The Ironic Legacy of an Opus Dei Bishop

Native Priests and Andean Catholicism in Postconflict Apurímac, Peru

by
Christine Lee

Since the end of the civil war, the diocese of Abancay in the south-central Peruvian Andes has produced a clergy made up entirely of men born and raised in the diocese where they now work. Yet, ironically, this diocese was specifically criticized by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for its lack of engagement with local Andean populations. Abancay is a politically and theologically conservative diocese strongly influenced by the Opus Dei bishop who trained this generation of native clergy, but it is also a diocese in the process of forging a new relationship between Andeanness and institutional Catholicism.

Desde el final de la guerra civil, la diócesis de Abancay, en los Andes peruanos del centro-sur, ha producido un clero formado exclusivamente por hombres nacidos y criados en la diócesis donde trabajan actualmente. Sin embargo, irónicamente, esta diócesis fue criticada específicamente por la Comisión de la Verdad y la Reconciliación por su falta de compromiso con las poblaciones andinas locales. Abancay es una diócesis política y teológicamente conservadora fuertemente influenciada por el obispo perteneciente al Opus Dei que formó a esta generación de clérigos nativos, pero también es una diócesis en el proceso de forjar una nueva relación entre la identidad andina y el catolicismo institucional.

Keywords: *Catholicism, Andes, Priests, Peru, Ethnicity*

For the first time in living memory, the diocese of Abancay, in Apurímac, in the south-central Peruvian Andes, features a generation of native Andean priests.[1] Apart from the Spanish bishop, all of the nearly 50 priests working in the diocese are themselves from the diocese. With the exception of two with more middle-class backgrounds, all are native speakers of Quechua, men who were born and raised in rural, agricultural Andean families. These priests are a postconflict phenomenon, and, ironically, they have arisen in a diocese criticized by Peru's Truth and Reconciliation Commission for its lack of engagement with the local Andean population. Drawing from 16 months of ethnographic fieldwork in the Catholic parish of Talavera in the diocese of Abancay (encompassing the provinces of Chincheros, Andahuaylas, Aymaraes, and Abancay in the Apurímac region), where, according to the 2017 census, two-thirds of residents learned Quechua as their first language and nearly 80 percent of the population identify themselves as Catholic, this article examines

Christine Lee is an honorary research fellow in the Department of Social Anthropology at the University of St. Andrews.

LATIN AMERICAN PERSPECTIVES, Issue 228, Vol. 46 No. 5, September 2019, 59–72
DOI: 10.1177/0094582X19854080

the relationship between institutional Catholicism and Andean ethnicity in postconflict Apurímac, where the Truth and Reconciliation Commission found the Church ineffective in opposing either the Maoist guerrilla group Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) or the government military forces and in some cases complicit in the violence that occurred (Gamio, 2016: 180; Tovar, 2006: 24).

The intended implication of the commission's framing is that the goals of the two sides—conservative versus liberal, traditional versus progressive, Opus Dei versus liberation theology, pro- versus anti-Vatican II—are mutually exclusive, especially when it comes to the relationship between the institutional Church and indigenous Andeanness. This perception also permeates the scholarly literature; for example, Olson (2006: 888) describes the Peruvian Catholic Church as an "ideologically-fragmented church, with the conservative influence of Opus Dei offset by regions . . . in which liberation theology [dominates]." It is this zero-sum, dichotomous framing that my article disputes.

Modern Abancay features a full-fledged native clergy that is at the forefront of a new, more amicable relationship between Andeanness and institutional Catholicism. At first glance, one might assume that this is because, in the years since the commission's report, there has been a political shift in the diocese—after all, a native clergy that is sympathetically engaged with local flavors of Catholicism has long been a goal of the liberal, progressive, left-wing branches of the Peruvian Church. But Abancay continues to be a conservative diocese dominated by priests strongly influenced by Opus Dei, a notoriously right-leaning branch of the Catholic Church. Most of the priests I know in Talavera are politically and theologically conservative, cautious about Vatican II, openly dismissive of liberation theology and human rights discourses, and staunch supporters of the Fujimoris.[2] Yet they also take pride in their Andean culture and language, including within Catholicism.

Dominant frameworks for analyzing attempts by the Church to incorporate Andean elements tend to assume that such endeavors stem from priestly sympathy with Andean traditions (Orta, 2002; Salas Carreño, 2014). In Abancay, however, the premises (and therefore the political alignments) are different: because the clergy is locally native, local institutional Andean Catholicism is rooted in priestly empathy rather than sympathy with Andeanness. Abancay's native clergy thus upends the usual link between positive sentiment toward Andean culture and left-wing politics in the Peruvian Church.

ABANCAY, THE COMMISSION, AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NATIVE CLERGY

Two excerpts from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report show that Peruvian discourse tends to use certain related bundles of terms to refer to conservative versus progressive branches of the Peruvian Church and point to an apparent conservative/liberal political fault line (CVR, 2003: 287 and 292, my translation):

> In general, where the Church had been renewed along the lines of the Second Vatican Council and the Assemblies in Medellín and Puebla, there was much

> more resistance toward the arguments of subversive groups, since they had developed social teachings that connected with the population and responded to its concerns with a discourse of change and demand for justice but that still rejected violence. Such was the case in certain dioceses in the interior—Cajamarca, Puno, Chimbote, Huaraz, Piura, etc. In contrast, where the Church had not as much taken into account the changes encouraged by the Council, subversive groups found much more fertile ground in which to take root. This was the case in Ayacucho and other dioceses like Abancay and Huancavelica. . . .
>
> The bishop [of Abancay], Monsignor Pélach, was a member of Opus Dei, and he had as an auxiliary bishop Monsignor Salas, member of Opus Dei, who succeeded him upon his retirement. . . . The new bishop . . . mistrusted advocates for human rights, suspecting that they were communists.

Here we see the diocese of Abancay being implicitly identified as conservative through the mention of the Second Vatican Council and Opus Dei. The Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) marked a watershed in the history of the Church, seeking to open it up to the modern world. One of the methods by which this was to be achieved was encouraging local innovation. For example, it approved the translation of the Latin liturgy—the words for celebrating the Mass and other sacraments—into the vernacular. In Latin America this allowed space for engagement with and the incorporation of local popular religious practices (Schwaller, 2011). These were radical changes for the Church at the time—one bishop notoriously described Vatican II as "the French Revolution in the Church"—and not all branches were fully supportive of the changes involved. Therefore the commission report notes the affiliation of Monsignors Enrique Pélach and Isidro Salas with Opus Dei, a notoriously conservative movement within the Church, linking their conservatism to the fact that their diocese was not "renewed along the lines of the Second Vatican Council."

The conference of bishops in Peru is split along political lines, with Opus Dei bishops often at odds with liberation theology bishops (Olson, 2006). This polarization is evident in the commission report as well. Liberation theology seeks to interpret Christian teachings from the perspective of the poor and is strongly linked with left-wing politics. It was perhaps most famously spearheaded by the Peruvian priest Gustavo Gutierrez and is particularly strong in the Peruvian and other Latin American branches of the Church. In contrast, Opus Dei tends to emphasize tradition and other more conservative aspects of Catholicism, but it has also long had a strong and powerful presence in Peru. Juan Luis Cipriani, archbishop of Ayacucho during the civil war and later the powerful cardinal of Lima, was a member of Opus Dei. He was known to be close to Alberto Fujimori, a former president of Peru who is currently in prison for human rights violations during the war.

The tension between the conservative, Opus Dei segments and the progressive, liberation theology segments of the Church is the basis for the commission report's distinguishing dioceses that were lukewarm about Vatican II (conservative) from dioceses that were enthusiastic about it (liberal) and mapping this contrast onto the engagement of the diocese with local Andeans—those that were engaged being identified as liberals following the spirit of Vatican II and those that were not as conservatives who rejected it.

This is not to say that the commission was incorrect in this. The diocese of Abancay was, indeed, brutalized by both military and Shining Path forces. Shining Path began its military campaign in Andahuaylas, the province that the diocese encompasses, only 18 months after it began in Ayacucho. Andahuaylas shares a border with Ayacucho, and the two provinces are linguistically and culturally similar in many ways (Berg, 1994: 108). By March 1982 Andahuaylas had been officially put under a "state of emergency," with most civil liberties suspended. The police concentrated, however, on the provincial capital, where many of the wealthy landowning families resided, while Shining Path controlled most of the countryside (Berg, 1994: 110). In December 1982 Andahuaylas was declared part of the Ayacucho Emergency Zone—in essence, under military rule. Caught between Shining Path and the military, the rural Andean residents of Andahuaylas suffered tremendously throughout the war (Gorriti, 1990). The war officially ended in 1992 with the capture of Shining Path's leader, Abimael Guzmán, but violence continued to disrupt the region until about 2000.

Further, the report is correct in that Abancay is located toward the "traditional" end of the Catholic theological spectrum. In 1957 Monsignor Enrique became the first secular priest[3] to ask for and receive admission to Opus Dei; he arrived in Peru later that same year and founded the seminary after an inspiring conversation with Josemaría Escrivá, the founder of Opus Dei. He and the priests who worked with him were part of a revival of the traditional wing of the Peruvian Catholic Church in the 1970s. While Abancay is not a diocese that rejects Vatican II, it is one that approaches it with caution. A repeated refrain I heard from nuns and priests alike in Talavera was that other orders or dioceses such as the American nuns who had chosen to shed their habits after Vatican II had taken Vatican II "too far." Its priests continue to associate themselves with Opus Dei. Many priests, following in Monsignor Isidro's footsteps, were strongly suspicious of advocates for human rights discourses, although they tended to label them agents of Western neoliberal values rather than of communism. The parish priest in Talavera once scoffed at a friend who walked into the presbytery carrying a book by Gustavo Gutierrez and asked him why he was reading "that rubbish." During the 2015 presidential elections most of the priests I knew vociferously defended Alberto Fujimori and his legacy.

Yet, this very conservative diocese has seen the development of a generation of native Andean priests: native speakers of Quechua, born and raised in agricultural families, who are driving a renewal of Andean Catholicism in Apurímac. These priests are a response to a long-standing call within the Church, amplified by Vatican II, for the development of a native clergy that is engaged with the population. Ironically, however, they exist not in spite of but because of the efforts of conservative movements like Opus Dei. Both bishops mentioned by the commission report are widely admired and fondly remembered by both the clergy and the laity in the diocese. The large number of priests who have come from the parish of San Jerónimo is attributed to Monsignor Isidro, and Monsignor Enrique is revered for his charisma and his gentleness toward rural Andeans, his having lived in Abancay until his death in 2007 (when he was buried in the local cathedral), and his fluency in Quechua to the

point of publishing catechisms in that language and compiling the very popular bilingual prayer book *Rezar y Cantar* (Pray and Sing).

In particular, the priests attribute their existence in significant part to the efforts of Monsignor Enrique, who in 1977 officially opened the Our Lady of Cocharcas Major Seminary and the St. Francis Solano Minor Seminary in the city of Abancay (Pélach, 2005). It is in these two seminaries that all the priests of the diocese were trained. These priests are all native to Apurímac; only the current bishop, a Spaniard, is not. Their numbers are also notable: there are nearly 50 of them—an unusually large number of priests for Apurímac, historically speaking. In 1969 the archdiocese of Cusco (which includes the diocese of Abancay) had 98 (Sallnow, 1987: 16). In the early- to mid-twentieth century, Popes Pius XI and Benedict XV exhorted dioceses around the world to cultivate a self-sufficient native clergy and ecclesiastical hierarchy (Clark, 1954; de la Costa, 1947), and this had been made especially urgent by a significant drop in the number of priests in the postrevolutionary period. Romolo Carboni (1963: 346), the representative of the Vatican in Peru, reported that while at the end of the eighteenth century in Cajamarca there was 1 priest for every 3,000 Catholics, at the end of the nineteenth century there was 1 for every 5,700 and at the time of his writing there was 1 for every 12,000. He advocated providing Peru with the "means to develop a native clergy as soon as possible," arguing that "if we do not find priests immediately for Latin America we will have no one to recruit and train native vocations for the future; we will lack a source of highly-qualified men for the episcopacy; we shall watch the Church gradually shrivel up and die here."

Furthermore, priests in Peru were not only few but apparently of poor quality, especially in the Andes. The rural priest had long been stereotyped as "invariably pretentious in his learning, condescending in his attitude toward the Indians, avaricious in money matters, hypocritical in personal morality, and forever involved with the local officials in new schemes to exploit the people further. Also, he is frequently a Spaniard" (Klaiber, 1975: 292). Priests were associated with "foreign domination" (Isbell, 1978), considered in the same "outsider" category as teachers, engineers, and nurses (Canessa, 2012) and categorized alongside the military as "white authorities" (Weismantel, 2001: 224). The earliest *pishtacos* (vampiric beings who siphon off the fat from Andean bodies) were priests, an association that continues to the present day in some parts of the Andes (Burman, 2018).

This native clergy was therefore meant to enable Vatican II's call to open up the Church to the world—to develop a Christianity that was integrated with local cultures and peoples, facilitated by a liturgy in the local vernacular. Yet, during the war—a number of years after the closure of the Second Vatican Council—stereotypes of priests remained largely the same and were cited as one reason Andeans had begun to convert in large numbers to Evangelical Protestantism. Unlike the priests, "most [Evangelical pastors] were themselves Andean migrants [who] lived and worked with the poor and marginalized sectors of society" (Fumerton, 2002: 247). In 1997, the anthropologist Mario Fumerton was "told by rural people [in the Peruvian Andes] that in the initial years of Sendero Luminoso's armed struggle, priests and nuns abandoned the countryside and fled to the cities, whereas the evangelical *hermanos* stayed (and

sometimes died) with the people." Evangelical pastors—in contrast to the status-quo-supporting Catholic priests—took an explicitly anticorruption stance, thus demonstrating their alignment with rural residents, as part of their ministry strategy (Scarritt, 2013). Even at the end of the war, nearly two-thirds of the priests in Peru were from abroad (Strong, 1992).

In short, what we see in Abancay is a significant break between the pre- and the postconflict Catholic landscape in terms of the behavior and ethnic makeup of the clergy. Priests today resemble—in the senses described above—the Evangelical pastor more than the stereotypical Catholic priest, and this has transformed the relationship between institutional Catholicism and Andeanness and the way Catholicism is experienced by rural Andeans.

THE IMPACT OF A NATIVE CLERGY

Talavera is a small town located at about 2,800 meters above sea level in the province of Andahuaylas. The population of the district is currently about 16,500, with approximately half in the town center and the rest in the countryside. In line with rest of the province, Talavera is largely bilingual—60 percent of Talaverans listed Quechua as their first language in the 2007 census. In the countryside, fluency in Spanish decreases and Quechua predominates, indicating an "indigenous," rural Andean identity. Likewise in line with the province and indeed the country at large, Talavera is heavily Catholic, with about 80 percent of the population identifying themselves as Catholic and about 15 percent as Evangelical.

During and after the war, Catholicism provided a potent means by which rural Andeans processed their experiences and reworked narratives in response. In Huancapi, a town in Ayacucho that suffered a great deal during the war, narratives about how their patron saint protected them from the military and Shining Path helped residents process those experiences (Robin, 2013). According to local priests, similar stories circulate in the Andahuaylas countryside. These examples point to the deeply embedded and enduring nature of Catholicism in Peru and to the foundation of Catholicism in Abancay on which a generation of native priests could be built.

The parish priest in Talavera, Father Simón, is from a village near the city of Abancay. Born in the late 1970s, he grew up during the internal conflict and recalls, for instance, that he, his brothers, and his father slept in the trees at night, leaving only his mother in the house. Today he works in a parish only about three hours by car from his natal village, and his ethnicity and class (including his experiences of the war) strongly inform his ministry. This is notable because it indicates not simply an imposition of labels of class and ethnicity upon these priests because of their origins but their *choices* in continuing to identify with their rural origins.

As men native to the local area, born and raised in Quechua-speaking farming communities, they would—by Peruvian standards—be considered *campesinos* (peasants) or ethnically "indigenous" by default, but their training as priests (the many years of education they have received in the seminary and in postgraduate courses in Peru and abroad), their clothing, and their unaccented fluency in Spanish mark them as middle-class or even *mestizo* (mixed-race). This

fluidity is a peculiar feature of the overlaps between race, ethnicity, and class in Peru. Ethnicity in the Andes and in Peru is, like class, relative and context-dependent and depends heavily on the exhibition of specific markers (de la Cadena, 1995; Weismantel, 2001). Especially in Peru, in the wake of the 1960s land reform, which dissolved many haciendas and returned the land to native hands, Andeans defined themselves primarily as "peasants" rather than on the basis of race or ethnicity. In practice, these two are closely connected and often move together. If one is born to a certain race, ethnicity, or class in Peru, there is some level of fluidity and mobility involved via education and changing the way one speaks and dresses and what one eats (Alcalde, 2007).

Priests, given the amount of education they have, are no longer "Indians" by default, and it would be very easy for them to solidify this position by rejecting or hiding their pasts. I knew of some priests who avoided speaking Quechua and refused to live in rural parishes. However, I knew many more who chose to maintain their identification with the countryside: as has been repeatedly noted in the Andean literature, a person is "not someone who simply is, but someone who does" (Canessa, 2012: 139). Many priests actively, deliberately maintain certain markers that identify them as of rural origin, among them food, labor, and language.

Food is often written about as constituting indigenous Andean bodies. Throughout the Andes, "membership in . . . a race . . . is created through metabolic processes" (Weismantel, 2001: 191): "food makes Indians different from whites." This is why it is noteworthy that at the presbytery table the foods served are often ones marked as rural. The curate, Father Juan, was known to enjoy *oca* and *masua*—tubers that are generally cultivated only at high altitudes. Father Simón openly and regularly declared that he loved eating guinea pig and that a meal without *mote*—boiled corn, a rural Andean staple—was not a real meal. He knew that stating this was going against the status quo: at one point he told me that there were many people in Andahuaylas who no longer ate mote or potatoes because "they went to Lima for a few months." By this he meant that they had internalized the mainstream view of Andean food as "dirty" and "inferior." I imagine that this is why he made a point of complaining that the food in Lima made him ill and his stomach settled down only when he could return to Talavera and a highland diet.

This open preference for rural Andean food was an important part of the priests' ministry, especially in parishes more rural than Talavera. Father Simón had been the parish priest of the smaller town of Chicmo, about half an hour's drive up the mountains to the east, for many years. He had been especially beloved there, and his parishioners remembered him fondly and reminisced about his time with them. A particularly popular topic of conversation with them when I visited Chicmo was how much he liked their food and would sit down and eat with them in their homes. They recalled the foods that he had especially liked—popcorn and soft fresh cheese made with milk from their cows. In asserting a preference for rural cuisine and eating the food rural people cook with them in their homes, the priests openly align themselves with the countryside—with "Indians"—and against the narrative of rural, Andean things' being polluting and repulsive. Because they are priests—a status long associated with foreignness, whiteness, and an accompanying disdain for rural

customs—their actions make an implicit positive political statement about the value and status of rural people.

As has become a theme in the ethnographic literature of the Andes, land is a deeply important part of Andean life. The physical landscape is kinesthetically experienced, such as through pilgrimages (Sallnow, 1987), and in many places forms the foundation for a "sacred geography" that is intertwined with rural Andean life (Bastien, 1978). Connected with this is the idea that it is physical agricultural labor that constitutes an Andean person. According to Canessa (1998), rural highland Bolivians say that outdoor labor such as herding livestock and tending crops produces a type of brown fat that distinguishes Andeans from mestizos/whites. Indeed, the hard physical labor involved in working in the fields quite literally inscribes the body with markers of a rural Andean upbringing. At lunch one day, Father Simón compared his hands with mine and those of the parish housekeeper and noted the scars and calluses that marked the two of them as people who had done farm labor.

Parishioners in Chicmo recalled with visible emotion how Father Simón had worked alongside them in their fields. One man repeatedly emphasized that for him the priest had been "like part of the family, like a son." This continuing participation in ethnically marked rural labor was not restricted to Father Simón. Father Juan's elderly parents still lived in his natal village in Pacucha, about an hour's drive from Talavera, and he returned regularly to help them with the harvest and other farm work. When the seminarians stayed in the parish during their school holidays, Father Simón often made them take up pickaxes and do physical labor; being from the countryside, he said, they should know how to work in a field. He proudly said that when he was in the seminary they had grown much of their own food. Even now he keeps a garden on the presbytery grounds to grow vegetables and potatoes, explaining that a place without a garden would not feel like home. Field labor underlies discrimination against indigenous Andeans for being dirty, because proximity to the earth is seen as a marker of Andean inferiority (Orlove, 1998). These priests publicly and openly defy these stereotypes by working in fields, marking their bodies as Andean and thereby aligning the Church with Andeanness.

Finally, Quechua-speaking is stigmatized in Peru and tied to a rural Andean identity (Weismantel, 2001; Alcalde, 2007). A core aspect of the structural oppression of Quechua-speakers is the assumption that eventually Quechua will die out in favor of Spanish and native Andeans will assimilate to the mestizo Peruvian mainstream. In contrast, Father Simón often waxed nostalgic about Quechua, his first language, and repeatedly said that it was a much more beautiful language than Spanish. He made a point of publicly speaking in Quechua—for instance, delivering entire Sunday sermons in Quechua or switching to Quechua mid-sermon. This is not itself new to the Andes—there is a long history of Quechua language use by the Church as a pastoral tool (Durston, 2007)—but his use of Quechua is rooted particularly in local episcopal endeavors since Vatican II. The Quechua translation of the liturgy currently in use in the diocese was first published in 1980, a project spearheaded by the diocese of Huancavelica. The prayer book *Rezar y Cantar*, the third edition of which was published in 1981, exists in large part because of the efforts of Monsignor Enrique. It contains over a hundred songs, prayers, liturgy, and catechetical information and, as of 2016, was in its seventh edition. It is heavily used

throughout the diocese, to the point that attendees of catechism and other classes are often told to bring both their Bibles and their copies of *Rezar y Cantar* with them. Father Simón remembered his own first time hearing Mass, celebrated by a white priest in Spanish. He spoke only Quechua until the age of 12, and, as he drily put it, the Mass "might as well have been in Latin, for all I understood of it." Thus, when celebrating Mass in the villages surrounding Talavera, he and the other priests take special care to ensure that their congregations can properly understand it. The liturgy, the Bible readings, and the homily are always in Quechua, and the congregation is encouraged, in Quechua, to confess so as to be able to receive Communion—which is very important because they usually only hear Mass once a month, in contrast with at least twice-daily Masses in Talavera.

The use of Quechua by these priests is implicitly political. There is a noticeable generation gap between Quechua-speakers and others; those older than about 25 are almost all fluent in Quechua, while children and teenagers by and large do not speak it. This gap has been fueled by the intense stigma attached to the language, which has meant that Quechua-speaking parents often raise their children deliberately to speak Spanish and not Quechua in the hope that this will allow them class and economic mobility (Hornberger and Coronel-Molina, 2004). In recognition of this, some priests encouraged younger urban parishioners to use Quechua. For instance, during Lent catechism, Father Simón instructed the catechists—all young people from the local area and largely not fluent in Quechua—to learn the Quechua translations of the Lord's Prayer and the Hail Mary and teach them to the children in their classes. In recent years, pro-indigenous activists have been—with mixed success—attempting to promote bilingual education and encourage the use of Quechua among younger Andeans (García, 2003; 2004). In taking pride in speaking Quechua not only to be understood by rural Quechua monolingual parishioners but also to encourage younger people in their Quechua, the priests are participating in the ongoing political narrative surrounding its use.

Openly defying these three potent axes by which racism is enforced and facilitated in Peru is immensely powerful—especially when coming from a representative of an institution as old and powerful as the Catholic Church. People remember very clearly what priests were like before then (the stereotypes were sometimes true), and so it is a shift that is emotional for many Andeans.

THE CHURCH AS A NATIVE INSTITUTION

An anecdote that Father Simón often recalled with emotion was about his being sent home from the seminary to recover from an illness and there receiving a visit from one of his teachers to see how he was recuperating. This shocked him and his family; no one had ever heard of a white priest's so much as setting foot inside a rural Andean house. Today his publicly enjoying and even preferring rural food, speaking Quechua, and doing agricultural labor alongside his parishioners, unheard of in a priest, provoke similar reactions. The fact that these are not only native priests but native priests who openly embrace their rural Andean backgrounds marks a sea change in the average Abancay Catholic's experience of the Church and its institutional representatives. Furthermore,

these three insider aspects provide the foundation from which Catholicism in Abancay is now increasingly being positioned not as a foreign but as a native institution. The current generation of priests in Apurímac, having grown up both Catholic and with the practice of Andean rituals, do not seem to regard the latter as a threat or opposed to Catholicism. What for previous generations of foreign priests were insurmountable barriers to the evangelization of the Andes are in contemporary Talavera at best lovely traditions preserved to honor one's antecedents and at worst surmountable and understandable mistakes.

Father Simón once told me his memories of watching "traditional" rituals being carried out in his village partway up the mountains that surround the city of Abancay. He and the other village children would follow along, goggling and giggling, as the men solemnly went from one site to another with offerings. To them it seemed a ridiculous and strange thing to do, and they only stopped whispering and laughing and shoving each other when a man whose responsibility it was to hush them came over and twisted their ears until they promised to behave. He said that he had never had any sense of a real, profound belief in the mountain spirits or the ancestors in anyone he knew. To him it seemed that the village carried out the rituals as a way of honoring their forebears, something they had always done. In fact, he lamented the loss of many traditional rituals, among them the irrigation-canal-cleaning festival. He wanted them brought back, in fact, because for him they were beautiful traditions that it was a shame to have lost.

This nostalgia stemmed from his own childhood, dominated by the two decades of the civil war. Indeed, it is likely that the civil war was part of the reason such traditions had been lost in the first place: as Fumerton (2002: 245) recounts, "When political violence depopulated the countryside and transformed many places into no-go areas, irrigation canals had to be abandoned for a time, and so too the observance of *Yarcca Aspiy*, the important rite of cleaning the irrigation system in September that signaled the beginning of the rainy season and time for planting." This was a transition that he would have seen in the course of his childhood and adolescence, and it is that past about which he is nostalgic now.

Today he is taking an active role in trying to bring that past back. He reported, for example, that it was incorrect that the *negrillo* (a traditional Andean dance) had been performed recently for Our Lady of Carmel's feast day celebrations; negrillos were traditionally danced at Christmas. He was looking up videos on YouTube of how other towns in Peru danced for Our Lady of Carmel, searching for ideas for a new dance he wanted to invent specifically for Talavera's celebrations. Invention was necessary, he said, because it would be wrong to steal someone else's dance—each dance is tied to a specific place and a specific history. He was excitedly planning whom to ask for help in inventing it and which of the elderly locals might be able recall how they had danced for Our Lady of Carmel in the past, hoping that in perhaps five years they might be able to start dancing this new dance for her and begin a new Andean Catholic tradition.

The idea of Catholic priests trying to revive Andean cultural practices is not new. It is often analyzed as a form of inculturation—the adaptation of the public practice of a religion to the conditions of a given culture, part of a wider undertaking in the Church, particularly since Vatican II. Thus, scholars have, for example, described as "inculturation" the way catechists in Aymara communities in highland Bolivia during the 1990s were encouraged to "remember, recuperate and revalorize" Aymara culture (Orta, 1998: 165). Indigenous cultural practices

are taken as "local expressions of universal Christian meaning" (Orta, 2002: 722). Salas Carreño (2014: S200, quoting Hansen, 1993: 277) quotes a priest as saying,

> It is not about introducing uniform ritual from Western Christianity. Neither is it about "purifying" the Quechua peasant religiosity but rather discovering its legitimacy within the pluralism of Christian cultures. Then, the main task of the priest is to share the Andean religiosity, deepen it, and find its place in the universal Catholic community in such a way that the Church ends up recognizing itself in Andean religiosity and Andean religiosity finds itself reflected in the official Church.

However, while Salas Carreño argues that the incorporation of traditional Andean dances is possible because religion is "conceived of as a domain of immaterial beliefs" (2014: S201, quoting Keane, 2007: 111–112), thus allowing an understanding of semiotic forms such as dance as "expressing essentially abstract meanings, and thus . . . able to convey Christian values through metaphoric associations," I would argue that there is a pivotal difference here between the priests cited in studies of inculturation and those working in Talavera and Abancay: that the latter are locals.

Inculturation, in Orta's (1998: 170) formulation, "entails an integration at the level of the macrolocal at a certain cost for the microlocal," because "missionary ideology"' involves a "discursive alignment of Aymaraness that effects a conversion" through which "horizontal connection[s] of equivalence and translation across cultures [are] rendered a vertical relationship of encompassment" (167). In other words, inculturation necessarily comes at the cost of flattening the diversity that exists locally in favor of a unifying pan-Andean Quechua or Aymara identity. But the situation in Talavera is in fact the product of a locally specific Quechua identity, not a pan-Andean one. It is the product of Monsignor Enrique's desire, for instance, to promote specifically local devotions to Our Lady of Cocharcas, for whom the major seminary is named. It is also the product of a uniquely local history built on local experiences of the war and the memories of the priests who grew up during it and on the fact that these priests now work in the areas where they grew up. The priests in Abancay are not necessarily immune to anti-Andean racism. A priest I knew who had grown up and been trained in Abancay but worked in Puno (about a thousand meters higher in altitude than Abancay) was skeptical of local Catholic customs even as he praised the traditions of his hometown. His attitude fit within the wider Peruvian anti-Andean paradigm, in which the higher-altitude communities are the more stigmatized. In Abancay, however, the positionality is different. These are not priests who have arrived in the area and are sympathetic with what they encounter; rather, they are *empathetic* because it is what they themselves experienced as born-and-raised Andean Catholics. Father Simón's enthusiasm for the irrigation-canal-cleaning ritual is rooted in his own experience. What we are potentially seeing in the diocese today is therefore the establishment of a new institutional relationship between what it means to be Andean and what it means to be Catholic.

CONCLUSION

When the Truth and Reconciliation Commission linked embracing Vatican II with outspokenness against the internal violence, it was indicating a

corresponding correlation between enthusiasm for Vatican II and theological and political progressiveness. Speaking broadly, this is a trend that tends to hold: the Church in Puno, for instance, is notably politically progressive in its pro-liberation-theology stance, and it spoke out strongly against the violence during the war (Tovar, 2006). Priests in Abancay today, in contrast, are avowedly conservative and actively disdain liberation theology. They tend to be correspondingly politically conservative, being staunch supporters of the Fujimoris.

Yet, conservative movements such as Opus Dei can have aspects in common with very liberal Catholic ideals, among them the development of a native clergy. Monsignor Enrique may have been conservative, but in founding the seminary in Abancay and training a native clergy he was—in his way—responding to the principles of Vatican II. After all, one of Opus Dei's emphases is on involving the laity more deeply in the life of the Church—and if that is one's goal it is good strategy to cultivate a native clergy that can more closely relate to the local laity. The result has been an unprecedented generation of native clergy in the diocese— men who not only are native Quechua-speakers, born and raised in local agricultural families, but continue to embrace their rural ethnic backgrounds as representatives of the Church. Most of these men grew up during the war; their lives were irrevocably shaped by it. The kind of Andean Catholicism they try to foster through their ministry now is one rooted in their own experiences and even nostalgia for a cultural world that the internal conflict shredded. These priests therefore also offer a comparative case for Catholicism in other postconflict dioceses: for example, the priests in Abancay tell me that the diocese of Ayacucho now has only priests with rural Andean backgrounds.

What we see in Abancay today is the legacy of Monsignor Enrique, a conservative priest who was nevertheless clearly invested in developing a genuine and self-sustaining Andean Catholicism. The foundations he laid by building a seminary and training a generation of locally native priests form the basis for a Church that fosters Andeanness from a position of empathy rather than sympathy—built on shared cultural backgrounds, shared experiences, and shared histories of the decades-long internal conflict. This change in positionality indicates the makings of a new institutional relationship between the Church and what it means to be Andean and invites a reexamination of the political lines drawn between indigeneity and Catholicism in Peru.

NOTES

1. For historical reasons, the term *indígena* (indigenous) is a loaded one in Peru. For this reason, I largely use the term "native" to indicate the same concept, although I retain the occasional use of "indigenous" for the sake of clarity.

2. President of Peru from 1990 to 2000 Alberto Fujimori and his daughter, Keiko Fujimori, who is currently the leader of the conservative party Fuerza Popular (Popular Force) and was its candidate for president in 2011 and 2016. Fujimori's administration oversaw increasingly authoritarian policies and the involvement of the military in politics. Those who approve of the Fujimoris and subscribe to Fujimorismo (a hard-right populist political movement centered in part on a cult of personality surrounding Alberto Fujimori and his family) tend to be conservative. In general,

the Fujimoris are closely associated with neoliberal, right-wing political and economic policies and are highly polarizing figures in Peru. While some remember Fujimori nostalgically and credit him with ending the internal conflict, he is currently imprisoned for corruption and human rights violations during that conflict.

3. Priests and deacons who are not members of a monastic order or a religious institute but live "in the world" and do not take vows.

REFERENCES

Alcalde, M. Cristina
2007 "'Why would you marry a *serrana*?' Women's experiences of identity-based violence in the intimacy of their homes in Lima." *Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology* 12 (1): 1–24.

Bastien, Joseph
1978 *Mountain of the Condor: Metaphor and Ritual in an Andean Ayllu*. St. Paul, MN: West Publishing Co.

Berg, Ronald H
1994 "Peasant responses to Shining Path in Andahuaylas," pp. 101–122 in David Scott Palmer (ed.), *Shining Path of Peru*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Burman, Anders
2018 "Are anthropologists monsters? An Andean dystopian critique of extractivist ethnography and Anglophone-centric anthropology." *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 8 (1–2): 48–64.

Canessa, Andrew
1998 "Procreation, personhood and ethnic difference in highland Bolivia." *Ethnos* 63 (2): 37–41.
2012 *Intimate Indigeneities: Race, Sex, and History in the Small Spaces of Andean Life*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Carboni, Romolo
1963 "Peru's need: priests." *The Furrow* 14: 343–348.

Clark, Francis
1954 "The Holy See on forming a native clergy—1909–1953." *Philippine Studies* 2 (2): 149–164.

CVR (Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación)
2003 "Informe final. Vol. 3, pt. 1, El proceso, los hechos, las víctimas." http://idehpucp.pucp.edu.pe/images/docs/tomo_iii.pdf.

de la Cadena, Marisol
1995 "'Women are more Indian': ethnicity and gender in a community near Cuzco," pp. 329–348 in Brooke Larson, Olivia Harris, and Enrique Tandeter (eds.), *Ethnicity, Markets, and Migration in the Andes: At the Crossroads of History and Anthropology*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

de la Costa, Horacio
1947 "The development of the native clergy in the Philippines." *Theological Studies* 8: 219–250.

Durston, Alan
2007 *Pastoral Quechua: The History of Christian Translation in Colonial Peru, 1550–1650*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.

Fumerton, Mario
2002 *From Victims to Heroes: Peasant Counter-Rebellion and Civil War in Ayacucho, Peru, 1980–2000*. Amsterdam: Rozenberg Publishers.

Gamio Gehri, Gonzalo
2016 "Catholicism and the struggle for memory: reflections on Peru," pp. 177–188 in Michael J. Schuck and John Crowley-Buck (eds.), *Democracy, Culture, Catholicism: Voices from Four Continents*. New York: Fordham University Press.

Garcia, María Elena
2003 "The politics of community: education, indigenous rights, and ethnic mobilization in Peru." *Latin American Perspectives* 30 (1): 70–95.
2004 "Rethinking bilingual education in Peru: intercultural politics, state policy and indigenous rights." *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* 7: 348–367.

Gorriti, Gustavo
1990 *Sendero Luminoso: Historia de la guerra milenaria en el Perú*. Lima: Editorial Apoyo.
Hansen, Peter
1993 "Perspectivas pastorales," pp. 266–286 in Bruno Schlegelberger (ed.), *La tierra vive: Religion agraria y Cristianismo en los Andes centrales peruanos*. Cuzco: CCAIJO.
Hornberger, Nancy and Serafin Coronel-Molina
2004 "Quechua language shift, maintenance, and revitalization in the Andes: the case for language planning." *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, no. 167, 9–67.
Isbell, Billie Jean
1978 *To Defend Ourselves: Ecology and Ritual in an Andean Village*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.
Keane, Webb
2007 *Christian Moderns: Freedom and Fetish in the Mission Encounter*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Klaiber, Jeffrey
1975 "Religion and revolution in Peru: 1920–1945." *The Americas* 31: 289–312.
Olson, Elizabeth
2006 "Development, transnational religion, and the power of ideas in the High Provinces of Cusco, Peru." *Environment and Planning A* 38: 885–902.
Orlove, Benjamin
1998 "Down to earth: race and substance in the Andes." *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 17 (2): 207–222.
Orta, Andrew
1998 "Converting difference: metaculture, missionaries, and the politics of locality." *Ethnology* 37 (2): 165–185.
2002 "'Living the past another way': reinstrumentalized missionary selves in Aymara mission fields." *Anthropological Quarterly* 75: 707–743.
Pélach Feliú, Enrique
2005 *Abancay: Un obispo en los Andes peruanos*. Madrid: Rialp.
Robin Azevedo, Valérie
2013 "'Con San Luis nos hemos hecho respetar'—la guerra, el santo y sus milagros: hacia la construcción de una memoria heroica de la guerra en Huancapi (Ayacucho, Perú)," pp. 193–234 in Ponciano del Pino and Caroline Yezer (eds.), *Las formas del recuerdo: Etnografías de la violencia política en el Perú*. Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos.
Salas Carreño, Guillermo
2014 "The glacier, the rock, the image: emotional experience and semiotic diversity at the Quyllurit'i pilgrimage (Cuzco, Peru)." *Signs and Society* 2 (S1): S188–S214.
Sallnow, Michael
1987 *Pilgrims of the Andes: Regional Cults in Cusco*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press.
Scarritt, Arthur
2013 "Liderazgo evangélico y el espíritu de comunidad en Huaytabamba, Ayacucho," pp. 271–308 in Ponciano del Pino and Caroline Yezer (eds.), *Las formas del recuerdo: Etnografías de la violencia política en el Perú*. Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos.
Schwaller, John Frederick
2011 *The History of the Catholic Church in Latin America*. New York: New York University Press.
Strong, Simon
1992 *Shining Path: The World's Deadliest Revolutionary Force*. London: Harper Collins.
Tovar, Cecilia
2006 "Introducción," pp. 15–36 in Cecilia Tovar (ed.), *Ser iglesia en tiempos de violencia*. Lima: Instituto Bartolomé de las Casas.
Weismantel, Mary
2001 *Cholas and Pishtacos: Stories of Race and Sex in the Andes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.