



SHORT REFERENCE that the undersigned makes about the religious situation in Chiapas.

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Nearly all the inhabitants of Chiapas have been and are under control of the constituent authorities. For this reason and notwithstanding the efforts of some agitators, they did not take part in the revolution organized by Carranza. But as soon as it was known that said revolution had won, and that with the departure of Mr. Carvajal from Mexico, Carranza would take the reins of the Government, Chiapas did not further resist but put herself under the command of the First Chief and accepted the authorities nominated by the said Chief. In acting thus, we hoped to be left alone, that is, undisturbed and that the church would be respected; but few days after the arrival of the Carrancista authorities the inhabitants were relieved of their guns and then, the attacks against the church began. I shall refer the most important points.

I.- All the churches were closed and the services prohibited as well as the administering of the sacraments even the most necessary as the christening of children and the confession of the dying, under penalty of severe punishment for both priests and the people.

II.- Few days later the carrancista authorities called all the priests of the episcopal city to a meeting and told them to leave the town; only one of them was allowed to remain for the Sundays mass but under the condition that he should not preach nor administer the sacraments. The keys to the church were given to him only for the time the mass would last on Sunday.

III.-It was declared that only one priest should remain in each town to recite the mass under the same restrictions above mentioned.

IV.- Under these circumstances the third part of the priests decided to leave the country and the remaining were oppressed.

V.- Several of the churches were filled with troops and the Episcopal Home and the Seminary were confiscated, not few of the personages and other buildings amongst them the Catholic Colleges managed by the Sisters of the Divine Providence, Colleges that were famous like the Colleges of the Brothers Maristas,--famous for the solid instruction imparted therein. The Sisters were molested although no attempt was made against their virtue; the Sisters of Our Lady of Guadalupe were also molested for they were not permitted to teach not even privately and they had to leave the country not without difficulties.

VI.- A beautiful and valuable object of art was at first praised and respected; this article was named "Granada" and belonged to the Cathedral. Then they decided to take hold of it as it was very large and was made of silver, and in order to take possession of it they placed the young ladies, in whose care the "Granada" was, in jail.

VII.-With the time the persecutions of the church ceased and the churches reopened the sacraments with the exception of the confession were allowed. On account of this prohibition the priests found themselves in difficulty to attend the dying, and although in some places this was overlooked in other places as Tapachula the prohibition was very strict.

VIII.- Bye and bye the Villista revolt and then the Felicista came, and without any reason or justification they thought the priests were involved in this revolt and with this pretext they were jailed and later on offered them their liberty under a fine of 20,000 pesos, in silver. As this sum could not be raised and because efforts were being made to obtain their freedom, they were at last set free, the Governor having declared their ino



cence. Their imprisonment took place on the 6th of July of this year and ended on the 15th of August, the people having been left without mass, services and without the holy sacraments.

IX.- At present the furious persecution has ended but the priests have not the liberty necessary for their ministry and the confession is still prohibited.

X.- As to the ecclesiastical buildings nearly all the churches have been returned only the Episcopal Home and the Seminary as well as the Catholic Colleges are in their hands, the first two are utilized as army headquarters.

Efforts are being made to obtain their permission for the absent priests to return to Chiapas, but they will be allowed to come back when the felicista revolt has subsided, or destroyed.

Castroville, Texas, December 5, 1916.

Signed: Maximino Ruiz,

Bishop of Chiapas.

