

# Chapter 1: Beginnings [1]

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San Francisco was a genteel, laid-back sort of town from its early Spanish beginnings in the 1700s to the drifting in of pioneering Europeans and U.S. citizens. But shortly after the cry "Gold!" was heard from Sutter's Mill in January, 1848, even the most sober and settled of its citizens caught the fever and joined in the rush.

Overnight carpenters dropped their hammers, masons their trowels, bakers their loaves, clerks their pens, to rush to the American River. Schools were closed as both teachers and pupils deserted; shopkeepers hung signs on their doors -- "Gone to the Diggings," "Off to the Mines" -- and disappeared. By June 15 [1849] San Francisco was a ghost town, with houses and shops empty, and all who could walk, ride, run, or crawl rushing toward the Sierras."<sup>[2]</sup>

A ghost town, yes, but not for long. A year later San Francisco was alive again with those returning from the mines, rich or as poor as ever, and with late comers from near and far stopping off to cash in. The town soon became "the City," percentage-wise as cosmopolitan as we find it today. So a wide-eyed seminarian, later ordained by the city's first archbishop, wrote to the Society of the Propagation of the Faith on September 18, 1851:

What a port! What a town! What a population! French, English, Germans, Italians, Mexicans, Americans, Indians, Canacs, and even Chinese; white, black, yellow, brown, Christians, pagans, Protestants, atheists, brigands, thieves, convicts, firebrands, assassins; little good, much bad; behold the population of San Francisco, the new Babylon teeming with crime, confusion and frightful vice.<sup>[3]</sup>

The archbishop who ordained this young enthusiast was Joseph Sadoc Alemany, then, as the above letter was being written, simply (!) bishop of the two Californias, Alta and Baja, Nevada, most of Utah and a fair slice of Arizona, with his episcopal see in Monterey. Less than a year prior to this date, Alemany, a Dominican friar newly ordained bishop expressly for the wilds of California, arrived at the port of San Francisco. It was the night of Friday, December 6, 1850. With him was another Dominican friar, Fr. Francis Sadoc Vilarrasa, and a Dominican sister, the Belgian-born Sr. Mary Goemaere. Next day Alemany with his party was formally welcomed and the following day, December 8, he presided at the Mass of the Immaculate Conception in the small wooden church of St. Francis, the only Catholic church in San Francisco besides the mission. After the Mass he was presented with a gift of \$1400.00 to cover the expenses projected for the visitation of his vast diocese.

Such was the modest ceremony, prayerful and practical, that began a new era in the history of the Catholic Church in California. It also was the beginning of the presence of the Order of Preachers in the whole of the western United States. For Bishop Alemany had come not just to oversee the California Church but also to establish in California a new province of the Dominican Order. Before his departure from Rome where his consecration took place, Alemany had spoken to Fr. Jerome Gigli, the Vicar General of the Order, of his intentions with regard to the new foundation, and had been given the green light. Once arrived in his new diocese he

immediately set to work not only as bishop but as "provincial." Within a few days of his arrival we find him writing to the new Vicar General, Fr. Alexander Vincent Jandel, requesting more explicit directions with regard to the province. Fr. Jandel responded graciously but also rather sharply that "It is entirely forbidden to any Dominican religious elevated to the episcopacy to retain any jurisdiction in the Order itself: this is clear in our Constitution and confirmed, if I mistake not, by a bull of Benedict XIII.[4] Since I am unable to give you the authority to establish our Order in California, I send with this answer letters patent to Father Vilarrasa to do so." Jandel's letter, however, did not reach Alemany until some weeks after its writing, thus permitting the bishop in good faith to take some initial steps in the establishment of the western Dominicans, both men and women.

Although Fr. Vilarrasa under the title of "commissary general" became the founder in legal fact of the province, it is to Alemany that the idea and inspiration of the province originally belong. Even before he was consecrated bishop, as the newly appointed provincial of the Eastern Province he had begun the process. A young Dominican, Fr. Peter Augustine Anderson, had come to him asking to be missioned in California. Alemany immediately granted the request, hoping that Fr. Anderson would restore the Dominican missions in Baja California and thereby lay the ground for another Dominican province. And, when made bishop, one of his first acts was to enlist Fr. Vilarrasa as companion to help in the new foundation. A further indication of his initiative and seriousness in this regard was his invitation, dutifully accepted, to some Dominican sisters to participate in the work. It was St. Dominic over again: as the Dominican Order in its very inception was composed of both women and men, so it would be with the Order in its newest and newly challenging terrain.

#### Prehistory: The Baja Connection

Beginnings, however, are difficult to define. Certainly the disembarkation of the three Dominicans in the port of San Francisco was significant. But they were not the first of their Order in California, and certainly not the first in the western reaches of the New World.[5] We think of the earliest Dominicans who accompanied Columbus in his explorations and others who ministered shortly thereafter in South and Central America. We especially recall that other great missionary bishop, Bartolome de Las Casas (1474-1566), and his Dominican companions in Hispaniola (Haiti) and southern Mexico. But there were others who subsequently made their way further and further north, finally into the lower regions of the territory known as The Californias. The Jesuits had been first on the scene in Baja or Lower California with the founding of the mission, Our Lady of Loreto, by Fr. Juan Maria Salvatierra and his superior, Eusebio Kino, in 1697. It was the first of 21 Jesuit missions in southern Baja established over a period of seventy years. After the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1767 by King Carlos III of Spain, the Franciscans took over briefly -- 1767-1773 -- while also moving into Alta California, where they raised their first mission in San Diego in 1769 and their last in Sonoma in 1823. In 1773 it was the Dominicans' turn in Baja.

The Dominican venture in Baja almost ended as soon as it began. Under the leadership of Fr. Juan Pedro de Iriarte, newly appointed vicar-provincial of Baja, twenty-seven Dominicans left Mexico City, June 1, 1772, for the new mission territory. They travelled nearly four hundred miles northwest to Guadalajara, where one of the missionaries died, June 27, 1772. The rest

continued an arduous two hundred mile journey through mountains to the coastal town of San Blas. Here the worst, rather than being over, was about to begin. One of the missionaries, Fr. Louis Sales, later described the terrible sea voyage. He blamed the Viceroy for having commanded the Dominicans to embark immediately in ships ill-prepared for the voyage, with incompetent crews, and food already spoiling, and in a perilous season for sailing (September). His account reads:

As soon as we left the harbor we ran into contrary winds, with the result that a hole opened in the ship that was like an open conduit. The missionaries worked to plug it but they could not. Then an epidemic began on the ship. With the sailors all out of action the missionaries steered the ship and carried out their heavy tasks of labor. At last the pestilence, an epidemic of putrescent boils, which appeared chiefly on the head, attacked the missionaries. Being in this bad situation there came a most furious storm of thunder and lightning, the sea rose up, and among the missionaries there were scarcely any who could get about. Twice the ship put us under water. The poor missionaries cried to heaven in screaming voices. The poor sick men below were all drenched by the great quantity of water that came in. Already we thought that we had come to our last day, but in the end we reached a little port called Mazatan [Mazatlan] and resolved to land and care for the sick. We prepared a small boat and set out toward an unknown greater uncertainty, but we saw a distant light, steered toward it and soon entered a lagoon. Thinking that it would have shallow water we went overboard, dressed and shod, and after walking for an hour in water up to our breasts we got out at nine o'clock at night and met some poor mulattoes who had a little house there but no supply of food. The night having been passed in sighing and lamenting, they led us to a town and there we laid out some mantles on the ground for the sick. Two of these died, and the Father Master Vicar General [Iriarte] died in the greatest pain, more at the sorrow he felt at seeing us in such misery than of his illness, for he saw us begging alms from door to door, without clothing or utensils. You may be able to guess what were the feelings of all, and much more when we learned that the other missionaries who had gone in the other boat had disappeared in the sea because of the fury of the wind. Our boxes and bundles still lay on the beach and we all expected death at any moment because of the sickness and the lack of supplies. But the Viceroy and the Province of Santiago, notified of all that had happened, gave the necessary orders to enable us to continue our voyage. In fact they sent some new missionaries, naming a Vicar General [Vicente Mora], and sent a vessel with a good crew to cross over to California. On the second voyage our fears were augmented, but with difficulty the boat arrived at the Mission at the Port of Loreto, and in a few days the other ship which had been lost [also arrived]. The missionaries could hardly stand on their feet. They made their entry, some in chairs, some on the backs of Indians, and still others supported by the Franciscan Fathers who were expecting us. Two days later one of us died.[6]

Once arrived and recovered, and initiated into the Baja mission field by the Franciscans who were happily leaving for the kindlier lands of Alta California, the Dominicans set about their work. Purportedly, however, little documentation remains of the Dominicans and their labors in Baja. The California historian, H.H. Bancroft, puts the matter bluntly, and not very flatteringly for the Dominicans:

Salvatierra, Venegas, and the rest have furnished a copious account of the Jesuit period; Palou and his associates have left satisfactory material for the Franciscan occupation; but the Dominicans have left no account of their labors. It would appear that they accomplished nothing in California worth recording, even in their own estimation. To make matters worse, the secular archives, elsewhere so invaluable for filling up gaps in the systematic chronicles, are here singularly barren of information.

However, Bancroft does not altogether blame the Dominicans. As he suggests, they left no records because they accomplished nothing; but, he adds, they accomplished nothing because there was nothing to be accomplished!

In fact, there was little to be recorded. Nowhere was life more monotonously uneventful than in Baja California. Scattered items of routine military, financial, and missionary reports, the occasional founding of a mission, an epidemic or revolt, the arrival of a vessel, or a party quarrel between officials, these are the piers on which the historian has to build a frail bridge to carry the reader over the gulf of years that have no record.[7]

But some records did survive. Fr. Zephyrin Engelhardt, the Franciscan historian, who was also annoyed at Dominican carelessness with regard to historical matters, was able, nevertheless, to piece together enough surviving bits of information to devote a fair-sized section of his volume on the Baja missions to the Dominicans. And for this he was especially grateful to the efforts of two northern California Dominicans, one of whom, especially, will later feature prominently in our present history. Speaking of the paucity of information about the Baja Dominicans which was available to him when he published the first edition of his history, Fr. Engelhardt, in his second edition (1929), happily announced that "Owing to the kindly interest of the Very Rev. Fr. James Reginald Newell, O.P., we are in a position to supply a more accurate list of the Fathers and a clearer view of their activities in the northern portion of Lower California, at least" (pp. 600-601). And he quotes, in full, an explanatory letter he received from Fr. Newell, sent from St. Dominic's in San Francisco and dated May 2nd, 1916:

Dear Fr. Zephyrin:

I received your letter. It was from July, 1887, to March, 1888, that Fr. William Dempflin, O.P., and I were down in Lower California. We were earnestly desired to go by Bishop Mora of Los Angeles, and he gave us the most extended faculties for our mission.

Besides other Pueblos in the Peninsula, we held exercise for a week in the Old Missions San Temlo, Santo Tomas, San Ramon, San Vicente, San Rafael, Santo Domingo, and El Rosario. We considered this last to be the end of the chain of Dominican Missions [i.e. visited from north to south, though first to be founded], at least of the west coast of the Peninsula. Below it is the desert of San Fernando, and we felt we had had hardships enough.

The few records -- merely of baptisms, marriages, and interments -- were lying around uncared for; and Fr. William packed them up and took them to Benicia. There are statues

and pictures of Dominican Saints and subjects in some private houses in the missions, but the possessors will not part with them. There is hardly anything left of the Missions.

We usually held services in what must have been the Mission barn or stables. An old Indian whom the Fathers on departing from the Peninsula had left in charge of El Rosario told us that a certain lawyer from the Capital of Mexico represented himself as commissioned to take away the church furniture -- candelabra, etc., and the Indian let him have them; and I presume this kind of transaction occurred at other Missions also. The good red tiles covering the better class of private houses at the Missions must have been taken from the roofs of the church and monastery; and hence the walls of the Mission buildings have melted away under the action of the rains...

In Dominicana, an early western Dominican publication[8], Fr. Newell had given a fuller account of his and Fr. Dempflin's pilgrimage south of the boarder. This account suggests that the western Dominicans, though conscious of their origins in the east, were also aware of their roots in the Mexican/Spanish south, and treasured them.

About ten years ago, in the hope of contemplating the monuments of the Dominican Order in that country, we crossed the line of Mexico at Tia Juana [sic] with a buckboard and two Indian ponies, and drove down through the Peninsula for a distance of about four hundred miles, or to the most southerly Dominican Mission.

But let us say at once, we found very little to describe. Since Mexico's achievement of independence from Spain, and the expulsion of the Spanish Friars from the Peninsula -- that is, for a period of seventy years -- those missions had been utterly abandoned, and, what is worse, adventurers and interlopers from Sonora -- who constitute the present owners of the Mission lands -- after driving and killing off the Indians, dismantled the churches and monasteries, seized on and sold the valuable church furniture and works of art, and even tore the tiles from the Mission roofs for their own huts, thus exposing the walls to the dissolving action of the rains, so that there is hardly a Mission in that country of which it might not be said, Etiam ruinae perierunt! Even the ruins have perished.

The dwindled remains of these Dominican Missions form a long chain of ruins, at intervals of about thirty miles apart, and extending down from the line to a distance of 400 miles -- that is, not geographical, or as the crow flies, but practical, or, better still, impracticable -- awful, Mexican road miles -- every league of which we have ample reason to remember!

Here Newell pauses to counter those who claim that the missionary activity in the Californias was the result of competition among the three Orders involved. Not so, says Newell. Rather, it was planned on a cooperative basis.

The fact is that, though members of the several Missionary Orders visited the Peninsula a century ago, yet before the establishment of any missions in either of the Californias was undertaken, a joint Council of Jesuits, Franciscans and Dominicans was held under the proper ecclesiastical sanction, and with the aid of the civil authority, at Guadalajara, in

Spain, and [sic] the respective spheres of jurisdiction and evangelization were there and then fixed and determined for each of these orders, the Jesuits being assigned to the southern half of the Peninsula -- that is, from Cape St. Lucas to the desert of San Fernando; the Dominicans to the northern half -- that is, from the desert of San Fernando to what is now called the line, and the Franciscans to Alta California -- that is, to all that region now comprising our State.

And what besides ruins did Newell and Dempflin find?

The life of the Catholic Indian, where unmolested by the vices and violence of the so-called civilized white man, is usually of great length, and it was our good fortune to meet survivors of the earliest missions -- old they were, of course, but yet vigorous enough to sit two whole days in the saddle as our guides, and who remembered no other missionaries than the "white-robed Padres del Santo Domingo." All that, for love or money, we could secure from the people as mementos of the fast-vanishing monuments of Dominican zeal are a few small oil paintings of the Rosary and of S. Vincent Ferrer, and some registers of foundations, including many thousands of recorded baptisms, marriages and interments of Indians evangelized by the sons of S. Dominic in Lower California...

The life of the Dominicans in Baja, as that of other religious missioned there, must, as Bancroft observed, have been filled with stress and strain. The terrain was bleak, mostly desert, with few villages scattered about and widely distanced from each other. But the land and the people were apparently the least of the problems. Mexico had seceded from Spain in 1823 and formed a government of its own -- several governments in rapid succession, and all of them hostile to the Church. Religious had fared badly under Spanish domination. Under the successive Mexican governments they fared even worse. There was, for instance, the confiscation by the government of the so-called Pious Fund: a trust of private benefactions established by the Jesuits for the support of the missions and missionaries, since the civil authority refused its financial help. Loss of this fund left the missionaries, and their care of the Indians, entirely at the mercy of the yearly produce from Baja's barren land. There were also the various attempts at secularization, i.e. the enforced surrendering of the missions by the religious into the hands of the secular clergy and the government. The government's theory, or ruse, behind this was the return of the land to the Indians. It was the natives' land and so the natives should manage it. So read Articles one and six of the Decree of Secularization passed by the Spanish Cortes on September 13, 1813, and observed, more or less, in Mexico in one form or another through subsequent years:

1. All new Reductions [missions] and Christian settlements in the provinces on the other [American] side of the ocean, which are in charge of missionaries from Religious Orders, and which have been converted ten years, shall be immediately turned over to the respective Ordinaries [Bishops] without excuse or pretext whatever, in conformity with the laws and decrees on the Royal Patronato.
2. The missionaries from Religious Orders must immediately surrender the government and administration of the estates of those Indians, leaving them to the choice and care of said Indians, by means of their Ayuntamientos and under the supervision of the civil

governor, to nominate from among themselves those [Indians] who would be to their [the Indians'] satisfaction, and may have more intelligence for managing them, the lands to be divided and to be reduced to individual ownership in accordance with the Decree of January 4, 1813, concerning the reduction of the Valdios [vacant lands] and other lands to private ownership.[9]

But the practical consequence (and intention?) was that government officials (the Ayuntamientos) now stood in the place of the missionaries, with a claim on financial support from the Church (the Pious Fund?). The Indians were allowed to manage their land, but the government managed the Indians, and, for a time anyway, profited thereby. Whatever the gain or loss was to the natives, the missionaries were continually demoralized, frustrated in their attempts to christianize and educate their charge. And once the religious missionaries finally gave up and left, the missions in fact fell completely to ruin. Few secular priests applied for the job of missionary in such poor, harsh terrain, and the Indians left to themselves could not (would not?) manage the land and so abandoned the missions for their former less settled, less disciplined way of life.

Another thorn in the side of the Dominican missionary in Baja was his isolation. In his years of formation, communal living was stressed; it was an essential part of his religious commitment. He would know, of course, that often he would have to be alone, especially if he were called to the missions. But he would expect at least periodic contact with his brothers, some oasis of religious community in whatever desert of solitude he might have to endure. But Baja offered little if any fulfillment of such expectancy. At any one time in that vast wasteland of desert and mountain there would be only a modest number of Dominicans at work, each with a mission many miles distant from those of his brothers with scarcely the time or opportunity for the briefest visit. There may at times be a landfall of new recruits, as in 1792 when eighteen Dominicans arrived from Mexico, but then the exodus of others might be equally spectacular, as when in this same year thirteen veterans obtained permission to leave. By 1840 the situation had reached its nadir. From a report of Fr. Gabriel Gonzalez, O.P., presidente of the missions from 1840 to 1854, we gather that priests had become so scarce in Baja that some fathers were compelled to attend two or more widely separated missions. It seems that in 1840 only six priests, only four of whom were Dominicans, were available to minister to the spiritual needs of a territory that extended from Cape San Lucas in the extreme south of Baja to within fifteen miles of San Diego. Such isolation coupled with the other trials of Baja missionary life must have made that life scarcely tolerable for any Dominican wanting to live the fullness of the life he was vowed to.

Also weighing heavily upon the missionaries were the accusations of cruelty toward the Indians leveled against them by the civil authorities. Bancroft, surmising from evidence dubious at best, asserted that Dominicans especially were guilty of severe maltreatment of the Indian: "The fact is the Dominicans were harder task-masters than either the Jesuits or the Franciscans, and administered severer punishments, and the natives were weary of excessive labor and the lash." [10] In corroboration Bancroft offered the incident of the murder of a Dominican missionary by four Indians, as reported in a letter from Fr. Rafael Arvina, O.P., presidente of the Baja missions, to Fr. Fermin Lausen, O.F.M., presidente of the missions of Alta California:

Loreto, June 18, 1803. My Most esteemed Brother and Senor.-Under date of May 19th last, I received the unhappy notice that Fr. Eudaldo Surroca, missionary of Santo Tomas, was found dead in his bed. Although at first he was believed to have died a natural death, it is now known that it was a violent one, and that it was perpetrated by four Indian domestics. Three of them have been arrested, and one of them immediately acknowledged being guilty of the parricide. The body was found beaten all over, full of bruises and bones fractured. From signs, which were observed about the room, it may be believed that the deceased must have made a strong defense to save his life. I communicate all this to your Reverence in order that... you may inform all my Beloved Brethren [the Franciscans in Alta California] and Fathers religious that they have the goodness to relieve the soul of this unfortunate religious by means of the customary suffrages; and that, at the same time, it may serve them as a useful lesson to guard themselves against the treachery of the Indians, and escape such a terrible catastrophe.[11]

No motive for the murder is given here or, apparently, anywhere else, and so Bancroft's surmise as to Dominican cruelty must remain just that. There is, however, no doubt that the Indians of the missions were physically punished when rules were not observed -- as also, however, were the soldiers in the adjacent garrisons and the friars themselves. Corporal punishment for misconduct, within the family as in other institutions, was the accepted rule of the day. Even so, the friars were forbidden by the "twelve ordinances and instructions" issued by Pedro Garrido, the Dominican provincial of the Province of Santiago, Mexico, on May 15, 1772, to act harshly toward the Indians: they "were to avoid all things unbecoming, and were to practice charity, patience, kindness, prudence, treating all with gentleness and not with rigor." [12] Some friars probably abused their authority in the inflicting of punishment, others would be shy of exercising it. There is a letter dated January 7, 1797, from Fr. Mariano Apolinario, O.P., of Mission San Miguel, in response to one by the governor of the locale. The Governor speaks of complaints leveled against the Dominicans accusing them of causing Indians to flee the missions because of the severity of punishments inflicted upon them. Apolinario's reply may throw some light on a difficult and volatile subject:

To the contents of your letter I have to say in the first place that I do not know how it is that the paternal jurisdiction (as Your Honor expresses it in your communication), should extend only to twenty-five lashes, for as we see every day a father at times inflicts a slight punishment, and at other times a grave chastisement according as the misdeed demands. Can it forsooth be said that such a father does not love his sons?

In the second place, the motive for the running away of the Indians does not, as Your Honor says, rise from too much chastising. Considering the character of these Indians I dare say that they run away for lack of punishment rather than for punishing them in keeping with the guilt. I prove this by telling Your Honor that when my companion, Fr. Mariano Yoldi, received charge of this mission, he at the same time received from the Fr. Presidente a list of the Indians. It showed that there were then forty deserters. Had they forsooth run away because of too much chastising? Your Honor knows very well the kind and affable character of our Rev. Fr. Presidente.



Finally Your Honor may question all the soldiers that are in this ancient mission, who have always lived in the neighborhood of this mission. They will tell you that since the founding of the mission until the present moment the Indians have always run away. Now, perhaps, we have fewer runaways than any of the Fathers that have been stationed here. I may be wrong, but the cause of so many desertions is the neglect of going in search of them, as is evident from their own declaration which the Indians have made to us. When an Indian was asked one day why they ran away, since they were not whipped, and they were regularly given food and clothing, he told us that they deserted because they saw that no one went after them, and that not the slightest solicitude was manifested for the runaways. This, as Your Honor tells me in your letter, is not found in the report. Well, many other things pertaining to the royal service are not found in the report; but when the Fathers are accused that is quickly put into the report.[13]

In spite of such trials and hardships, the Dominicans persevered in their missionary endeavors through some 80 years. Although with the departure of the Franciscans they had the charge of all the Baja missions, their specific task was to missionize northern Baja -- the "Frontera," extending from Velicata to just south of San Diego -- thus bringing the missions of Baja geographically closer to those of Alta California. Accordingly, in 1774 they established their first mission -- Nuestra Senora del Rosario --at Vinaraco, some 520 miles north of Loreto and about 20 miles northwest of Mission San Fernando de Espana Velicata, which had been the northernmost mission when the Dominicans arrived. One father, Francisco Galisteo, O.P., is recorded to have been in residence there in 1775. On August 30, 1775, a second mission was dedicated under the title of Santo Domingo. It was located 70 miles northwest of Rosario. Its founders, and presumably initial curates, were Frs. Manuel Garcia and Miguel Hidalgo. The third mission, San Vicente Ferrer, was founded in October of 1780, about 60 miles north of Santo Domingo (and 642 miles north of Loreto). Again we find Fr. Hidalgo as curate together with Fr. Joachin Valero. San Miguel was the Dominicans' fourth mission, founded in March, 1787, about 60 miles north of San Vicente. Fr. Luis Sales was in residence at this time. The fifth mission, founded in 1791 by Fr. Jose Loriente, was Santo Tomas. It was located between San Vicente and San Miguel. San Pedro Martir was the sixth mission (1794), situated some 40 miles east of San Domingo. The seventh mission, Santa Catalina Martir, was dedicated on November 12, 1797, and was located 20 miles east of San Vicente and Santo Tomas. Two other, later missions were established by Dominicans: Descanso, almost to the border of Alta California, in 1817, and Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe del Norte, just south of Mission San Miguel in 1834. By the end of the eighteenth century, then, and the beginnings of the nineteenth, the Dominicans had succeeded in connecting the northern reaches of Baja with its southern mission complex, as also with the missions of Alta California.[14]

Such was the work of the Baja Dominicans as a body. Individual Dominicans, however, did not limit themselves to their established territory. They would at various times edge further and further north until we find some of them making their way into Alta California, sometimes at the request of the Franciscans to help out in their missions, sometimes simply on their own for whatever reason.

The first Dominican known to have visited Alta California is Father Caietano Pallas, who appears in the register of baptisms of Mission San Diego on April 5, 1791. He was at the time

secretary to Fr. Juan Crisostomo Gomez, the presidente of the missions. This seems to have been his sole visitation north of the boarder. Judging from his subsequent activities in Baja there would have been little if any time for him to serve beyond the Dominican domain. We find him throughout the '90s engaged at several different missions and in various capacities. His name appears on the records of Mission San Fernando de Velicata and Mission Nuestra Senora del Rosario. From 1793 to 1798, he served as vicar provincial and presidente of the Baja missions. During this period, he was also in charge of the mission and presidio of Loreto, accepting that position in 1794. This same year he travelled the long trail north to found Mission San Pedro Martir by planting the cross and celebrating the Mass of the Saint's Feast Day, April 28. The following October and November found him at work at Mission San Vicente Ferrer, Mission Santo Domingo, Mission Rosario, and Mission San Fernando. He was to found Mission Santa Catalina Martir in 1797, but being occupied elsewhere he authorized Fr. Jose Loriente for the work. Father Pallas retired from the Baja missions in 1799.

Other Dominican names found in the registers of Mission San Diego as officiating at one function or another are: Fr. Jose Loriente (September, 1791, and June, 1792), Fr. Mariano Apolinario (October, 1794, and October, 1795), Fr. Miguel Lopez (May and June, 1795), Fr. Jose Conouse (July, 1798), Fr. Eudaldo Surroca (November, 1801).

It seems that the first Dominican to have gone farther than Mission San Diego was Father Ramon Lopez. He performed baptisms at Mission San Diego in November 1798 and, the same month, went on to visit Mission San Juan Capistrano. Fr. Ramon served as vicar provincial and presidente of the missions in Baja from 1810 to 1816 when, on June 30 or July 1, he died. Another of the fathers traveling further north than San Diego was Fr. Felix Caballero. In May of 1821 he visited the Franciscans at San Juan Capistrano, after which he was appointed administrator of the Baja missions of San Miguel and Santa Catalina -- at a time, writes his contemporary missionary, Fr. Jose Miguel de Pineda, when "In the whole frontier district, we are no more than three Fathers."

In 1823 Fr. Caballero journeyed north again, this time into Arizona, arriving in Tucson in June of that year. He was intent on finding a land route from Mexico to California, but unfortunately at the Colorado River a band of Indians attacked his party, stealing their supplies as well as their clothes. He was forced to return to Baja. He was again found in San Diego in 1824, when he assisted the overburdened fathers at their Mission. On May 14 of that year it is recorded that he baptized eight adult Indians from Santa Isabela. Back in Baja, while ministering in several of the missions, he was, in 1825, appointed vicar provincial and presidente of the missions, holding both positions until his death on July 11, 1840. It was said that although throughout his life he remained an ardent Spaniard, he nevertheless was enthusiastic when the Mexican revolt proved successful, though he was less and less enthusiastic as the revolution progressed.

Another Baja Dominican supporter of the revolution was Fr. Antonio Menendez, who eventually moved further into Alta California than any of his predecessors and made of it his field of ministry.

Before coming north, however, he journeyed from mission to mission in Baja ministering where, apparently, resident priests were no longer present. He was centered at Mission Nuestra Senora

del Santissimo Rosario from October 30, 1814, to August 30, 1815. From April 13 to July 10, 1815, he visited Mission San Fernando de Velicata, which had had no resident priest since December 1806, and performed three baptisms. He recorded burials at Mission San Vicente Ferrer on April 24 and September 16, 1817. In 1823, he was again at Mission del Rosario, where he recorded a baptism on August 10. Fr. Menendez appears for the first time in the baptismal records of Mission San Diego on March 31, 1824. On April 25 of this year he officiated at a baptism at the presidio chapel. When, on May 25, 1825, he again baptized at the presidio, he signed himself as "Ministro de San Vicente Ferrer, Baja California."

But his activities were soon to be centered elsewhere. In 1825, at the age of 43, after 12 years of missionary labors, Father Antonio was given a pass by Father Felix Caballero, then vicar provincial and presidente, to return to his convent in Mexico City. First, however, he travelled to San Diego, where the Franciscans persuaded him to accept the chaplaincy of the soldiers and their families, as the fathers found it difficult to take care of both the presidio and the Indians at the Mission. In October, he was notified by Governor Echeandia that "the President of the Republic, through the Minister of War, tells you that he will receive with pleasure your services as chaplain of San Diego." Being chaplain, he received a salary for his services, much of a novelty for this begging friar. At San Diego, he also conducted a primary school for a while, receiving a salary for this also: from \$15 to \$20 a month from town funds. On October 16, 1829, he baptized for the last time at the Mission.

From San Diego, he travelled the long distance to Monterey, perhaps with the party of the then Governor Echeandia, who went by land to the capital in December of 1829. Here again he acted as chaplain at the presidio, and the legislative assembly allowed him \$30 a month for his ministry. His name is found in the baptismal records of the Presidio Chapel of San Carlos Borromeo from February 28, 1829, until April 12, 1831. During this time he was also at Mission Nuestra Senora de Solidad where on March 6, 1829, he officiated at a burial.

Menendez next went to Santa Barbara, where he undertook the ministry of chaplain to the presidio and the town. His first baptism at the Mission was on June 23, 1831, and the last on August 19 of that year. He baptized at the Presidio Chapel for the first time on November 6, 1831, and remained as chaplain until April 1 of the following year. Later that same month, Menendez died suddenly, and his death and burial are recorded as follows in the burial register of the presidio: "No. 295. On April 14, 1832, in the crypt of the church of this Mission of Santa Barbara, I gave ecclesiastical burial to the body of the Rev. Fr. Antonio Menendez of the Order of Preachers, missionary of Baja California residing at the adjoining presidio in which he held the position of chaplain by permit of the Rev. Fr. Presidente Narciso Duran. On account of the almost sudden death, he could not receive more than the holy sacrament of Extreme Unction. In testimony I have signed. --Fr. Antonio Jimeno." [15]

Still others travelled into Alta California, for shorter or longer stays -- Fr. Tomas de Ahumada, for one, who was called from Mission San Miguel in Baja to San Diego to tend a solitary Franciscan who was dying. But the Dominican missionary who came and stayed the longest, making of Alta California his "home," and briefly serving in the establishment of the new Western Dominican Congregation, was Fr. Ignacio Ramirez de Arellano. Shortly after his emigration north of the boarder around 1849, the Dominican ministry in Baja would be

terminated. Two lone Dominicans, Frs. Gabriel Gonzalez and Tomas Mansilla -- all that was left of 80 years of Dominican presence in Baja -- embarked from the port of La Paz in February, 1855, for their convent in Mexico City.[16]

Father Ramirez had been in Baja in the early 1830s, but, for whatever reason, had returned to Mexico. On January 30, 1840, we find him once again in Baja in charge of Mission San Jose del Cabo and, as of October of this year, vice presidente of the missions under Father Gabriel Gonzalez, O.P., presidente and vicar provincial of the Baja vicariate. When Garcia Diego y Moreno, O.F.M., who had been consecrated the first Bishop of both Californias on October 4, 1840, arrived in San Diego in December, 1841, he reappointed Fr. Gonzalez Vicar Forane of Baja California and granted him permission to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation. He granted the same faculties to Fr. Ramirez, no doubt because of the vastness of the Baja part of his diocese and the scarcity of clergy in attendance of it.

After the U.S. declaration of war against Mexico in 1846, Captain John M. Montgomery of the American warship Portsmouth, on March 29, 1847, took possession of San Jose del Cabo in the extreme south of Baja. On April 13th he appeared before La Paz, the capital, and immediately secured its surrender, and with it the whole of the Baja territory until the end of the war in 1848. Throughout the war Fr. Ramirez's sympathies were with the Americans, and apparently he had their respect, as may be indicated in a report of September 27, 1847, by Lieutenant-Colonel Henry S. Burton, then in command of La Paz, to the Secretary of State of Upper California, in which it is noted: "by the politeness of Fray Ramirez de Arrellano, padre presidente [sic] in this peninsula, I have been able to form a tolerably accurate estimate of the amount of population in Lower California." [17] At any rate, at the end of the war, whether because of dislike and/or fear of the Mexicans or his love of the Americans, Fr. Ramirez emigrated to Alta California. There his name is first found in the baptismal records of the Church of San Carlos in Monterey on February 15, 1849. At the end of the following month, Fr. Jose Marie Gonzalez Rubio, O.F.M., who had been named vicar capitular, or administrator, of the diocese on the death of Bishop Garcia Diego y Moreno on April 30, 1846, granted him the faculties of the diocese, and he began to function as the pastor of San Carlos.

Fr. Ramirez's liking for the United States seems to have climaxed with the entrance of Alta California into the Union in 1850. He was actively present at the Constitutional Convention that met in Colton Hall, Monterey, from September 1 to October 13, 1849, as reported in the minutes of the Convention [18]:

At the [second] meeting, on Monday September 3rd, a quorum was present, and Reverend Samuel J. Willey, being observed among those outside the rail, was invited to open the proceedings with a prayer, which he did. Later it was resolved to begin the deliberations of each day in the same way, the Reverend Mr. Willey and Padre Ramirez, pastor of what had been the presidio church in Pedro Fages' time, were invited to officiate on alternate mornings.

One of the observers of the Convention was a Baynard Taylor who later wrote his recollections of it, some of which were of Fr. Ramirez:

The appearance of the company... was genteel and respectable, and perhaps the genial unrestrained social spirit that possessed all present would have been less had there been more uniformity of costume... The most interesting figure to me was that of Padre Ramirez, who, in his clerical cassock [habit?], looked on until a late hour. If the strongest advocate of priestly gravity and decorum had been present, he could not have found in his heart to grudge the good old padre the pleasure that beamed upon his honest countenance.

Another memory recorded by Taylor again speaks well of Ramirez, though one wonders whether to judge the friar's preaching by Taylor's generous words about it or by his and others' conduct during it.

I attended the Catholic Church in Monterey [San Carlos] one Sunday to hear good old Padre Ramirez. The church is small and with scanty decorations; the nave and gallery were both crowded by the Californian families and Indians. Near the door hung opposite pictures of Heaven and Hell -- the former a sort of pyramid inhabited by straight white figures, with an aspect of solemn distress [sic]; the latter enclosed in the expanded jaws of a dragon, swarming with devils who tormented their victims with spears and pitch forks. The church music was furnished by a diminutive parlor organ, and consisted of a choice list of polkas, waltzes, and fandango airs. Padre Ramirez preached a very excellent sermon, recommending his Catholic flock to follow the example of the Protestants, who, he said, were more truly pious than they and did much more for the welfare of their church. I noticed that during the sermon several of the Californians disappeared through a small door at the end of the gallery. Following them, out of curiosity, I found them all seated in the belfry and along the coping of the front, composedly smoking their cigars.

As pastor of San Carlos Fr. Ramirez greeted Bishop Alemany, Fr. Vilarrasa, and Sr. Mary Goemaere when they first arrived in Monterey, Jan. 28, 1851, and assisted at the various ceremonies and masses of welcome in his church now become cathedral. He continued on as pastor, with the assistance of Fr. Vilarrasa, who, among his other duties, had the charge of San Carlos Mission in Carmel. It seems Fr. Ramirez was a minister at the Solemn High Mass celebrated on August 4, 1851, the feast of St. Dominic, in the chapel of the Sisters' convent of Santa Catalina which Alemany, in his assumed role as provincial, had established on March 13. At the Pontifical Mass at the Cathedral on the following Sunday, Fr. Ramirez preached a panegyric on St. Dominic. He was also present at the establishment of the men's convent of St. Dominic in Monterey on February 4, 1852 and, as Vilarrasa's Chronicle continues, "The same day, in the evening, we all gathered in choir, where certain regulations made by me for the orderly administration of the convent and for regular observance were made public by Fr. Ignatius Ramirez de Arellano of the Mexican Province." Ramirez may have taken up residence in the convent, but there is no documentation of this at hand. We know that he remained in Monterey, probably continuing on as pastor of San Carlos, at least until February 2, 1853, the date of his last baptismal entry at San Carlos. When Fr. Ramirez returned to Mexico, Vilarrasa succeeded him as pastor of the cathedral church.

### **Fr. Peter Augustine Anderson: Martyr to Charity**

The Spanish and Mexican Dominicans who in the early 1800s continued on in Baja and now and again made their way into Alta California acted pretty much as individuals with little if any thought of a future California province. It was different with another pioneer Dominican missionary, this one a U.S. citizen from birth and making his way to Alta California from much further afield. It would seem that the inspiration toward a full-blown Dominican foundation for the western United States, particularly California, originated with him; and he gave his life that it might be fulfilled.

Peter Anderson was born of Protestant parents in Elizabeth, New Jersey, on January 8, 1812. In 1827, when he was fifteen, his family emigrated to Ohio. Soon after this move west his father died, leaving him the sole support of his widowed mother and younger brothers and sisters. Under the inspiration and guidance of the Dominicans then serving in Ohio, Peter with his whole family entered the Catholic Church. His new-found faith ran deep, for almost immediately upon his conversion, and presumably because his younger brothers were now able to provide for the family, Peter became a postulant for the Dominican Order at St. Joseph's Priory in Somerset. In 1831 he was sent to St. Rose Priory near Springfield, Kentucky -- the oldest Dominican foundation in the United States -- where he received the habit in 1832, taking the name of Augustine. His year of novitiate completed, he made his solemn profession on August 4, 1833, at the hands of his prior, Fr. Richard Pius Miles. In view of the manner of Fr. Anderson's near-future death, it is significant that it was in this year that a severe plague of Asiatic cholera broke out in and around Springfield. The fathers and brothers of St. Rose, including presumably Brother Augustine, together with the Dominican sisters of St. Mary Magdalen convent, were at constant risk of their own lives as day and night they ministered to the sick and dying. Seven years later, on April 4, 1840, Peter was ordained a priest at St. Rose by the same Richard Miles who had received his vows, now Bishop Miles of Nashville, Tennessee.

Fr. Anderson spent his first years as a priest at St. Rose, leading the contemplative life that was his as a Dominican but he was severely restricted in his ministry by a stern, "hard-fisted" prior and former provincial, Fr. Nicholas Dominic Young. After several years on the leash he grew restless. In 1845, together with another Dominican, Fr. James Vincent Bullock, he wrote to the noted missionary, Fr. Samuel Charles Mazzuchelli, asking if he might join the newly established "mid-west" province of St. Charles, which Mazzuchelli himself had founded. The transfiliation, however, was not made. Instead, on December 4 of this same year, he was elected socius of the prior going to the provincial chapter to be convened at St. Joseph's Priory/Novitiate on December 31, and at this chapter he was assigned to St. Joseph's. On January 13 of the following year Fr. Anderson was elected the convent's procurator at a council meeting signed by Fr. Francis Sadoc Vilarrasa as secretary. At a meeting of the council of February 6 he was made secretary while Fr. Vilarrasa was reelected novice master at St. Joseph's. At the house meeting of February 20 he was appointed "to take care of the fabric of St. Joseph's Church." In September of this same year he resigned as both procurator and secretary, but continued on as "sacristan."

In this latter capacity he was granted permission July 17, 1847, by the then provincial, Fr. George Augustine Thomas Wilson, to tour the United States and Canada to collect money for St. Joseph's. He must have met with some success in his begging mission because in November of this same year Fr. Vilarrasa, now prior of St. Joseph's and vicar of the province, sent him out again. This second tour is chronicled in Fr. Anderson's journal which bears the title, "The Journal

of my Begging Expedition to the South -- A.P. Anderson, O.P." Its entries date from November 26, 1847, to July 18, 1848. It was an extensive tour, exercising the young priest for his future missionary work. It took him through Kentucky on into Tennessee, Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama, Missouri, Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio, New York, and Massachusetts. In most places he met with hospitality, though his financial success appears to have been minimal. For instance, at the start of his tour: "M 6 [Dec.] At Memphis, one o'clock in the morning. Find the field already occupied by Revd. Fr. Jennings a Franciscan Friar from Ireland. Remained on the warf." "W 15 [Dec.] Found begging poor business in Jackson." It was poorer still in Dubuque, as recorded for May 6, 1848: "Visited Sinsinawa Mound, Benton, New Diggins, & Dubuque. This last is the last place a beggar should go to. I collected there fifty cents. Being disheartened I left the place, in disgust, in less than 24 hours." Not all went well toward the end of the tour either. The entry for June 2, 1848 reads: "Landed at Detroit 4 1/2P.M. [four thirty p.m.] had my baggage carried to the Michigan Exchange. Visited the Bishop. Could no encouragement [sic] from him in my humiliating mission. I accept however of his kind invitation to enjoy his generous hospitality." Sometimes, though, even hospitality was lacking, as we read in the entry for December 23, 1847. At St. Patrick's in New Orleans he asked the pastor, a Fr. Mullin, if he might say Mass, "which request, I am sorry to be obliged to record it, was positively refused to me on the ground that the Dominican Rite (venerable though it be) would give scandal." But there are happier notes. So for June 11, 1848 we read: "Preached in Tolledo. Found people remarkably generous." It seems there was almost always some gain, however slight, as we discover in his entry for Saturday, December 18, 1847, the eve of his preaching in the new cathedral in Natchez, Mississippi. A Fr. Blinkinsop, a resident cleric, "is very clever [sic] to me; for having two hats, he gave me one of them seeing that I had lost mine". Sometimes along the way he would say Mass and preach in private homes. He also performed several baptisms. As may be gathered from his journal he did his traveling by steamer, train, and horseback.

When Fr. Anderson began to dream of California it is impossible to say. Perhaps that restlessness he felt back in 1845 when he expressed his desire to be part of a more westerly province was that dream beginning to surface. At any rate it was at the beginning of 1849 that he talked the matter over with his new provincial (since May 2, 1848), Fr. Joseph Sadoc Alemany. In the light of subsequent events, we may imagine each firing the imagination of the other and together laying plans for a new foundation of the Dominican Order in the far west. Briefly Fr. Alemany recorded in the provincial register: "February 22, 1849, Father Augustine P. Anderson is being sent to California (or Santa Fe), where he will try to revive our missions." Alemany seems to have had in mind Baja California to begin with, for it was there that the Dominican missions were located and in dire need of help. But Anderson's plans as they took shape were for Alta California, by then a territory of the United States and soon to be admitted to statehood (Sept. 9, 1850).

Preparations for his departure began at once. Fr. James Whalen, the subprior in charge of St. Joseph's, wrote to Archbishop Samuel Eccleston of Baltimore testifying that Fr. Anderson "has obtained all necessary faculties and permission from the Very Rev. Fr. Provincial for the purpose of going to missionary duties to California." On March 7, 1849, Fr. Nicholas Dominic Young, Anderson's vigilant and restrictive prior when at St. Rose but now enthusiastically supportive of the young priest's missionary plans, added to Fr. Whalen's letter his own recommendation. He himself had been a vigorous and much admired missionary in addition to serving as provincial of his province and accordingly held considerable influence among the hierarchy. He specified to

Eccleston that Fr. Peter was going to California "for the purpose of rendering assistance [to] those of our American Catholics who have already started...to that country, and if he shall find the country such as we expect, it is our design with the approbation of the Ecclesiastical authority then to establish a Community of our Order in California. I hope that this plan and intention will meet with your approbation." Fr. Young asked Archbishop Eccleston for a letter to the Bishop of California and to the Archbishop of Mexico where he surmised Anderson would visit along the way. He also suggested that if he knew of any other people going to California he might arrange that Fr. Anderson accompany them. Impatient for Eccleston's reply, Young wrote to him again on March 21, asking for a "special letter to the Archbishop of Mexico and the Bishop of Monterey." This time Fr. Young had his answer soon enough, for it was only ten days later that he once more wrote to the archbishop as follows:

Your kind letter with the enclosure I received last night and communicated the contents to Rev. A. Anderson, who is so much pleased with the plan you propose and suggested to Bishop [Francis Patrick] Kendrick to select him as the chaplain of the company going from Philadelphia to California... If he should not succeed in obtaining that situation, he will go from this to Orleans, and would in that case gladly receive then from you, any letters you may be so kind as to give him with any information you may think serviceable in Mexico and California.

It was Fr. Anderson's intention to start immediately after Easter if he could then have all things ready for the journey; by that time he hopes you will be able to give him any information regarding the intention of that company, and should it be arranged for him to go with them, he will take Baltimore and Washington on his way, where he will have the pleasure of seeing your Grace and avail himself of the opportunity of profiting by your kindness in obtaining for him the recommendations of the Mexican Minister.

The appointment to the chaplaincy did not materialize, but Fr. Anderson went to New York anyway to catch whatever ship might be headed for the Isthmus of Panama whence he might begin the second leg of his journey to California. But while in New York his services were demanded in Sullivan and Ulster counties. His work in these locales though brief was, apparently, outstanding and long remembered, for a quarter of a century later The Freeman's Journal of February 19, 1876, reported apropos a mission Fr. Stephen Byrne, O.P., was preaching in Wurtsboro:

Father Byrne was surprised to find on his arrival here, many traditions of Father Anderson, a Dominican, who in 1849 bought the church of St. Joseph from the Dutch Reformed and turned it into one for Catholic services... The memory of Father Anderson is still fresh and green in the minds of older Catholics of this place as it is among thousands of readers of the Freeman in other states.

Back in New York City awaiting his ship, Anderson was once again diverted from his mission, this time to minister to Irish immigrants in Canada who had fled the famine in their native country and were now "dying by the scores of ship fever" . When this work was finished he returned to New York City and eventually, in the early months of 1850, set sail for California. His ship brought him to the Isthmus of Panama whence by small boat and muleback he made his



way to Panama City. On June 17, 1850, he boarded the SS Panama and in 18 days (on July 6) entered the Golden Gate. "The run to San Francisco was splendid," he noted in his journal. A quiet, prayerful preparation, it would seem, for seem, for the life, and death, about to begin. In a letter to Fr. Young dated July 12, 1850, Anderson described his first days in San Francisco and the prospects for the Order:

My reception by the Rev. Mr. Langlois, who is the presiding priest here (and by the bye, I think an excellent missionary) has been most kind and encouraging. My arrival was on Saturday morning; in the afternoon I presented my credentials. On Sunday morning I said Mass, and did the honors of the pulpit at ten o'clock service and at Vespers. Monday morning I moved my baggage to the priest's house, adjoining the church, where I have a comfortable room. For the present I am associated [sic] in the Mission belonging to the city of San Francisco. Would to God, dear Father, that you were here! O! Had Montgomery accepted [the bishopric of California]. What a field for the Order would have been opened...

He is captivated by the City, its life, its energy, its beauty, but mainly because of what his Order can, must(!) offer it:

This young giant of a city grows beyond the widest stretch of the imagination in spite of fire, wind, and dust. The tracks of the two recent conflagrations on the 18 May, the other 14th June, which totally consumed the major and best part of the city are scarcely traceable except by the newest of the buildings that have taken the place of those swept off by the two mighty elements, wind and fire combined. There is here, according to the best information I caught, a resident population of about 20 thousand. The growth and buildup of this important place have not been, I think, much overrated by our Atlantic newswriters. In part every part of the city can be heard the carpenter's hammer, the mason's trowel & blacksmith's anvil, whilst the Bay presents the astonishing spectacle of a forest of masts and steamboat pipes. Building of docks, too, and grading of streets are here carried on with great rapidity. San Francisco, in my humble opinion, in twenty years time, will rival N. York in commercial importance.

Concerning the result of your coming to this mission, my opinion remains unchanged, I might say it is confirmed. It is my full conviction that the Order could be advantageously established here, no matter who becomes Bishop. But to accomplish this no time should be lost... Too much delay has already been made; however, the field is not yet lost.

"Lost" here has reference to the Protestants. Anderson shares the worry of the eastern hierarchy which, as we shall see, had led them to their urgent recommendation to Rome for a bishop for California. Anderson concludes his letter by begging Fr. Young himself to come and "to engage one of the Spanish Fathers to accompany you." He should also bring with him vestments, church ornaments and "a good library" since, once the new bishop of Monterey arrives the Mexican government is to remove and take to Mexico all properties belonging to the upper California missions.

Fr. Antoine Langlois, mentioned at the beginning of Anderson's letter, was the pastor of St. Francis Church, the first church in San Francisco after the Mission, and, with the Mission, the only place of formal Catholic worship in the city at this time. He was also Vicar General for the northern part of the state for Fr. Jose Maria Gonzalez Rubio, O.F.M., the Vicar Capitular of the vacant diocese. The "Fr. Montgomery" Anderson refers to was formerly provincial of the Eastern Province. He had been chosen for the See of Monterey but had declined. Thus Anderson's expression of regret. Unknown to him at the writing of this letter, as is apparent, Fr. Alemany had been selected in Montgomery's place, and had already been ordained Bishop of Monterey on June 30. Fr. Young, the recipient of the letter, was deeply moved by it. He seriously considered accepting the proffered invitation, but did not make the move.

Fr. Anderson spent some days in San Francisco before going to Sacramento, his assigned field of ministry. On August 6, Fr. Langlois wrote a letter to the Catholics of Sacramento introducing their new pastor and authorizing him to collect funds and procure property for the building of a church. This same day Fr. Anderson took a steamer and arrived in Sacramento on the following day. He immediately announced his ministerial intentions in the Sacramento Transcript. On Saturday, August 10, he celebrated Mass in a "new house generously given for the purpose." Only a handful of people were present, but the symbolic value of the event was not lost on at least one of the participants. Dr. Gregory Phelan, a Catholic physician of Sacramento, wrote to the New York Freeman's Journal: "This first small assemblage of the Catholics of Sacramento reminded me of the parable of the mustard seed. I hope that our church here may soon grow up into a noble tree, beneath whose widespread and shading branches, the wearied of all sects may find shelter and refreshment." Dr. Phelan goes on to describe the public Mass celebrated the next day, Sunday, with a larger congregation. Perhaps worried that the people, having been for a long time without the Sacraments, Fr. Anderson began the Mass with a brief reminder of the need for "attentive and respectful deportment at its celebration." The gospel was that of the Good Samaritan and, Dr. Phelan reports, their pastor preached "a very eloquent and appropriate discourse" upon it.

Immediately after Mass pastor and people got down to business. A committee of 13 was appointed "to take steps toward procuring a lot and building a church thereon... and report progress to the Pastor who is vested with veto power." Later in the day Fr. Anderson baptized three children and in the evening preached a sermon on confession. In his journal he carefully notes that the Mass collection was \$25.00 and the stipends for the baptisms came to \$58.00. He also records for this same day a donation of \$15.00 given by a Mr. Murphy.

On August 13, after baptizing another child, he left for San Francisco, promising to return soon. Perhaps it was during this particular sojourn that he collected \$2000.00 for a church in Happy Valley (lower Market Street), which materialized as the city's first St. Patrick's Church. Evidently he did not limit his apostolate to the area of his formal assignment: his mission was to be the whole of California, as in his original dream.

By now Anderson knew who the new Bishop of Monterey was. The information was personalized in a letter he received from Alemany from Paris, dated August 24, 1850: "Some slight sickness and also some affairs made me remain in Rome a little longer than I expected. I

also remained a little in Lyons to obtain some assistance for our Mission in California... I hope to be in New York before the end of September... I wish to hasten to California."

Reading between the few lines of the remainder of Anderson's journal we see that August almost through November of 1850 was a busy time for him. His missionary travels took him from San Francisco back to Sacramento, thence to Marysville and Long Bar, and into the mining regions. Most of his time, presumably, was spent in Sacramento itself, his official parish. His first masses there were offered in a frame structure procured for him on L Street between Fifth and Sixth. It was fitted up as a chapel with a sort of sacristy behind, which also served as his temporary residence. But in October Governor Burnett, a staunch Catholic, deeded to the parish "Lot 8" located in the block bounded by Seventh and Eighth and J and K streets, where a church was soon begun. It was to be dedicated to St. Rose of Lima, first canonized Saint of the New World and the name of Fr. Anderson's novitiate priory in Springfield, Illinois. The little church was almost completed when it collapsed in a violent storm on November 26, the day before Anderson's death.

It was in October that cholera broke out in northern California, and on the 26th of this month Fr. Anderson, who had been in San Francisco at the time, returned to Sacramento to tend the sick and dying. The Sacramento correspondent for the Freeman's Journal wrote on Nov. 14, 1850: "Father Anderson has been very active in the performance of his laborious duties. He visits the hospital several times a day and also seeks out the sick and distressed in tents and other exposed situations." Sorrow is added to admiration when two weeks later, on Nov. 30, he reports: "We are called upon to mourn the loss of one who was a father to his people, a benefactor of the poor; our esteemed and beloved pastor, Rev. Augustus [sic] P. Anderson, has passed from earth, I trust, to Heaven..." According to the correspondent it was on November 14 that Anderson finally realized he was seriously sick and allowed the doctor to examine him, but it was too late. He had contracted typhoid fever. Word was sent to San Francisco, and Fr. Langlois went to Sacramento to be with his fellow priest. Father Anderson died at 1:45 p.m. on Wednesday, November 27, 1850, at the age of thirty-eight, devotedly regarded as "a martyr to charity."

He was first buried in the restored St. Rose Church in Sacramento. On October 1, 1854, a few months after the Dominicans moved from Monterey to Benicia, Archbishop Alemany ordered that his remains be removed to the Dominican church of St. Dominic in Benicia. Here they were interred under the altar of the old church with the Dominican burial ceremonies. Shortly after the new St. Dominic's was built in 1890, they were transferred to a section of land adjacent to the parish cemetery Vilarassa had purchased in 1861. There he was buried in the quiet circle on "the hill" that also shelters the remains of his Dominican brothers and sisters who followed him in life and in death.

### **Endnotes**

[1] For full references of secondary materials cf. bibliography. Most references throughout our study are to be found in the Western Dominican Archives (WDA). These, thanks mainly to the efforts of Fr. Charles Hess and Sr. Veronica Lonergan, are neatly and safely stored in cartons marked with Roman numerals, each carton containing multiple files pertaining to the general subject designated by the number on the carton and noted on a directive sheet in the archives.

The files contain letters -- originals and/or copies -- contemporary or later newsclippings pertaining to the subject, biographical materials, official documents such as visitation records, property deeds, financial reports, minutes of provincial or house meetings, etc. There are cartons of photographs and of catalogi, and on the various shelves may be found Acta of General and provincial/congregation chapters and sundry other materials.

For Alemany -- Most by far of what I say about Alemany comes from John B. McGloin, S.J., California's First Archbishop... There has been much subtraction and a few additions, but it is to McGloin's devoted and pioneering study that I am heavily indebted for what I know and have written about the Dominican archbishop. I have, of course, rearranged (and sometimes reinterpreted) McGloin's materials as the particular history with which the present book is concerned demands. The supplemental materials used may be found in Alemany's file, WDA XIII:3 and in R. Coffey, The American Dominicans... and V. O'Daniel, The dominican Province of St. Joseph... For a full discussion of the primary sources for Alemany, cf. McGloin, pp. 367-377.

For Vilarrasa -- In this chapter and in subsequent chapters, cf. his file, WDA XIII:4, especially his letters and his Chronicle from 1850 to 1884. For his Chronicle, written in simple and direct Latin, I have used Fr. Paul Starrs' translation and notes as published in "The Catholic Historical Review," January, 1952, pp. 415-436.

For Baja -- Of the several cartons of documents on Baja in the western Dominican archives my references are to WDA XI, 950 (C). I have also made use of Fr. Charles Hess's unpublished monographs on the pre-history of the province and Fr. Ramirez de Arellano. Fr. Hess's monographs are in the relevant files in the WDA. I have also relied heavily on Fr. Zephyrin Engelhardt, O.F.M., The Missions and Missionaries of California..., vol. I, pp. 555-714. In addition I have used Peveril Meigs' study, The Dominican Mission Frontier of Lower California..., and the doctoral dissertation of Fr. Albert B. Nieser, O.P., The Dominican Mission Foundations in Baja California 1769-1822... This last concludes with an extensive description of the original sources (manuscripts, printed materials, and their locations) for the history of the Dominican

Baja

missions.

For Anderson -- cf. WDA XIII:2 (A) (B), containing his journal and other contemporary documents. Also, Fr. Hess's essay on Anderson in Anderson's file, supplemented by Fr. Reginald Coffey, O.P., The American Dominicans..., pp. 262-267.

[2] Ray Allen Billington, The Far Western Frontier, 1830-1860 (New York, 1956), pp. 219-220, quoted by John Tracy Ellis in his forward to John McGloin's California's First Archbishop... p. 10.

[3] Joseph Venisse, Annales de l'Association de la Propagation de la Foi, XXIV (Novembre, 1852), p. 412, again as quoted by John Tracy Ellis, Ibid. Ellis has "little gold, much bad." I have changed this to "little good, much bad," which seems more likely to have been the thought of Venisse if not the word he used.

[4] Alemany had recent and proximate precedent for asking to be provincial, and Gigli in granting his request. In 1828, the Dominican generalate in Rome made Bishop Edward Fenwick,

who in 1807 as a simple Dominican had established the first Dominican province in the U.S., "commissary general" of the province -- whatever any bull of Benedict XIII or other legislation may have said to the contrary. Cf. Loretta Petit, O.P., *Friar in the Wilderness...*, p. 23.

[5] Nieser, *op. cit.*, ch. 1, pp. 1-19, summarizes the story of the first Dominicans in the New World up until their entrance into Baja. In his subsequent chapters he treats specifically and in detail the Dominican Baja mission itself.

[6] As quoted by Nieser, pp. 51-52

[7] as quoted by Engelhardt, p. 555. Both Peveril Meigs and Albert Nieser are not so negative as Bancroft and Engelhardt with regard to Dominican documentation on Baja. They draw on a wealth of information left behind by the missionaries and, as noted above, Nieser devotes seventeen pages (pp. 330-346) to a listing of pertinent documents and their library locations.

[8] vol. 1. no. 7, 1900, p.210.

[9] as in Engelhardt, p. 660

[10] as in Engelhardt, p. 565

[11] Engelhardt, p. 626

[12] quoted by Nieser, p. 40

[13] In Engelhardt, pp. 578-579

[14] These foundations and dates are as given by Engelhardt and Meigs. Meigs (p. 39) notes changes in location for most of the missions and the dates of change and reasons for them. The reason for change was most often water failure, though for Santo Tomas it was mosquitoes in "an unhealthy lagoon." Nieser (pp. 291-92) claims that Descanso was not founded in 1817 but 1809, and was really Mission San Miguel brought further north. Thus Descanso was at the time often called "Mission Nueva de San Miguel" and the former mission simply "Mission Vieja."

[15] Quoted by C. Hess in his unpublished monograph: "Our Dominican Heritage: Western Dominican Province Pre-History."

[16] As Nieser says: "To describe the process [of the dissolution of the Dominican missions] would require a very long chapter, but some interesting phases should be pointed out. The modification of the mission and of the status of the missionary was gradual. The peninsular missions which survived became first quasi-parishes and included in their services whites as well as Indians, then parishes under diocesan control [secularization]. Mission lands were gradually allotted to Indians and sold or allotted to whites. At least one mission was essentially a garrison, to whose church soldiers and settlers could come and Indians were invited. Most of the missions became small settlements or villages and the people were attended occasionally by visiting priests. The Dominican fathers' status likewise changed to that of quasi-pastor, chaplain, pastor,

and visiting priest" (p.287). The causes for the dissolution were multiple, as Nieser lists them: 1) a hostile government's secularization of the missions, taking them from the care of the missionaries and placing them in that of those who could not or would not manage them; 2) the Mexican revolution, separating New Spain from Old Spain, thus discouraging the Spanish government and church from supplying new missionaries and supporting the old; 3) epidemics of small-pox and "galico" (Syphilis) which in the later mission years more and more would decimate the Indian population until in the end (c. 1850) only a handful of natives remained to carry on the life, activities and work necessary to sustain the missions; 4) the discovery of gold in Alta California which drew the relatively few Baja settlers away from an already sparsely populated country, and left the missions prey to renegade 49ers on their way north; 5) the barrenness of the country which, with few missionaries and Indians to work the land, often became the source of great poverty working grave hardship on Indian and missionary alike. Interest in Baja, on the part of state and church alike, had severely declined, and all eyes were focused on the north where there was life, good land aplenty, and a promising future.

[17] Engelhardt, pp. 669-670. As noted in the text Fr. Ramirez was not presidente of the missions but vice-presidente.

[18] The following quotations re Ramirez are as they appear in Fr. Hess's monograph.

[19] O'Daniel, p. 84

[20] On Feb. 25, 1861, Vilarrasa purchased at the price of \$487.34 part of the city cemetery for the Catholics of Benicia and vicinity (Cf. Fr. C. Lamb's historical sketch, WDA XI:102:28 (A)). It would seem that the friars were first buried in the convent gardens in the shadow of the old church (as suggested by Fr. J. Asturias' recollections of tomb stones near the former church and of the older brethren speaking of Dominicans having been buried there), just as the sisters of St. Catherine's buried their deceased in their convent grounds (Dominicans of San Rafael Archives, Community Records 1850-1898, vol. I, p. 89). Then, with the building of the new St. Dominic's in 1890, the friars were given land in the area of the city cemetery for their use and they transferred the remains of the brethren including those of Anderson to it (as may be conjectured from the letter of Fr. H. Palmer to Fr. C. Lamb, July 28, 1934, WDA XI:102:2). Fr. Palmer speaks of 1912 as the date of the deed for the "new" cemetery, but, whatever the date of the deed, this particular section -- the "hill" -- had been owned and used by the friars since the mid-1890s. Thus the Community Records in the San Rafael Archives (op. cit.) speak of the St. Catherine sisters deciding to remove "all bodies interred in the Convent grounds and re-inter them in the new cemetery recently purchased by the Fathers, and the removal of all the bodies took place in 1897 [emphasis mine]." (I am grateful to Sister Martin Barry, O.P., archivist for the San Rafael sisters, and Sister Paul Kirk, O.P., for the information about the early burials of St. Catherine's, which has helped me sort out those of the early Dominican friars.)

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