

# THEOLOGY AND POLITICO-LEGAL POPULARIZATION OF MARTYRDOM IN THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSAL MONARCHY

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## 1. The theory of martyrdom according to St. Thomas Aquinas.

The choice of the doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas to formulate a theory of martyrdom present in the Hispanic Modern Age corresponds to the evident fact of its value as foundation of the Second Scholasticism theology, in the quality of builder of the philosophical and theological tendency that laid the foundations for the renovation of natural Law: an intellectualist iusnaturalism, contrary to voluntarism, which meant the Catholic orthodoxy and constituted, under the counter-reformist spirit, the basis of a reinterpreted and original thinking embodied by the modern jurists and theologians in their treatises and commentaries in order to acquire a political and legal connotation with regard to the legitimation of the nature and aims of Universal Monarchy<sup>1</sup>.

Thus, the reading of St. Thomas Aquinas' work is also required because modern theology undoubtedly adopts its dogmatic study of martyrdom, and the use of this virtuous idea in the operation of the Hispanic Monarchy always keeps him as a reference.

### a) Martyrdom, act of justice and fortitude.

The fortitude of man justifies his spirits in human justice, and thus it makes the latter possible as an aim through the innate instrument of an ability to endure and overcome dangers, including death. Likewise, there is an innate and divine fortitude that has as *raison d'être* the iron and blind faith in Christ, which consolidates the grandness of the individual in the realization of good of divine justice. According to St. Tho-

mas, two aspects can be then considered in the act of fortitude: the first one is *fortitude* in the proper sense or, so to speak, in the teleological one, as the spiritual good pursued by the strong as a goal, and the second one is the *firmness* required in the transition, as persistence or perseverance, to achieve the same objective. Both concepts, spiritual good as aim and firmness, complement each other in fortitude: the firmness of the strong is precisely what prevents being removed from good by a persuasive and enemy voice. Consequently, if the foundation of martyrdom is firmness and support in faith, at the same time fortitude constitutes the virtuous habit that allows enduring it according to the spiritual good pursued.

But not only fortitude is virtue of martyrdom, since the latter would not exist without charity. Indeed, charity is the predominant virtue that inclines the nature of martyrdom turning it into a meritorious deed. If there was a lacking or absence of this charitable virtue, martyrdom could not be considered as a consummate virtue and, therefore, it would not have any effect. In this sense, in martyrdom, charity and fortitude are together, united, linked, since charity, understood as a characteristic quality of the subject, contributes to the creation and prop of fortitude. In this unity of virtues, charity acts as a moderating factor in the fortitude that is used with greater rigour—as St. Thomas does—to identify martyrdom: attention towards neighbour does not allow the confusion between fortitude and the mere strength, so that an active response or counter-attack is excluded under the circumstances that the virtue of the strong must bear. As it is limited by charity, we must

<sup>1</sup>For a general visión about the influence and contribution of Thomist doctrine in the theoretical basements of the Catholic iusnaturalism like a support of Universal Monarchy Law, vid. Michel Bastit, *Naissance de la loi moderne. La pensée de la loi de Saint Thomas à Suarez* (Paris : 1990), pp. 25-168

understand that in the martyrdom act fortitude only contributes restricted to its essential sense, which is the ability to endure and suffer, and consequently patience becomes one of the most appreciated virtues of the martyrs<sup>2</sup>.

Composed of charity and fortitude, martyrdom is understood as a virtuous act that consists of the firm maintenance in truth and justice, understood both as an object of reason and faith, under the constant aggressions of their possible pursuers. And we must prepare this spirit in regards to martyrdom, in the sense that it is necessary to work the spirit to properly bear the unfairly endured suffering. In order to act according to the reason of faith, the key is to suffer with restraint the abuses our neighbour causes, always highlighting the unlawfulness of the provocation, that is, excluding the incitement that gives other subject the opportunity or cause of a wrongdoing towards us. Thus, there is a *virtue of passion* in martyrdom: if the natural fortitude of man contains the good of virtue to bear danger, and fundamentally to bear death, man will show his fortitude of divine breath in this resistance, achieved even running the risk of death. It is as if the martyr defeated death in the spiritual battle of panic that the enemy challenges him with, and emerged thanks to his faith in God, as St. Cyprian says, with the free voice, immaculate soul and divine strength of the servants of Christ. And this happens, although the victory in this kind of heavenly battle fought deep down is not only present in death itself, which is the ultimate and perfective consequence of martyrdom, but in the act of resistance itself, which is indeed a virtuous fortitude<sup>3</sup>.

## b) Martyrdom as an act of perfection of charity.

According to St. Thomas, martyrdom is an act that requires an extreme obedience and imitation of Christ, since He was obedient until his death in the same way that the martyr has to be completely submissive until his. Thus, this extreme obedience, together with a process as violent as the suffering of martyrdom, ratifies the virtuous perfection of the act.

Likewise, if martyrdom is an act of perfection of charity, a perfect act of virtue that is maximized when it requires enduring death, we must consider that this suffering would not be laudable without a blind faith and love for God, as the one that the martyr shows by giving preference to Him above all things. Certainly, the charitable love is found out working on the principle that man fundamentally tends to value his own life and detest death, an odious fact by nature, especially if it is accompanied by violence and torment as it usually happens in the martyr situation; martyrdom, however, radicalizes charity because it prefers God to life itself and therefore values death not as an odious circumstance but as a potentially perfect trance connected to charity, if the latter is understood as the virtue that makes us love God above all things and is linked to the obligation of the human being to love one's neighbour as oneself precisely in the sense of a prolongation of that love for God, as a maximized charity. As St. John indicates, dying for one's friends is the greatest love that can be offered. Thus, despite the severity the martyr has to bear, he usually does not show any fear and he waits patiently, and even gently and calmly, the development of the facts,

<sup>2</sup>Santo Tomás de Aquino, *Suma de Teología* (directed edition by the rulings of Dominical Provinces Studies in Spain), IV, Secunda Secundae (B), quaestio 124, art. 1 (Madrid: 1997), pp. 326-327.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 326.

knowing full well the expected end, which explains his unconditional love for God.

Despite all that, as St. Augustine explains, willingness to martyrdom must not be confused with an assessment of martyrdom as the only path to salvation, and the need to suffer it must not be determined as the only procedure to reach God. Although it is a perfect act, martyrdom is not the only way to earn a place in heaven, acting the freewill against the ominous force of the events that condition suffering. If man can freely reach God by diverse paths, definitely this wilfulness also means the vision of the act of martyrdom itself as a voluntary act, and not as a fatalistic path derived from pitiful circumstances. As St. Thomas reminds, the holy martyrs are remembered in their charitable and fervent movement towards God precisely because they voluntarily opted for the path of martyrdom, and in this free will as foundation of a virtuous suffering, they substantially showed the merit itself of their virtue<sup>4</sup>.

### c) Martyrdom, an act perfected by death.

The martyr is the person who gives preference to his faith in Christ above all things; the person who underestimates what earthly life offers and anxiously waits for the supra-earthly happiness; who repels what is visible and esteems what is invisible. However, with his acts he cannot show any disregard towards the material world, since this way the martyr would not be far from any common man whose ambition for preserving life could even lead him —as sometimes happens, under the force of fear— to the rejection of his relatives and material goods. Thus, St. Thomas relates what Satan sprang on Job: “Skin for skin. A man will give all he has for his own life”. The martyr prolongs his virtue with sacrifice, he neither

substitutes nor renounces the former with the latter; the martyr does not reject what is temporary in exchange for the salvation of his life, and if he risks his life, it is due to the maintenance of his virtuous appreciation, undoubtedly as a prolongation, as an expansion of his fortitude.

That is why the merit of martyrdom is not, precisely, in the achievement of the divine sphere after death, but in the wilfulness of enduring death, in the free choice of suffering it for the faith in Christ. Although fortitude constitutes a virtue that allows enduring and resisting all kind of dangers and risks, its radical meaning in martyrdom is best appreciated when death is presented as the maximum sacrifice. If there is no death, there is no martyrdom, although the individual has been subjected to risks such as unfair imprisonment, persecution, exile or confiscation of property; he will not be seen as a martyr unless these harms are followed by death caused by the pursuers of faith. But, as we have said before, death is —no less, but only— the key of perfection of martyrdom as passion, and that is why at the same time it can be said that martyrdom does not require specific times, being possible for the process of suffering and therefore of survival to be extended, despite of severe injuries or tortures suffered for Christ; but then this time of sacrifice, which makes the martyrdom act even more meritorious, is finished with the definite death, which finally opens, consensually, the door towards the communion with God<sup>5</sup>.

In this context, as St. Thomas does, we must assert a consideration regarding death, and with that we will finish this synthetic reference to the Thomist theory of martyrdom, so assumed by the modern theological doctrine. As we mentioned, death indeed constitutes the fundamental element that culminates the conception of martyr-

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 328-329.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 328-329.

dom, in its most perfect and consummate sense. But we must understand that the martyr is not called to kill himself due to his love for God, since in that event he would be committing a crime of suicide<sup>6</sup>. Although St. Thomas appreciates the rightness of the martyr's death, he also believes that the latter has the duty not to abhor the things of the world or act against the temporal entities, despite the strong wish motivated by his faith in God for reaching the eternal and divine happiness. If the person finally opts for killing himself in order to avoid suffering the miseries of earthly life and reach God sooner, he would obviously be committing a mortal sin; consequently, there is no attachment for death, as the key of the theory of martyrdom. However, the martyr is certainly recognized as such for the contrary: for the virtue of patience, of doing good and resisting calmly the violence and suffering the earthly world inflicts on him, resisting deep down the war that the enemies of faith —the mundane world— have declared on him. Death is right when the individual voluntarily —since he could choose not to suffer it— subjects himself to follow a bloody path that finally leads to God, that is, when death derives from a suffering and sacrifice that the martyr assumes in order to witness to his faith and follow the path of good in his celestial struggle. That is why death is like the zenith of those difficulties this path of suffering offers, where the martyr commits himself to constantly enduring and suffering all the complications and obstacles arising, in order to defend God arduously. The suicide person that kills himself only shows his surrender before God, his alienation from God and the loss of the possibility of salvation; the martyr does avoid sacrifice as the suicide person does. Therefore,

despite the voluntary choice of martyrdom, the martyr neither wishes nor provokes the enemies of faith, his will is inner and resistant; he does not incite them at all to make him suffer a brutal death, since in this case he would be seeking, maybe indirectly, suicide, and instigating immorally the other's evil: who calls the enemy rationally and intentionally so the latter proceeds to execute his death is a false martyr. Thus, the martyr's duty is passive and not active; it does not consist of calling and persuading the enemy to challenge him to evil, since in this case he would also commit a sin. Definitely, the true martyr is the person who, facing the death threat for the defence of faith and without the previous real provocation of the enemy, stands firm in the Catholic dogma and in the exclusive, also virtuous and even pleasant, sense of his suffering for Christ<sup>7</sup>.

## 2. Martyrdom according to moral literature in the early modern period.

Modern moral literature contributes ideas that can be useful to complement the dogmatic theological vision St. Thomas offers about martyrdom. As our intention in this work is to approach an understanding of the use of the concept of martyrdom, also in a legal practice, we opted for this moral literature that brings us closer to a common and spread meaning, or so to speak a more slightly literary and narrative sense, without considering the reiterations that would make us continue stressing the theological, debtor technique, as we have repeated, of Thomism in the Second Scholasticism. Furthermore, moral literature uses the concept of martyrdom —due to its even le-

<sup>6</sup>About the connection between suicide and unjust martyrdom, vid. Victoria Sandoval Parra, "Occidere seipsum. El crimen del suicidio según la literatura jurídica y teológica del siglo XVI", in E. Álvarez Cora (ed.), *Liber Amicorum. Estudios histórico-jurídicos en homenaje a Enrique Gacto Fernández* (Madrid: 2015), pp. 321-359.

<sup>7</sup>Santo Tomás de Aquino, *Suma de Teología*, op. cit., p. 326.

gendary vocation and its tendency to exaggerate the described facts—in a closer way to the vulgar conception and spreading of its meaning, which adds very useful notions for the perfection of its not exclusively theoretical understanding.

However, moral literature about martyrdom developed in the early modern period as well as martyrdom itself as an act in defence of Catholic faith must be understood conditioned by a documentary literary tradition of this religious phenomenon, which delimits its understanding. Because, although the Thomist doctrine explained the characteristic virtues of the martyr's behaviour by expressing a virtuous Catholic behaviour pattern to face the adversity of the enemies of faith, the Church did not keep indefinite the meaning of martyrdom as a generic virtue—no matter how much, as we will see, those who had to bear efforts in hostile territories for Catholicism wanted to claim as their own merit their supposed martyrdom tribulations—, but it crystallized, in a controlled way, the list of those who had to be considered as true examples of martyrdom, adapted to the theoretically held doctrine, in literary genres that catalogued the martyrs' list, facing its vague popularization. Therefore, beatitude or saintliness has as a reference a proper behaviour, a variety of confirmed and determined virtues, but definitely does not depend on a spontaneous adaptation to its theological model, but on the procedural and formalised recognition on the part of the Church. Likewise, there was a literature that wanted to avoid that martyrdom was a kind of individualized ethics, and then it specified, with higher or lower doses of reality and legend, the lives that would officially be consolidated as models of martyrdom.

Hence, the *Passiones* or *Acta Martyrum*, and

the *martyrologies* form the documentary tradition where the meaning of modern moral literature of martyrdom must be placed, which in the quality of *legend*—where the inaccuracies and exaggerations of its narrative are so usually possible precisely because it is a last story, as a reminder of a traditional file of martyrs, and always protecting the clichés that persevere in the archetypal virtue of martyrdom— appears as a new literary basis for the controlled cataloguing of the martyrs' list<sup>8</sup>. It is like a hagiography of martyrdom that prevents the vulgarized dissolution of the concept in individual hands, and allows the verification of the virtue on the part of the ecclesiastical institution. Thus, literature of martyrdom is a complement of the official formalization that precisely is now embodied with the approval of the *Martyrologium Romanum*, since 1583, in successive editions in the 17th and 18th centuries, constituting the consolidated and authorized literary reference of an eventually renovated but always institutionally regulated tradition.

### a) Martyrdom, triumph of perseverance in faith and cause for joy.

According to a later work, situated in the middle of the 18th century, we can confirm the moralists' perseverance in the patterns that characterised martyrdom since the Thomist doctrine. Thus, Francisco Pallás, constant in such traditional keys, with optimistic belligerence, says that martyrdom is a triumph of faith that rejects regrets and condolences, despite sacrifice. The martyr is a valiant combatant whose struggle—his inner struggle, his inner war against the enemy of faith—is an honour for God and a dignity for the Church, as valiant combatant who prefers his fai-

<sup>8</sup>For the definition and distinction of the different literary genre, vid. v. gr. Bernardino Llorca, *Manual de Historia Eclesiástica* (Barcelona: 1942), pp. 63-64

th in Christ<sup>9</sup>. At the same time, martyrdom is a manifestation of the assistance of divine grace, which provides strength, courage and joy to bear a path that, from the perspective of any human being, could only represent anguish and melancholy. Pallás' description about the martyrdom that Jesuit fathers suffered in China is a practical example that tallies with the theoretical structure of St. Thomas: the "special assistance of divine grace" is that supernatural fortitude turned into a blind faith that guides the martyr in his path by providing him with the necessary confidence and courage to reach God<sup>10</sup>. For that reason, martyrdom does not appear in a sadness attitude, and tears and sorrow are not its characteristics; on the contrary, martyrdom is the happy triumph of the divine sphere over the earthly world, of the firmness used by the strong against the weakness of the material world, the worldliness.

Resignation and patience as characteristic

virtues of martyrdom are the central concepts of the reflection. That is what Pallás says in the description of the Jesuits' martyrdom: resignation to face the execution of their sentence, joy to face any sad news, and the pleasant acceptance showed by those fathers in any circumstance are outstanding and recurrent values<sup>11</sup>. Besides, as culmination, death appears, as last act that guarantees the perfection and purity required by martyrdom in its fulfilment: death mainly perfects the virtue that gives martyrdom its meaning, and without it martyrdom does not culminate its nature. The news of the coming death is for the martyr the news of a suffering towards greater glory of the maintenance of firmness of faith in God, and therefore it means a cause for greatest happiness, a definite proof of this supra-earthly fortitude that definitely leads the martyr towards the divine sphere. Martyrdom entails the propagation of faith until its posterity, and it is the best

<sup>9</sup>Francisco Pallás, *Relación del martirio de los VV. PP. el Il. Mo. Sr. D. Fr. Francisco Serrano, Obispo Tipasitano, y Vicario Apostólico, de la Provincia de Fokien, Fray Juan Alcober, Fray Joaquin Royo, y Fray Francisco Diaz, Misioneros del Orden de Predicadores; Persecucion de algunos Religiosos de N. P. S. Francisco, entre ellos dos Ilmos. Obispos; Martirio de dos padres de la Compañía de Jesus; y otros sucessos en el Imperio de China, y sus Provincias: Recopilada de varias cartas de dichos VV. quatro Martires, y otros Misioneros* (Sevilla: 1750), pp. 2-3: "Pero, aunque assi pudiera, no publica esta Relacion, para demostrar lamentables las muertes, de los que constantes en la Fé, y predicación Evangelica, mas que murieron, triunfaron: no se condele, de que perdió; congratúlase si, de que tuvo Campeones valerosos, cuyos combates sirvan de honra a Dios, gozo á la universal Iglesia, gloria a la Orden de Predicadores, y crédito a sí misma, que es su madre. No llora esta Provincia, pues sabe muy bien por San León Papa, que no menoscabo, sino aumento en el fruto de sus Ministerios, y Misiones, es lo pronosticado, en lo que parece desperdició de tantos granos [...]."

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 11: "Brillaba también la especial asistencia de la divina gracia, pues en medio de tantas penalidades, bastantes a melancolizar el mas animoso espíritu, se descubría en los VV. PP. una singular alegría, y regocijo de ánimo, que daba bien que admirar, a quien la percibía."

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., pp. 11-15: "Mostraron ésta en la gran resignación, con que esperaban el término de sus trabajos en la ejecución de su sentencia; pues nunca consintieron en la práctica de algunas diligencias, que se les prometían para el logro de su libertad, aunque al mismo tiempo no ejercían acciones, que positivamente influyesen en el total cumplimiento de la sentencia. Oían alegres cualquier noticia: porque si era confirmación de su martirio, festejaban la dicha, que el señor les preparaba; y si era innovación en la sentencia, por comutarse en expulsión de aquel Imperio, o en cárcel perpetua, como varias veces se divulgó, aunque sentían la privación de tanto triunfo, manifestaban lo placido de sus ánimos en la apacible conformidad, con que veneraban las divinas disposiciones, y se sometían gozosos a los inescrutables juicios del Altísimo, reconociéndose indignos de la gloriosa felicidad del martirio [...] Pero en medio de tantos trabajos, y miserias, como hemos insinuado, no se leen en las cartas de los referidos padres, cláusulas que den a entender menoscabo alguno en su paciencia, alegría, y conformidad con las divinas disposiciones, ni palabra alguna, que indique sinsabor, o aversión a aquellas Misiones, procurando, o pretendiendo su alivio con la salida de ellas; antes muy gozosos dan en ellas gracias al Señor, que les daba la gloria de padecer tantas fatigas por la predicación de su inmaculada ley, animándose con ellas al cultivo de aquella nueva viña. Era todo esto avezarse al sufrimiento, y alegría, que en los últimos trabajos habían de manifestar tan constantes Campeones, como queda ya apuntado."

compliance of the duty to transmit the message of Christ to the ultimate consequences<sup>12</sup>; or as Pallás says, the definite proof of the achievement of the divine sphere, the victory of the combatant who, motivated by his faith in God, has managed to reach the glory, which even has to be written, as epiphany, on the face of the deceased martyr. Beyond life, the martyr's body is finally able to be venerated as a valuable relic, worthy of all the delicacy and cares present in worship<sup>13</sup>.

### **b) Martyrdom and resistance in the dissemination of Catholicism.**

Martyrdom is not only defined by suffering and voluntary submission—with all the required and already mentioned virtues—to a violent death in defence and firm maintenance of the faith in God. Martyrdom entails something more than an inner struggle for the achievement of the divine sphere, and therefore it consists in the martyr's duty to evangelize and disseminate the Christian faith, the conversion of the infidel people and its defence as the only true religion. There is no point in maintaining oneself constant in one's creed

if the person does not struggle for its dissemination; indeed, the martyr's mission is not only focused on patiently resisting and enduring the injuries the enemy causes him, but also on the attempt to redeem, precisely, the latter's soul by showing him the true path with his sacrifice.

Gabriel Santamaría, in the late 17th century, provides us with the keys of the spiritual mission concerning the life and martyrdom of some preachers. When he relates the martyrdom of St. Raymond Nonnatus, Santamaría highlights how the saint was sent by the order of Our Lady of Ransom to Africa not necessarily to convert the renegades, but to redeem the Christians who had been captured by pagans and suffered slavery. Facing the lack of economic resources for the redemption of all the captives, St. Raymond opted for staying in infidel territory as a hostage and instructing in the path of God those whose faith had weakened, trying to convert to Christianity as many Muslims as he could, until he was finally imprisoned, and he indeed faced martyrdom<sup>14</sup>. The story may be exaggerated, but it is interesting to point out the qualities that appear in this story to edify us about this holy martyr and how charity is presented as

<sup>12</sup>Ibid, pp. 21-22: "A las nueve de la misma noche, con pretexto de visitar la cárcel, fueron Ministros a la del Juez del crimen, donde estaban el padre vicario provincial Fr. Juan Alcober, y su compañero el Padre Fr. Francisco Díaz. En la misma furia con que los verdugos echaron luego mano de ellos, conocieron que iban a matarlos; pero los detuvieron, diciéndoles: Mucho nos alegramos con morir, pero permitidnos antes dar gracias a Dios, y adorarle, y después podréis hacer de nosotros lo que quisieréis. Condescendieron los ministros a petición tan cristiana; y después de un breve espacio de tiempo, tendiendo en el suelo al V. P. Fr. Juan Alcober, y atándole los pies, y manos, le dieron la muerte con un lazo, del mismo modo que al venerable, e ilustrísimo señor Serrano. Lo mismo ejecutaron después con el V. P. Fr. Francisco Díaz, cuyos labios, como también los del V. P. Alcober, no cesaron de exortar a cuantos estaban presentes, mientras los tendían, y maniatában, a que se alistasen en la religión cristiana".

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 27: "Hízose la piadosa extracción, y poniendo cada parte en un costalillo, volvieron a casa alegres con tan preciosas alhajas (refiriéndose a los huesos de los padres), sin encontrar en todo el camino ronda, o espías que los molestasen. Ocupáronse en limpiar devotamente los huesos, y en separar las cenizas: todo lo cual pusieron en seis tibores, o tinajuelas, que finalmente enterraron junto al mismo sitio, en que se sepultaron las reliquias del V. Señor Serrano. Allí queda depositado aquel tesoro hasta que por vía de Macao pueda ser transferido a esta ciudad de Manila".

<sup>14</sup>Gabriel Santamaría, *El predicador apostólico y sus obligaciones* (Sevilla: 1684), pp. 90-91: "Aunque el instituto, y santísimo fin de esta mi sagrada religión de la Merced es el redimir cautivos cristianos del poder y tiranía de los bárbaros infieles, y de los inhumanos y atroces tratamientos que esta ciega y fiera gente les hace [...] Con todo eso la predicación evangélica, y apostólica, y celo de traer almas a Dios, no sólo, no se opone a ese fin de redimir cautivos, sino antes es más conforme y propio de este caritativo instituto, cuanto es más alta, y excelente la redención de las almas del cautiverio horrible de las culpas, que la redención de los cuerpos del cautiverio de los infieles, por bárbaros e inhumanos que sean [...]"



his most remarkable virtue. His charity drove him not only to achieve the initial purpose his mission required, but also to carry out another objective, by combining the instruction of the weakest ones and the conversion of the renegades<sup>15</sup>. Of course, despite the danger the saint had to face, since he was aware of his imminent capture and risk of death, the mercenary father preferred the evangelization and conversion of weakened Christians and Muslim infidels, respectively, to his own life. The truth is that charity and divine fortitude are the characteristic virtues of a martyr that helped him persevere and be constant in his venture, as well as his vocation for the dissemination of the faith in Christ; and it is evident that without these virtues, beyond the good intentions, St. Raymond would not really have been a recognised martyr<sup>16</sup>.

The true martyr must disseminate Christianity, even costing him his own captivity; likewise, his mission resides in saving the souls that are about to lose their faith in God, maybe due to the despair and uneasiness generated by the capti-

ty imposed by the "savage"; maybe due to the weakness of their souls and the possibility of falling into heresy because of the constant threat; in this sense, we understand that submission and humiliation are relative when the really important thing is the salvation of the soul, more imperative than the salvation of the body, and the martyr, acting as a hostage, looks for this salvation of the souls<sup>17</sup>. On the other hand, the evangelization through martyrdom has to be public and notable, without accepting the possibility of its concealment or conversion in secret, because this would degrade it; the martyr does not show his fear before the infidel enemy and, knowing the danger he is exposed to, since he openly shows himself before an renegade public, he is able to convert a great number of souls that leave everything behind to follow him. And this is the most outstanding greatness of the martyr, since he does not keep his faith just for himself, as if it was an inner and personal struggle, but he disseminates it to set a good example<sup>18</sup>. Besides, his evangelist

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., pp. 109-110: "Habiendo dicho la Iglesia, que nuestro glorioso Raimundo había guardado perpetuamente la rica joya de la virginidad, que a la Santísima Virgen había consagrado antes que entrase en su religión mercenaria, prosigue diciendo, como resplandeció en todo género de virtudes, y especialmente en la de la caridad para con los cautivos cristianos, que padecían en poder de paganos dura esclavitud y miserable vida, para cuya redención fue enviado al África. Donde habiendo libertado muchos cautivos, y viendo que para otros, que peligraban en la fe, faltaba el dinero, con que redimirlos, se quedó en rehenes en lugar de ellos. Y como el pecho de Raimundo se abrazase con ardientísimo deseo de la salvación de las almas, y por esta causa con sus sermones convirtiese muchos de los Mahometanos, fue echado de aquellos bárbaros en una estrecha, y rigurosa prisión [...]"

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., pp. 109-110: "[...] y afligido con varios, y diferentes castigos, y tormentos, entre los cuales fue uno cruelísimo, y extraordinario, que taladrándole los labios le echaron un candado de hierro en la boca, para impedirle la predicación de la palabra divina, y conversiones de aquellas ciegas almas: cuyo cruel martirio padeció Raimundo mucho tiempo. [...] sin hacer caso de los horribles tormentos de los infieles, ni de la misma muerte, no dejaba de predicar, tan abrasado en el fuego de la caridad, que con ser aquel género de gente tan bárbara, y dificultosa de guiar por el camino del cielo, tuvo virtud y poder su palabra para traer a él tantos que para atajar tan grande estrago como a ellos les parecía, le cerraron la boca con una tan dura y cruel cerradura"

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., pp. 91-92: "[...] Y así en la ejecución de la redención siempre son preferidos los cautivos que están a peligro de perder la fe, aunque para ello sea necesario, si no alcanza la limosna, quedarse en rehenes los PP. Redentores, porque este sagrado instituto de la Redención más atiende a la de las almas, que a la de los cuerpos"

<sup>18</sup>Though Gabriel Santamaría's stories on certain martyrs of "Orden de la Merced" might be incredible or exaggerate in conformity with the tone of the legend that accompanies the martyrology, the fundamental thing is to underline the insistence in the importance of conversión, but is an opened conversión that longs for the redemption of the major number of unfaithful souls, though it increases the danger and the possibilities of being captured. Ibid., pp. 107, 121: "[...] Fray Raimundo Blanes, a quien había enviado a aquella ciudad a redimir, salió por la de Valencia predicando públicamente en su plaza y calles la fe de Cristo, y camino del cielo, de cuya predicación y abrasado celo se siguió, que habiendo puesto en libertad 360 cautivos, le vinieron acompañando de vuelta gran número de moros que llegando a tierra de católicos fueron bautizados, y llevó nuestro padre San Pedro Nolasco consigo a Barcelona. Y no sólo fue grande el número de moros que convirtió nuestro padre a la fe, y enseñó el

mission, external and open, not only has to be aimed necessarily at the apostates who believe in a different God and persecute Christians; the martyr's evangelization also has to have its effect, finally, in the Catholics that live in Christian territory, since the preaching strengthens their souls in peace to keep them steadfast and constant in their faith and avoid falling either into apostasy or into indifference<sup>19</sup>. Therefore, the martyr does not convert bodies, but converts, strengths and prepare souls in regards to the future world, that is, the endless world of God.

Francisco Pallás, who has been already mentioned, is another author that talks about conversion and dissemination of Catholicism as an essential criterion of martyrdom, this time as we

know, concerning the Jesuit fathers that suffered it in China. Pallás emphasises that the conversion of the infidel turns out to be an arduous task, because the range of the infidel or pagan beliefs is deep-seated and huge; maybe in his reflection, although he exalts again the hope and confidence the Catholics had in the possibilities of evangelization, there is an insistence on highlighting the difficulties, maybe because he wants to assert the favourable results achieved, when many evangelized people together with their families admit their mistake, as a manifestation of a miraculous phenomenon, and the miracle as the fruit resulting from the triumph of hope and perseverance as virtues that God gives to face dangers and threats. In Pallás' accounts, as well as the conver-

camino de la vida eterna, sino muchísimos los nobles, y sin número los de la gente común, que con su predicación y pláticas que en las plazas y calles públicas hacía, redujo a penitencia y enmienda de sus vidas, moviéndolos al deseo de la celestial patria, y bienaventuranza eterna [...] Quan grande, pues, haya sido el fervor y apostólico espíritu de estos ínclitos y valerosos mártires de cristo, con que entrándose por las mezquitas, y discurriendo por las plazas y calles de los infieles, y bárbaros mahometanos, predicaron la verdadera y celestial doctrina del evangelio, desterrando con su luz las tinieblas de aquella ciega gente, sin hacer caso de los tormentos y muerte con que los amenazaban: y cuan admirables motivos, y ejemplos de la verdadera, y apostólica predicación dejaron a los ministros de la Iglesia [...]."

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., pp. 114-115: "Y porque tanto fuego no podía dejar de estarse comunicando continuamente, no sólo en tierras de infieles, en diferentes partes del África, no cesaba de predicar todos los días a los moros [...] sino también en tierras de cristianos, en diversas partes de España, fue continua su apostólica predicación con admirable, y copiosísimo fruto de las almas [...] Y este fervor, y celo de la salvación de las almas, con ardientísimos deseos de ganar muchas para Dios, le comenzó a tener, y ejercitar entre católicos nuestro glorioso Ramón, desde su mocedad, aun antes que por sus pocos años le ocupase la religión en el oficio de redentor: procurando por todas vías, así con la predicación de la palabra divina, como por medio del sacramento de la penitencia, encaminar cuantos pudiese al cielo [...]."

<sup>20</sup>In this way Francisco Pallás relates the conversion of the chinese "Chin Ulyuen"; his family and some others that follow him after his assistance to the decapitation of the Jesuit father D. Francisco Pedro Martir Sanz: "No eran estas acciones obscuros vislumbres de la luz que en su corazón rayaba: ya con estos principios concebían los cristianos, y misioneros bastante esperanza de su conversión; pero aún dificultaban su último cumplimiento, por el grande afecto hacia los ídolos, que reinaba en él, y en toda su familia. Pero determinose tan de veras a renunciarlos, que sin demora alguna redujolos todos a menudos pedazos, y los entregó al fuego, diciendo claramente a su familia: Ea, hijos míos, ya no quiero seguir esta diabólica secta, quiero abrazar la santa Ley de Dios, y vosotros debéis también recibirla, si queréis libraros del castigo de Dios, y conseguir el Cielo. Asintieron todos a su consejo, y empezaron a conocer a Dios, instruidos de varias exortaciones, y pláticas espirituales, con que algunos misioneros los movían, admirándose éstos del gran fervor, que todos mostraban en la atención a la divina palabra. Veíanse sus efectos cada día en la recuencia, con que repetían actos de contrición, reconociendo, y detestando sus antiguos errores; y dando muchas gracias al Señor, que por la intercesión de su siervo el V. Señor D. Fr. Pedro Mártir Sanz (según su piadosa creencia) los había traído a su conocimiento, y librado de los engaños del Demonio. [...] Uniéronse a estos Chin Ana [...] que habiendo asistido al martirio de dicho V. Señor Sanz, al volver a su casa destruyó cuantos ídolos conservaba en ella. Finalmente, en el día 26 del mismo mes se reengendraron en cristo Chin Vicente [...] aun quedan otros, que con vivas ansias piden el bautismo Y este es el fruto, que ha producido la persecución, con otras conversiones, que se han experimentado en Hinghoa, con el cultivo tan diligente, cuidadoso, y saneado de los Señores clérigos del seminario parisiense, a cuya piadosa, y acertada conducta se reconoce obligadísima esta provincia, sintiendo como propios quebrantos la prisión con que ha sido afligido el señor Don Thomas Sánchez, con otros cristianos de Hinghoa, y las ocasiones en que el señor don Matías Fú se ha visto en riesgo de ser preso, por

sions in hostile territory, we do not find anyone who flees to avoid risk: they all stay and resist without hiding, and they also expose themselves to danger openly due to their full conviction and defence of Catholicism<sup>20</sup>.

### c) The formal meaning of martyrdom.

As the doctrine of St. Thomas differentiated the true martyr from the false martyr, the testimonies of moral literature, which remind the suffering of martyrdom, also show a concern about distinguishing the acts that truly deserve this virtuous qualification from others that, even having certain similarities—in a kind of pseudo-martyrdom—, do not comply with the necessary conditions, theologically established. But to the extent that moral literature avoids references to dogmatic theology, the vagueness of the precision of martyrdom's limits can be accentuated.

Thus, for example, Gabriel Santamaría specified the "formal meaning" that identifies martyrdom with the "suffering of Christ, defence of faith, and publication of the Gospel". Despite the fact that its expression entails the acceptance of martyrdom as a theological institution, formally, the fact that these moral aims and keys of martyrdom are not rigorously accompanied by the precision of other essential theological conductive principles—suffering, sacrifice and resistance with a spirit of happiness in the invincible main-

tenance of virtue— could leave the door open for imprecisions, because there were certainly many people who complied with these evangelist general purposes without being finally worthy of the palm of martyrdom. Moreover, in this formal crystallisation that entails the martyr's recognition, we have to take into account, as we have mentioned previously, the existence of an official literary or documentary tradition of passions and martyrologies that catalogued in a controlled and institutional way the recognition of this virtue on the part of the Catholic Church, avoiding a vulgar consideration of martyrdom that could include those who, despite certain meritorious acts of faith, lacked the absolute compliance of the expressly required conditions for the consideration of martyrdom.

For that reason, although there are many remarkable accounts of people who suffered for the defence of Christianity, their stories do not have always place—at least, under equal conditions— among the martyrs' ones. Undoubtedly, the chronicles about individuals or groups that fought for the Christian evangelization in pagan territories are numerous, always with a constant violence and suffering that are praiseworthy; thus, Santamaría succinctly reminds the acts of conquerors of the Indies as Pizarro and Cortés, in parallel with the description of the works of true martyrs. But, afterwards, Santamaría returns to his formal and institutional sense of martyrdom

su especial asistencia a nuestros religiosos, cuyo esmero se grangea nuestra mayor gratitud, en que cuando era más temible el peligro, por sospechase próximo el tiempo de la violenta muerte de los cuatro últimos VV. MM. dicho señor, con D. pablo Sú, hacia empeño de venir a la misma metrópoli, para acudir piadoso a cuanto pudiese ser ayuda, o alivio a los que habían de morir por la predicación de Cristo".

<sup>21</sup>Gabriel Santamaría, *El predicador apostólico*, op. cit, pp. 123-124: "O cuan gran matanza, hermanos, descubriéramos aquí ahora, siguiendo el hilo de los años, y el orden de los tiempos, si nos hubiéramos de entrar tras Pizarro, y Cortés, por ese nuevo mundo: donde por haber sido los nuestros los que descabezaron el rigor de la tierra, y los que la comenzaron a labrar, a cuenta de sangre, y vidas tuvieron bien donde emplearlas, y gozar a manos llenas las ocasiones del martirio. Y así es grande el tropel que de ellos tenemos, muriendo unos atravesados con jaras en las refriegas, otros con mazas abiertas las cabezas, y hechos menuzos, cual trinchado en piezas pequeñas era arrojado a las aves, y cual guisado en mil maneras de potajes servía en los banquetes de estos ídólatras, por el mejor plato de su mesa: mas como ninguno de estos toca al propósito de que hablamos, pues aunque padecieron por cristo, por defensa de la fe, y publicación del evangelio, que es la razón formal del martirio, y en lo que todos los mártires convienen, como no murieron sobre el cumplimiento de nuestro cuarto voto, quedanse para mejor sazón".

and points out that they have never been considered as martyrs, among other things due to a formal reason as well, which is the breach of the fourth Jesuit vow<sup>21</sup>. He also relates other probable comparisons about the bloody agony suffered by many of the defenders of the Catholic faith, in the context of Muslim domination in Valencia or the domination of France by the heretics<sup>22</sup>, but martyrdom formally requires explicit acts that reflect the suffering, defence and evangelization of the Catholic faith.

Suffering —and death— and preaching of faith are keys that formally delimit martyrdom<sup>23</sup> and also attract —a new evident difference with the practice of many pseudo-martyrs— the courage of the insistence on the faith of Christ, without any fear towards the enemy. This courage is concretized in the avoidance of the flight, because the flight or escape, as Diego de Yepes explained in the late 16th century, “seems to be a sign of turning away from the Lord and from the crown of martyrdom, and it could be a scandal for others, and example, so that in such trances sheep had a great fear of death, and did the same, after seeing their shepherd refuse it, and escape being so close to it”<sup>24</sup>.

### 3. Martyrdom and its popularization: political reflection and legal practice.

#### a) Political reflection. A significant example: the Catholic persecution in England in the 16th and 17th centuries.

There was a remarkable institution for the arduous defence and struggle for Catholicism during the early modern period, and it was undoubtedly the Hispanic Monarchy. Therefore, it is not surprising that Catholics residing in hostile territory saw the Hispanic monarch as a kind of protective father, and a refuge of so many Catholics who were threatened by heresy. There are many considerations that jurists and theologians embodied in their works, highlighting the greatness of the Hispanic monarch and his constant valour to maintain the Catholic religion, not only in his realms, but also abroad. And one of the best examples of the counter-reformist activity is his confrontation with the policy developed by the reign of Elizabeth I in her defence of the “Protestant heresy”; so active in the bloody persecution carried out against Catholics of the Kingdom of England. Of course, one of the consequences of this persecution was the constant flight of Ca-

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., pp. 123-124: “Por la misma causa deo de referir las crueldades con que muchos de los nuestros murieron, en aquel alboroto que los moros hicieron en Valencia, años ha: pues hubo día, en que en odio de cristo, a quien ellos tanto aborrecen, y en menos precio de su santa fe, nos pasaron a cuchillo treinta y más religiosos. Tampoco hablo del destroz de Francia, ni de la carnicería que los herejes, hicieron en los nuestros, mientras los trajo Dios olvidados de sí: pero basta para muestra de lo mucho que fue decir que con ser una muy grande, y muy poblada provincia la que allí había, apenas nos han quedado casas. Pero pues los moradores de ellas trocaron la vivienda de este siglo por la de la gloria, no hay sino envidiarlos. Así que pues esta es otra bota de mártires, que no toca a este tratado [...]”.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 136, about the San Fray Raimundo de Blanes' martyrdom, protomartyr of “Nuestra Señora de la Merced” Religion: “Comenzó con intrépido ánimo, y valentía de espíritu a predicar la fe de Jesucristo, reprendiendo a los moros los inhumanos rigores, y bárbaras crueldades, que con los cristianos usaban. Prendenle los enemigos, dan con él en una oscura cárcel; cárganle de cadenas y grillos, y después de inmensos tormentos, en odio de la fe, que defendía, y del instituto de la redención, en la plaza pública, por mandado de los gobernadores de la ciudad, le cortaron la cabeza, y su alma voló al cielo a poseer eternamente la palma gloriosa del martirio, que fue por junio de 1235”.

<sup>24</sup>Diego de Yepes, *Historia particular de la persecución de Inglaterra y de los martirios más insignes que en ella auido, desde el año del Señor 1570: en la qual se descubren los efectos lastimosos de la heregia y las mudanças que suele causar en las Republicas* (Madrid: 1599), p. 686.

tholics who, threatened due to their faith, had to decide to abandon their homeland to take refuge within the confines of the Austrian Monarchy, requesting the assistance and protection of the Catholic sovereign.

The Hieronymite friar and bishop Diego de Yepes is an author who perfectly describes the political and institutional activity of the Catholic Monarchy against the Anglican reformation<sup>25</sup>, and in this context he relates the martyrdom of many Englishmen in the sixteenth-century England, taking the opportunity to exalt the magnificence of Phillip II towards the Catholic Englishmen<sup>26</sup>, and his persistence and perseverance regarding the defence and propagation of the Catholic faith.

Let's be more specific with a document. In his work, Yepes reproduces an outstanding and noteworthy letter, addressed to the treasurer and royal favourite of Queen Elizabeth, contrasting the persistence of the Catholic policies of Phillip II in his realms with the situation of the territories of England, hardly affected by heresy. The letter emphasises the Catholic government as the only one possible with regard to the maintenance of the principles of justice and piety, as well as its function as anchor that allows a solid bond guaranteeing the political union, by closely relating the

assaults on the territorial area of the Austrian monarchy with a declared attack against the Catholic faith and its defenders. It is said that the fact that a king was able to keep his different and far kingdoms secure and governed undoubtedly turns out to be a "work of God", being at the same time a very revered figure by his subjects. Indeed, the reason resides in the attraction and eagerness for conciliation that the monarch shows, whose love, piety and justice only seek the wellbeing of his subjects. And this is achieved—herein the legitimation and its positive consequences—because the monarch does not act against the divine law, that is, maintains his human power subject to the divine and natural *iura* according to the hierarchy that the intellectualist theological *iusnaturalism* describes. If the Hispanic monarch is seen as a captivator of wills that gladly submit in order to obey him, the existing harmony between the monarch and his subjects does not come from anything but Catholicism. The good Catholics, who sincerely feel and show their faith, happily offer their jobs, goods or lives for the Catholic cause, as does the sovereign for religion against sects, generating an image not only admired by his own vassals, but also by other foreign powers and peoples that wish, in a kind of spiritual com-

<sup>25</sup>For example, by the royal financing of English Catholic monasteries, convents and seminars in Hispanic monarch territory in order to protect and support them: vid. "Libro sexto de la historia particular de la persecución de Inglaterra que trata de la fidelidad y consta(n)cia de otros católicos perseguidos por nuestra santa Religión, y de la institución de los Seminarios o Colegios de Clérigos, que el Sumo Pontífice, y el Rey Católico de España don Felipe han fundado y sustentado, para el socorro espiritual del Reyno de Inglaterra. Y del fruto que aquel Reyno ha sacado, y otros deuen sacar desta persecución", in Diego de Yepes, *Historia particular de la persecución de Inglaterra*, op. cit., pp. 714-865.

<sup>26</sup>Says Diego de Yepes, *Historia particular de la persecución de Inglaterra*, op. cit., p. 878: "Ya se ha visto [...] los socorros continuos que su diuina magestad ha dado por muchas vías a los católicos, perseguidos desta nación, dentro y fuera de su casa, para poder mantener la possession de su Fè, contra la violencia de los Hereges, q(ue) entraron en aq(ue)l Reyno, por las quiebras dichas en el capitulo precedente: las quales nuestro Señor ha ydo soldando, y sanando con admirable prouidencia y traza, y con la misma va poniendo remedio a lo que queda, con grande suauidad y eficacia, como luego se dira". Particularly there were many the english people supported by the Catholic monarch through all kind of pecunary favours, like "entretenimientos", "ayudas de costa", "ventajas" o "limosnas". For the regulation, administrative procedure, in order to the helps concession, supplicants profile, conditions to the concession, and other practical aspects, vid. Victoria Sandoval Parra, *Manera de galardón. Merced pecuniaria y extranjería en el siglo XVII*, (Madrid: 2014), pp. 153-411.

munion that Catholicism provides, the happiness of the Catholic king and his kingdoms<sup>27</sup>.

Throughout the more than nine hundred pages of his *Historia* (History), Yepes relates, among many other related matters, how violent the attitude shown by the English authorities was and the harsh punishment their ordinary justice applied to the Catholics of that nation. Therefore, the persecuted people not only were exiled, or imprisoned and sentenced to death and confiscation of their property, but they also opted for a voluntary flight. The severity of the policies about persecution of Catholicism in England caused a deluge of fugitives, and so diverse and ominous personal changes of those who fell from grace due to Reformation are the context where it is easy to understand the process of popularization of martyrdom together with the genuine manifestation

of the strict and true martyrs. This is because the ways to face the destiny of the religious persecution always correspond to a complex reality, in a background of violence that conditions individual and collective stances, and at the same time pertinent and different justifications of the behaviour itself facing the politically organized harriving and the harassment of repression.

The Anglican tactics are also mentioned in the letter addressed to the royal favourite of Elizabeth I, which we now analyse again. English justice considers as a *lèse-majesté* crime the open defence of Catholicism and, consequently, the recognition of the Pope of Rome as the highest representative and head of the Church, by using legal resources that the Catholic criminal law reproduces—but to the contrary—against heresy. In the eyes of Catholicism, the Reformation has

<sup>27</sup>Diego de Yepes, *Historia particular de la persecución de Inglaterra*, op. cit., s/f.: “Clausula de una carta muy discreta, embiada en el año 1592 a Guillelmo Cecilio, Tesorero, y gran priuado de la Reyna de Inglaterra: en el qual trata de los daños que ella recibe por la heregia, y de los muchos bienes que tiene el rey nuestro Señor en el gouierno de sus Reynos, por ma(n)tener en ellos la Fè Catolica: Debe sin duda mucho a nuestro Señor Dios, autor de todos los bienes, el Rey Catolico don Felipe, y despues de Dios a sus antepassados, no tanto por los muchos grandes y opulentissimos Reynos, que dellos ha heredado, quanto porque se los dexaron de tal manera unidos con la justicia y piedad, y arrimados a la Fè Catolica, que ellos se sustentan con la Fè, y la Fè con ellos: y de tal manera esta trauido el estado temporal con la religion, que los que hazen guerra a sus Reynos, la hazen a la Fè Catolica, y los que la defienden, por el mismo caso, son defensores de su estado temporal. De donde procede, que multiplicados y aumentados al Rey don Felipe tantos, y tan grandes Reynos, y en regiones tan apartadas, que muchos Reyes no bastarían para sugetar y gouernarlos el solo, en un rincon y en una cama, con tanta facilidad los sujeta, y los gouierna con tanta suauidad y de tal manera obedecido y reuerenciado, aun en las tierras mas remotas hasta al otro Polo, que a todos haze euidencio, que esta no es obra de humana prudencia, sino efeto de la obediencia Christiana, que la Religion Catolica planta en los coraçones, y con ella la piedad, justicia, y otras virtudes q(ue) conseruan los Reynos. Porque el gouierno que en estas virtudes se funda no violenta los cuerpos, sino atrahe y concilia co(n) suauidad los animos: no dexa resistencia ni contradiccion en los súbditos, sino con amor captiua las volu(n)tades, y engendra fidelidad en sus coraçones, para que de buena gana obedezcan a su Rey, que no les manda cosas contrarias a las leyes diuinas, ni les pide sino lo justo, honesto, y necesario, y en fin en su gouierno no mira por sus comodidades, sino la prosperidad de sus Reynos; ni tiene cuenta de con autoridad, sino en quanto es necesario para la quietud y prouecho de sus vassallos. Todo esto procede de la religion Catolica, y es mucho de estimar, que los que de coraçon la professan, no solamente ofrecen su trabajo, haziendas, y vidas por el bien publico, el Rey por la religion, y los súbditos por su Rey, sino que lleuados por obligacón de conciencia, lo hazen prontamente, y con gusto y alegría: lo qual quanto importa, suele probar en ocasiones. Demas desto, la Fè Catolica no solo ata con beneuolencia y amor al Rey don Felipe sus propios vassallos, y les obliga a serle fieles; sino también a muchos otros Principes y caualleros, y en fin todos los que tienen verdadero zelo de nuestra sagrada religion. Y aun entre las naciones que suelen tener competencias y enemistades con los Españoles, se hallan muchos que ruegan a Dios de todo coraçon por la prosperidad del Rey de España, y con todas veras dessean la felicidad de sus Reynos, y procuran su aumento, no solo ayudando con su industria, trabajo, y consejos, sino con sus haziendas también, quando es menester: mouidos deste amor que he dicho, y zelo dela religion comun: lo qual todos los Christianos están obligados a defender con sus haziendas, y vidas, y con todas sus fuerças. Y es todo esto fundado en un principio necesario, y natural, de que la semejança causa amor: y que las cosas que a un tercero conuienen, furçosamente conuienen entre si”

caused an unfair civil war, and the support to heresy has disturbed the republic to the point that the monarchy, against its own subjects, has irremissibly executed the justice of the new civil and ecclesiastic state against those innate people, but faithful to the Roman Catholicism<sup>28</sup>. As the English monarchy becomes the head and defender of the heretical sectarianism assuming its mixed institutionalization of religion and politics, the divine and human *lèse-majesté* crimes have become confused, and Catholicism experiments a situation of weakness and maximum criminality, as a treason crime towards the English Crown and the reformed Christianity, consequently deserving death penalty. Yepes relates the agony suffered by the priests and Catholics in general who face the regime of the English Queen, as follows:

*La muerte que dan a los Sacerdotes, y Catolicos, contrauiendo a estas leyes:*

*Primeramente, arrastran al condenado hasta el lugar de la hora, y estando medio ahogado en ella, lo derriban en el suelo, buelto en si, le cortan las partes vergonçosas, y se las echan en el fuego: despues el verdugo le aure el pecho con un cuchillo, y le saca el coraçon, y las entrañas (aun estándose viuo) y las quema en la brasa, que esta allí junto apercebida. Finalmente le perdigan, y desquartzado le ponen en diuersas puertas de la ciudad. Todos sus bienes, y possessiones se co(n) fisca(n), sin que su muger, hijos, o parientes, lleuen alguna parte dellos: y pierden los decendientes del muerto su nobleza para siempre.*

*Este es el castigo y muerte que dan a los Sa-*

*cerdotes y Catolicos, transgressores de sus nuevas leyes: y ultra de los tormentos, y castigos que les dan, y de la comun afrenta con que mueren (a juyzio del vulgo) como traydores a la republica, para justificar mas su causa, y dar color a su crueldad, suelen publicar libelos infamatorios, forjando mentiras y calumnias de las costumbres, y doctrina de los muertos. Assi poco ha, auiendo colgado públicamente a Eduardo Hansio (santo y zeloso sacerdote) y rezelandose, no se lastimasse el pueblo de su martirio, no se que opiniones, y errores hizieron imprimir, con tan poca aduertencia, que lo uno contradiezia al otro<sup>29</sup>.*

The author also reproduces the order of exile enacted by the English Parliament under the authority of the Queen, against Jesuits, priests, seminarians, or any other person who had received the sacrament of the order of the Church of Rome. Having forty days to leave the kingdom under penalty of being considered as traitors in the event of breaking the law, not only those who professed had to be persecuted, but also all those who helped and assisted the Catholics, under the same death penalty and confiscation of property. The subjects raised in seminaries, or who had provided enough help so that the Catholics entered in England without telling the bishop or ordinary judge within the stipulated time, as well as those who refused the oath of allegiance to their Queen, religion and laws, also incurred the penalties the above-mentioned *lèse-majesté* crime entailed. Similarly, prison and confiscation penalties were established for the Englishmen who directly or indirectly assisted religious people,

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., s/f.: "Clausula de una carta muy discreta, embiada en el año 1592 [...] Sabido esto, vera el Lector de donde nacen los tormentos y martirios que socolor de lesa magestad, executa(n) en los católicos, que reconoce(n) al Papa por cabeça: vera lo que pretenden en los escritos q(ue) publican contra los iesuytas y otros sacerdotes que procura(n) restituir aquel Reyno a su antigua obediencia: y como por sustentar este derecho de Ysabel, todo lo perturban, y trastornan sin perdonar a nadie. Quebrantan sus propias leyes: dan la muerte a sus naturales".

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., pp. 263-264.

seminarians or Catholic students residing out of England, or contributed to their return. Finally, the permission of the Queen was required to leave the kingdom and educate abroad the children of the English parents who wanted to do so, and should it not obtain it, there was a fine whose amount came to three hundred escudos<sup>30</sup>.

In this context of repression and suffering, whose essential motivation is the religious nature of persecution, episodes of Catholic sacrifice and loyalty must unavoidably appear, at the same time that the mere persecution, its mere suffering, seems to entail, in the protective resistance of the own convictions, a consubstantial and almost automatic merit in the defence of faith. But this does not mean that all the persecuted people were martyrs, obviously, all the more reason considering the characteristics—the formal meaning—of martyrdom we have studied in previous pages. We could say, in the mixture of situations of martyrdom and pseudo-martyrdom present in this complex historical situation, that a difference between martyrdom and martyr appears in some way, as if the objective element broadened its dimension, turning vulgar, and the subjective element specified its identification with only a certain kind of people who, besides, the Church officially recognizes. Thus, somehow, it can be said that if few people can aspire to the condition of martyr due to the virtues it entails, martyrdom is an act

of suffering with religious basis that can affect in a more indiscriminate and generalized way.

In time to the Anglican repression, the numerous falls of Catholic martyrs and pseudo-martyrs make the situation conceptually confused. Yepes refers to the martyrdom of almost a hundred Englishmen who openly defended the Catholic religion until their capture and death<sup>31</sup>. But we can also go deeply into the passion of the recognized martyrs in order to distinguish if their stories tally with the Thomist theory of martyrdom and its reflection in modern moral literature, seeing if there is a difference of perfectly coherent aspects or characteristics.

The passion of Blessed John Storey is a good example. Doctor of laws and arduous defender of Catholicism, Storey was imprisoned until he managed to escape and flee to Flanders with his family. According to Yepes, they took refuge in Leuven, and he showed his repentance about having escaped from England, because he thought he had lost the palm of martyrdom that, in his opinion, God had given him the chance to deserve. In order to do penance, he stayed a long time with the Carthusians of this city, until he finally returned to England to undergo the desired martyrdom, being captured and killed on the gallows soon after. Without showing any remorse or fear before his imminent execution, he exclaimed his desire to die for God, since he considered that

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., pp. 739-740: "Manda el Parlamento con la autoridad de la Reyna, que todos los Iesuitas, Sacerdotes Seminaristas, y otros qualesquiera ordenados, fuera de los Reynos de su Magestad, o en ellos con autoridad de la Iglesia de Roma, despues del primer año de su Reynado, se partan luego dentro de quare(n)ta días de Inglaterra./ Que despues de pasados los quare(n)ta días, será castigado como traydor, qualquiera de los dichos q(ue) en el reyno se hallare./ Los que industria recibieren en sus casas, o fauorecieren de qualquier manera alguno de los dichos, será castigado con perdimiento de vida, y de bienes./ Qualquier otro súbdito, criado en algún seminario de los hechos, o por hazer, que entrare en Inglaterra, dentro de los seis meses, y no se manifestare al obispo, o juez ordinario dentro de dos días, y no jurare de guardar las leyes, y religion de la Reyna, será castigado como traydor./ Los q(ue) ayudare(n) a los Sacerdotes, o estudiantes dichos, de qualquier manera q(ue) sea, o embiaren algún socorro a los seminarios, directa o indirectamente, y también los que lo truxere(n) perderan la libertad y hazienda toda la que tuuieren. / Que ninguno embie a su hijo, o criado fuera de Inglaterra, sin tener especial lize(n)cia de la Reyna por escrito, y si alguno hiziere lo contrario, pague por cada vez trezientos escudos".

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., s/f., in the "Catálogo de los Martyres y Catolicos perseguidos, de quienes se hace mencion en esta historia".



this was his penance for the sins committed. Moreover, with political and religious significance, he stated that he was dying in the universal faith and recognized Phillip II as his lord, implicitly denying that Queen Elizabeth could be the highest head of any temporal church. Once he was hanged as a traitor, the hangman opened his chest to pull his heart out, cut his throat and quartered him<sup>32</sup>. In this way, the story turns out to be very significant in its confirmation of the Thomist theory and the mentioned keys in the Catholic moral literature about martyrdom: the flight or concealment appears as a negative element, and the later encounter with death is conceived as a fair perfective penance to earn a place in heaven, but this voluntary submission to punishment does not co-

respond to a suicide attitude, but a continuation of the virtue —not for nothing he escaped from prison and previously took his family to a safe place— that finds in death the honourable culmination of the defence of his faith, openly showing himself to the enemy, but avoiding provoking him —he positively affirms his beliefs and only indirectly rejects heresy— even at the very moment of his execution. There is no fear or rancour in his defence of Catholic religion as the only true faith, until his predictable end.

Jesuit Father Enrique Valpolo is a priest also officially recognized as a martyr. Resident in the seminary of English Catholics founded in Valladolid, he begged Prince Phillip III to create an English Jesuit seminary in Saint-Omer. He went to

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., pp. 292-296: "Martirio de Iuan Storeo, escrito por el mismo Doctor Sanderio en el libro séptimo de su Monarquía visible. Cap. III / Despues de auer estado algunos años preso, un día se le ofreció ocasión de soltarle de la cárcel; y aprouechandose della, se escapo y estuuo escondido en las casas de algunos particulares amigos, hasta que se pasó a Flandes. / Estando en Louaina, le afligía, y congoxaua mucho la co(n)sideración de auer por su culpa perdido la ilustre palma del martyrio, à que Dios parecía llamarle con aquella ocasión, y lugar. Y sobre este particular hablando muchas vezes con su muger, y algunas con sus amigos, y una vez muy deueras con migo, me preguntaua, si le sería licito, tornarse à poner otra vez en manos de los hereges. Yo no me atreuia a aconsejarle que se tornasse a la cárcel, porque parecía, que Dios milagrosamente le auia librado della; y no era cosa muy segura ponerse uno en el peligro, de que Dios le auia sacado a paz y a saluo. / Tratando de hazer penitencia, le pareció lugar à propósito la Cartuxa de Louayna: y quisiera entrarse en alguna religion, si su muger se le ofreciera a seguir el mesmo propósito. Mas aunque ella no acetó la condición, con todo esso permaneció Storeo de manera en su penitencia, que mas tiempo estaua con los Cartuxos, que en su casa; hasta que accosado de la pobreza y de la falta de lo necesario, con ocasión, mayormente de auerse venido con el de Inglaterra un nieto y una nieta, començo a cuidar de su sustento. / Oyò decir Storeo que en Zelandia estaua una naue cargada de mercaderías prohibidas: y como tocava a su oficio visitarla, se fue a Vergas de primera instancia, y de allí pasó en Zelandia a la naue, que por orden de ciertas personas estaua sobre auiso, para en entrando en ella Storeo, hacerse a la vela, y lleuarle a Inglaterra. Y aunque yua bien descuidado deste sucesso, con todo esso quando entendió el trato, dio muchas gracias a Dios, que le tornaua a ofrecer ocasio(n) de padecer por su causa, rogándole que le hiziesse merced de la palma y corona del martirio. / [...] y a primero de Iunio pusieron en el çarço a este glorioso mártir de Iesu Christo, y lo lleuaron al lugar donde los acostumbran ajusticiar. Ma(n)dar(o)n(le) q(ue) subiesse en un carro y tenie(n)do puesto el cordel al cuello, dezía, que estaua allí desseoso de morir, y confessaua, que no sin particular misericordia de Dios le auia traído a Inglaterra, para que padeciesse aquel castigo, pues mucho mayor lo auian merecido sus pecados. Porque muchas vezes le auia(n) aduertido el riesgo y peligro en que andaua, mas que nunca lo auia podido echar de ver, y que ahora le daua gracias a Dios por tanta merced, y perdonaua a sus enemigos: y que de muy buena gana entregaua el cuerpo al verdugo, para q(ue) con una pena tan breue, por los merecimientos de Iesu Christo, alcançasse la vida eterna. Y auiendo hablado algo sobre la injusticia del juyzio que auian hecho de su persona, y sobre la calumnia que le auian leuantado, afirmaua que moria en la Fè uniuersal en queauia sido bautizado, la qual professaua(n) el Rey Filipo su señor, y todos los demás Principes, y pueblos Catolicos. / Luego le preguntó uno de los ministros predicadores de Inglaterra, si creía que la Reyna inmediatamente despues de Dios era la suprema cabeça de las Iglesias de Inglaterra, e Irlanda. Y Storeo le respondió: No he venido aquí a disputar; ni el negarlo yo, seruira para que vosotros creays que no es assí. / Apenas auia dicho esto, quando mandaron tirar el carro, como se hizo; y despues de auer estado por un breue rato colgado, quedando aun viuo, lo derribaron, y le abrieron el pecho, y cortada su cabeça, le hizieron quartos."

England “very glad” but “carrying great portents of his martyrdom”<sup>33</sup>. When he was imprisoned, although he received letters from Catholic friends willing to pay his bail, Father Valpolo refused to avoid the imprisonment, claiming that, although paying a fine to set him free was fair, he considered that staying and resisting was more honourable and meritorious, since he would betray

God by escaping. Finally, he was sent to London, where the charge of a crime of treason led him to die on the gallows. Therefore, just like Storey escaped from salvation to return to sacrifice, Valpolo did not want to avoid the sacrifice by refusing assistance to be released: the wilfulness of submission to the martyrdom act was evident in both cases. Apart from that, in Valpolo there is an

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., pp. 670-672 y 686: “Relacion del martirio q(ue) padeció en la ciudad de Eboraco de Inglaterra, en Abril del año de 1595 el padre Henrique Valpolo, Sacerdote de la Co(m)pañia de Iesus, y primer martyr q(ue) ha salido de los Seminarios Ingleses de España, embiado de Valladolid, para ayudar a la conversión de su patria, y de otros sacerdotes. Cap. IX” / “Auiase dado principio, poco antes que esto sucediese, a otro seminario de la juventud anglicana, por orden también de su magestad católica, en una ciudad de los estados de Flandes, llamada san Omer, cerca de Inglaterra, para que en el se acogiesen los hijos de los católicos de aquel reino en su tierna edad, porque assi se librasen de las manos de los herejes, que los querían quitar a sus padres en llegando a cierta edad, para peruertirlos, y criarlos en su peruersa secta, y tenerlos mas guardados, que no saliesen de Inglaterra a los seminarios: por lo qual para obuiar a este tan grande inconuiniente, se propuso a su magestad del rey don Felipe Segundo, que está en gloria, que sería de grande seruicio a nuestro señor, si fundasse un seminario particular para este efecto en aquellos estados cerca de Inglaterra, y su magestad, con aquel su católico, y real pecho, y amor singular, que siempre a esta nación ha mostrado, mandó luego que así se hiziesse. Lo qual se tuuo por singularissima merced (como lo era) principalmente, porque se entendió, que el serenísimo príncipe don Felipe (que ahora sucediendo a su padre, gouierna felizmente estos Reynos) auia con muy tierno afecto tomado la protección de aquel seminario de mancebitos. Y assi mandó su magestad señalar para el sustento de los que auian ya venido, dos mil ducados de renta. Pero auiendo los ministros de Flandes detenidose en executar este mandato de su magestad, y no acudido tan puntualmente con la paga, fue forçoso, por auer venido ya a Flandes, y a la villa de San Omer, muchos hijos de gente principal y católica de Inglaterra, con el auiso de nueuo seminario, y tratar de embiar juntamente una persona de España, a propósito para dar calor en el negocio: y poniéndoselos ojos para ello en el padre Henrique Valpolo, aceptó el la jornada de buena gana, pero con condición, que luego en dando sus recaudos en Flandes, y assentando las cosas del colegio de san Omer, pudiesse pasar a Inglaterra. Lo qual le fue concedido: y el contentísimo con esto (llevando unos prenuncios grandes de su martirio) fue primero desde Valladolid (donde estaba) a san Lorenzo el real, el mes de Agosto, del año 1593 a suplicar a su magestad, fuesse servido de mandar se le diesen estas nuevas cartas para el efeto dicho, y auiedole despachado con grande breuedad, y besado a su majestad las manos por las mercedes continuas, y favores grandes que a la nación Inglesa hacía, se despidió, y también de algunos señores principales de la Corte, que allí se hallaron y con grande consuelo suyo dio la vuelta al colegio de Valladolid, de donde se partió luego para Vizcaya, y hallando en Portugaleta un navío, que estaba aprestado para partirse a Cales, se metió en el para hazer su jornada. En esta sazón escriuió una carta al padre Rodrigo de Cabredo, rector que era en aquella sazón del colegio de los Ingleses de Valladolid, de donde se había partido; que porque muestra bien el ánimo con que yua, y esperanças grandes que llevaba de la merced que nuestro señor después le hizo en Inglaterra [...] le vino un mensajero con cartas de unos amigos católicos, por las cuales le dauan a entender por cosa cierta, que tenían suficientes medios, para secretamente librarle de la prisión, y que no faltaba más para ponerlo en execucion, que solo su consentimiento: el qual el padre no quiso en modo ninguno dar: pues fuera del disgusto que mostraua, de que le quitasen por esta via la ocasión del martirio, via también muchos y grandes inconvenientes, que dello se seguirían, y con todo esto por no parecer que hazía poco caso del ofrecimiento de tales amigos, y por satisfacer a la importunidad de alguna gente principal, que este medio proponía, se resoluió de remitir la determinación del caso al padre Ricardo, que como hemos dicho era religioso de su misma orden [...] se resoluió que en ninguna manera conuenia hazer ni intentar tal cosa, alegando para esto las razones siguientes: La primera, que aunque la cosa en sí era lícita, con todo esso el quedarse, era cosa de gran virtud y merecimiento, y manifestamente de grande gloria de Dios, y no viéndose igual gloria suya en huir, antes la huida pareciera señal de volver las espaldas al señor, y a la corona del martirio, y podía ser de mucho escándalo a otros, y ejemplo, para que en semejantes trances las ovejas tuviesen grande temor a la muerte, y hiziesen lo mismo, viendo a su pastor rehusarla, y huyr estando tan cerca della. Fuera desto dezia, que no se podía creer, que le saldría cierta y segura la huyda, y que podría ser que de nueuo fuesse con grande ignominia preso, lo qual era mas cierto que el poderse salvar. Finalmente, lo que era de mayor momento y consideración, era dar ocasión a que con su huida hiciesen los herejes grandísima inquisición y diligencia por todo el reino, por lo qual podría suceder, que en lugar de uno, muchos por esta vía viniesen a manos de los ministros, y estos por ventura más flacos, y menos esforzados que él. Estas razones le escribió el Padre Ricardo”.

active joy, also characteristic of the martyr, who escapes from melancholic sorrows in his battling desire for faith, both when he undertakes his journey and when he “gladly” does not weaken after being terrified with the gallows and quartering, and he consoles other prisoners. Finally, the martyrdom act reaches its moment of perfection when death is carried out, in which the martyr significantly adopts a sublime position by forgiving the heretics, asking for the prayer of the Catholics and praying for the unity of the Catholic Church<sup>34</sup>.

Thus, undoubtedly, these figures remembered

by Yepes are true martyrs in this modern time of tension between Reformation and Counter-Reformation. But the context of their example is not only the theological and moral coherence of their virtue, but also the contrast of their path with an increased deluge of migrations and exiles of captives, refugees, dissidents, passers-by, and all kind of persecuted people subject to the same anguish and suffering, who, precisely because of the similarity of their passion, force to understand the martyrdom process from a not only rigorous, but also more vulgarized expression<sup>35</sup>.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., pp. 708-709: “[...] sacaron otra vez al tablado al Padre Valpolo, auiendole tentado primero en la cárcel, si seria possible que ablandasse algo: y no hallando disposicion, pronunciaron la ultima sentencia, y se la leyeron: la qual era, que boluiesse a la carcel, y se dispussiesse para morir, porque el Lunes siguiente auia de ser ahorcado, y antes que espirasse, hecho quartos viuo. Respondio el martyr, que de muy buena gana aguardaría aquella dichosa hora [...] se dispuso para morir, con tanto consuelo de su alma, que los que le venían a ver, que eran muchissimos [...] se espantauan en gran manera de verlo: pero sobre todos se consolaron sumamente entre si los dos corderos, que auian de ser sacrificados por su bue(n) Señor [...]. Llego pues, y a buena hora vino la justicia a sacarlos, y el Sacerdote Alexandro se ofreció primero, para yr y poner se sobre la rastra, o çarço, sobre el qual les auian de arrastrar, y hasta la horca, y yua con tanto animo y contento, que los hereges dezia(n), que yua desesperado [...] pero llegando el Padre Valpolo, y abraçandose con el (con el padre Alejandro, también martirizado) , fue el consuelo de entrambos muy grande, y començauan a darse la norabuena el uno al otro: mas los crueles ministros de la justicia (embidiosos deste consuelo que los dos martyres recibían) se lo estoruaron, mandándoles que callassen: y para que no pudiesen proseguir en secreto la santa platica como yuan de camino, pusieron el uno al reues del otro, cabeça con pies, poniendo la cabeça del Padre Valpolo a los pies del cauallo que los arrastraua, donde yuan los pies del buen Alexandro, y assi los lleuaron arrastrando por la ciudad. / Llegados a la horca, hizieron subir primero al Sacerdote Alexandro [...] y viendo el pueblo, que besaua Alexandro la horca, y la escalera, y sogas con grande deuocion, començaron a burlar del [...] le echaron abaxo, y assi acabo su vida con el nombre dulcissimo de Iesus en la boca, dándola por su Señor, que primero auia dado la por el. / Muerto que fue Alexandro, le mostraron al padre Valpolo [...] dixeron que era crimen de lesa Magestad; pero todavía le rogaron, que pues auia de morir, muriesse en paz y caridad con ellos, y hiziesse juntamente con ellos oración por su saluacion. A lo qual respondió, que por la gracia y misericordia de Dios el tenia paz con todo el mu(n)do, y rogaua à Dios por todos, y particularmente por los que le quitauan la vida [...] que el rogaua a nuestro Señor de su parte, que los alumbrasse, y reduxesse a la unión de la Yglesia Catolica, y que viesse el mal estado en que se hallauan, y que boluuie(n)do a la verdad, se aprouecharon de la misericordia de Dios, mientras auia tiempo. / A este efeto pidió las oraciones de todos los católicos que estauan presentes, para que se juntasen con las suyas en este postrero y ultimo fin de su vida, y assi con gra(n)dissimo feruor de espíritu leuanto los ojos al cielo, y leuanto júnrame(n)te las manos (como podía, por estar atadas) començo el Pater noster, y le oyeron con paciencia, hasta començar el Ave maria, porque en començandola, por el aborrecimiento q(ue) tienen los hereges desta santa Salutation, le interrumpieron a gritos, y le echaron de la escalera abaxo, dexandole colgado, y corta(n)do despues la sogas, le hizieron quartos, executando la sentencia.”

<sup>34</sup>In this sense, the bibliographical references about this martyrial conception adopted by english groups (among others) are very numerous. In them, we can appreciate the true sense of the martyrdom, and consequently, the mean of a true martyr, but also we can understand the popularization in the conception of this process, v. gr. Myles O'Reilly, *Lives of the Irish Martyrs and Confessors* (New York: 1993); John Ray Knott, *Discourses of Martyrdom in English Literature 1563-1694* (Cambridge: 1993); Diana Wood (ed.), *Martyrs and Martyrologies*, Ecclesiastical History Society (Cambridge: 1993); Brad Stephan Gregory, *Salvation at Stake. Christian martyrdom in early modern Europe* (Cambridge: 2001); Javier Burrieza Sánchez, “Escuelas de sacerdotes y mártires: Los Colegios del Exilio Católico”, in E. García Hernán, M. A. Bunes Ibarra, O. Recio Morales, B. J. García García (eds.), *Irlanda y la Monarquía Hispánica, Kinsale 1601-2001. Guerra, Política, Exilio y Religión* (Madrid: 2002), pp. 39-73; Anne Dillon, *The Construction of Martyrdom in the English Catholic Community, 1535-1603* (Aldershot: 2002); Margaret Cormack (ed.), *Sacrificing the Self: Perspectives on Martyrdom and Religion* (Oxford: 2002); Sarah Covington, *The Trail of Martyrdom. Persecution and Resistance in Sixteenth-Century England* (Notre Dame: 2003); Peter Lake, Michael Questier, “Margaret Clitherow, catholic

However, the Anglican reformists contradicted the theological and political theory of Catholic martyrdom developing a conception that, questioning the Catholic conception of the temporal and spiritual power of the Pope, recognized as pseudo-martyrdom the supposedly virtuous action that he aroused at the service of the Hispanic Monarchy. The work attributed to John Donne, *Pseudo-Martyr*, dated from 1610, is very representative of this position, as its title shows us. Donne considers that martyrdom itself and its dignity have been corrupted by an excessive affectation; in fact, the Roman Church incites to increase the number of individuals who submit to this spiritual mission of highest risk by means of the persuasion derived from the praise of me-

rits connected to the aims of the secular magistracy, and under the unfair spiritual promises like the guarantee of an eternal life and the avoiding of the Purgatory. Besides, the threat of Catholic martyrdom is presented as a concrete instrument in the hands of the Jesuit order, protected by the fourth vow of obedience to the Pope. The political motivations brand this martyrdom as false, whose *raison d'être* is about a political operation of a destabilizing penetration in the Kingdom of England, knowing full well the contravention of the laws and official reformed religion that it entails. This political intention corrupts the purity of the martyrdom act, because it comes from the intent to provoke the "enemy"; being distorted<sup>36</sup>.

Hence, there is a reformist pseudo-martyrdom

nonconformity, martyrology and the politics of religious change in Elizabethan England"; in *Past and Present*, 185-1 (2004), pp. 43-90; Susannah Brietz Monta, *Martyrdom and literature in early modern England* (Cambridge: 2005); Andrea McKenzie, *Tyburn's Martyrs. Execution in England, 1675-1775* (London: 2007); Stuart Carroll, *Martyrs and murderers: the Guise family and the making of Europe* (Oxford: 2009).

<sup>36</sup>*Pseudo-Martyr. Wherein out of certaine Propositions and Gradations, This Conclusion is euicted. That those which are of the Romane Religion in this Kingdome, may and ought to take the Oath of Allegcance* (London: 1610). Its table of chapters is very complete and helps to understand which are the bases that define the pseudo-martyr theory in opposition of the Catholic martyrdom theory: "CHAP. I.) Of Martyrdome and the dignity thereof. / CHAP. II.) That there may be an inordinate and corrupt affectation of martyrdome. / CHAP. III.) That the Roman Religion doth by many erroneus doctrines mis-encourage and excite men to this vitious affectation of danger: first by inciting secular Magistracy: Secondly by extolling the value of Merites, and of this worke in special, by which the treasure of the Church is so much advanced: And lastly, by the doctrin of Purgatory, which by this act is said certainly to be escaped. / CHAP. IIII.) That in the Romane Church the Iesuits exceed all others, in their constitutions and practise, in all those points, which beget or cherish this corrupt desier of false-Martyrdome. / CHAP. V.) That the Missions of the Pope, under Obedience whereof they pretend that they come into this Kingdome, can be no warrant, since there are laws established to the contrary, to give them, or those which harbor them, the confort of Martyredome. / CHAP. VI.) A Comparison of the Obedience due to Princes, with the severall Obediences required and exhibited in the Romane Church: First, of that blinde Obedience and stupiditie, which Regular men vow to their Superiours: Seecndly, of that usurped Obedience to which they pretend by reason of our Baptisme, wherein we are said to have made an implicite surrender of our selves, and all that we have, to the church: and thirdly, of that obedience, which the Iesuits by a fourth super numerary vow make to be disposed at the Popes absolute will. / CHAP. VII.) That if the meere execution of the function of Priests in this Kingdome, and of giving to the catholiques in this land, spiritual sustentation, did assure their consciences, that to dye for that were martyrdome: yet the refusall of the Oath of Alleageance doth corrupt and vitiate the integrity of the whole act, and dispoile them of their former interest and Title to Martyrdome. / CHAP. VIII.) That there hath beene as yet no fundamental and safe ground given, upon which those which have the faculties to heare confessions, should informe their owne consciences, or instruct their penitents: that they are bound to adventure the heavy and capital penalties of this law, for refusall of this Oath. And that if any man have received a scruple against this case stands, incline, and warrant them, to the taking therof. / CHAP. IX.) That the authority which is imagined to be in the Pope, as he is spiritual Prince of the monarchy of the Church, cannot lay this Obligation upon their consciences: First because the Doctrine it selfe is not certaine, nor presented as matter of faith: Secondly because the way by which it is conveyed to them, is suspitious and dangerous, being but by cardinall Bellarmine, who is various in himselfe, and reproved by other catholiques of equall dignity, and estimation. / CHAP. X.) That the Canons can give them no warrant, to adventure these dangers, for this refusall: And that the Reverend name of canons, is falsly and cautelously insinuated, and stolne upon the whole body of the canon law, with a breffe consideration upon all the books thereof: and a particular survey, of all those canons, which are

that must be differentiated from the specifically Catholic pseudo-martyrdom due to the deviation or popularization of its theologically strict content. What is relevant is that, beyond this vulgariser practise we will talk about later, the Reformation itself generated a theological and moral review of the political practice of Catholic martyrdom laying the foundations for the —critical— theory of pseudo-martyrdom.

### **b) Legal practice: a martyrdom discourse for the royal protection.**

The fall of England into heresy spread terror among many Catholic Englishmen who, however, refused to abandon their creed. The new crime regulations excluded any harmonious cohabitation between Catholic and Protestant communities, forcing the former to expatriation or exile, the only ways to avoid persecution and violence. In this situation, the territory of the Catholic Hispanic Monarchy was presented as the natural refuge for the beginning of a new life. Nevertheless, this fate, typical of those who persevered in the defence of Catholicism, had a personal and family price: expatriation and exile meant uprooting of lives and economic losses. And for this reason —and also because the Catholic King specifically benefited from the fact that such migratory process significantly increased the troops of his own active armies against Reformation—, the protective monarch piously and mercifully had to exercise his patronage of the Catholic faith, facing the

difficulties and scarcity of those who sought and trusted his protection.

In this context, there are countless memorials addressed to the Council of State by English refugees in the territory of the Austrian monarchy, requesting favours —mainly pecuniary help— and explaining their flight and request of assistance due to their defence of the Catholic faith. Indeed, these pleas for favours usually contain the widest range of risks suffered: persecutions, deaths of direct and indirect relatives, loss of property, prison, abandonment, etc., always linked to the perseverance in faith. This suffering and the constant death threat forced them to abandon their homeland. Thus, the majority of the plea memorials seems to follow some common guidelines, adopting, so to speak, a kind of community discourse where the scarcity and disasters suffered are praised —not only their own but also close relatives' and forefathers'— showing availability to the service of the Catholic king and the state of necessity the signatories are suffering as a consequence of their flight. For all these reasons, and insisting that the misfortunes are consequences of the loyalty and constant defence of the Catholic faith, they request the monarch the concession of an economic favour in order to be able to sustain themselves and live with dignity.

Thus, in the motivation of these plea memorials the concept of martyrdom usually appears regarding the calamitous vicissitudes suffered by the persecuted Catholics. But we must wonder to what extent there is rigour in the reference to

ordinarily eyed by those Authours, which maintaine this temporall Iurisdiction in the Pope. / CHAP. XI.) That the two Breves of Paulus the fift can not give this assurance to this Conscience. First, for the generall infirmities, to which all Rescripts of Popes are obnoxious: And then for certaine insufficiencies in these. / CHAP. XII.) That nothing requir'd in this Oath, violates the Popes spirituall Iurisdiction: And that the clauses of wearing that Doctrine to bee Hereticall, is no usurping upon his spirituall right, either by preiudicating his future definition, or offending any former Decree. / CHAP. XIII.) That all which his Maiesty requires by this Oath, is exhibited to the Kings of Fraunce, And not by verte of any Indult, or Concordate, buy by the inhaerent right of the Crowne. / CHAP. XIII.) Lastly, That no pretence, eyther of conversión at first, Assistance in the Conquest, or Acceptation of any surrender from any of our Kings, can give the Pope any more right ouer the Kingdome of England, then over any other free State whatsoever".

a martyrdom passion, or if the mention of martyrdom is included with certain thoughtlessness about the exact meaning of the word, in order to give more drama to their story.

We can mention as first example the testimony of the Englishman “Robert Belami”, whose plea is included in the report of the Council of State on 14 November 1606:

*Roberto Belami yngles en un memorial que se remitió al consejo refiere que ha padecido por nuestra sancta fee catolica mas de veynte años de carçel con perdimiento de todos los bienes y hacienda que tenia y a su madre y dos hermanos les dieron martirio que viene huyendo del furor y persecucion de los hereges a recogerse al amparo de la iglesia y religion cristiana, por lo qual supp(li)cª a V. Md le haga m(e)r(ce)d usando de su acostumbrada clemencia de un entretenimiento en algùn presidio de Flandes particularmente en el castillo de Amberes donde pueda acauar la vida en serui(-cijo) de Dios y de V. Md<sup>37</sup>.*

Martyrdom has not been suffered by the supplicant, but by his mother and two brothers. The concept is used generally, without concern about the strict meaning of the word: it is not easy to accept without greater precisions that his mother and brothers were officially martyrs. There are no complete names or more concrete and detailed family data to verify it. However, the demonstration of their condition of martyrs does not seem to matter, but the statement of an objective situation of martyrdom, in the sense of the afflictions suffered by his relatives, due to the perseverance in the Catholic faith, and with the fatal result of death. Therefore, in this testimony there is a

pseudo-martyrdom because, as well as the fact that there is no official recognition of the supposed martyrs, we do not have a description of their behaviour of passion that allows us to confirm a clear and strict example of martyrdom. Nevertheless, martyrdom is present for legitimizing purposes of the discourse itself from a vulgarized perspective.

As we have mentioned previously, if martyrdom —objective element— is vulgarized, martyr —subjective element— is a concept that maintains its exact meaning. Thus, the example of “Philip Basset”, Englishman, seems to allude to a true martyr, according to a report of the Council of State on 5 October 1609:

*En el consejo se ha visto como V. Md lo embio a mandar por villete del Duque de Lerma un memorial de Don Phelippe Baset visnieta de Tomas Moro, gran chanciller de Inglaterra y martir, en que refiere que el Rey n(uest)ro señor que (h)aya gloria a el y a sus padres hizo mucha honrra y m(e)r(ce)d [...], y como el suplicante ha padezido largas prisiones y daños de los hereges que le quitaron el patrimonio que sus pasados le dexaron y agora pasa muy gran necesidad por la constancia que ha tenido en n(uest)ra santa fee en cuya consideracion le ha hecho V. Md m(e)r(ce)d, supp(li)ca a V. Md se la haga de manera que pueda sustentarse con alguna deçençia demas q(ue) sera limosna y obra muy de caridad<sup>38</sup>.*

It could be said that there is an indirect martyrdom, obviously alleged with a remunerative purpose. But in this case, the martyr’s figure is rigorous: the supplicant introduces himself as great-grandson of Thomas More, martyr recogni-

<sup>37</sup> Report of the Council of State about “Roberto Velami”, English man, on 14 November 1606, in Archivo General de Simancas (= AGS), Estado, 2768, s/f.

<sup>38</sup> Report of the Council of State about “Phelippe Baset”, English man, on 5 October 1609, in AGS, Estado, 2771, s/f.

sed by the Church. Although the declarations are similar to the prior assumption —prison and injuries—, the story becomes more reliable because his ancestor was an official martyr, as if blood transmitted virtue or deserved the hereditary transmission of it.

Anyway, the popularization of martyrdom is not extreme, because most supplicants do not use the term although describe suffering, persecution and flight for the defence of Catholicism similar to the ones we have mentioned regarding the pseudo-martyrs. Inter alia, we can mention the example of “Wlick Mac Conyn”, Irish gentleman who asked Phillip III for a favour in 1607, stating the following:

[...] y su padre lo continuo (el servicio) hasta q(ue) los herejes le mataron defendiendo su castillo contra ellos y en otro castillo de sus tios hermanos de su madre adonde muria su madre dos hermanos una her(man)<sup>a</sup> y dos tios del sup(lican)te s(eño)res del d(ic)ho castillo y mas de 60 personas ho(m)bres y mugeres deudos y parientes del sup(lican)te q(ue) los herejes les quemo dentro del castillo una noche q(ue) el enemigo vino con todos sus fuerças sobre ellos y lleuaron un cauallero tio y le horcaron los herejes y confiscaron para la corona de Inglaterra su lugar y castillo y toda la hacienda del sup(lican)te de tios q(ue) murieron en manos de los herejes ingleses y fuele forzoso al sup(lican)te huyer de su tierra y venir a pasarle de V(uestra) M(a)g(esta)d [...]<sup>39</sup>.

To a large extent, this story adopts a discourse with sense of martyrdom —regarding fundamentally the supplicant’s family—, emphasising the

loyalty to Catholic religion. Although the supplicant does not refer to himself as a martyr —and does not use the term of martyrdom regarding his relatives—, he describes a real ordeal, similar to the spirit of suffering that accompanies the active or passive struggle against the reformist heresy and legitimises the request of favour to the Hispanic monarch.

From the perspective of the precision of the discourse, the one we have just named martyrdom discourse must not be confused with martyrdom, and in this sense the memorials, by avoiding the term, avoid a large exposition. As we had the opportunity to explain in these pages, theology of martyrdom comes from the voluntary suffering, with a deliberate desire of the individual to stand firm in his faith, knowing full well the dangers he may run and asserting his Catholic belief in God above all things, until the last punishment. And the persecuted people, even with the virtue of faith, suffered a repression that not always was freely faced. Maybe the awareness of this defect explains that in many plea memorials the supplicants are resolute to continue at the service of Catholicism and offer their wish to join the army or do other kind of services, highlighting their will of active perseverance to struggle against heresy. But this interpretation is also indirect and leads to a vulgarized conception of martyrdom and not to a true martyrdom.

Apart from the official recognition of martyrdom on the part of the Church, the flight of the heretics and their consequent suffering, that base the plea for favours to the Catholic monarch, offer a testimony that does not comply with the essential requirement of martyrdom: the positive encounter with death. The expatriation to a Catholic

<sup>39</sup>Report of the Council of State about “Wlick Mac Conyn”, Irish gentleman, on 16 September 1607, in caballero irlandés, AGS, Estado, 1748, s/f. A great number of plea memorials of similar character are analyzed in Victoria Sandoval Parra, *Manera de galardón*, op. cit., pp. 153-411.

territory evades the staunch persistence, perseverance and courage of the martyr, the firmness against the heretic enemy in a kind of spiritual war. The supplicants have escaped from the danger their lives run, and have escaped from death. And at the same time and above all, when redacting their plea memorials, when asking for the Catholic king's protection, with all the legitimate justifications, they finally seek a protection that is also lucrative, a reward for their virtue finally materialised in money... This is not typical of the plain virtue without compensation that characterises the behaviour of a true martyr.