
Document 1501

The Papal Bull *Eximiae* dated 16 November 1501

Sources: Published in Navarrete's Colección de los viages, ii, pp. 408-9 (454-5, 2nd ed.); in Col. de doc. inéd. Amér. y Oceanía, vol. 34, pp. 22-29; and in Hernaez' Colección de bulas, i, pp. 20-25. Translation by Father T. C. Middleton, O.S.A., in Blair & Robertson I, pp. 241-5.

Alexander, Bishop, servant of the servants of God:

To the Catholic sovereigns of Spain—King Ferdinand, dearest son in Christ, and Queen Elizabeth, dearest daughter in Christ, health and apostolic blessing.

The sincerity of your great devotion and the unswerving faith with which you honor us and which the Roman Church merit, and not unworthily, that your wishes, especially relating to the propagation of the Catholic faith, and the overthrow of infidel and barbarous nations, should be freely and promptly granted. Indeed, on your behalf, a petition recently laid before us sets forth that, impelled by pious devotion to the propagation of the Catholic faith, you greatly desire—inasmuch as quite recently, and not without great expense and effort on your part, you began and from day to day continue to do more toward the capture and recovery of the islands and regions of the Indies, so that in those lands wherever any accursed belief obtains, the Most High should be worshipped and revered; and inasmuch as for the recovery of the islands and regions aforesaid, it will be incumbent upon you to incur heavy expenses and undergo great perils, it is expedient that for the conservation and maintenance of the said islands, after their capture and recovery by you, and for defraying the expenses necessary for the conservation and maintenance of the same—you should be empowered to exact and levy tithes on the inhabitants of the aforesaid islands and dwellers therein for the time being. On this account we have been humbly petitioned on your behalf to deign through our apostolic graciousness to make in the presents suitable provision for you and your state.

Therefore, yearning most eagerly for the propagation and increase of that same faith particularly in our own days, we commend in the Lord your loving and praiseworthy purpose, and being favorably disposed thereto, **we hereby through our apostolic power in virtue of these presents do as a special favor grant to you and your**

successors for the time being that in the aforesaid islands after their capture and recovery (as observed) you may receive a tithe from the inhabitants thereof and the dwellers therein for the time being, and levy the same freely and lawfully¹, provided that, after dioceses shall there be established (whereon we charge your consciences as well as those of your successors), you first from your own and their estate shall really and effectively devise a sufficient revenue for the establishment of churches in those islands through you and your aforesaid successors, whereby the incumbents of the same and their administrators may support themselves suitably, carry on the necessary work of those churches for the time being, as well as celebrate correctly the divine worship of Almighty God, and fulfil all diocesan requirements.

The Lateran Council, other apostolic constitutions and ordinances or other decrees, to the contrary notwithstanding.

Let no one then infringe on this our grant, nor dare with rashness to contravene its provisions. But should any one presume to set it at naught, let him recognize that he has thereby incurred the displeasure of Almighty God, and of the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul.

Given at Rome at St. Peter's, in the year of the incarnation of our Lord one thousand five hundred and one, the sixteenth day of November, the tenth year of our Pontificate.

[Signatures and authorizations follow].²

1 Ed. note: Emphasis mine.

2 Ed. note: As far as the rights of Portugal were concerned, there are also a number of applicable bulls: (1) *Dum diversas* of 18 June 1454 giving them the right to make war on the infidels [i.e. the Moors] and to reduce them to slavery; (2) *Romanus Pontifex* of 8 January 1454 granting them possession of the African lands discovered and to be discovered; (3) *Eterni Regis* of 21 June 1481 extending this grant as far as India, and finally (4) *Præcelsæ denotionis* of 3 November 1514 confirming the above rights.