Bartolomé de las Casas*, Albuquerque, NM 1967, 4-69; Isacio PÉREZ FERNÁNDEZ, *Cronología documentada de los viajes, estancias y actuaciones de Fray Bartolomé de las Casas*, Madrid 1984, 183-313.



three evangelical vows of material poverty, consecrated celibacy, and holy obedience, as well as lived this vowed life in Franciscan community, before he was ordained a religious priest as a mendicant friar in 1738/39. He was twenty-five or twenty-six years of age.<sup>20</sup>

### Formation in the Novitiate and *Studium*

Mendicant Orders, like all religious institutes, socialised their candidates in religious life and in the particular charism of their institute through a period of years of seclusion and concentrated study. During the novitiate, which is also known as the »canonical year,« the candidates' daily routine consisted of regular prayer, spiritual meditation, common liturgy, spiritual reading, sacred study, instruction from the Novice Master, acts of mortification, manual labour, and cloistered silence. While the specific details of Las Casas's novitiate are still unknown, its substance can be inferred from the Dominican *ratio* – the standard for friars' formation that has changed little since the Order's foundation.<sup>21</sup> Serra's novitiate training as a Franciscan is known and recorded. Reportedly, he embraced the rigorous ascetic discipline of the canonical year with great diligence, and nurtured his spiritual advancement with books about mysticism and asceticism.<sup>22</sup> For both mendicant friars, the novitiate also consisted of initiation into the mendicant way of following Christ by living a life of poverty.

The novices' intellectual formation included the study of Latin, patristics, and martyrology (the lives of the saints) as well as ecclesial and secular history.<sup>23</sup> While Serra's novitiate included these basic studies, Las Casas's programme of studies was likely accelerated, given his proven linguistic ability in Latin, his significant understanding of canon law, and his considerable knowledge of the Church Fathers and the saints, as well as of the history of Church and society.<sup>24</sup> In addition, would-be mendicants studied scripture. For all friars, including Las Casas and Serra, this fundamental study of the Bible began in the novitiate and continued throughout the period of the *studium* and beyond.

The future friars also studied the history and tradition of their respective religious institutes, which included continued study of their mendicant charism and initiation into its ministerial works. Records show that Serra read the history of the Franciscans as well as the Order's chronicles – particularly those from the Spanish provinces and from the Franciscan missions in foreign lands.<sup>25</sup> Las Casas was surely acquainted with much of Dominican history and tradition because of his extensive experience with Dominicans on both sides of

18 Las Casas's clerical education was one of the best at the time. Three programs for clergy education were established at the end of the fifteenth century; these were in 1) monastic schools, 2) episcopal schools, and 3) universities. Las Casas seemingly participated in the programs of both episcopal schools and universities. These programs for clerical education remained the norm until the Council of Trent (1545-63). Prior to the late 1400s, clerical education had been adversely affected by the confusion during the Avignon papacy (c1308-c1377), by the demographic collapse because of the Black Death (1348), and by the problems attendant to the

western schism (1378-1417). Indeed, at one time during those tumultuous years, a man could become a cleric if he could read and write, as well as possessed a Bible and a catechism. Additionally, until Trent, a »cleric« could receive a benefice even if he were under the age of 14 years.

19 LOTH, *Catholicism*, 19.

20 Serra was not ordained in 1736 with the rest of his class, who were studying for the priesthood, because he had not reached the age of twenty-four years as stipulated in a canon law requirement that was in effect by the seventeenth century. See LOTH, *Catholicism*, 20, 24; GEIGER, *Life and times*, 25.

21 GIMÉNEZ FERNÁNDEZ, *Las Casas: capellán*, 1222-3.

22 COUVE DE MURVILLE, *Man who founded*, 15-20.

23 DENEVI and MOHOLY, *Illustrated story*, 33; GEIGER, *Life and times*, 18-20; Manuel María MARTÍNEZ, *Fray Bartolomé de las Casas: »Padre de América,«* Madrid 1958, 2-3; Ramón Jesús QUERALTO MORENO, *El pensamiento filosófico-político de Bartolomé de las Casas*, Sevilla 1976, 389-403.

24 GIMÉNEZ FERNÁNDEZ, *Las Casas: capellán*, 1222-3.

25 COUVE DE MURVILLE, *Man who founded*, 21; PALÓU, *Relación histórica*, 13-16.



the Atlantic; accordingly, he might not have engaged extensively in such studies during his formal formation years. In any case, these kinds of studies – of basic subjects, sacred texts, and the historical traditions of their respective Orders – constituted important dimensions of the intellectual formation of candidates for religious life, whether Dominican or Franciscan.

Upon completion of novitiate studies, the candidates became members of their respective mendicant Orders by profession of the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. In 1731, Serra professed the three vows as a Franciscan friar, and received the religious name of »Fray Junípero.«<sup>26</sup> The date of Las Casas's profession of the evangelical vows is unknown, however – following custom of the Order, he probably professed vows in the year after entrance: 1523. His name was not changed.

After this first year of initiation into the religious and mendicant life, both friars entered the *studium* period of their respective Orders, during which they concentrated on the study of philosophy and theology. This period of intellectual formation built upon the areas of studies initiated in the novitiate, and continued the study and living of a religious way of life.

The length of this academic study could and did vary. In 1526 – four years after he entered, Las Casas finished his Dominican *studium*.<sup>27</sup> From 1531 to 1534, and in accord with the Franciscan *studium*, Serra first took a three-year course in philosophy and then studied theology for three more years. After this *studium* and his ordination to the priesthood, Serra continued additional studies in theology and, in 1742, earned a doctorate in theology at the age of twenty-nine.<sup>28</sup>

This general profile of the friars' studies in the novitiate and *studium* contains two important sources of variation in the character of their intellectual formation. The first derives from the similar and yet dissimilar histories and traditions of the Dominicans and the Franciscans, which uncover both commonalities and differences in the ministerial expressions of the mendicant charism. The second pertains to the philosophic-theological studies taught in the *studia* of the Dominicans and of the Franciscans, which differed significantly in the branch of scholasticism that each mendicant Order espoused.

### Ministerial Expressions of the Mendicant Charism

The ministerial expressions of the Dominicans' and Franciscans' foundational charisms were responses to the signs of their times. Both mendicant Orders originated in the thirteenth century during a time of political and religious crisis of values as well as of high medieval pan-societal corruption. A new emerging strata of European urban society – a »middle class« of merchants – was embarking on a power struggle with the nobility to dismantle the old feudal system in which nobles exercised significant power in local affairs. The wealth of the institutional Church hierarchy as well as the immoral and scandalous practices of many of its clergy eroded the Church's long-held Christian ideals. Partially in response to the civil and ecclesiastical

26 LOTH, *Catholicism*, 19. While often it was a common practise in religious institutes (whether monastic, mendicant, or other apostolic groups) for their candidates to take a religious name, this was apparently not the rule for the Order of the Friars Minor of Regular Observance. However, the Franciscans on the island of Majorca had the privilege, presumably papal, of taking a new name upon making religious profession. This change of their nominal identity symbolised their

taking on a new life. Serra requested and received the religious name of Junípero in honor of a lay companion of Francis of Assisi named Junípero. See Kenneth M. KING, *Mission to paradise: the story of Junípero Serra and the missions of California*, Chicago, IL 1973, 6-7. As all Franciscan Observants, Serra renewed his vows each year on the anniversary of the date that Innocent III orally approved Francis' primitive Rule. GEIGER, *Life and times*, 21-2.

27 GIMÉNEZ FERNÁNDEZ, *Las Casas: capellán*, 1222-3.

28 Serra's superiors recognised his keen intellect and capacity to learn during his novitiate, and singled him out to be a professor in the Order. DENEVI and MOHOLY, *Illustrated story*, 21, 33.

29 BEDOUELLE, *Saint Dominic*, 23-45; HINNEBUSCH, *Breve historia*, 15-9.



disorder and corruption, heretical sects developed in southern France and northern Italy, and laity challenged Church doctrine and authority. Genuine reform was needed in the Church among clergy and laity. In response to this need, Dominic Guzmán (1170–1221), a cleric and the son of Castilian nobility, founded the Dominican Order in 1217 as the »Order of Friars Preachers,« and Francis of Assisi (1182–1226), a layman and the son of an Italian merchant, founded the Franciscan Order in 1209 as the »Order of the Friars Minor.«<sup>29</sup> The history of these Orders shows that initially Dominic pursued clerical reform and Francis addressed lay reform.

Prior to founding the Order – in 1196, Dominic Guzmán joined the austere Canons Regular at the cathedral of Osma in Castile and was ordained a diocesan priest. After travelling to Denmark on diplomatic missions in 1203 and 1205 with diocesan Bishop Diego de Azevedo, Father Dominic and the bishop preached for four years in southern France against the ascetic Albigensian and Waldensian heretics. Their experiences at this time convinced both the cleric and the bishop that these heretical movements could only be corrected by a revival of apostolic life in the form of qualified travelling preachers to proclaim orthodox Christianity and in the form of the mendicant example – that is, »barefoot and begging« as did the early Apostles. As Dominic's ministry quickly expanded in Europe and as Cistercian monks and orthodox lay people joined in the preaching effort, the need for learned preachers became increasingly evident and generated Dominic's emphasis on study.<sup>30</sup> Subsequently, in 1215, Dominic gained permission from Innocent III to consolidate the travelling preachers into a religious group. Dominic also requested and secured papal privilege for these austere and learned itinerant friars to preach and to hear confessions anywhere without authorisation from local episcopal authorities. In late 1216, the new pontiff, Honorius III, approved the preachers as an ecclesial organisation that followed the Rule of Saint Augustine; in early 1217, the pontiff confirmed their establishment as the Order of Friars Preachers – the second new mendicant Order, the first being the Franciscans.<sup>31</sup>

Before founding this first mendicant Order, Francis of Assisi allegedly underwent two conversion experiences.<sup>32</sup> As a result, in 1206, he was a hermit and lay oblate at San Damiano under the jurisdiction of the local bishop. His second conversion experience took place in 1208, while listening at Mass to the Gospel reading about Jesus Christ sending out the apostles as preachers and with virtually no possessions. Francis subsequently changed his lifestyle from that of a hermit-penitent to that of a mendicant-apostolic-preacher. Other rich and poor laymen soon joined the *poverello* (the poor one) – as Francis was called. Accordingly, from the nucleus of Francis' dwelling in the abandoned chapel of Porziuncola, the Gospel-based mendicant movement among the laity was born – intent on a renewal of the apostolic life through preaching and strict poverty. As the Gospel mandated, friars travelled in pairs to preach the Gospel, and took »nothing for [the] journey.« Indeed, these followers of Francis came to be known as the »Friars Minor« to indicate that these mendicants lived as true »little« brothers and that, as true »minores,« they lived according to the model of Christ and the apostles. In

30 Guy BEDOUELLE, *Saint Dominic: the grace of the word*, Mary Thomas Noble (trans.), San Francisco 1982, 49–88.

31 William A. Hinnebusch, *Breve historia de la Orden de Predicadores*, Salamanca 2000, 16–8, (hereinafter cited as *Breve historia*); M. H. VICAIRE, *Saint Dominic and his times*, Kathleen Pond (trans.), Green Bay, WI 1964, 293. For a succinct summary of the development of the Order of Friars Preachers, see the Order's internation-

al website at <http://www.op.org/international/English/History/order.htm>.

32 As a young man, Francis led a turbulent life, which included participation in the civil war against the Assisi nobility, dreams of knighthood, and a boisterous nightlife. An alleged subsequent conversion experience, in which the crucifix in San Damiano Church »spoke« to Francis telling him to repair the old semi-abandoned Church, marked a turning point in his life. Contrary to the expectations of

his father, Pietro de Bernardone, and in open conflict with him, Francis started the work. As he begged for stones and alms for the renovation, he began to identify with beggars and outcasts.



1209, a preliminary Rule, written by Francis, received oral approval from Innocent III, as well as the pontiff's confirmation of the establishment of the Order of Friars Minor. After the original Rule was lost, Francis and two canonist friars rewrote the Rule as the *Regula bullata*, which was approved by the Franciscan friars in 1221, and ratified by Honorius III in 1223.<sup>33</sup>

The Dominican and Franciscan mendicant Orders were similar in many respects. In time, both Orders sought to revive the apostolic life and to focus their ministries in urban areas: the Franciscans in response to rampant materialism and corruption in the Church, and the Dominicans in reaction to heretical movements and scandalous behaviours. Both Orders were established with the particular charism of preaching, teaching, and witnessing to the Gospel by embracing poverty; for both, this meant that no friar possessed property and, initially, neither mendicant Order held communal property of any kind.<sup>34</sup> Both Orders had branches of women religious.<sup>35</sup> Both Orders also became pontifical religious institutes, and thus were not subject to local bishops and other diocesan Church functionaries. Both Orders gradually expanded their preaching, teaching, and witness to the Gospel to foreign lands.

The Dominican and Franciscan ministerial expressions of their mendicant charism also differed. What was particularly different about the Dominican Order was Dominic's insistence on study as an essential component of preaching. Although the Dominicans became a predominantly clerical Order as clerics and learned laymen were attracted to the Order, most clergy in the thirteenth century were uneducated and thus lacked the formal education to adequately defend Church teaching, for example, against heresies. Dominic insisted that, without study, the friars would not be able to initiate and sustain dialogue with heretical groups, nor would they be able to preach what they did not or could not understand. For Dominic, intellectual preparation was an absolute necessity not only to teach orthodox Christianity and to refute heresies, but also to search for truth and to disseminate it in any possible situation.<sup>36</sup> To achieve this, Dominic required study as an essential part of the formation of a preacher as well as for preaching. Indeed, this innovative requirement of continuous study was the reason why the friars quickly concentrated on developing priories and centres of theological studies near the new medieval major universities: initially, in Paris and Bologna; in time, at Oxford and Salamanca, among others. Overtime, such centres also generated illustrious Dominican

33 For a chronology of the history of the Order of Friars Minor, see »The Franciscan experience: living the Gospel through the centuries,« [online] Available at <http://www.christusrex.org/www1/ofm/fra/FRAmain.html>.

34 Charles H. LIPPY, Robert CHOQUETTE, and Stafford POOLE, *Christianity comes to the Americas: 1492-1776*, New York 1992, 7-8; Robert RICARD, *La conquista espiritual de México: ensayo sobre el apostolado y los métodos misioneros de las órdenes en la Nueva España de 1523-1524 a 1572*, Ciudad de México 1986, 83-7.

35 Two notable women, among others, were the Dominican Catherine of Siena and the Franciscan Clare of Assisi.

36 BEDOUELLE, *Saint Dominic*, 155-68.

37 Justo L. GONZALEZ, *The story of Christianity*, New York 1984, 305; BEDOUELLE, *Saint Dominic*, 138-54.

38 The Franciscans' first university professor was Alexander of Hales, a secular Master at the University of Paris. After he entered the Franciscans in 1236, his student, Bonaventure, as well as other students also joined the Order. Omer Englebert contended that the Dominicans and Franciscans became theological rivals during the Middle Ages (Omer ENGLEBERT, *The last of the conquistadores: Junípero Serra (1713-1784)*, Katherine Woods, trans. Westport 1956, 8); see also Bernard F. REILLY, *The medieval Spains*, Cambridge 1993, 154-5.

39 The dissension was seemingly precipitated when in 1228 Gregory IX built a basilica in Assisi to honor Francis who had just been canonised. Adjacent to the basilica, the pope also built a convent for the friars. The Observant

friars condemned the buildings, and particularly the residence for the friars, as inconsistent with Francis' rule and ideal of poverty.

40 BEDOUELLE, *Saint Dominic*, 138-54.

41 The Dominicans' governance and organisation benefited from the expertise of Friar Reginald, who was a teacher of canon law at the University of Paris, as well as from the expert leadership of Jordan of Saxony, who became the second Master General of the Order. While the Franciscans did have the expertise of Leo and Bonizo – two canonist friars from Bologna, the governance and structure of the Franciscan Order tended to develop in increments as disputes over poverty were addressed, whereas the Dominican form of governance remained relatively uniform and stable throughout the centuries.



scholars, such as Albert the Great (c. 1200–1280) and Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) whose teachings were influential in both intellectual and ecclesial circles.<sup>37</sup>

The Franciscans, however, became a predominantly lay Order as both rich and poor laymen were attracted to the Order and to its mendicant charism that initially and explicitly engendered the mission of preaching and of modelling a Gospel-based spirituality for the laity, which included living a life of poverty. In time, their ministry to the urban poor also extended to students and secular masters in newly established universities. Indeed, the followers of Francis of Assisi (like those of Dominic de Guzmán) studied at (and lived in friaries near) universities such as Oxford and Paris, as well as set up learning centres near universities such as Bologna and Salamanca.<sup>38</sup> Franciscan friars also rose to great stature as theologians in major universities, as did John Duns Scotus (c. 1266–1308) and William of Ockham (c. 1287–1347). However, the Franciscans did not legislate study as an essential component of preaching and teaching as did the Dominicans.

What was particularly different about the Franciscan Order was its emphasis on strict poverty and their subsequent centuries-long struggle about the appropriate level of poverty. Francis taught that absolute poverty signified both the credibility of the friars' trust in God's providence as well as a way of freedom that facilitated their going unencumbered anywhere to preach the Gospel. However, shortly after the death of Francis, internal divisions related to poverty emerged among the Franciscans.<sup>39</sup> Many friars wanted to maintain Francis' strict poverty in all aspects of their lives and to restrict the friars' dwellings to hermitages: they simply wanted to live exactly as the saintly *poverello* did, so they resisted any modification – including from the papacy – of Francis' example and his Rule; these Franciscans were known from 1368 onwards as the Friars of Regular Observance. Others wanted to adapt their witness to poverty according to the needs of the time and, like the Dominican friars who lived in priories and houses, these Franciscan friars wanted to continue to build *conventus* and to live together. By the mid-1400s, these friars would be known as Conventuals (from the Latin word *conventus*, which refers to the collective dwelling in which many friars lived). The changes proposed (and some already made) by the Conventuals implied corporate ownership of property by the Order as well as the handling of money by the friars. The Friars of Regular Observance charged that Francis would have forbidden such modifications.

In the Dominican mendicant Order, where moderate poverty was embraced, such dissensions about poverty were less common. This was in part because the regulation about personal and communal possessions was modified for certain Dominican houses in the early fifteenth century and, in 1447, Sixtus IV granted permission to the entire Order to hold property in common.<sup>40</sup> Perhaps the Dominicans' relative lack of discord about poverty as compared with the Franciscans was due to differences in their respective Rules: the Dominicans adhered to the Rule of Saint Augustine which, unlike the Franciscan *Regula bullata*, did not stipulate the hermitical life as the ideal way of living the Gospel. Moreover, Dominic repeatedly insisted that observance of »the Rule« must never take precedence over »the preaching mission.« Perhaps the division about poverty within the Franciscan Order was also the result of the »cult of St. Francis,« which surrounded the founder before and after his death as well as after his almost immediate canonisation. In contrast, no cult developed rapidly around Dominic, although he too was canonised. Perhaps the internal struggle about poverty was also because of the Franciscans' organisational structure. The Franciscans' top leadership consisted solely of their Minister General, whereas the governance structure of the Dominicans (from the beginning) included four *definitors* who assisted Dominic in his role as Master General.<sup>41</sup>



Nevertheless, the issue of poverty within the Franciscan Order remained unresolved for almost three centuries.<sup>42</sup> In 1415, a partial resolution of the poverty problem was achieved. The Observants and the Conventuals were recognised as two branches within the Franciscan Order – under the same Minister General of the Order who, according to their Constitutions, was usually chosen from the Conventuals. Even so, the issue continued to surface fuelled by fragmented reform movements in various places and countries.<sup>43</sup> Finally, in 1517, Leo X (1513–1521) mandated that the Order of Friars Minor Conventual become a fully independent branch of the Franciscans, and that the disparate reform movements be unified to form another completely independent and more austere branch of Franciscans: the Order of Friars Minor of Regular Observance.<sup>44</sup> Junípero Serra joined this stricter branch in the eighteenth century.

The charism of preaching and teaching as well as the two different emphases of these mendicant Orders – for the Dominicans on study and for the Franciscans on radical poverty – impacted the mission *praxes* of Friar Bartolomé and of Friar Junípero as they participated in the missionary enterprise of the era in which they lived. That is, their expressions of the mendicant charism differed, and did so faithfully – albeit in distinct temporal and geographic arenas – in accord with the emphases of their respective Orders.

Throughout his life as a Dominican friar both in New World locations and in the court of Spain, Las Casas expressed the preaching and teaching dimensions of his Order's mendicant charism through his denunciatory sermons and copious writings as well as his political proposals and intellectual dialogues. Moreover, in keeping with the Dominican emphasis on study, his labours also constituted a life-long study and application of ancient, medieval, and contemporaneous scholarly works and of canonistic-philosophic-theological principles to his preaching and teaching as friar (and prior) in Hispaniola (1522–1534), in Mexico as well as in Central America (1535–1540), as bishop of Chiapa (1544–1550), and as a valued member of Philip II's privy council in Spain (1547–1566).<sup>45</sup>

42 The issue was also compounded by the indiscriminate recruitment of new members after the Black Death of 1348, which had decimated most religious Orders. The Great Schism also created a confused state of affairs for the mendicants because, as pontifical religious institutes, they were then under the direct jurisdiction of two and at times even three popes. In addition to such compounding events, papal interpretations and re-interpretations of mendicant poverty for the Franciscans were persistently requested and repeatedly given throughout the ensuing years. These changes were met by the Observant friars' continuing protests and, at times, disregard of papal authority, as well as were occasioned by the Conventuals' pleas for, and exemplification of, moderate poverty.

43 For example, in 1495 in Spain, with the permission of the Minister General, Juan de Guadalupe established the Custody of the Angels – a group of Observant friars dedicated to living the Franciscan life with even stricter poverty than the other Observants. This group became a model and source of hope for many Observants – such as Cardinal Cisneros in his reform of religious Orders during his regency, as well as the Spanish Franciscans Observants – of whom twelve became known as *Los Doce* in the New World.

44 In 1525, from within the Observants, another even stricter independent group was founded: the 'Order of Friars Minor Capuchins.' The information about the Franciscans presented in this section drew extensively from 'The Franciscan experience' website <http://www.christusrex.org/www1/ofm/fra/FRAmain.html>

45 For the details of Las Casas's life and labours after entering the Dominicans, see PÉREZ FERNÁNDEZ, *Inventario*, 200–793; Helen RAND PARISH and Harold E. WEIDMAN, *Las Casas en México: historia y obra desconocidas*, Ciudad de México 1992; HELEN RAND PARISH, *Las Casas as bishop: a new interpretation based on his holograph petition in the Hans P. Kraus collection of Hispanic American manuscripts*, Washington, DC 1980; GUSTAVO GUTIÉRREZ, *Las Casas: in search of the poor of Jesus Christ*, Maryknoll, NY 1995; Las Casas, *The only way*, 28–54.

46 Maynard GEIGER, 'The scholastic career and preaching apostolate of Fray Junípero Serra, OFM, SSTO (1730–1749)', *The Americas* iv (1947), 65–82, (hereinafter cited as 'Scholastic career').

47 After Junípero earned his doctorate in theology, he no longer taught at St. Francis friary. Rather, he was appointed as professor of the Chair of Scotist Theology at the 'Pontifical, Imperial, Royal and Literary University of



During his life as a Franciscan friar both on the isolated island of Majorca and in remote missionary work in the New World, Junípero Serra also expressed the teaching and preaching dimensions of his Order's mendicant charism. Indeed, he was famous during the first part of his life as a regular cleric on the Balearic island as well as a university professor and pulpit orator.<sup>46</sup> In his teaching ministry in academia (1739-1749), he progressed from lecturer of philosophy at the friary to professor in the Chair of Scotist Theology at Lullian University. (In central New Spain – before going to Baja and Alta California, he also taught the seminarians at the apostolic College of San Fernando for seven years.) In his preaching throughout the island of Majorca, he was also famous for his eloquent sermons to the learned and the unlettered, as well as to lay groups, women religious, and clerics.<sup>47</sup> While Junípero seemed to equate study with »academic studies,« which, in his own judgment, he »had completed« when attaining his doctorate, he also applied his learning in the missionary phase of his life (1749-1784).<sup>48</sup> For example, he and his Franciscan colleagues at the College of San Fernando devised and applied a new theory and strategy for the evangelisation of nomadic indigenous peoples to whom he ministered with his confreres in Serra Gorda (1749-1758); the rationale was that the nomads would become sedentary by erecting mission compounds in which to congregate them.<sup>49</sup> Later, Serra also utilised this method as he established a chain of missions in Alta California (1769-1784), where, as in Serra Gorda, the main recipients of his teaching and preaching were the indigenous peoples, both the unbelievers and the neophyte Christians.<sup>50</sup>

However, above all, whether in Majorca, central New Spain, or Alta California, Serra faithfully lived in conformity with the Franciscan Regular Observants' radical expression of the charism of strict poverty. In contrast, Las Casas lived a life of more moderate poverty – one characterised, as he stated in his deathbed petition to Pope Pius V, by bishops and clergy »living simply.«<sup>51</sup> Friar Junípero embraced a more rigorous life of poverty – even in his building of several large and profitable enterprises in the mission compounds, he personally owned nothing of them – nor did his Order.<sup>52</sup>

Majorca« or the »Lullian University« as it was called. The university also had three other chairs in theology, namely, the Chairs of Thomist (Dominican), Suarezian (Jesuit), and Lullian (Franciscan) Theology. See GEIGER, *Life and times*, 24-35; GEIGER, »Scholastic career,« 74. That Serra's sermons »spoke to the heart and moved people to tears,« see COUVE DE MURVILLE, *Man who founded*, 45.

48 In the manuscript notes of his philosophy courses, there is no evidence of Serra dialoguing with contemporary philosophy, even though the Enlightenment questioned the value of tradition in science and religion, as well as contended that pure reason was the only criterion for the political activity of monarchs, politicians, and social reformers. COUVE DE MURVILLE, *Man who founded*, 24, 26. Also during Serra's years in academia, his earlier desires for missionary life simply laid dormant. PALÓU, *Relación histórica*, 7.

49 ENGLEBERT, *The last of the conquistadores*, 353-4; GEIGER, *Life and times*, 28, 36-7.

50 The royal order expelling the Jesuit missionaries was executed in Mexico on 25 June 1767. Consequently, Dominicans and Observant Franciscan friars began ministering in the former Jesuit areas. Under Serra, the Franciscans extended the missionary enterprise into Alta California in 1769. Francisco Xavier CLAVIJO, *Historia de la antigua o Baja California*, ed. Miguel León-Portilla, Mexico 1970, 239.

51 Bartolomé de LAS CASAS, »Petición a su Santidad Pío V (1566),« *Obras completas*, XIII: Cartas y memoriales, ed. Paulino Castañeda, Madrid 1995, 370-1.

52 For the Observants, absolute poverty required them to depend on the generosity of others. As such, the missions supported the friars in their daily necessities as well as in their new missionary endeavors in the region. For a discussion of the Franciscan Rule of poverty and the near monopoly of land that the friars »held« for the indigenous populations in Alta California, see Marie Christine DUGGAN,

»The laws of the market versus the laws of God: scholastic doctrine and the early California economy,« *History of Political Economy* xxxvii (2005), 343-70, (hereinafter cited as »Laws of the market«); Herbert E. BOLTON, »The mission as a frontier institution in the Spanish-American colonies,« *The American Historical Review* xxiii (1917), 42-61. In time, the mission compounds were to be owned by the indigenous peoples, and/or the land was to be divided up between them and the Spaniards. However, many of the natives did not have title to the lands, and so did not receive the property. David J. WEBER, *Bárbaros: Spaniards and their savages in the age of enlightenment*, New Haven, CT 2005, 108, 119-20, (hereinafter cited as *Bárbaros*); Kent G. LIGHTFOOT, *Indians, missionaries and merchants: the legacy of colonial encounters on the California frontiers*, Berkeley, CA 2005, 68, (hereinafter cited as *Indians*).



## Scholastic Training

The friars' intellectual formation also stemmed from the kind of scholasticism to which each Order subscribed, and in which philosophic-theological tradition the friars were schooled. As a Dominican, Las Casas was trained in Thomism; as a Franciscan, Serra was educated in Scotism. These two parallel branches of scholasticism resulted from the works of two prominent thirteenth-century theologians: Thomas Aquinas, also known as *Doctor Angelicus* (the Angelic Doctor), for the Dominican Thomistic branch; John Duns Scotus, surnamed as *Doctor Subtilis* (the Subtle Doctor), for the Franciscan Scotist branch. Thomism would have greatly shaped Las Casas's philosophy and theology, and, in turn, the character of his participation in the missionary enterprise; in like manner, Scotism would have influenced significantly Serra's thought and action. An example of this influence can be found in the differing perspectives of Aquinas and Scotus with respect to the relationship of intellect and will.<sup>53</sup> While both held that human rationality was composed of intellect and will, Aquinas and Scotus differed in the primacy each allocated to these faculties.

Aquinas' perspective was intellectualist; for him, the intellect had primacy over the will. Using the categories of means and goals, Aquinas sequenced the exercise of intellect and will in the following order of action: first, the intellect apprehends the goals, which are subsequently desired by the will; then, the intellect presents the means to attain these goals, and the will decides which means will be pursued. In this process of eliciting action, the will must choose the goals of necessity if the intellect apprehends these goals as good, because the will cannot reject what is presented to it as an unqualified good, and must cleave to the final goal – that of happiness (or beatitude). Because the will does not qualify the good, the will does not function as a rational power; rather, the will functions as an intellectual appetite inclined toward the good. That is, the will necessarily tends to the universal good by virtue of a superior inclination of the soul that surpasses natural inclination; similarly, the will is necessarily inclined to all those particular goods connected with this universal good and that belong to people by their very nature, such as life, knowledge, sociability, procreation, and family. Although the will is thus not free to reject the final goal (and the particular goals connected with this universal goal), the will is free with respect to the particular means to achieve the goal. That is, the will is free only in making choices about the means to achieve the goal. However, since all the choices the will makes are good and fully intelligible only when they are aimed at the ultimate goal of happiness, the will remains at best an intellectual appetite subordinate to the intellect and the intellect's apprehension of the goals and of the means to attain these goals.<sup>54</sup>

In contrast, Scotus's perspective was voluntarist; for him, the will has primacy over the intellect. Scotus does not deny the pursuit of happiness, or the role of the intellect in apprehending the good; he simply does not confine the understanding of the will to this pursuit and to its sole function as an intellectual appetite. For him, the will is inclined both to hap-

53 This presentation of the relationship of intellect and will is restricted to the fundamental distinctions made by Thomas and Scotus, and does not constitute a comprehensive analysis of their perspectives. For a succinct comparison of their thought on this relationship, see John C. MÉDAILLE, «Heaven as the home of the free: the primacy of the will in Duns Scotus,» [online], available at <http://www.medaille.com/primacy%20of%20the%20will.pdf>.

54 See THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa Theologiae*, New York 1947, 1a-2ae, Q8, art. 1, 2; 1a-2ae, Q9, art. 1; 1a-2ae, Q13, art. 6; 1a-2ae, Q15, art. 3; 1a-2ae, Q17, art. 5; 1a, Q79, art. 1, 8; 1a, Q80, art. 1, 2; 1a, Q82, art. 1, 2, 3, 4; 1a, Q83, art. 3, 4. Also see THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa Theologiae: a concise translation*, ed. Timothy MCDERMOTT, Westminster, MD 1989, 126-9, 167-91.

55 Joannis DUNS SCOTUS, *Opera omnia*, I-IV: ordinatio, lectura, ed. C. Balić, Vatican City 1950, 2, d. 6,

q. 2; 2, d. 39, q. 2; 3, d. 17, q. un.; 3, d. 26, q. un.; 4, d. 49, qq. 9-10. See also Alan B. WOLTER, «Introduction,» in William A. FRANK (ed.), *Duns Scotus on the will and morality*, Washington, DC 1997, 35-45; Thomas WILLIAMS, «The libertarian foundations of Scotus's moral philosophy,» *The Thomist* lxii (1998), 193-215, [online], available from <http://www.thomist.org/journal/1998/982awill.htm>; Mary Beth ING-HAM, «Letting Scotus speak for himself,» *Medieval Philosophy and*



piness and to justice: the will is motivated toward one's advantage (*affectio commodi*) as well as toward willing some good not oriented toward oneself (*affectio iustitiae*). Scotus concurs with Aquinas that, in the will's affection for one's own happiness (*affectio commodi*), the will is only free in choosing the means. However, because the will is also free to act contrary to one's own advantage – to one's own natural inclination to happiness – by preferring and choosing to act on behalf of others because of those humans' intrinsic worth (*affectio iustitiae*), the will, for Scotus, has the power of free self-determination. That is, the will can choose what is right and just rather than what makes one happy. In this manner (and in contradistinction to Aquinas), Scotus's perspective frees the will from its dependence on, or subordination to, the intellect. In Scotist thought, the human will is much more than a passive appetitive power and instrument of human rationality, as in Thomistic thought, wherein the intellect has absolute superiority over the will. Rather, for Scotus, the will itself is a rational power that is capable of reflexive action (indeed, of spontaneity) with respect to the options that intellect and reason present. This independent exercise of the will extends to happiness as well, because the will is always capable of choosing not to will a particular happiness, or even happiness in general. Moreover, if the will chooses not to will an apprehended goal or means, the will can direct the intellect to other possible objects of action. Therefore, since the will can determine itself, the intellect is no longer primary. The will is primary.<sup>55</sup>

The influence of these differing scholastic perspectives about the relationship of intellect and will – of knowing and acting – are discernible in the friars' approaches to the process of conversion. Las Casas's method reflected Thomas Aquinas' intellectualism, whereas Serra's approach reflected John Duns Scotus's voluntarism.

Las Casas proposed and used a rational and peaceful method of evangelisation, which was based on the premise that clear knowledge of Christianity would attract the indigenous peoples to the Faith, and thus they would choose to become Christians. Las Casas believed that the ultimate happiness of the indigenous peoples was their salvation.<sup>56</sup> Accordingly, the native peoples first needed to know about the Christian God and, in order to »know« this God, the Christian message needed to be taught by word and example. Utilizing their cognitive powers – intellect, reason, and intelligence – to apprehend the options available to them, the indigenous people would be inclined to choose the Christian Faith as the means to the ultimate goal of salvation. That is, because of this knowledge about the Christian God that »wins the mind with reasons,« the wills of the indigenous peoples would be gently persuaded to respond; they would choose to become Christians.<sup>57</sup>

Serra focused on and employed a volitional method of »schooling« the will in the missions that he established in Alta California. In his approach to the process of conversion, knowledge through practice and instruction would be a product of the disciplined life on the mission compounds.<sup>58</sup> Accordingly, once the indigenous inhabitants became catechumens or neophyte Christians, Serra and his Franciscan confreres structured the natives' lives from sun-up to

*Theology* x (2001), 173–216; Hannes MÖHLE, »Scotus's theory of natural law,« in Thomas WILLIAMS (ed.), *The Cambridge companion to Duns Scotus*, Cambridge 2003, 323–8; C.R.S. HARRIS, *Duns Scotus, II: the philosophical doctrines of Duns Scotus*, New York 1959, 281–99.

<sup>56</sup> From 1516 until the end of his life, LAS CASAS contended that the principal end of the papal donation was the proclamation of the Gospel, the spread of the Christian Faith, and the

conversion of the indigenous inhabitants of the New World. See for example his »Memorial de remedios para las Indias (1516),« *Obras completas* XIII: 40, and his »Tratado de doce dudas (1564),« *Obras completas* XI. 2: »Doce dudas,« ed. J. B. Lassegue, Madrid 1992, 51.

<sup>57</sup> LAS CASAS, *The only way*, 68.

<sup>58</sup> The routine of life on the mission compounds was geared »to sustain and keep [the natives] learning the doctrine.« Daniel D. MCGARRY,

»Educational methods of the Franciscans in Spanish California,« *The Americas* vi (1950): 335–58. Sandos pointed out the difficulty of adequate instruction because of the array of native languages as well as the time needed to master any one of the dialects. Therefore, the length of the instruction (which consisted of rote recitation of prayers) before baptism could be as short as eight days or as long as thirty days. SANDOS, *Converting California*, 15.



sundown with a disciplined routine in which they behaved and lived as Christians – indeed, as »civilised, agriculturalised, industrialised ... Hispanics.«<sup>59</sup> From and within this behavioural routine and formation, knowledge of the Faith would be imparted and gleaned. Most importantly, in this schooling, the indigenous peoples would learn, and have opportunity, to exercise their freedom of will each time they acted contrary to their natural inclinations to seek their own advantage – for example, whether to work or not, to eat or to abstain, to have multiple spouses or one, to fornicate or to be chaste, and so forth. The daily routines, and even the punishment for infractions, were all part of this necessary »schooling« of the will.<sup>60</sup> Additionally, Serra and his Franciscan confreres »schooled« the natives to transcend any penchant for self-advantage (*affectio commodi*) by making choices for the good of others (*affectio justitiae*). They promoted and were vigilant with respect to the collective welfare of the mission inhabitants, and strictly prohibited any profiteering on the part of individuals; in this motivation for justice, they built on the indigenous peoples' own norms about communal property.

In their distinctive missiological approaches – and from two temporal and geographic extremes of the New World Spanish missionary enterprise, both friars pursued the same goal: to bring the indigenous inhabitants to Christianity. The difference was in the means to this goal. Las Casas contended that the missionary must educate the natives' reason and form their consciences in order that they may »freely will« in making their decisions. Serra contended that the missionary must set up an environment that »compels« the will of the neophyte indigenous Christians to act differently – and, in that »schooling« in the Christian life, to come to know Christian teachings more fully.

### Responses to the Signs of their Times

Las Casas and Serra lived during the early modern period (1500–1800) – a time of dynamic forces and dramatic changes. Geo-politically, the Spanish empire ascended and declined, while the Crown engaged in profitable exploration, conquest, and colonisation of American overseas territories as well as pursued costly European conflicts and wars. Religio-politically, the differing Spanish monarchical dynasties influenced Crown-Church relationships. During Las Casas's lifetime, the decentralised and council-oriented Germanic Hapsburg monarchs fostered close cooperation with the Church. Accordingly, Las Casas appealed unencumbered to royal and civil authorities, as well as addressed a wide range of religio-cultural and politico-economic epistemological questions that confronted the Old World when Spain encountered the so-called New World. In so doing, he drew from the contemporaneous flourishing of Second Scholasticism and from his knowledge of ancient and medieval writings to contribute to trans-Atlantic juridical-philosophic-theological debates

59 Masten Dunne's chronicle of the Jesuit missions showed how the »Black Robes« also aimed to Christianise and to civilise the indigenous peoples (Peter Masten DUNNE, *Pioneer Black Robes on the west coast*, Berkeley, CA 1940). Unfortunately, this method of civilizing also dissociated them from their ancestral lands, as Lightfoot pointed out, and precipitated socio-cultural-religious genocide, as Tinker noted. LIGHTFOOT, *Indians*,

65; George E. TINKER, *Missionary conquest: the Gospel and Native American cultural genocide*, Minneapolis, MN 1993, 6–7.

60 Neophyte Christians who deserted the mission compounds were also punished. Significantly, Serra recorded three instances of such desertions in his diary concerning the missions between San Diego and Monterey. Charles J. G. PIETTE MAXIMIN, *Évocation de Junípero Serra: fondateur de la Californie*, Washington, DC 1946, 323, 331, 334. David SWEET, »The

Ibero-American Frontier Mission in Native American History, « *The New Latin American Mission History*, eds. Erick Langer, Robert Howard Jackson (University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 21. John Leddy PHELAN, *The Millennial Kingdom of the Franciscans in the New World: A Study of the Writings of Gerónimo de Mendieta (1525–1604)* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1956). In the sixteenth century, unlike the Spanish Spiritualist Franciscans,



about the level of humanity and the religious capacity of indigenous peoples as well as about their enslavement and Spain's alleged dominium over them.

In contrast, during Serra's life-span, the centralised and absolutist Francofied Bourbon administration pursued policies designed to bring the Church more under Crown control, and even sought to recruit religious personnel as happened when Charles III expelled the Jesuits from the Americas in 1767. However, even with the demise of Scholastic methods and the spread of Enlightenment rationalism, Serra and his Franciscan confreres continued to respond to such changes by adherence to their traditions of poverty and of Scotist Scholasticism. Consequently, Serra endured repeated anti-clerical stances and acrimonious relationships with civil officials, especially with governors in Alta California whose legislations mirrored regalist policies. For example, he opposed governor Felipe de Neve whose Enlightenment-nurtured legislation (1781) granted indigenous catechumens, the »liberty« to return to or visit their native homes as often as they desired. For the Franciscans, this legislation would have subverted both the religious and the economic goals of the friars, which included the eventual ownership by the indigenous Christians of their respective mission compounds. Indeed, throughout his fifteen years in Alta California, Serra stridently opposed the Bourbon efforts to secularise the missions and to restrict the mendicants' activities to spiritual and pastoral concerns.<sup>61</sup>

In addition to these forces and changes, Las Casas and Serra also responded differently because of the various geographic and temporal arenas of their labours. The Dominican's advocacy on behalf of the indigenous peoples extended to the whole of the Indies: from the Caribbean islands to Florida through Mexico and Central America, as well as into South America. Serra laboured at a time and in a place typified by generalised Spanish colonisation of New World lands, as well as by widespread subjection of the indigenous inhabitants by previous wars of conquest. The Franciscan's activism on behalf of the nomadic indigenous populations was limited predominantly to Serra Gorda, and to the remote coastal region of Baja and Alta California – a territory that was vulnerable to the encroachment of Russian expeditions and to exploratory landings by France, England, and Prussia. Accordingly, at the order of Charles III, the Franciscans entered Alta California accompanied by Spanish military who, with the friars, began to occupy the region. However, during the eighteenth-century Spanish colonial period, the region was not fully colonised nor evangelised.

Although situated in geographically and temporally distinctive arenas, the two friars' participation in the missionary enterprise had profound common religious incentives. Both friars were motivated by »God's glory« and »the salvation of the indigenous peoples«; both believed that the primary reason for the presence of the Spaniards in the Americas was the evangelisation of the Indians. Both friars sought to protect the indigenous persons in body and soul.<sup>62</sup> For example, Las Casas, who in 1516 was appointed »Universal Protector

the Spanish reformed Dominicans did not, for the most part, subscribe to the imminence of the Second Coming of Christ. However, both mendicant Orders regarded their missionary work as a return to the age of the Apostles, and sought to exemplify the *modo de ser* of their apostolic forebearers by the poverty and simplicity of their individual and communal lives. In addition, echoing the tension between the Dominican intellectualist and Franciscan voluntarist missiological approaches, in the sixteenth century, the Fran-

ciscans baptised Amerindians *en masse*, while the Dominicans were more cautious, preferring to catechise carefully first and then baptise when there seemed to be sufficient understanding of the Christian Faith.

61 WEBER, *Bárbaros*, 106–9, 120–6.

62 For LAS CASAS's motivation, see »Memorial de remedios para las Indias (1516),« »Carta al Consejo de las Indias (1531),« »Carta a un personaje de la Corte (1535),« »Brevisima relación de la destrucción de las Indias (1552),« *Obras escogidas de Fray Bartolomé*

*de las Casas: Opúsculos, cartas, y memoriales*, ed. Juan Pérez de Tudela Bueso, (Madrid 1958) V: pp. 20a; 44a, 47b; 62a, 63b; 134–35b, 176b–77a. See citations concerning Serra's motivation in ENGLEBERT, *The last of the conquistadores*, 353–4; COUVE DE MURVILLE, *Man who founded*, 26; GEIGER, *Life and times*, 28, 36–7.



of all of the Indigenous Peoples of the Indies, « envisioned and promoted colonisation by Spanish farmers under the jurisdiction of friars and bishops – without the interference of *conquistadores*, *encomenderos*, and slave-raiders. Indeed, his own Tierra de Vera Paz (Guatemala) experiment later in 1536-1537 prohibited entry to all Spaniards except clergy. In his missiological treatise entitled *The only way*, Las Casas articulated the duty of all Spaniards to proclaim the Gospel in a rational and peaceful manner; in his *Very Brief Account*, he persistently condemned the evil deeds and scandalous example of many so-called Christians. Las Casas was also pivotal in formulating the New Laws of 1542, which called for the abolition of the *encomienda*, slavery, and all conquests.

Serra, as the founder and first Franciscan president of the Alta California missions, concentrated on establishing a chain of missions to provide completely for the spiritual and temporal needs of the indigenous inhabitants. Like Las Casas's experiments, Serra sought both to segregate the indigenous inhabitants from non-Christian and Spanish peoples as well as to congregate them in their own indigenous mission societies. Toward this end, he and his confreres from San Fernando wrote a manual detailing the structure and function of such mission compounds. From 1769 to his death in 1784, he established in Alta California the first nine of the Crown-proposed twenty-one missions for the region. Because of the importance that Serra placed on exemplary Christian living, he too restricted presence on the mission compounds to religious and indigenous neophytes. He barred non-Christian indigenous people, Spanish settlers, and military personnel from living on these compounds, and decried their often drunken and otherwise «undesirable» behaviour. He also had recourse to biblical law and to the 1774 *Leyes de las Indias* to fight for the rights of native peoples, such as their right to ownership of their lands.<sup>63</sup>

## Conclusion

While both Las Casas and Serra were deeply committed to evangelisation, their approaches to the proclaiming the Christian Gospel differed. Serra's missiology, which was discernible in his *praxis*, was effectively a top-down approach – of acculturating the indigenous peoples to Christianity as well as to Spanish ways and customs. Las Casas's missiology, which was evident in his *praxis*, was fundamentally a bottom-up approach – of inculturating the Gospel through an understanding of indigenous ways, customs, and realities. As such, Las Casas's missiology tended to be inductive, and Serra's deductive.

Both Las Casas and Serra gave themselves to the tasks at hand, as they understood them and in accord with their Orders' distinctive ministerial postures. The Dominicans favoured a juridical route focused on remedies in justice; the Franciscans preferred a paternal route focused on guardianship in charity. Accordingly, for Las Casas, in his role as a «canon lawyer» for all the indigenous peoples, the task was to secure a «total remedy» for the inadequate evangelisation and the unjust situation in the Indies. For Serra, as the «good father» of the natives under his guardianship, the task was to establish paternalistic communal societies of indigenous people schooled in and professing the Christian Faith.<sup>64</sup>

However, the distinctive character of the two friars' responses to the «signs of the times» derives from an admixture of their Orders' particular emphasis in their ministerial expression of the mendicant charism and in their scholastic understanding of the relationship of intellect and will. Las Casas portrayed the Dominican tradition of study, with its accompanying search for truth, as well as the tradition of Thomist intellectualism, with its focus on «winning the mind with reason [and] ... the will with gentleness.»



Friar Bartolomé studiously blended his canonistic-philosophic-theological knowledge with on-the-ground experience and observation to ceaselessly »inquire how, according to God and natural reason, divine and human justice, we should relate to [the indigenous peoples].«<sup>65</sup> His prodigious body of writings on behalf of their rights consisted of more than three hundred *cartas*, petitions, *tratados*, proposals, *memoriales*, and *obras mayores*. His own words convey the depth and breadth of his search for truth in its myriad forms: »For forty-eight years, I have worked to inquire, to study, and to make sense of the law; I believe, if I am not deceived, that I have delved so deep into the waters of these matters that I have reached their source.«<sup>66</sup>

Serra represented the Franciscan tradition as a *poverello* and a Scotist scholastic, and exemplified the Observant emphasis on radical poverty and on the tradition of Scotist voluntarism. He facilitated the schooling of the will in his Franciscan confreres and, in particular, in the indigenous inhabitants during his labours in the California missions. In this remote region, he spawned the resurgence of absolute poverty among the Alta California Franciscans such that they, as true *poverellos*, both relied on the generosity of others for their daily needs, and worked to construct what they envisioned as a more perfect society – indeed, a would-be utopia – of Christian indigenous peoples practicing evangelical poverty under their tutelage, as well as living in the mission compounds and on lands that they collectively owned. Serra's personal commitment to living radical poverty and to disciplining his own will, as manifested by his rigorous practices of self-mortification, his strenuous manual labour (working like a peon), and his enormous willpower, demonstrated how he schooled his own will. He readily sacrificed personal advantage for the sake of what he perceived as advantageous in justice for the indigenous peoples.<sup>67</sup> A few lines in a letter to his nephew, a Franciscan in Majorca, which were written as Serra »with fervour« was »tilling the [Lord's] Vineyard« in the fringe of the empire, encapsulated the ageing friar's Franciscan ideal of wedding poverty with disciplined will: »Do the best you can ... to become a true and perfect Friars Minor.«<sup>68</sup>

Elucidating these differences of mission *praxes* and epistemologies as well as their commonalities, which characterised Las Casas and Serra, contributes to the history of missiology. The differences and similarities uncovered draw attention to the role of intellectual formation in shaping the participation of the missionaries in the enterprise of evangelisation; they demonstrate how the charisms of different religious institutes were expressed over time and crucially contoured their members' labours; they show how different philosophic-theological epistemologies affected these labours, and how they responded to the signs of their times. By offering a clearer grasp of the activities and missiologies of Las Casas and Serra, this study may also help temper tendencies to project twentieth-century values on the alternately lauded and derided labours of these two colonial mendicant missionaries who represented the beginning and the end of the Spanish colonial missionary enterprise. ♦

63 Steven W. HACKEL, »The competing legacies of Junípero Serra: pioneer, saint, villain,« [online], available from <http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/cp/vol-05/no-02/>; DUGGAN, »Laws of the market,« 348.

64 Maria Paz HARO, »Religious Orders, the Indian, and the conquest: fifty years of dispute and contradiction,« [online], available at <http://www.shc.edu/theolibrary/resources/>

harodunlap.htm; McGarry, »Educational methods,« 335-58.

65 See the dedication to Phillip II that was written in 1563 by LAS CASAS and is found in the unpublished Providence version of his »Tratado de doce dudas (1564),« fos 135v-36. Manuscript in John Carter Brown Library, Providence RI.

66 Bartolomé de LAS CASAS, »Carta a los Dominicos de Chiapa y Guatemala (1564),« *Obras completas* XIII: 354.

67 M. V. WOODGATE, *Junípero Serra: apostle of California (1713-1784)*, Westminster, MD 1966, 56-75, 159, 161; Lightfoot, *Indians*, 68; WEBER, *Bárbaros*, 108.

68 MORGADO, *Junípero Serra's legacy*, 188.