

Latin America: Lands of Many Cultures

In Latin America, cultures mix like they do nowhere else in the world. Native Americans, Europeans, Africans, Japanese, Hindus and Muslims from India, all live and work together in the huge urban areas of the Latin American countries.

Latin American culture is found throughout Mexico, Central America, and South America, and in parts of the United States. In the 15th and 16th centuries, southern Europeans --- especially Spaniards and Portuguese --- began to settle in Latin America. These early settlers brought their Catholic religion and customs as well as their languages to their new homes. Since the languages of these settlers, Spanish and Portuguese, came from Latin, this cultural region of the world is called Latin America.

The Geography of Latin America

Latin America has nearly every type of landscape: mountains, jungles, plains, deserts, and coastland. It also has abundant natural resources: vast **rainforests** and timberlands, rich grazing and farm lands, and large deposits of valuable minerals.

rainforest: a tropical woodland that receives a very large amount of rain every year. Rainforests have very tall broad-leaved evergreen trees whose branches make an unbroken roof or canopy over the forest floor.

South America has a wide variety of landscapes, from tropical forests to dry desert, from temperate grasslands to icy cold mountaintops. The equator runs through northern Brazil, northern Ecuador, and southern Colombia; so, in general, the weather in these regions is warm throughout the year. Rainforests rise in the regions north and south of the equator. In contrast, the Atacama Desert in northern Chile is one of the driest places

on Earth. The weather is always cold in the high Andes Mountains, which are made up of incredibly high, snow-covered peaks and active volcanoes (many over 20,000 feet high). The Andes range stretches 4,500 miles along western South America from Venezuela in the north to Tierra del Fuego on the southern tip of the continent.

South America has two other major mountain regions. One of these, the Guiana highlands, runs from southeastern Venezuela, through Guyana, Suriname, and into French Guiana. The other range is about 1,500 miles to the south in Brazil, around the cities of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. Plateaus, plains, smaller mountain ranges and hills cover much of Brazil between the southern mountains and the great Amazon River Basin.

The largest tropical rain forest in the world is found in the Amazon River Basin. The Amazon River is the second longest river in the world. It flows 4,000 miles, eastward from the Peruvian Andes Mountains to the Atlantic. Only the Nile River in Africa is longer than the Amazon. The hot and moist Amazon Basin covers two-fifths of

the South American continent and contains more kinds of plants than anywhere else in the world.

Extending eastward from the Andes, the Central Plains cover about three-fifths of South America. These plains are drained by the huge Amazon and Plate **river systems**, which empty into the Atlantic. Argentina and Venezuela, especially, have very fertile plains and grasslands, which support many prosperous ranches and extensive farms.

river system: a term referring to a group of rivers that all flow into a common river. The Mississippi River system, for instance, is made up of the Mississippi River and all the rivers that flow into it. The Ohio, Red, and Missouri rivers are thus part of the Mississippi River system.

The boundary between South and North America is the narrow neck of land called the Isthmus of Panama. Between this isthmus and Mexico is the region called Central America, which includes the republics of Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Belize. Much of Central America is covered with high mountain ranges. Among the mountains are fertile valleys. Central America has a warm, tropical climate and tropical rainforests.

Mexico is geographically part of North America, but its history and traditions make it part of Latin America. Mexico's geography is rugged but hospitable to human life. The coastal plain along the Gulf of Mexico is semitropical forest. The central plateau rises rapidly to a mile above sea level. The eruption of volcanoes has left a layer of rich soil over the plateau.

Mexico has two major mountain ranges that run from north to south and are part of the Rocky Mountains of North America. One of these ranges, on the western side of the country, is called Sierra Madre Occidental; the other range, running on the eastern side of the country, is the Sierra Madre Oriental. The region of Mexico around the capital, Mexico City, is very mountainous, with peaks rising over 17,000 and 18,000 feet high. Northern Mexico is mountainous and arid, with two large deserts --- the Chihuahuan and Sonoran deserts. A long peninsula on the west, Baja California, forms the western coastline of the Gulf of California, one of the richest marine-life regions of the world.

The islands of the Caribbean Sea also form a part of Latin America. These islands include Cuba (the largest of them all), Hispaniola (divided between the nations of the Dominican Republic and Haiti), Jamaica, Puerto Rico, and the Bahamas.

Latin America Before Columbus

Sometimes we think of Native Americans as people living in tribes that travel from place to place and survive by hunting or gathering seed plants and nuts. Certainly, there were many Native American peoples who lived this way. Yet, North and South America also sheltered native peoples who farmed, lived in villages, and even built permanent houses

and villages. And in Central America and northwestern South America, native peoples built great civilizations that we can admire today.

Pre-Columbian: referring to the history of the Americas before Columbus and the Spaniards arrived in the New World

maize: a plant with grain growing on large ears; corn

jade: a hard stone used in jewelry and ornaments. Most jade is green.

Latin America's story includes the tale of these three great Native American civilizations: the *Maya* civilization of southern Mexico, the *Inca* civilization of Peru in South America, and the *Aztec* civilization in the highlands around what is now Mexico City. These civilizations are often called **Pre-Columbian**, because they existed before Christopher Columbus came to the Americas in 1492. Here, we shall discuss the Mayan and Inca civilizations. We shall address the Aztecs later in the chapter.

The Maya

Of the three Pre-Columbian civilizations (Aztec, Maya, and Inca), the Maya is the oldest. The Indian people called the Maya have lived on the Yucatan Peninsula for centuries, developing what became their great civilization. The Mayan civilization reached its full greatness between A.D. 300 and 900.

The Maya were a farming people, growing **maize** (their most important crop), cotton, and other crops. Farming was not easy where they lived, for the Yucatan is covered with tropical forests. In order to farm, the Maya had to clear away the forest --- and then work constantly so that the dense jungle vegetation did not again overtake their fields. They terraced hillsides to provide more land for crops and developed rather advanced methods of irrigation.

It was in the cleared spaces of the jungle that the Maya raised their cities. At the peak of their civilization, the Maya had over 40 cities with populations of anywhere from 5,000 to 50,000 people. Mayan cities were more like groupings of religious temples than anything we think of as a city. These temples, made of stone, had a pyramid shape and could be lofty. One temple ruin discovered in the Yucatan is over 200 feet high. The Mayan temples are amazing not only because they were built so skillfully but because those who built them had only wood and stone tools to use in cutting the temple stones. The Maya too had no vehicles with wheels or large beasts (such as oxen) to drag the huge stones from the quarry to the building site. They possessed no machines to raise the stones one on top of another.

The Maya had other arts besides architecture. They carved beautiful figurines and ornaments out of **jade**. They developed painting, both for murals and pottery, as well as the arts of relief carving and sculpture. The Maya invented a written language that used hieroglyphics, which is a form of writing using pictures, or "glyphs." The pictures come to be associated with the sound of the name of a thing the glyph represents. Along with the art of writing, the Maya developed the art of making paper, using the inner bark of the wild fig tree. They chiseled their hieroglyphs into stone, and

it is from these inscriptions that we have come to know much of what we do know about Mayan civilization.

Like nearly all ancient peoples, the Maya worshiped many gods. Their gods were the gods of nature, and, along with the sun, moon, rain, and other natural things, the Maya honored maize as a god. A part of Mayan worship was human sacrifice --- and it could be very brutal in the Mayan lands. Mayan warriors raided neighboring peoples, not only to get slaves but also to gather victims to sacrifice to their gods. These victims they tortured, mutilated, and then offered in sacrifice. Even Mayan rulers, as representatives of their people, had to offer themselves to the gods by drawing their own blood and torturing themselves. The Maya thought human sacrifice brought fertility to the soil. They also offered human beings to show their devotion to the gods. And the Maya thought that if they did not offer such sacrifices, disorder and chaos would strike not only their own land but all the world.

Priests had tremendous power in Mayan society, both because they represented the people before the gods and because they were believed to be able to tell fortunes and predict the future. To predict the future, the priests studied the stars and, especially, the movements of the sun, moon, and the planet Venus. In this way the Maya developed a knowledge of astronomy as well as mathematics. Among their great mathematical discoveries was the use of zero.

Their knowledge of astronomy and mathematics allowed the Maya to develop a complex and very precise calendar. The Mayan calendar was based on the **solar year**, which they divided into 18 months of 20 days each (360 days), with five days left over, which the Maya observed by fasting because they thought the days were unlucky. The Maya had another sacred calendar they used in conjunction with this calendar. The sacred calendar (of 260 days) was used to calculate when religious and

ceremonial events would occur and as a means of **divination**. A third calendar was the Long Count, a cycle of time that began at a point in the distant past the Maya designated as zero. Most scholars name this zero point as 3113 B.C. If this is so, then the current cycle of the Long Count would end in A.D. 2011. The Long Count as well as precise observations helped Mayan astronomers predict solar eclipses.

After the year 900, the Maya abandoned many of their settlements --- no one knows exactly why. Invaders from the north took control of Mayan settlements in north Yucatan and, it seems, changed Mayan society greatly. The older Mayan settlements had no walls to protect them from invasions, but later settlements did. Human sacrifice, too, seems to have increased in the new Mayan settlements. On the whole, it seems, because of the conquest, Mayan civilization became considerably more warlike than it had been before.

solar year: the period of time it takes for the earth to make one full revolution around the sun

divination: the magical art or practice by which someone seeks to see into the future or discover hidden knowledge

The Realm of the Inca

The high mountain valleys of the Andes in Peru were the home of another great Pre-Columbian civilization. We call this civilization Inca after the title of its ruler, the Inca, who was believed to be a descendant of the sun god. Inca tradition says the first Inca, Manco Capac, was the son of the sun god and the moon goddess. It was Manco Capac who led his people to the Cuzco valley, where he established his capital city, named Cuzco, around the year A.D. 1200.

Like the Maya, the Incas built cities having great stone buildings. Unlike the early Mayan settlements, however, the Inca cities had walls made from uncut stones, very skillfully built without mortar. Unlike the Mayan pyramids and other buildings, the Incan structures had only one story; and, unlike Mayan buildings, which had stone roofs, Incan buildings had **thatch** roofs. Incan buildings are not as impressive as the Mayan structures, but the Incas showed their genius in building roads and canals to

thatch: straw, rushes, or a similar material used as a covering or roof
aqueduct: a manmade channel or pipe used to bring water from a distance

make travel over their wide realm easy and swift. Incan roads connected distant parts of the empire, though only government messengers and military could use them. The Incas, too, raised **aqueducts** to bring water to their settlements. They built all these structures without the aid of iron, machines, and beasts of burden.

The Incas were ingenious farmers, cutting terraces in the sides of hills and mountains in order to grow food. In growing crops, Incan farmers took advantage of the different climates of their realm. The low elevations along the Pacific coast were warm, while the weather grew colder as the Andes rose to their thousands of feet above the level of the sea. The Incas, thus, grew warm weather crops farther down the mountainsides and crops that did better in cooler climates, farther up.

The Incan government was very simple. The Inca was a complete despot, controlling the lives of all his subjects. Even the marriages of the humblest Peruvian were arranged by the Inca's government. Though, on the whole, the Inca was a rather gentle ruler, he took bitter revenge on anyone who dared to resist him. If he captured a city or region that had rebelled against him, he laid waste to it and slaughtered its inhabitants. No one was to rebel against the son of the sun.

Like the Maya, the Incas worshiped nature gods. Their chief god was the sun god, who had a magnificent temple in the city of Cuzco. The Inca was not only the king, but the highest priest, and he controlled religion just like he did everything else in his land. The Incas offered animals, grain, and flowers as sacrifices to their gods. On very solemn occasions they offered human sacrifices, generally a child or a beautiful maiden. Human sacrifice, however, was in no way as big a part of Incan religion as it was of the Mayan and Aztec religions.

Gold was very abundant in Peru and the Inca stored his houses with treasures of gold. It is said that no Inca passed his treasure down to his son. Each Inca thought he would need his treasures and even most of his houses in the next life. When the next Inca began his reign, he had to build new houses as well as gather his own treasury of gold. This gives one an idea of just how much gold was to be found in Peru.

Since the Incas passed on no written records, what we know of their history comes from the people's oral tradition that was committed to writing after the Spanish conquest. Before the conquest, officials called "memorizers" preserved Incan history from generation to generation.

The oral tradition says that it was the fourth Inca, Mayta Capac, who in the 14th century began to raid his neighbors for tribute and booty. The next Inca began expanding his sway outside the Cuzco valley; but it was the eighth Inca who instituted full-scale, permanent conquests, placing garrisons among the peoples he conquered. To prevent revolutions against his power, the Inca broke up tribes and dispersed their members throughout his realm. In the hundred years after 1438, the Inca empire entered its greatest period of expansion, reaching its greatest extent under the Inca Huayna Capac (1493-1525). But this empire was not destined to last long. Only ten years after Huayna's death, his empire fell under the conquering hand of the Spaniards.

Europe Comes to Latin America

The modern history of Latin America began with Christopher Columbus's discovery of the American continents in 1492. In Chapter 16 of *Light to the Nations I*, we describe how, after much trying, Columbus was able to convince King Fernando and Queen Isabel of Spain to pay for an expedition to reach the Indies by sailing west over the Atlantic Ocean. Columbus's mission was to find gold and wealth for himself and Spain's "Catholic Monarchs" (as Fernando and Isabel were called). Yet he had greater aim --- to carry the Catholic Faith to the heathen overseas.

The land Columbus first discovered in October 1492 was only a small island, but it was just the beginning of his discoveries. In this, his first expedition and in others that he later made, Columbus discovered Hispaniola, Cuba, and the Virgin Islands. On his last expedition, he discovered the northern coast of South America. But to the day of his death, on May 10, 1506, Columbus thought he had reached the Indies instead of a "New World."

Not just Spain, but all of Europe took great interest in Columbus's discoveries. Portugal, which had been the first to reach the Indies by sea, was worried Spain would take some of its colonies in India and the Orient. To keep Spain and Portugal from quarrelling over the new lands, Pope Alexander VI in 1493 set a dividing line in the Atlantic. The pope decreed that Spain could claim all lands in the Indies that fell west of this line, while Portugal could claim all the lands that fell east of the line. Because of the pope's decision, most of Latin America came under the power of Spain. Only Brazil, which jutted out east of the line, went to Portugal. This is why, even to this day, the

people of Brazil speak Portuguese, while most of the rest of Latin America speaks Spanish.

Even during Columbus's lifetime, other adventurers set out to discover new lands in the "Indies." One of these was an Italian named Amerigo Vespucci, who explored the northern coast of South America. Because of a book that told of Vespucci's adventures, people in Europe began to call the newly discovered lands *America* after him. (*Americus* is the Latin form of the name Amerigo.)

In 1513, a Spanish captain, Vasco Nuñez de Balboa, plunged into the interior of Darien (Panama) with 170 men. On September 24, 1513, standing on a mountaintop, Balboa sighted a new ocean. He called it the South Sea; later, it would be called the Pacific. It was Balboa's discovery of the Pacific that showed that what Columbus had discovered and explored was not Asia or the Indies, but an entirely new world.

The Conquest of Mexico

The Spanish explorers did not set out just to discover new lands, but to conquer them as well. Everywhere they went, these men, called **conquistadors**, claimed the lands for the crown of Spain. Like Columbus, they were eager to find riches; some, too, were

conquistador: Spanish word meaning "conqueror"

interested in converting the Native Americans to the Gospel of Christ. Unfortunately, many of the explorers were cruel to the natives and forced them into slavery. They did so, even though Queen Isabel and, later, King Charles I, of Spain said the Indians should be treated with great gentleness.

One of the greatest of the Spanish conquistadors was a man named Hernán Cortés. In his youth, Cortés had been a bad student, wasting much of his time in foolish living. He dropped out of law school after only two years and then went to the Indies to seek his fortune. In 1518, Cortés became captain general of an expedition that was to seek for riches in what is now Mexico.

Cortés's fleet landed off the coast of Yucatán in February 1519. There, in what is now the state of Tabasco, Cortés's army of about 600 men fought and defeated a force of 40,000 Indians. Cortés made peace with these Indians and then sailed north along the coast of Mexico. In April 1519, he founded the first Spanish settlement on this coast, calling it Villa Rica de Vera Cruz.

At Vera Cruz, some of Cortés's men demanded that the expedition return to Cuba. They had learned that Cortés meant to march inland, to the realm of the mighty Aztecs. In response to these men, Cortés destroyed all but one of his 11 ships. Cortés's troops cried out that he had led them to Mexico to be butchered like cattle. But Cortés refused to listen to them. "I will remain here," he said, "while there is one to bear me company." If any of his men, he said, were cowards, they could take the one ship left and return to Cuba. There, said Cortés, they can remain and tell "how they deserted

their commander and their comrades, and patiently wait until we return loaded with the spoils of the Aztecs.”

These words filled his men with courage. Nearly all of them cried out: “To Mexico! To Mexico!” They were determined to match their force against the fearsome nation of the Aztecs.

The Aztecs

The first Indians the Spaniards met when they came to the Americas were the gentle Taino people, who lived on many of the Caribbean islands. The Indians Cortés and his men had met in Tabasco were very different from the Taino. In this land the Native Americans called Anahuac, the native peoples raised buildings and temple pyramids of stone instead of the dwellings of stick and thatch the Taino built. The people of Anahuac were very numerous and lived in towns surrounded by well-cultivated fields of maize.

In the center of Anahuac, in a city built in the center of a lake, dwelt a powerful, warlike people --- the Aztecs. By the time Cortés arrived, the Aztec king, Montezuma II, had conquered the tribes of Anahuac, making the Aztec empire greater than it had ever been before.

The Aztecs said that they had come to Anahuac from a land called Aztlán, far to the northwest, and had wandered into the south. In the 14th century, they came upon a lake in the high mountain valley of Mexico. There, on the shores of the lake, they beheld an eagle, perched on the stem of a prickly pear cactus, its wings spread to the rising sun and a serpent in its **talons**. For the Aztecs, this was a sign that they should settle there. They called this place and the city they would build there, Tenochtitlán.

talons: the claw of a bird of prey, such as an eagle or hawk

The Aztecs were rather primitive when they arrived in Mexico. The neighboring city of Texcuco, however, had a high civilization, like that of the Maya, and it was from Texcuco that the Aztecs learned the arts of civilization. By the 16th century, the Aztecs had become skilled in agriculture (which allowed their population to become numerous and wealthy) and architecture. They planted beautiful gardens and built the glorious city of Tenochtitlán in the center of the lake. They displayed their skill in making gold ornaments and developed hieroglyphic writing with which they wrote histories and beautiful poetry. Like the Maya and Inca, however, the Aztecs had not invented the wheel.

It was the Aztec ruler, Itzcóatl (r. 1428-1440) who began the period of his people’s expansion. It was he who forged alliances with Tenochtitlán’s neighboring cities, Texcuco and Tlacopan, and made the Aztecs the dominant power in central Mexico. By 1519, the Aztec empire had conquered over 400 small states and covered over 80,000 square miles. Tenochtitlán grew into a very large and populous city, with over 140,000 inhabitants. This great realm was ruled by the Aztec king and his military, who dominated the rest of society made up of various classes. Among the ruling classes of

Aztec society were the priests and government officials. At the bottom were serfs, indentured servants, and slaves.

The Aztecs drew their religious beliefs from other peoples of central and southern Mexico, especially the Maya. (The Aztecs developed their calendar from the Maya.) The Aztecs worshiped many nature gods, one of the most important of whom was Huitzilopochtli (witsy•lo•POCT•lee), the god of war and of the sun. It was to this god that the Aztecs offered human sacrifices, of which there were many. Indeed, one of the most important reasons the Aztecs went to war was to capture victims for sacrifice. The Aztecs had many religious festivals, and each one of them had to include sacrifices of human beings, whose bodies, afterward, were eaten by the worshipers. It is said that the Aztecs sacrificed about 20,000 victims each year.

Another important Aztec god was Quetzalcoatl (the “feathered serpent”), who was said to have white skin, dark hair, and a flowing beard. The legends say that Quetzalcoatl had taught people how to farm, use metals, and set up governments. The Aztecs said that under Quetzalcoatl Mexico had enjoyed a period of prosperity. But, at last, another god drove him out of Anahuac, and he went east across the sea. Quetzalcoatl promised his followers that, one day, he would return to Anahuac from the east, over the sea. It was said that when Quetzalcoatl returned, he would abolish human sacrifice.

The Spaniards Arrive

The news of Cortés’s landing at Vera Cruz filled Montezuma with fear --- could the Spaniard be Quetzalcoatl returned from over the sea? The strangers were white-skinned and bearded, as Quetzalcoatl supposedly had been. What’s more, whatever Native American cities the strangers entered, they freed the people who were to be sacrificed. Uncertain what to do, Montezuma invited Cortés to come to Tenochtitlán.

As the Spaniards approached the Aztec capital, they were joined by the Tlaxcalan Indians, who were enemies of the Aztecs. When Cortés and his men at last climbed the mountains surrounding Tenochtitlán, they saw below them the great Aztec city, with its towering temples. It was so beautiful that the Spaniards were in awe and fearful. Only a very powerful people, they thought, could build a city like that! It was Cortés’s courageous spirit that encouraged his men to conquer their fear and move forward into the city.

Montezuma treated Cortés and his troops with hospitality. But though Montezuma was kind, Cortés did not trust him. Finally, fearing for his own safety, Cortés and his men seized Montezuma in his own palace. The Aztec king thus became Cortés’s prisoner, though he continued to act as the king of Mexico.

The capture of their king was humiliating to the proud Aztecs. At last they rose up against the Spaniards. The streets and rooftops of Tenochtitlán were filled with armed Aztecs. Bloody fighting erupted, in the course of which Montezuma himself was killed by his own people. The Aztec king died on June 30, 1520.

Because of the uprising, the Spaniards faced certain death if they remained in the city. On the night of July 1, 1520, Cortés led his men and their Tlaxcalan allies in a retreat from Tenochtitlán. The Spaniards later named this night *La Noche Triste* --- “the sorrowful night.” The Aztecs in great numbers surrounded and attacked the fleeing Spaniards, taking some of them prisoner to sacrifice to the war god. Both the Spanish and the Tlaxcalans lost many men that night; all told, 450 Spaniards and 4,000 natives were killed. A few days later, a broken and discouraged army marched into Tlaxcala.

But though he had suffered defeat, Cortés was not discouraged. He immediately began making plans to return to Tenochtitlán. Though he at first did not know it, this time he had another ally to help him in his conquest --- a disease called smallpox, which struck the Aztecs. Having no **immunity** against the disease, the Aztecs died in great numbers.

At Tlaxcala, Cortés ordered 15 small ships, called **brigantines**, to be constructed so that he could assault Tenochtitlán by the waters of the lake as well as by land. His total force consisted of 818 Spaniards, together with 87 cavalry and 25,000 Indian allies. The assault on the city began on April 28, 1521. It was very hard and bloody fighting. The desperate Aztecs withstood the Spaniards in every block and street of Tenochtitlán. Finally, to deprive the Aztecs of hiding places, Cortés ordered his men to destroy every house and building they came upon. When Cortés’s army at last reached the center of Tenochtitlán, seven-eighths of the city had been laid waste. On August 13, 1521, the Spaniards overwhelmed what remained of the Aztec forces. Cortés had conquered Mexico.

immunity: the body's ability to resist catching a disease

brigantine: a ship with two masts

exorcism: the act by which the Church drives demons from persons, places, or things

rebuff: resisting another person's attempts to help or seek help

The Beginnings of “New Spain”

In 1522, King Charles I of Spain made Cortés captain general and chief justice of “New Spain,” as Mexico now was called. From 1522 to 1524, Cortés worked to rebuild Tenochtitlán, which became known as Mexico City. Using forced Indian labor, Cortés raised a city that was said to be more beautiful and rich than any city in Europe.

Encouraged by Cortés, many Spaniards came to settle in Mexico, where they mingled with the Native American population. Cortés zealously spread the Catholic Faith among the Native Americans. He requested the government to send over missionaries. Under Cortés, these missionaries established schools and colleges for the education of the Indians. The missionaries worked to destroy the native religion, but some of them translated Aztec hieroglyphics and so preserved the knowledge of Aztec institutions and history. On every site of human sacrifice, the Church performed **exorcisms** and erected churches to sanctify these terrible places.

In later years, Cortés fell out of favor with the court of Spain. In 1540, he returned to Spain to plead his case before the king. Frustrated with the **rebuffs** he received from

Charles I, Cortés journeyed to Seville, planning to embark for Mexico. Instead, he fell sick in a town near Seville and there died on December 2, 1547.

Spain and the Native Americans

In setting up governments in the lands they conquered in America, the Spanish monarchs faced a serious difficulty. Fernando and Isabel wanted the Native Americans to become Christians. They wanted to teach them European civilization so that they could fully participate in Spanish society. Only in this way, thought the monarchs, could Native Americans and Spaniards live peacefully side by side in America.

It was Columbus who came up with a way that was supposed to civilize the Native Americans and make them Christians. When Columbus was governor of the island of Hispaniola, he divided up the island's lands among his men and allowed them to use Native Americans to work the lands. Later, the Spanish crown took over what Columbus did and gave lands to Spanish settlers. These lands were called **encomiendas**

encomienda: land that was given or granted by the Spanish king to some person

encomendero: a man who receives a land grant or *encomienda*

—“complimentary land grants.” Someone who received an *encomienda* was called an **encomendero**. According to Spanish law, an *encomendero* was not to treat the Native Americans on his *encomienda* as slaves, but he could make them work for him. In return, the *encomendero* had to take care of the Native Americans and educate them so that they could become Christians and learn the ways of

European civilization. The idea behind this arrangement was that, in time, the Native Americans would take their place as full members of Spanish society.

Unfortunately, the *encomienda* plan did not better the lives of Indians. *Encomenderos* often treated their Indian workers like slaves and were cruel to them. On Hispaniola and other islands, the native peoples were not used to such heavy labor as farming and mining. Having no immunities against European sicknesses, thousands of Indians died.

As governor of New Spain, Cortés himself established *encomiendas*. Cortés was careful not to break up native tribes but allowed the Indians to live in their villages under their native chiefs. To insure that Indian workers were treated justly, Cortés passed laws setting the number of hours an Indian was allowed to work and how much he must be paid. Cortés also required *encomenderos* to provide suitable religious instruction to their Indian workers.

Nevertheless, just like in the Caribbean islands, Native Americans were often abused in Mexico. The system turned the natives of the continent into serfs, bound to their lands and enslaved to their landlords. Cortés was able to keep the abuses to a minimum, but they still occurred.

Some Spaniards defended the way the Spanish treated the natives in America. They claimed that Pope Alexander VI had divided the New World between Spain and Portugal, and so both nations had the right to conquer the Native Americans. But other Spaniards disagreed. They said the pope did not give either Spain or Portugal the right to conquer but only to convert the natives to the Catholic Faith. They condemned the way the way *encomenderos* were treating the Native Americans. Among the Spaniards who stood up for the Native Americans was a lawyer turned priest who would become known as the “Defender of the Indians.” He was Bartolomé de Las Casas.

Defender of the Indians

Bartolomé de Las Casas probably heard a sermon preached in a straw-thatched church on the island of Hispaniola in 1511. Commenting on the text, “I am a voice crying in the wilderness,” the Dominican friar, Antonio de Montesinos, asked, “Are these Indians not men? Do they not have rational souls? Are you not obliged to love them as you love yourselves?”

Las Casas dedicated his life to the belief that the Native Americans should be treated with justice and Christian charity. For 40 years or so, he argued that, as human beings, Indians had equal rights with Spaniards. The Spanish crown, said Las Casas, had no right to conquer the Native Americans by force. He thought Spaniards could act as **overlords** to the Native Americans, but they could not abolish Native American governments or enslave natives. The *encomienda* system, he said, was little better than slavery and should be abolished. No one should use force in preaching the Gospel, Las Casas said.

In 1544, the Spanish king Charles I appointed Las Casas bishop of Chiapas in southern Mexico. There, Las Casas enraged colonists by setting rigid standards *encomenderos* must meet before he would **absolve** them from their sins. He basically forbade giving the Eucharist to anyone who exacted labor from Native Americans.

Las Casas was a stout defender of the Indians. Sometimes, though, in defending them, he exaggerated both Indian virtues and Spanish cruelty. His most famous work, *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, is filled with many exaggerations of Spanish cruelty. This work was translated into several languages, and from it came the “Black Legend” that has been used to this day to attack the reputation of colonial Spain.

In 1550, Las Casas was in Spain where he tried to convince the Spanish king to stop all conquests of America. King Charles I did stop conquests until theologians could decide whether they were just or not. The result was that the king issued a new law for Spaniards in America. The law did not abolish conquests, but it tried to make life better for Indians in America and limit the cruelty of their Spanish rulers. It was a law inspired by the ideas of Bartolomé de Las Casas.

overlord: someone who is lord over someone else

absolve: to declare someone is free of sin or guilt

Juan Diego and Our Lady of Guadalupe

Because he fought for justice for the Indians, Bishop Las Casas drew many native people to the Catholic Church. Unfortunately, this did not happen all over New Spain. Because of the bad treatment they had received, many Indians were not willing to accept the Catholic Faith. They thought it was a white man's religion, that it had nothing to offer the brown-skinned natives.

Then, on December 12, 1531, something miraculous occurred. The Virgin Mary appeared to the Indian Juan Diego on Tepeyac hill near Mexico City --- the site where an Aztec temple to the goddess Tonantzin had once stood. Appearing, not as a white woman but as an Aztec princess, the Virgin told Juan Diego to ask the bishop of Mexico, Juan de Zumárraga, to build a church dedicated to her on Tepeyac Hill. Bishop Zumárraga was, at first, unwilling to believe Juan Diego, but then a miracle changed his mind. On his third visit to the bishop, Juan Diego opened his **tilma**, or cloak, and a flood of roses poured forth from it. Not only was it wondrous that the Indian should

apparition: the appearing of something that is unexpected, strange, or unusual

tilma: a cloak made of cactus fibers

find roses in December, but upon the *tilma* appeared the image of the lady. Bishop Zumárraga changed his mind and commanded that the church the Virgin ordered be built on Tepeyac hill.

Because of this **apparition** of the Virgin (whom we remember as Our Lady of Guadalupe), millions of Indians in Mexico were baptized into the Catholic Church. That Mary had appeared as an Aztec woman showed the Indians that the Faith was not just a white man's religion but was meant for them as well.

The Conquest of Peru

Cortés's conquest of the mighty Aztec kingdom inspired another Spanish *conquistador* to find an empire of his own to conquer. His name was Francisco Pizarro; and, in 1532, he with his brothers set off on an expedition to Peru --- an empire that rivaled the glory of the Aztecs.

Climbing high into the Andes, the Pizarro brothers and their men learned that the Inca, Atahualpa, was fighting a civil war against his brother. Arriving in the Peruvian city of Cajamarca, it seemed to the explorers that the buildings were roofed with gold. The walls and roof of the Temple of the Sun, the largest building in Cajamarca, and the walls of the Inca's palace were hung with plates of gold to reflect the life-giving rays of the sun god. Hungry for treasure, Francisco Pizarro planned to seize this gold for himself.

Pizarro and his men carried out their plan in the most treacherous way. They invited the Inca into their camp. When he entered with his bodyguard, the Spaniards

slaughtered the Indians and took Atahualpa captive. Pizarro said he would release Atahualpa only if he agreed to fill a room with gold. The Inca and his nobles agreed and filled the throne room of the palace with the shining metal. But when, at last, the Inca fulfilled his promise and had filled the entire room with gold, the Spaniards killed him.

After the murder of Atahualpa, Pizarro had an Inca named Manco Capac crowned king of Peru. Manco Capac, however, wanted to drive the Spaniards from Peru. With his Indian armies, he laid siege to the Spaniards in the cities of Cuzco and Lima, a city Pizarro had founded in 1535. But in April 1537, the Spaniards defeated the Indians and put them to flight.

Francisco Pizarro, however, did not long enjoy his new riches and power. On June 26, 1541, he was assassinated in Lima by fellow conquistadors. The whole of rich Peru, however, remained part of the Spanish empire.

Life in Spanish America

What was Spanish America? It was essentially a European society transplanted among the Native American people, who gradually transformed it, just as they were being transformed by it. It was an extension of Spain and Europe in the New World.

The kings of Spain saw their New World possessions, not just as colonies to be exploited for the sake of the mother country, but as new kingdoms, equal to the old kingdoms of Spain --- Castile, León, and Aragon. While the king did take a portion (the "royal fifth") of whatever gold, silver, or other wealth was found in America, he expended great sums of money in maintaining the colonies. The kings of Spain saw the free inhabitants of America, both natives and transplanted Spaniards, as equal subjects of the crown. The king believed it was his duty to Christianize and civilize the natives of America, and so he maintained any colony as long as there was progress in Christianizing and civilizing the Indians --- even if the colony was a drain on the royal treasury.

The king of Spain tried to maintain a tight control over the government of his New World possessions, which he divided into "kingdoms." The highest authority in each kingdom (or **viceroyalty**) was a king's representative, or **viceroy**, who acted in the king's name. Along with the viceroy was the court called the *audiencia real*, or royal audience. While the viceroy took care of the administration of the viceroyalty, the *audiencia* took care of justice. Within the viceroyalty were provinces, each with its own governor and *audiencia*. Below the governor were a number of lesser officials. In the pueblos, or towns, some of these officials were elected, while others were appointed.

viceroy: an official who acts in the place of the king and in his name
viceroyalty: a region ruled by a viceroy

Spanish American Society

From the very beginning, the Spanish crown encouraged intermarriage between Spaniards and natives. From this intermingling of the races -- what the Spanish called *mestizaje* -- came a new racial type, the **mestizo**, or man of mixed European and Indian blood. After a time, the *mestizos* formed the largest single class in Spanish American society, outnumbering both Spaniards and Indians.

Spanish American society was clearly divided into classes based on race. The most influential and powerful were the European-born Spaniards, called **peninsulares**. These controlled all the higher offices of government in Spanish America. Below the *peninsulares* were the **creoles**, who were pure Spaniards, but born in America. The

mestizo: a person of mixed Indian and Spanish heritage

creoles: American-born Spaniards

peninsulares: Spanish-born people of New Spain

creoles could not hold the highest political offices, though they occupied the less influential and powerful ones. After a time the creoles, who were often rich, were able to buy their way into higher offices and some (though not many) even served as viceroys. As time passed, the creoles came to resent the power wielded by the *peninsulares*.

As the *peninsulares* tended to look down on the creoles, so the creoles tended to look down on the *mestizos*. Even so, the *mestizo* population began to outnumber the ruling classes and even began to occupy many of the lowest offices, such as elective offices in the pueblos.

Next in order in Spanish-American society after the *mestizos* were the Indians. Though the Spanish crown considered them equal subjects to the Spaniards and tried to protect them, Indians were in practice often ill treated both by their *encomenderos* and by lower government officials. Spanish law, however, never called for transplanting Indians from their native lands or for placing them on reservations. The crown also opposed any attempts to exterminate the Native Americans. Though thousands of Indians did indeed die under Spanish rule, this was largely because they lacked immunities to European diseases. Smallpox, measles, whooping cough, scurvy, and influenza devastated Indian peoples; in some cases, as on some Caribbean islands, disease wiped out the entire native population. In the 17th and 18th centuries, the crown tried again to change the *encomienda* system, to make it more just. King Philip V (r. 1700-1746) finally, in 1720, abolished the whole system in law, though it continued to exist in practice.

Spanish America had hundreds of thousands of black African slaves, imported from Africa every year from 1600 to 1750. These slaves suffered from cruel treatment in many parts of Spanish America, which led to a number of slave revolts. Though Spanish law had protections for slaves and said they could own property, a master held absolute power over his slave and could punish him with mutilation or even death. The law said the Church had to teach black slaves the Faith and give them the sacraments, including sacramental marriage. Spaniards intermarried with blacks, from which arose another

social group, the **mulattos**. The *zambos*, or *sambos*, came from intermarriages between blacks and Indians.

Since slaves could buy their freedom, there were many free blacks in Spanish America. Communities of free blacks could be found in Cuba, Santo Domingo, Puerto Rico, and Colombia. Some black slaves from English territory escaped to the Spanish lands, fleeing their English masters.

Life in New Spain

By the 17th century, Central, and South America had large, thriving cities with universities, theaters, mansions, and beautiful public buildings. These cities in some cases arose around ancient centers of Indian cultures. Spanish America had a rich culture. It was a Spanish, European civilization that was influenced by Indian cultures. Churches, cathedrals, monasteries, and palaces built in all the European styles rose throughout Mexico,

Central America, and South America. The churches were dark but filled with colorful statuary and paintings. Ornately carved gilded **reredoses**, adorned with images of Our Lord, Our Lady, and the saints, filled church sanctuaries with brilliant color.

Much of the art of Spanish America was done in the service of the Church. A *mestizo* composer named Manuel de Zumaya composed beautiful music in the baroque style for church, as well as an opera called *Partenope* in 1711. Another great Mexican composer was Ignacio de Jerúsalem, who composed in the classical style popular in mid-eighteenth century Europe. A Mexican writer much admired today was the nun, Sor (sister) Juana Inés de la Cruz. Born in Mexico in 1648, Sor Juana wrote both secular and religious poetry, novels, and comedies, and engaged in scientific and classical literary studies.

The first colonists to come to Spanish America came to find gold. However, as time passed, agriculture became increasingly more important to the economy of the Spanish American realms. The Spanish introduced a number of crops to the New World -- wheat, rye, barley, oats, sugarcane, coffee, peas, onions, melons, pears, plums, peaches, grapes, and many others. They also introduced plows and beasts of burden, such as oxen and horses. The Spanish introduced the wheel --- an invention unknown to Native Americans.

The Spanish did not carry only gold and silver from America to Europe, but new foods cultivated by the Native Americans. Native American Indian farmers gave to the world their pink and lima beans, the potato, yellow squash and acorn squash, chili pepper, maize corn of many types, chocolate, and the tomato.

The Catholic Church was central to the life and culture of Spanish America. One of the main goals of Spanish exploration and settlement in the New World was the

mulatto: a person of mixed African and Caucasian heritage

reredos: a stone or wood screen or wall of partition behind an altar. A reredos is often highly ornamented and often adorned with pictures or statues of saints

conversion of the natives to the Catholic Faith. Missionaries from religious orders, such as the Dominicans, Franciscans, and Jesuits, traveled into the mountains, deserts, and jungles of the New World to spread the Gospel of Christ. Everywhere they established missions under the patronage of the Spanish king.

The Church influenced the whole way of life in Spanish American society. Pueblos were built around the parish church. The Church worked to civilize the Indians, teaching them how to engage in civic life and how to farm. The Church fought those who tried exploit the Indians or even exterminate them. Though there were clergymen who mistreated the Indians, from the beginning, the Church upheld the dignity and rights of the American natives.

As in Europe, the Church in America dispensed charity to the poor and the sick. Bishops, priests, and religious orders founded and staffed schools and hospitals, as well as the missions. The Spanish crown gave the Church wealth to carry out its task --- which made the colonial Church one of the largest landholders in America. This was not always good for the Church, for some bishops and priests grew too comfortable and even corrupt. Yet, many were the clergy and religious who took their vows seriously and worked for the good of their people. Many even suffered martyrdom for the sake of the Gospel.

Formed as it was by European and Native American cultures, as well as the Catholic Church, Spanish America became a rich, beautiful, and diverse civilization. Its legacy lives on today in the various nations and peoples that live in the lands that stretch from Tierra del Fuego (the southern tip of South America) to the northern borders of Mexico.

CHAPTER REVIEW

Summary

- ♦ Latin America has vast natural resources and a growing population. The languages of these regions --- Mexico and Central America, and South America --- are Spanish and Portuguese.
- ♦ Latin America has diverse climates and landscapes, with deserts, high mountain ranges, tropical rain forests, and plains. Latin America extends from Mexico to Tierra del Fuego.
- ♦ Latin America's story includes the tale of three great Native American civilizations: the *Maya* civilization of southern Mexico, the *Inca* civilization of Peru in South America, and the *Aztec* civilization in the highlands of what is now Mexico City. These civilizations are often called Pre-Columbian.
- ♦ The Maya, who lived on the Yucatan Peninsula, were a farming people. They raised cities, which were more like groupings of religious temples than anything we think of as a city. The Mayan arts included architecture, the making of beautiful figurines and ornaments, painting, as well as relief carving and sculpture. The Maya invented

a written language that used hieroglyphics. They developed the art of making paper. Their knowledge of astronomy and mathematics allowed the Maya to develop a complex and very precise calendar. The Maya worshiped many gods and practiced human sacrifice.

- ◆ Like the Maya, the Incas built cities having great stone buildings, built from uncut stones very skillfully joined without mortar. The Incas built roads, canals, and aqueducts. They were ingenious farmers. Their ruler, the Inca, was a complete despot, controlling the lives of all his subjects. The Inca was not only the king but the highest priest of his people, who worshiped many gods. Though the Incas practiced human sacrifice, it was not as big a part of Incan religion as it was of the Mayan and Aztec religions.
- ◆ The modern story of Latin America begins with Christopher Columbus's discovery of America in 1492. One of Columbus's motives was to convert pagans to the Christian Faith.
- ◆ Pope Alexander VI set up a demarcation line that split territories in the New World between Portugal and Spain for purposes of evangelization as well as empire.
- ◆ In 1518, Hernán Cortés captained an expedition to the mainland of North America. He intended to bring the Aztec kingdom of Mexico under the authority of the kings of Spain.
- ◆ The dominant native people in Mexico were the Aztecs. According to legend, they came from a land in the northwest called Aztlán to the high mountain valley of Mexico. By the sixteenth century, the Aztecs had become an advanced civilization.
- ◆ The most important Aztec god was Huitzilopochtli, the god of war. But another important deity was Quetzalcoatl, the god of the air, who, legends said, had white skin, dark hair, and a flowing beard. Quetzalcoatl, it was said, would return from the east and abolish human sacrifice, commonly practiced by the Aztecs.
- ◆ Reports of Cortés's landing filled the Aztecs and Montezuma with fear, because they thought he was Quetzalcoatl. Montezuma received Cortés and his troops at Tenochtitlán, but Cortés placed Montezuma under house arrest. In Cortés's absence from the city, the Aztecs rose up against the Spanish. Cortés returned to Mexico, fighting erupted, and Montezuma was killed by his own people. In their retreat from the city, the Spaniards lost 450 men.
- ◆ In August 1521, Cortés captured Tenochtitlán. In 1522, he became captain general of Mexico, called New Spain. He brought in missionaries and built churches.
- ◆ Columbus began the Spanish land grant system in America by rewarding his men with land. The Spanish crown continued this practice with *encomiendas*, which in practice included control over the Indians on the lands the government gave into the charge of a Spanish landowner. The system was abused, and a priest named Bartolomé de las Casas fought to protect the Indians abused by landowners.
- ◆ On December 12, 1531, the Virgin Mary appeared to St. Juan Diego, an Indian, at Tepeyac hill, near Mexico City. This apparition of the Virgin led to an increase of native baptisms.

- ◆ Francisco Pizarro and his brothers conquered Peru in 1532. Pizarro had the Inca treacherously killed. Pizarro then proceeded to conquer the Inca's realm.
- ◆ In Peru, the Church was the only ally of the natives. Many great saints come from Peru.
- ◆ Spanish America was essentially a European society transplanted among an alien people and being transformed by those people. The kings of Spain saw their New World possessions, not just as colonies to be exploited for the sake of the mother country, but as new kingdoms, equal to the old kingdoms of Spain. The king of Spain tried to maintain a tight control over the government of his New World possessions, which he divided into "kingdoms."
- ◆ In Spanish American society, slaves were the lowest class. Then came the Indians. *Mestizos*, those of mixed Indian and Spanish blood, had the largest population. The creoles, or American-born Spaniards, held a higher position in society than the *mestizos*. Highest of all were the *peninsulares*, those born in Spain, who controlled the political offices.
- ◆ By the 17th century, Central, and South America had large, thriving cities with universities, theaters, mansions, and beautiful public buildings. The first colonists to come to Spanish America came to find gold. However, as time passed, agriculture became increasingly more important to the economy of the Americas. The Spanish introduced new crops, tools, and the wheel to America. But Native Americans contributed new crops to Europe, such as the potato, chocolate, and the tomato.
- ◆ The Catholic Church was central to the life and culture of Spanish America. One of the main goals of Spanish exploration and settlement in the New World was the conversion of the natives to the Catholic Faith. Formed as it was by European and Native American cultures, as well as the Catholic Church, Spanish America became a rich, beautiful, and diverse civilization.

Key Concepts

river system: a term referring to a group of rivers that all flow into a common river

Pre-Columbian: referring to the history of the Americas before Columbus and the Spaniards arrived in the New World

solar year: the period of time it takes for the earth to make one full revolution around the sun

conquistador: Spanish word meaning "conqueror"

encomienda: a land grant system established by Spain in America by which landholders, called *encomenderos*, were given land along with control over the Indians in that territory

mestizos: those of mixed Indian and European blood in Spanish America

creoles: American-born Spaniards in Spanish America

peninsulares: Spanish-born inhabitants of Spanish America, who controlled the political offices

Dates to Remember

- 300** the period in which Mayan civilization reached its full greatness
-900
- ca. 1200** the Inca, Manco Capac, establishes his capital at Cuzco
- 1300s** the Aztecs arrive in Mexico
- 1438**
- ca. 1537** the period of the Incan empire's greatest expansion
- 1492** Columbus lands on an island in the Americas.
- 1513** Vasco Nuñez de Balboa sights the Pacific Ocean from Panama.
- 1521** Hernán Cortés conquers Tenochtitlán.
- 1531** The Virgin Mary appears to St. Juan Diego at Tepeyac.
- 1537** Francisco Pizarro conquers Peru.

Central Characters

- Manco Capac (flourished ca. 1200):** the first Inca; he established his capital at Cuzco
- Huayna Capac (1493-1525):** the Inca under whom the Incan empire reached its greatest extent
- Itzcóatl (r. 1428-1440):** the Aztec ruler who began his people's period of expansion
- Huitzilopochtli:** the Aztec god of war and of the sun to whom the Aztecs offered human sacrifices
- Quetzalcoatl:** (the "feathered serpent"), who was said to have white skin, dark hair, and a flowing beard. The legends say that Quetzalcoatl had taught people how to farm, use metals, and set up governments.
- Montezuma II (1466-1520):** the Aztec ruler of Mexico who welcomed Cortés to Tenochtitlán
- Hernán Cortés (1485-1547):** Spanish conqueror of Mexico
- Francisco Pizarro (ca. 1475-1541):** Spanish conqueror of Peru
- Atahualpa (ca. 1502-1533):** the Inca, ruler of Peru; killed by Pizarro and his brothers
- Bartolomé de Las Casas (1474-1566):** Spanish bishop of Chiapas; defender of the Indians; fought the *encomienda* system

Questions for Review

1. What three major Indian civilizations were in America when the Europeans arrived?
2. How were the Pre-Columbian empires of Latin America alike? How did they differ?
3. What Native American empire did Cortés overcome? What American Indian empire did Pizarro conquer?
4. How were the Spanish conquistadors, Cortés and Pizarro, alike? How did they differ?

5. Why did the Spanish set up the *encomienda* system? Was it successful? Why or why not?
6. What did the appearance of the Virgin Mary at Tepeyac tell Native American peoples about the Catholic Faith?
7. Give three examples of how the Catholic Church influenced life in Spanish America.
8. List and describe the four social classes of Spanish America.
9. What are the two major languages spoken in Latin America today?

Ideas in Action

1. Watch a documentary on Our Lady of Guadalupe and learn about the actual *tilma* hanging in Mexico City today. How did the apparition at Guadalupe change Mexico? What does this documentary teach us about God's action in history? About miracles? How does the miracle of Tepeyac, which we can see with our own eyes, change our thinking about the miracle of the Incarnation? Are there ways that we can experience the Incarnation in our own lives? Does Our Lady of Guadalupe still change history? How?
2. Ask students to list foods, fashions, music, words, and customs imported from Latin America to the United States. Have students write a paragraph or two summarizing the impact of Latino culture on American culture.
3. Teach students some basic Spanish vocabulary words and phrases. (Use a Berlitz guide to Spanish to find common phrases, such as "what is your name?") Make flash cards of the words, ask students to speak/repeat the words and phrases, and ask them to illustrate certain Spanish words and phrases with pictures.
4. Look up the ancient city of Cuzco in an encyclopedia or on the Internet. Assign class reports, including: some of the advances of Inca civilization; some facts about the way the Inca people lived, what they ate, what they wore, and so on. Does this civilization have any counterparts anywhere in the world, i.e. has there ever been such an advanced mountain-dwelling people anywhere else, in Europe, Asia, Australia, or Africa?
5. Look up the history of the civilizations that came before the Aztecs in Mexico and Yucatan. Assign reports on the Olmecs, the Toltecs, the pyramids at Teotihuacan, and the cities of Yucatan.

Highways and Byways

Saints of South America

Following the conquest of the Inca, the conquistadors set up *encomiendas* in Peru. The native Indians were treated as serfs, bound to the land of their villages, and forced to work in mines and building projects. Thousands died in the first ten years of the colony.

A feudal kingdom was created, rich, cruel, and far from the control of Spanish law and Spanish justice. The Church alone tried to help the Indians and improve their lot.

But despite all the evils of the time, Peru produced many holy men and women in colonial days. St. Rose of Lima (1586-1617) and St. Martin de Porres (1579-1639) are the best known.

A healer and wonder-worker, St. Martin was the son of an African slave-woman and a Spanish owner. He brought comfort to the poor of Lima and inspired the rulers of the city to help their Indian serfs.

St. Rose, the patroness of South America and the Philippines, is remembered for the love of Christ that led her to a life of prayer and hard penance. Though she lived as a recluse, St. Rose knew of the sufferings of the Indian poor of Peru and spoke out against the cruelty of those who showed so little respect for their brothers and sisters.

St. Toribio de Mongrovejo (1538-1606), the bishop of Lima, risked his life fighting for Native American rights and justice. His efforts were finally rewarded when the king of Spain, Philip III, outlawed Native American servitude in 1601.

St. Francis Solano (1549-1610) carried the Gospel deep into the Chaco jungle, over the mountains, to the hostile and primitive people who lived there. In old age he returned to Lima to preach to the wealthy of the city. His message brought about a revival of Christian faith and morality among the ruling classes of Peru.