



NORWEGIAN
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Bondage and Freedom

The role of the Catholic Church regarding African slavery
in Brazil during the emancipation period from 1850 to 1888

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Chapter I – Introduction

1.1 - Personal Concern

The African slavery in Brazil is somehow a forgotten history. During my years in the public high school History was my favorite subject, and throughout my twelve years of elementary and high school I never had a single class that dealt specifically with the slavery in Brazil, which was an encouraging fact to me to research more about it. Brazil was the last country to abolish slavery and it was the country in the Americas that received most African slaves, a practice that started with the Portuguese and was carried on in the country after its independence in 1822. My curiosity about the slavery period in Brazil was stirred up during my teen years by hearing histories of people who had some ancestors who were slaves, by watching some TV programs that portrayed the slavery period and by reading interesting books about the topic. The most intriguing fact to me is that the Roman Catholic Church has been present in Brazil since its discovery and I had a great desire to learn more about the history of my own country conciliating the both themes: the Roman Catholic Church and slavery, though I am not a Catholic myself. The reason why Roman Catholic Church will be the religious power to be investigated is the simple fact that in Brazil the Catholic Church was the dominant one.

1.2 - Background

On 21nd April, 1550, the first Europeans reached the coast of Brazil¹ and neither them nor the natives of that land could possibly have imagined the results of that encounter. The land was explored by the Portuguese who carried with them their political ideologies, culture and religion. The Roman Catholic Church was the main religious institution in the Portuguese empire which interestingly held the slavery practice for centuries. The church was not only one more religious institution among the Portuguese people, she was the only one that had influenced and exercised great power upon the society through its alliance with the Crown. Her influence was present in all parts of the society and her voice was heard. Knowing that they held such influence on the people, one question is raised: what was her role regarding the African slavery in the Portuguese colony that later on became Brazil?

1.3 - The Research

The present research will focus on what was the role of the church in the slavery practice during the

¹ Fausto 1999, p. 6.

emancipation period. The emancipation acquired relevance by the year 1850 when it was enacted the law which prohibited the arrival of Africans as slaves in Brazil through the transatlantic slave trade. Nevertheless, the newborn children of slaves were considered slaves as well and only on September 28th, 1871 the law of the free womb was promulgated.² The struggle for emancipation culminated with the signing of the Golden Law setting all slaves free on May 13th, 1888.

The slavery era had an end in the Brazilian society in 1888 and the Roman Catholic Church had been there since the discovery of the land. Bearing that in mind a main question is raised: *What was the role of the Roman Catholic Church regarding slavery in Brazil during the emancipation period from 1850 to 1888?* In order to answer this main question there are others sub-questions (1) what were the teachings and practices of the church regarding the African slavery prior to the emancipation, when the dream of freedom was only an utopia?; and (2) what were the teachings and practices of the church regarding the African slavery during the emancipation period? The research will focus on theory, the theology taught, and on practice - the example of the clergy to the society.

I have a pre-understanding that the church changed its opinion about the African slavery in Brazil during the emancipation period. When slavery was heavily accepted by the government and by the population, the church did not raise her voice to denounce the shameful act of enslaving other people, but when she saw that the political system and the popular opinion were changing which culminated with the freedom of slaves, the church supported the cause. Hence the pre-understanding is that the church in Brazil acted according to the interests of the political system to avoid complications, granting its own liberty of worship and financial support. This research intent to found out more and participate in the debate of what was the role of the Roman Catholic Church concerning the slavery of the African people in Brazil. The focus will be on the emancipation period (1850-1888) but also it will include other periods which are relevant for the investigation.

1.4 - Methodology

I will use the historical method based on primary sources and on studies of modern scholars. The main tool to interpret the documents will be hermeneutics which refers to the analysis of texts to achieve a coherent explanation of them. Within the hermeneutics field, the modern hermeneutics method will be used as the main stream.

The documents that I will use are primary sources which will be interpreted taking into consideration the historical context based on the social-political and religious influences on the

² The Law of the Free Womb declared free status to the children of slave women who were born after the law.

period of investigation. The procedure consists of first conceiving the social action in question as a text, in order subsequently to interpret it hermeneutically. The modern hermeneutics method aims to provide an explanation about what were the thoughts of the writers, as eye-witnesses of the slavery practice, where the text can speak for itself.

The principle of avoiding misunderstanding to discover the author's intention introduced by Friedrich Schleiermacher³ will be used, as well as the principle of hermeneutics circle, which means there is an interplay among text, context and the author introduced by Heidegger.⁴ The interpretation of the texts will reveal something about the social context in which the writers were living in, and it will also provide the reader with means of sharing the experiences of the author.

The principle introduced by Schleiermacher carries mainly two concepts: grammatical interpretation and psychological interpretation (also called technical interpretation).⁵ For him, these two principles have to go side by side. Grammatical interpretation seeks to root the text into a context, i.e. cultural, literary or historical. The focus is on the language used by the original author and the original audience but the grammatical interpretation alone does not fulfill the aim of interpreting a text in the best way possible. Hence, he adds the principle of psychological interpretation. Psychological interpretation seeks “to understand the discourse as a presentation of thought.”⁶ The interpreter must attempt to fully enter into the world of the author. Schleiermacher asserts that the interpreter must seek out the context of the author. He writes: “Before the art of hermeneutics can be practiced, the interpreter must put himself both objectively and subjectively in the position of the author.”⁷ Also, there must be a back-and-forth relationship between these two principles and as he says, there is no rule to measure or to stipulate how it can be done⁸. Finally, he concludes that the goal of hermeneutics is to enter into the world of the author in order to give the best interpretation as possible.

Another complementary method that will be adopted is the principle of hermeneutic circle, introduced by Heidegger. Hermeneutic circle involves going back and forth between experiencing an event and assigning meaning to it. Since we cannot go back to the past to experience the same real event as the original authors and audiences did, in order to give the best

³ Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) is considered to be the father of modern hermeneutics and his studies caused a paradigm shift in the field of hermeneutics.

⁴ Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) was a philosopher whose contribution for the hermeneutics field was the shift of focus from interpretation to existential understanding.

⁵ Schleiermacher, 1977, p. 97.

⁶ Schleiermacher, 1977, p. 161.

⁷ Schleiermacher, 1977, p. 192.

⁸ Schleiermacher, 1977, p. 100.

meaning to it we are dependent upon interpretation of the events.

In Heidegger's view, hermeneutics is neither focus only in understanding linguistic communication nor is it about providing a methodological basis for the human sciences. He adds a new point of view, for him, hermeneutics is ontological; it is about the most fundamental conditions of man's being in the world introducing a new conception of the hermeneutic circle. In Schleiermacher, the hermeneutic circle was conceived in terms of the mutual relationship between the text as a whole and its individual parts, or in terms of the relation between text and tradition. With Heidegger, however, the hermeneutic circle refers to something completely different: the interplay between our self-understanding and our understanding of the world. The hermeneutic circle is no longer perceived as a helpful philological tool, but it brings about an existential task with which each of us is confronted.⁹ Bearing that in mind, in order to give a better interpretation of the primary sources, this research will focus not only in the documents, but it will take into consideration the environment of the writers in their context and also their views of the world through the associations they had, as well as their background.

When it comes to modern hermeneutics I will consider the concepts of scholars such as Hans Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur. Hans Gadamer was a German philosopher (1900-2002) who wrote the book *Truth and Method* in which he elaborates the concept of philosophical hermeneutics. He asserts that is not enough to consider the background of the original writer, his/her intentions and the audience, but we need to be aware that the cultural context in which each one of us are embedded also exercise an influence when interpreting a text and, according to him, it creates a confront between the original text and the pre-understanding of the interpreter.¹⁰ Thus he introduces the concept of fusion of horizons which “does not allow the interpreter to speak of an original meaning of the work without acknowledging that, in understanding it, the interpreter's own meaning enters in as well.”¹¹ No one writes without a background nor reads without a background. Bearing this concept in mind, when discussing and interpreting the texts I will try to avoid as much as possible the bias which can arouse in a person living in the twenty first century when reading the cruelties of enslaving other peoples.

Ricoeur was a French philosopher (1913-2005) who pointed out two levels of reading and interpreting a text. The first one is to analyze the text taking into account solely the internal nature of the text, basically it takes into account only the meaning of the words, and due the distance existing between the text and the reader, it produces a relatively low level of understanding. The

⁹ Dahlstrom, 2013, p.93-94.

¹⁰ Gadamer 2013, p. 600-601.

¹¹ Gadamer 2006, p. 578.

second level of looking at a text attempts to restore the living communication. It takes into consideration the world of the reader and all possible factors that composed the text. In his book *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning* he asserts:

Not the intention of the author, which is supposed to be hidden behind the text; not the historical situation common to the author and his original readers; not the expectations or feelings of these original readers; not even their understanding of themselves as historical and cultural phenomena. What has to be appropriated is the meaning of the text itself, conceived in a dynamic way as the direction of thought opened up by the text. In other words, what has to be appropriated is nothing other than the power of disclosing a world that constitutes the reference of the text.¹²

1.5 - Sources

The main sources of this research will be books which address the topics of the Brazilian history, the slavery practice and the influence of the Catholic Church in Brazil. The material will consist of (1) primary sources and (2) the work of scholars in the topic of the Roman Catholic Church and African slavery with focus on Brazil. The documents which will be considered are primary sources written during the period under investigation (1850-1888), as books, laws, newspapers, sermons and pamphlets. The primary sources can be found in the Brazilian Digital National Library <http://bndigital.bn.br> and in the Digital Library of the Brazilian Senate - <http://www2.senado.leg.br/bdsf/>. The documents found in these libraries are digitalized, which facilitates the research. Therefore, there will be no need to go in person to the libraries in Brazil or to any library in Portugal. Also, the Roman Catholic Church provides a website <http://www.vatican.va> where there are a good number of official documents relevant to this research, such as papal bulls, encyclicals and letters concerning the slavery and the official catholic teachings about the topic. In addition to that, I will make use of the website <http://papalencyclicals.net> which provides a huge number of papal documents translated into English. This website is not owned or designed by the Vatican, nevertheless the webmaster has authorization of the *Libreria Editrice Vaticana* (Vatican Publishing House) to reprint papal and church documents in electronic format.

1.6 - Research History

When it comes to the work of other scholars on the topic of African slavery and the Roman Catholic Church in Brazil, there is not a vast material to be found. There are a lot of researches made on the

¹² Ricoeur 1976, p. 92.

topic of African slave trade but not as many researches were made on the topic related to the role of the Catholic Church regarding African slavery in Brazil. I will use four main authors who will be my discussions partners. (1) Robert E. Conrad wrote two important books about the relation between those two topics, the first one is “*Children of God’s Fire – A documentary history of black slavery in Brazil*”. The chapter IV will be more useful due his discussion about the contradictory policies of the church towards African slaves, and the second book is entitled “*World of Sorrow*” where he provides a good picture of how the Brazilian society was shaped. (2) Father John F. Maxwell provides a very good source on these two topics in his book *Slavery and the Catholic Church*. (3) John T. Noonan, who is a Catholic judge, wrote the book “*A Church That Can And Cannot Change: The Development of Catholic Moral Teaching*” which will be very useful when discussing the interaction of the Catholic moral doctrine and the laws. (4) The last one is a theologian, Laennec Hurbor, who wrote an article in the book *The Church in Latin America: 1492-1992*, edited by Enrique Dussel, where he discusses the relation between the church and slavery.

1.7 - Terminology

The topic of this thesis is very sensitive; it deals with some terms whose consensus among historians is not clear. The terms *African slaves*, *Black slavery* and *African slave trade* will be adopted. The term *Indian*, used to describe the natives of Brazil is commonly accepted so in one moment the term *Indian* will be used, the next *natives/native peoples* will be utilized. It is important to notice that I will never use the term *Negro/Negroes* as my own term. When the term appears it is only when I am quoting a text.

To the name Roman Catholic Church, the abbreviation RCC will be used and I will refer to the church with the pronoun *she/her*.

The term New World refers to the American Continent. Age of Discovery refers to a period starting from the 15th to the 17th century when the Europeans braved the oceans making contacts with new people in other continents.¹³

1.8 - Outline

The thesis aim is to participate in the current debate and to better understand what was the Church role on the society of that time related to the important issue of slavery. In order to achieve the aim the thesis will have the following outline: (Chapter I – Introduction) gives an overview of the topic as well as basic information about the method; the next chapter (Chapter II – History and

¹³ Arnold 2002, p. xi- xii.

Background) presents the background so that the reader can be acquainted with the history; (Chapter III – Exposition of Documents) displays the primary sources, documents which were written by popes, clergy and catholic laymen. It also gives a general overview of the context in which the authors was embedded; (Chapter IV – Documents Outside the RCC) also represents the primary sources but these are documents written by non-catholics. The documents in the chapters III and IV are the base for the discussion. The documents are presented in two chapters because it makes easier to the reader to understand the two different views of the catholics and the non-catholics and what was the opinion of both regarding the RCC and the slavery. In (Chapter V – Discussion) the documents presented are brought to the debate, partaking in the current discussion about the role of Roman Catholic Church regarding to the African Slavery in Brazil, particularly in the emancipation period; here it is presented the opinion of people who lived during the emancipation period, modern historians as well as my own assessment. The last part is (Chapter VI - Conclusion) where is found the outcome of this research.

Chapter II – Historical Background

2.1 - The History of Brazil

Brazil is a unique nation, the country was built upon the efforts of different peoples: Africans, Asians, Europeans and Natives. One could assert with no doubt that Brazil is a real melting pot, its cultural diversity enriched the country with different sub-cultures, costumes, music, food and religion, where different peoples found a new home. But it was not an easy process, the Natives had their land stolen and had to face prejudice, the Africans were forcedly brought to serve as slaves and for centuries there was no religious liberty, the Roman Catholic Church was the only religious institution which had permission to be established in Brazil. In this chapter, a relevant insight will be given to better comprehend the history of Brazil, the church and slavery. It will be emphasize how the nation was built during the first centuries giving the reader the background to better understand how and why the slavery system was implemented along with the RCC which was the main religious power.

2.1.1 - The Discovery

As an important nation in the beginning of the maritime expansion of Europe and Christendom, the Portuguese began systematically exploring the Atlantic coast of Africa in 1418. They not only explored the African coast but they adventured on a voyage to the New World. In 1492, a few years before the discovery of Brazil, the navigator and explorer Christopher Columbus, sailing for Spain, came to America, a fact that increased the expectations of the other explorers. Given the fact that both had the same ambitions and aimed to avoid wars for possession of the lands, Portugal and Spain signed the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494¹⁴. According to this agreement, Portugal kept the newly discovered lands that were east of an imaginary line, while Spain obtained the lands west of this imaginary division line where Brazil was on the Portuguese sphere.¹⁵

At first glance, they believed that it was a great mountain, and called it the *Monte Pascoal* (Easter Mount).¹⁶ After leaving the site into India, Cabral, uncertain whether the discovered land

¹⁴ "Treaty of Tordesillas (June 7, 1494), was an agreement between Spain and Portugal aimed at settling conflicts over lands newly discovered or explored by Christopher Columbus and other late 15th-century voyagers." Treaty of Tordesillas." *Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica Online Academic Edition*. Encyclopædia Britannica Inc., 2013. Web. 31 Oct. 2013. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/599856/Treaty-of-Tordesillas>

¹⁵ Levine 1999, p. 38.

¹⁶ MacDonald 1996, p. 27.

was a continent or a large island, he renamed it to *Ilha de Vera Cruz* (Island of the True Cross).¹⁷ After exploration undertaken by other Portuguese expeditions, they discovered that the land was actually a continent, and the name was changed again. The new land was to be called *Terra de Santa Cruz* (Land of the Holy Cross). In the land, there was found in abundance a type of tree called by the Portuguese *Pau-Brasil* (Brazil-wood). Only after the intense trade of brazil-wood in the late sixteenth century, the new land came to be called by the name we know today: Brazil.¹⁸

2.1.2 - The Encounter with the Natives

When the Portuguese explorers anchored at the beach they had the first contact with the local people. Together with Cabral in the fleet was an educated government official named Pero Vaz de Caminha, who wrote a letter to the king of Portugal reporting everything he had seeing. About the native people he wrote:

They are of a dark brown, rather reddish color. They have good well-made faces and noses. They go naked, with no sort of covering... they entered [the boat]. For all that, one of them gazed at the admiral's collar and began to point towards the land and then at the collar as if he wished to tell us that there was gold in the country. And he also looked at a silver candlestick, as if there was silver there, too.¹⁹

Pero Vaz de Caminha also compared the Europeans with the Indians stating that they were not farmers or shepherds because their main activity for living was to collect roots and fruits. He suggests that this type of feeding habits used by the Indians made them stronger having a lustrous skin apparently healthier than the Europeans. By his anthropological analysis, Caminha informed the king of Portugal the opportunity to learn something from this "new people":

They do not plow, nor domesticate animals, nor is there here ox, or cow, or goat, or sheep, or chicken, or any other animal, which is used to live with men, but they eat a yam which is found in abundance here and seeds and fruits that the earth and the trees give them. And only by feeding with that they walk so sturdy and so glossy, that we are not like them when only eating wheat and vegetables.²⁰

¹⁷ Boxer 1969, p. 84.

¹⁸ MacDonald 1996, p. 55.

¹⁹ Burns 1966, p. 22-23.

²⁰ Baiao, Cidade and Murias 1937, p. 364 -365.

Firstly the Portuguese saw the natives as people of nature, living innocently and freely but later they looked upon the Brazilian Indians as savages, living without religion, king or law.²¹

2.1.3 - The Colonization Process

From the discovery in 1500 up 1529 Portugal did not intend to colonize the new land, they were more interested in their high profits gained through commerce with Asian countries.²² Nothing much happened during those years unless one or another expedition to recognize the vast land. It was only in 1530, with the expedition organized by Martin Afonso de Souza, the Portuguese crown became interested in colonizing the new land.²³ One of the reasons to start an organized settlement and exploitation was a great fear of losing the land to squatters who had been left out of the Treaty of Tordesillas, eg, the French, Dutch and English Empires.²⁴ and the colonization would be a good way to occupy and protect the area. In a short period of time they braved the land and found out that it was good to cultivate sugar, targeting a promising trade of this commodity in Europe. They devised a system to effectively occupy Brazil called Hereditary Captaincy system²⁵, which divided Brazil into strips of land that were donated to Portuguese noblemen, who were in turn responsible for the occupation of the land answering solely to the king.²⁶ As soon as the Hereditary Captaincies system was put into practice the landowners needed a work force in order to generate profits and cultivate the land. The system was too ambitious but did not work well because there were not enough families in Portugal who were willing to travel to the a vast and unknown land. Hence, five of the fifteen divided captaincies never received the colonizers.²⁷

The new strategy adopted to substitute the prominent collapse of the captaincy system was the royal intervention in the territory, in order words, King João III of Portugal appointed Tomé de Sousa as the governor-general and sent him to the new colony in 1549 with more than 1000 soldiers so that they could defend the territory specially against the French who had attempted several times in the next decades to take away the Portuguese control over the area.²⁸ In the following years a transformation of the system would take place. Starting in 1609 when the Portuguese established the High Court of Appeals in Salvador, Bahia, which would administer the

²¹ Boxer 1969, p. 85.

²² MacDonald 1996, p. 56-59.

²³ MacDonald 1996, p. 70.

²⁴ Furtado 1971, p. 3-4.

²⁵ Boxer 1969, p. 86.

²⁶ Fausto 1994, p. 43-46.

²⁷ Smith 2002, p.5.

²⁸ Smith 202, p.7.

entire colony. Since the territory was so vast it was found very difficult to control it from one place and in 1621 the administrative sector was split in two sections one already established in Salvador and the other one established in São Luis, Maranhão.²⁹ Despite of the efforts to centralize the control of the land, in many places the presence of the government was null and the colony grew in such manner that a new system had to be implemented. Another factor was the distance and poor communication with Lisbon, the capital of the Portuguese empire. Thus, in 1642 was created the Overseas Council which would help more efficiently the control of the colonies.

Another measure to improve the administrative system in Brazil was to exercise control in small proportions, with the implementation of local governments. The prominent landowners served as councillors who would be accountable to the local law officer who would exercise the judicial power. Those local law officers would be presided over by the Crown. They would sent some superiors circuit judges from the High Court of Appeals in Salvador to the villages and towns to inquire and check the work of the local law officers. Even so, the territory was so vast that the Portuguese crown did not have full control and over it in 1696 they decided to appoint external magistrates to replace the local law officers.³⁰ Nevertheless, these appointments were made only in the main towns and during the eighteen century their status and influence were undermined, giving place to the governor of each province.

During the eighteen century a huge transformation occurred due to the discovery of gold. With the exploitation of the precious metal more than 300.000 immigrants from Portugal arrived in Brazil. This gave to the colony a boom not only in the population growth but in the economy and importance of the region. With the gold rush, there was need to make new roads and improve those which were already made. The state of Minas Gerais, was the area with biggest concentration of gold in Brazil, but the state was not a territory close to the shore which led the explorers to use the closer port which was the port of Rio de Janeiro. Due the increasing number of immigrants arriving in Brazil through that port and the goods exported from there, the city became very important in the colony and due to this fact, the Portuguese to transfer the capital from Salvador to Rio de Janeiro in 1763.³¹

2.1.4 - A New Society Emerges

The Brazilian new society was composed mainly by the following groups: whites - Portuguese born and Brazilian born, Indians and Africans. From those three groups a mixed society emerged, the

²⁹ Poppino 1973, p. 94.

³⁰ Smith 2002, p. 8-10.

³¹ Smith 2002, p. 13.

miscegenation resulted in different terminologies to classify them, i.e, *mulato* (a mix of a white with a black person), *mameluco*, (a mix of white with natives) and *cafuso*, (individuals resulting from miscegenation between Indian and Black).³² One of the reasons for the miscegenation was that the majority of the Portuguese who went to the New Land was not experienced men with their families, they were in a great extent young men who were in searching for adventure.³³ With the lack of white women, they mingled with the Indians and Black slaves, which indicates that the Portuguese men did not consider color or social status when willing to satisfy their sexual desires. Such situation horrified the Jesuits. In a letter to the king of Portugal, Father Manuel da Nobrega asked the Portuguese monarch to send Portuguese women to Brazil. Since they would be white they could have any type of behavior, it would not matter if they had bad reputation, because according to him there was a need for white women. He writes to the king of Portugal asserting that “it seems very convenient thing, Your Highness, to send some women who have little opportunity to marry, even if they are wrong, because they will all marry very well here, as long as those women did not have lost they fear of God.”³⁴

Even though they mingled themselves, the society still carried traces of prejudice.³⁵ Despite of the fact that during the colonial times the majority were non-whites, approximately only 25 per cent were white, the whites were considered to be on the top, followed by those of a mixed race, then, at the bottom of the social pyramid, were the Indians who are considered selvages, and the Blacks who served as slaves.³⁶

2.1.5 - The Independence

The history of Brazil is intertwined with the history of Portugal. Brazil was not only a Portuguese colony, it became the only colony in the world that had its status elevated to a capital of an empire. The former colony became capital, from where they administrated and exercised the sovereignty of the Portuguese empire overseas. The capital of the Kingdom of Portugal was established in the state capital of Brazil, the city of Rio de Janeiro.³⁷ This peculiar fact occurred due to the invasion of

³² Boxer 1969, p. 172-173; MacDonald 1996, p. 411.

³³ MacDonald 1996, 409.

³⁴ “Parece-me cousa mui conveniente mandar Sua Alteza algumas mulheres que lá têm pouco remédio de casamento a estas partes, ainda que fossem erradas, porque casarão todas mui bem, contanto que não sejam tais que de todo tenham perdido a vergonha a Deus...” Manuel da Nóbrega, cartas jesuíticas I – cartas do Brasil, apud Almanaque Abril: quem é quem na história do Brasil, São Paulo: Abril, 2000, p. 353

³⁵ Bethell 1987, p. 84.85.

³⁶ Smith 2002, p. 29-30.

³⁷ MacDonald 1996, p. 451; Boxer 1969, p. 200.

Portugal by Napoleon's troops in 1808³⁸ when the Portuguese royal family together with the nobility escaped to Brazil and from 1808 to 1821 they made Brazil their home.³⁹ For that reason the Portuguese crown elevated the status of Brazil, from a colony the land became the United Kingdom of Portugal, Brazil and Algarves.⁴⁰

The "new Brazilian society" had an interest of being united with Portugal, the feeling of independence was not a political motivation. When finally the Portuguese royal family went back to Portugal in 1821 after the Peninsula War was over⁴¹, the Portuguese court wanted to restrict the privileges of Brazil, turning Brazil to a colony once again.⁴² The Brazilians were very displeased with the news that their Portuguese fellows did not want to maintain ties to Brazil as an United Kingdom. The result of the differences culminated with the Brazilian Independence in September, 7th, 1822.⁴³ Nevertheless, the declaration of independence in Brazil neither took place on a warfare basis nor resulted in a complete break out with the Portuguese nation. It was an unique process that did not happen in any other country in Latin America. After independence, Brazil maintained the monarchical system by enthroning the son of the king of Portugal, Dom Pedro I as the first emperor of the Kingdom of Brazil.⁴⁴ The independence was not a new complete beginning for the Brazilian society, there were long lasting traces of the colonial period impregnated in the social and political system.⁴⁵

From a political point of view, the early history of Brazil can be divided in three parts: (1) the first period which is called *Primeiro Reinado* (First Kingdom) corresponds to the period from the discovery in 1500 up to the independence from Portugal in 1822; (2) the second period is called *Regência* (Regency Period) from 1822 to 1840 and the third one (3) is called *Segundo Reinado* (Second Kingdom) which lasts until 1889 with the Proclamation of the Republic.⁴⁶

2.2 - The Slave Trade

The Portuguese crown carried the African slave trade for hundred of years and was "the largest

³⁸ MacDonald 1996, p. 458-459.

³⁹ Olney and Barber 1839, p. 68.

⁴⁰ Walsh 1830, p. 532. The appendix no. II contains a translation of the decree which elevated Brazil to a Kingdom on 16th of December, 1815.

⁴¹ Boxer 1969, p. 200.

⁴² Levine 1999, p. 60.

⁴³ MacDonald 1996, p. 490-496; Levine 199, p. 60

⁴⁴ Levine 1999, p. 60-61.

⁴⁵ Wood 1975, p. 39-40.

⁴⁶ Fausto 1994, p. 35,141,173.

slave trading colonial power in the world.”⁴⁷ Some historians suggest that the enforcement of the slavery practices could have started around the beginning of the fifteenth century. The fifteenth century, whereas the servitude and bondage was being extinguished with the decay of the feudal regime, Portugal led by the impulses of Prince Henry the Navigator, began to ravage the coasts of Africa and surrendered to the traffic of Africans, thereby instituting African slavery in the Portuguese empire.⁴⁸

2.2.1 - The Origins of the Portuguese Slave Trade

Some historians suggest that the enforcement of the slavery practice was introduced by papal bulls that authorized the Portuguese to conquer and subdue all pagans, which means non-Christians, under a perpetual slavery. The three main bulls were as it follows: (1) the *Dum Diversas* of 18 June 1482, (2) the *Romans Pontifex* of 8 January 1485 and (3) the *Inter Caetera* of 13 March 1494.⁴⁹ Those three bulls gave the RCC's support to the crown to carry the slavery practice under its dominions upon the ground of the discovery motivation and Christianization of the world. “By trading and fighting, the Portuguese have secured a large number of Negro slaves and have brought them to Portugal, where many have been baptized and embraced the Catholic Faith.”⁵⁰ The African slaves had become a commodity, a black ivory that could fit the interest of the Portuguese crown. They not only carried the Africans as slaves to Portugal, but also took them as a cargo to the New World under the transatlantic slave trade which was also carried by other European nations with colonies in the Americas such as England, France, Spain and Holland.⁵¹

During the first half of the fifteenth century the Portuguese had sailed and reached the African coast. The crown had the ambitious plan of finding a new route to India, hoping that they would bypass their rivals, the Muslims, by seizing their control of the North African region and the wealthy commerce they had with India.⁵² Meanwhile in the 1480s, the Portuguese navigators had discovered uninhabited islands of Príncipe and São Tomé, located on the west of equatorial African coast line. On the islands, they cultivated sugar cane and used the Africans as slaves to perform the hard work. In some years the islands became the main producer of sugar cane to the European market and also a model for plantation slavery to what later was implemented in the New World

⁴⁷ Drescher 2010, p. 153; MacDonald 1996, p. 160.

⁴⁸ Gallagher 2003, p. 8-9;

⁴⁹ Boxer 1969, p. 20-21.

⁵⁰ Boxer 1969, p. 21-22.

⁵¹ Klein 2010, p. 35; Drescher, p. 30.

⁵² Boxer 1969, p. 18-24; Klein and Luna 2010, p. 7.

including Brazil.⁵³

When it comes to the period of the Discovery Age, with the increasing exploitation of the Americas, the Lusitanian explorers intensified the slave trade and without any limit to cruelty they enslaved millions of Africans aiming only at profit obtainable from the trade of men, women and children coming straight from Africa to the Americas. The reason why they turned to African could be due the fact that a great number of the natives of the new land had succumbed by the violence used by the Portuguese and also by the diseases which they had no immunity; also, many of the unwanted people, as criminals and outcasts, who are taken to the New World to work had weakened and died from tropical diseases which means that they had no laborers. The experiment in the islands with slave labour and the facility to find African rulers willing to sell their captives of war as slaves stirred up a huge interest to solve the lack of workers. Another fact is that the Africans had a certain level of immunity to some tropical diseases, meaning that they would last much longer than the natives and the outcasts taken to the colony.⁵⁴

Slavery was already practiced in Africa many centuries before the arrival of Europeans. Since the eighth century African kingdoms south of the Sahara desert promoted the capture of people to be sold to the Arabs.⁵⁵ The arrival of Europeans to the African continent only increased the pre-existing practices of slavery. In many cases the Portuguese did not have to fight in order to take the African people as slaves, they did a negotiation with the Africans by bartering, in other words, by exchanging. The products offered by the Portuguese such as fabrics, wines, horses, iron - which was melted and turned into weapons in Africa stirred up interest. With these goods on hand, the allies of the Portuguese could obtain a higher social status, could have advantages when facing the enemy peoples and thus could bring in more slaves to be negotiated with the Portuguese.⁵⁶ Even so, one cannot assert that the Portuguese would not use slave labor if such practice would not be found there in Africa prior to their arrival because “like almost all complex societies in world history until that time [1490s], the state of Europe had known slaves from their earliest foundations, and slavery in earlier centuries had been a fundamental labor institution.”⁵⁷

2.2.2 - The Slave Trade in Brazil

The African slave trade became more common in Brazil during the sixteenth century. The main

⁵³ Shillington 2012, p. 176-178.

⁵⁴ Muriithi 1997, p. 79.

⁵⁵ Shillington 2012, p.

⁵⁶ Shillington 2012, p. 176-177.

⁵⁷ Klein 2010, p. 1.

reason is due to a need of labor force to work in the farms, build houses, villages, work in all types of shores that a housemaid could do. Also along the northeast coast the new land based its economy upon the sugarcane plantations⁵⁸ and sugar was considered to be the gold mine of that period. Soon Brazil became the world's leading sugar exporter during the seventeenth century and in order to expand the work they used in a large scale the African slave workforce.⁵⁹ At first they tried to enslave the Indians, but it was not as easy as they thought. The Indians were found unsuitable to serve as slaves⁶⁰ due to the difficulties in capturing them, many had died from the diseases brought by the Europeans and due to the resistance caused by the Jesuit who aimed to protect the Natives. Hence, these difficulties encouraged the Portuguese to enforce the slavery toward the Africans, whence they imported millions of people. When the Africans imprisoned by the Portuguese arrived, they were assigned at a certain price, like a commodity. Those who were healthier and were skilled labors were sold for twice the value compared to the old and weak.⁶¹

Slavery in Brazil lasted for nearly four centuries⁶² and it is estimated that 3,600,000 African slaves arrived in Brazil not taking into account the illegal traffic.⁶³ The slave trade, although illegal from 1830, only ceased around 1850, after the passage of a law authored by Eusébio de Queiroz.⁶⁴ In 1850 it was prohibited to import slaves from abroad but those who were slaves in the country were still captives. It is important to have in mind that even though the slave trade had ceased in 1850, the slavery practices kept going until 1888, when the slavery system as a whole was abolished.

2.2.3 - The Journey

The importation of African slaves to Brazil started in 1535 when the first ship arrived.⁶⁵ The journey

⁵⁸ MacDonald 1996, p. 158.

⁵⁹ MacDonald 1996, p. 161.

⁶⁰ Staden 1930, p. 33

⁶¹ Klein and Luna 2010, p.126-129.

⁶² Klein and Luna 2010, p.14.

⁶³ Dussel 1992, p.187.

⁶⁴ Klein and Luna 2010, p. 302. The Law called Eusebio de Queiroz enacted in 1850 banned the slave trade from the African continent to Brazil. The law was essential in initiating the process of complete abolition of slavery in the country. Another fact is that the law had no immediate effect, the slave trade continued illegally and even occurred an increase in the number of Africans slaves arriving in Brazil in the following decades. Also an internal trafficking of slaves was developed. Slave traders held their services in different regions of the country to overcome the difficulty of importing Africans.

⁶⁵ MacDonald 1996, p. 164.

from Africa to Brazil lasted approximately 30-45 days depending on the place of departure and arrival. It was made on ships where they were stacked in the unhealthiest and worst inhuman condition, many did not even arrive alive and had their bodies thrown overboard. The whole process of navigating from one continent to the other was full of anguish, despair and risks. The conditions of the transport of slaves was precarious, there was a lack of enough space to move and carelessness of the most trivial hygiene principles which increased the death by diseases.⁶⁶ Once the slave ships had finally arrived in the New World, the slaves were driven to different ports and towns in Brazil, however almost always the slaves had the same destiny in common: the markets where they were sold as commodities, yielding high profits for the slave traders. The trip to Brazil was dramatic, about 40% of the people on board died during the voyage in the holds of slave ships that transported them.⁶⁷ Nevertheless at the end of the trip there was always a profit to the traders in the main landing ports of Brazil from where the slaves were split throughout the country.

2.2.4 - Reasons to Justify the Slave Trade

The Portuguese found many reasons in the attempt to justify such unacceptable and cruel practice. (1) they were not used to work hard and they would not have such interest in working in the new world, where everything was different from their homeland so their need to find someone who would do the hard work was increased; (2) there was a high mortality rate among the natives due to the fact they did not have a good immune resistance to the new diseases brought by the Portuguese; (3) there was an opposition led by the RCC against the enslavement of the natives, what did not happen towards the Africans; (4) The natives were found very difficult to get used to a labor system, they had always been free and did not adapted to a forced work routine increasing the level of difficulty in controlling them; (5) The Africans had some knowledge of metal working and agriculture that the natives did not have and (6) the Portuguese had some experience with African slavery prior the colonization of Brazil.⁶⁸ The fact is that the explanation found for the use of slave labor was alluding to religious and moral issues and the supposed racial and cultural preeminence of Europeans.⁶⁹

2.3 - The Catholic Church

The Roman Catholic Church is the biggest Christian institution in Brazil as well as in the world. She has being an influential power in the Brazilian society since its foundation when the first

⁶⁶ Shillington 2012, p. 176-177

⁶⁷ Gomes 2007, p. 216-217.

⁶⁸ Hawthorne 2010, p. 33.37.

⁶⁹ Muriithi 1997, p. 3-12.

Europeans set their foot in Brazil. The first Jesuits arrived in 1549 with the task of spreading the gospel to the native population.⁷⁰

2.3.1 - The Arrival in Brazil

The arrival of members of the Catholic clergy to the Brazilian territory was simultaneous to the process of conquering the lands of Brazil, as the Portuguese kingdom had close relations with the RCC. The first act the missionaries did after shoring in the new land was to celebrate a Mass dedicating the new territory to God and giving him thanks as they understood the new land was a divine gift to the Portuguese kingdom. Nevertheless the presence of the church began to intensify only in the 1550s with the arrival of the Jesuits, who formed villages and towns, whose most famous and probably the most important one was the village that later became the city of São Paulo.⁷¹

2.3.2 - Church and State

Since the beginning of the Brazilian history the church was interested in achieving the land to mark her presence and to carry the torch of the gospel. The mission to Brazil was held under the Portuguese Crown and the Jesuit order was commissioned to carry the message to the new land. Although the church had power and was allied with the crown, during the colonial period, to travel to the new colony they should get a visa and make an oath of allegiance. The oath stated that the church should not, by any terms, go against the interests of the kingdom.⁷²

The relations between the Catholic Church and the State were narrow both during the colonial period and after the colonial period when Brazil became independent. In addition to spiritual affairs, the church performed administrative tasks that are nowadays functions of the State, as the registration of births, deaths, marriages⁷³ and also contributed to the foundation and maintenance of hospitals. In contrast, the State appointed bishops and priests, and held the power to grant licenses to build new churches.⁷⁴

The scenario changed with the appointment of the Marquis of Pombal, who banished the Catholic influence on the state administration.⁷⁵ After his death, the tights between church and State

⁷⁰ Dussel 1992, p. 59.

⁷¹ Lacouture, p. 232.

⁷² Hoornaert 1983, p. 35

⁷³ Bruneau 1974, p. 11-12.

⁷⁴ MacDonald 1996, p. 178-179.

⁷⁵ Woodrow 1995, p. 80.

began to narrow once more, permeating throughout the Brazilian imperial period in the nineteenth century. With the proclamation of the Republic in 1889 the formal separation between the State and the Catholic Church occurred,⁷⁶ yet her presence was still kept alive, as evidenced by the existence of several festivals and national holidays, such as state fairs and holiday October 12, the day of *Nossa Senhora da Aparecida* (Our Lady of Aparecida), the patroness of Brazil.⁷⁷

2.3.3 - The Jesuits

In the sixteenth century, Christianity was going through an unique moment in the history: the Reformation movement was emerging.⁷⁸ Facing the rapid expansion of the Protestant doctrines of Luther and Calvin, the RCC responded with the Council of Trent, which in addition to internal reform the Catholics sought to create instruments to combat the Protestantism wave.⁷⁹ To that extent, it established the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, a list with prohibited publications which were seen as contrary to the Catholic doctrine.⁸⁰ Another measure adopted by the RCC was the Inquisition, which intended to pursue and convict the enemies of the Catholic faith.⁸¹ In this framework, the Spaniard Ignatius Loyola created in 1534, the Society of Jesus⁸² with the purpose of serving and fighting for the RCC.⁸³ Therefore, the Jesuits - Soldiers of Christ - through catechesis and education served as one of the main tools in the counter-reformation, offsetting the losses of Catholicism in Europe with the conversion of the native peoples in the New World. The arrival of the first Jesuits in Brazil dates from 1549 led by Manoel da Nobrega. The Society of Jesus was the most important Catholic order in the formation of Brazil. Since then, the Jesuits were involved with the pacification of the Indians, which brought them, often in direct confrontation with the settlers, who saw the Indians merely as a slave workforce.⁸⁴

The hegemonic religion in Portugal was the Catholicism therefore the church through the

⁷⁶ Bruneau 1974, p. 30

⁷⁷ Martins 2010, p. 101-115. *A Sacralização da República*, CSOnline – Revista Eletrônica de Ciências Sociais, ano 4, ed. 11, set/dez. 2010, p. 101-115. Accessed October 4, 2013 in

<http://www.editoraufjf.com.br/revista/index.php/csonline/article/view/1036/882>

⁷⁸ Mc Grath 2012, p.5-9.

⁷⁹ McGrath 2012, p. 11-12.

⁸⁰ Bald 2006, p. XI.

⁸¹ For more information about the Inquisition towards the Protestants, see William Allan, *The Inquisition: Its History, Influences, and Effects*, p. 59-61, 94-99.

⁸² Woodrow 1995, p. 41-44. The Jesuit order was recognized on September 3, 1539 and a year later, on September 27, 1540, the Pope Paul III officially approved their incorporation in the RCC by the bull *Regimini Militantis*.

⁸³ Woodrow 1995, p. 41-44.

⁸⁴ Woodrow 1995, p. 77-79.

Jesuit order received permission from the crown to spread the gospel to the so called pagans, however the Portuguese crown had no interest in converting the natives, they wanted to use the RCC to help in the unification of the Brazilian territory based on spread of religion of the empire, the Catholicism. They not only had permission to be in the new territory but also received financial support from the crown obligating the settlers to give the tithe to the Jesuit order.⁸⁵

The church had its aim at converting the Indians by teaching them and to do so they had to learn the Tupi-Guarani language which was one of the main languages spoken by the natives.⁸⁶ The Jesuits not only learnt Tupi-Guarani but they also taught the natives the Portuguese language. Targeting at the education of Indians the priests established in Salvador, the capital of Brazil at the time, the first elementary school, led by Vicente Rodrigues, which had the same molds and teachings as in Europe. Nevertheless, the settlers were not always satisfied with the presence and work of the Jesuits. They were seeking for workforce, turning to the native people to enslave them. The Jesuits fought to protect the natives and made their position very clear against the enslavement of the Indians.

Besides schools, which were located close to a few urban centers, the Jesuits were advancing through the interior of the colony, creating in the distant hinterlands large settlements of Indians. The settlements were called missions or reductions. The existence of a large contingent of skilled labor in these villages ended up attracting the greed of colonists culminating in the destruction of many of the Jesuit missions.⁸⁷ Despite of the fact that they faced barriers that undermined their work in the colony, the Jesuits succeeded in forming a great heritage, their mission in Brazil lasted more than two centuries, becoming an important order in Brazil. Focused on education and catechesis, the Ignatian founded the first schools of Brazil among them, “the first school of music in the Western Hemisphere.”⁸⁸

Until 1759, the Jesuits had established 36 missions, built 25 homes and 17 colleges and seminaries throughout the Brazilian territory. In that same year, The Prime Minister of Portugal Sebastião José de Carvalho, known as the Marquis de Pombal, ordered a mass expulsion of the Jesuits from all Portuguese colonies.⁸⁹ The decay of the order culminated with the suppression of the Jesuits by Clement XIV in 1773.⁹⁰ Nevertheless, the order was restored by pope Pius VII in

⁸⁵ Bethell 1987, p. 14.

⁸⁶ Poppino 1973, p. 63.

⁸⁷ Woodrow 1995, p. 78-79.

⁸⁸ O'Malley 1993, p. 159

⁸⁹ Wood 1975, p. 198.

⁹⁰ Woodrow 1995, p. 85.

2.3.4 - Church, State and Slavery

The RCC was interested in reaching the indigenous population yet she could not fully accomplish her goal if those people would be considered as slaves. They saw the Indians as free souls that should be saved by the Catholic Faith. This attitude towards the natives generated a conflict with the noblemen who owned the land. The alternative way the church found was called *Reduções* (The Reductions), which means that they had invited the Indians with their chief to live in well-protected hamlets, with Indian leadership but also with the Jesuits as counselors and masters. There, in the middle of the forest far from the landlords the Jesuits could do their missionary work without having direct conflicts with them. In some areas, particularly in the south, the reductions worked so well that they had their own social system with farming, trade, buildings, a defense strategy and so on.⁹² Despite of that, some asserted that the RCC failed in her mission, because the church neither protected the Indians effectively nor helped them to be integrated in the new society.⁹³

The Jesuits strategy did not last for a long time. With difficulty to find men power the landowners denounced the Jesuits to the king under the accusation of disturbing the interests of the kingdom. The conflict between the order and the landowners culminated with the decision in 1759 to prohibit the Jesuit work in Brazil⁹⁴, meaning that not only new missionaries could not go to the country but the ones who already were there had to leave.⁹⁵ Another important aspect is that the church in the colonial Brazil was under a system called *O Patronato* (The Patronage).⁹⁶ By such system, the king, not the Pope, had the right to make appointments; the religious power was under the king power and the first could not go against the interest of the kingdom without facing the consequences. The RCC financially and structurally depended on the king, and it could imply that they had no interest in going against the crown. Although the Jesuits order was for a short period expelled from Brazil the RCC and the settlers were practically one, “they were working for the same aim – the best for Portugal, not for Brazil.”⁹⁷

And finally, when it comes to the enslavement of the Africans the RCC did not have the same attitude as they had towards the natives, even the clergy had used African slaves as a work

⁹¹ Woodrow 1995, p.87.

⁹² Levine 1999, p. 36-37.

⁹³ Wood 1975, p.240.

⁹⁴ Wood 1975, p.194.

⁹⁵ Dussel 1992, p. 82.

⁹⁶ Boxer 1969, p. 230.

⁹⁷ Ruuth 2003, p. 341.

force.⁹⁸ One of the most influential Jesuits that Brazil ever had, Antônio Vieira, when referring to the African slavery, he asserted that “Brazil does not exist without slavery, but since Brazil ought to exist, the slavery also ought to exist.”⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Conrad 1983, p. 193-194.

⁹⁹ Hoornaert 1983, p. 263.

Chapter III - Exposition of Documents

In this chapter I will present the documents which will be under research. The documents which are mainly primary sources, covers the proposed period of the thesis dating from 1850 to 1888. In addition there will be other documents that contribute to the investigation, some were written shortly before or after that period and others were written during the Age of Discovery. The main documents are the primary sources including papal bulls, sermons, pamphlets, articles, letters relating the slavery practice as well as books about the RCC and slavery. Bearing in mind that a great number of texts are written in Portuguese, a translation into English will be set in the main text. Some texts as papal bulls, encyclicals, letters from the Pope are found translated into English already, other texts are only found in Portuguese and when it occurs I will translate them into English, informing the reader about the translation.

Firstly I will present papal bulls, official documents and sermons written prior to nineteenth century which dealt with the slavery practice; Secondly, papal bulls and sermons which discuss the issue of the African slavery during the nineteenth century; thirdly I will present articles and sermons found in the Catholic newspaper and others newspaper concerning African slavery and church in Brazil, and finally, I will present books written by Catholics which content portraits the African slavery and the RCC in Brazil.

In the RCC each type of document has a different nomenclature and it reflects the weight, the level of importance of each documents. The documents published by a Pope or the Magisterium invariably contain teachings in several categories of authority. The most important ones are defined by the latin term *de fide*, the teachings of the faith. Such documents manifest the presumption of correctness of the church and her beliefs. Papal documents are divided but not limited in the following categories: (1) Papal Encyclical is a letter written by a Pope to a particular audience of members of the clergy, to whom the RCC entrust a position of authority in a community and/or country. Such audience can be composed of “patriarchs, primates, archbishops, and bishops of the Universal Church in communion with the Apostolic See.”¹⁰⁰ It has a more personal nature and it is primarily directed to the clergy. In few occasions it can be addressed directly to all Catholics, nevertheless, such document is not considered to be infallible.¹⁰¹ (2) A papal bull is a document directed to the public. It contains the Pope's statements regarding different situations and after the

¹⁰⁰ Catholic Encyclopedia, s.v. “encyclical” accessed November 18, 2013,

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05413a.htm>

¹⁰¹ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, s. v. "encyclical," accessed November 18, 2013,

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/186599/encyclical>

thirteenth century the term was used to the most important papal documents as canonizations of saints and dogmatic pronouncements.¹⁰² (3) A Papal decree is generally a law promulgated by the Holy See within its jurisdiction. "In ecclesiastical use it has various meanings. Any papal Bull, Brief, or Motu Proprio is a decree inasmuch as these documents are legislative acts of the Holy Father."¹⁰³ There are also (4) Apostolic Letters which address particular issues or groups, as well as (5) Addresses to various gatherings and (6) Homilies at papal masses. There is a clear sliding scale here with encyclicals at the top and homilies at the bottom. Nonetheless, homilies may be an important way in which a Pope communicates an issue of great importance to Catholics. Overall, the highest level of authority lies on the encyclicals.

It is important to notice that documents of the church councils also express the teaching authority of the church. But as the papal documents, they too have different levels of authority. The most authoritative are the Constitutions, followed by Declarations and Decrees. By giving them different designations, the Council Fathers meant to indicate their level of authority as reflecting the depth of discussion they were able to achieve on the topics they considered. There are complex theological questions about the relationship of the authority of documents of the church councils and papal authority which I do not enter into here.

3.1 - Papal bulls which discuss the issue prior nineteenth century

In this section I will present documents which are important for the research before the nineteenth century. Unfortunately before the nineteenth century there are not an abundance of material which dealt with the topic of church and the enslavement of the African peoples. During the nineteenth century and the period that follows, there are more sources coming from the RCC in sermons, articles in newspapers and books.

3.1.1 - Pope Eugene IV, in *Sicut Dudum*, January 13th, 1435

During the fifteenth century Portugal and Spain played an important role in the discovery, colonization and exploitation of the so called New World. This period is within what is called the Age of Discovery and the motivation behind it was a mixture of economical, political and religious

¹⁰² Encyclopædia Britannica Online, s. v. "bull, papal," accessed November 18, 2013, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/84314/bull-papal>

¹⁰³ Catholic Encyclopedia, s.v. «decree», accessed November 18, 2013, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04670a.htm>

factors.¹⁰⁴ There was a hostility between Christians and Saracens who were known for being Muslims¹⁰⁵ and the Christian empires, as Spain and Portugal, were fighting against the pagans. In this interim Spain had sailed and discovered the Canary Island whose inhabitants were not Christians and had a dark skin color. The Spaniards exploited the islands and took the natives as slaves. Among the captives there were some who had been converted to the Catholic Faith.¹⁰⁶ Knowing that fact, Pope Eugene IV in January 13, 1435 writes from Florence the bull *Sicut Dudum* concerning the enslaving of Black Natives from the Canary Islands. In this document Pope Eugene IV explicitly condemns the enslavement of the natives by the explorers:

they have deprived the natives of the property, or turned it to their own use, and have subjected some of the inhabitants of said islands to perpetual slavery, sold them to other persons, and committed other various illicit and evil deeds against them, because of which very many of those remaining on said islands, and condemning such slavery, have remained involved in their former errors, having drawn back their intention to receive Baptism, thus offending the majesty of God, putting their souls in danger, and causing no little harm to the Christian religion.¹⁰⁷

Until that time, the Canary islands were not fully under any European empire. Yet, there was a tension between Spain and Portugal regarding the total dominion and control over the territory. As the Portuguese and Spanish were continually targeting the islands as a source of slavery¹⁰⁸, the pope urges them to stop enslaving the natives:

Therefore, We, to whom it pertains, especially in respect to the aforesaid matters, to rebuke each sinner about his sin, and not wishing to pass by dissimulating, and desiring—as is expected from the pastoral office we hold—as far as possible, to provide salutarily, with a holy and fatherly concern, for the sufferings of the inhabitants, beseech the Lord, and exhort, through the sprinkling of the Blood of Jesus Christ shed for their sins, one and all, temporal princes, lords, captains, armed men, barons, soldiers, nobles, communities, and all others of every kind among the Christian faithful of whatever state, grade, or condition, that they themselves desist from the aforementioned

¹⁰⁴ Boxer 1969, p. 17.

¹⁰⁵ Maxwell 1975, p. 51.

¹⁰⁶ Noonan 2005, p. 243. In 1434, Prince Henry the Navigator had landed on the Canary Island reporting to have baptized four hundred natives.

¹⁰⁷ Papal Encyclicals Online, Accessed November 21, 2013 <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Eugene04/index.htm>

¹⁰⁸ Rodriguez 1997, p. 260-261.

deeds, cause those subject to them to desist from them, and restrain them rigorously.¹⁰⁹

Concerned about the welfare of the newly converted Christians in the island, the pope commanded the explorers to restore the their liberty only those who were new baptized or were seeking for baptism. In case the Europeans did not want to obey, Eugene IV would sentence them to excommunication. It is important to note that excommunication in the midst of the fifteenth century had deep consequences to an individual in the social and spiritual sphere. In a society where Christianity was at the center of the empire and in people's daily life, being excluded would have deep effects. Such person would be prohibited of partaking in the sacraments and the consequences of excommunication would be "i.e. loss of the sacraments public services and prayers of the church, ecclesiastical burial, jurisdiction, benefices, canonical rights, and social intercourse."¹¹⁰ Nevertheless, the Europeans continued to enslave the natives and I did not find a single case where Pope Eugene IV excommunicated a explorer. In his warning, the pope writes:

And no less do We order and command all and each of the faithful of each sex, within the space of fifteen days of the publication of these letters in the place where they live, that they restore to their earlier liberty all and each person of either sex who were once residents of said Canary Islands, and made captives since the time of their capture, and who have been made subject to slavery. These people are to be totally and perpetually free, and are to be let go without the exaction or reception of money. If this is not done when the fifteen days have passed, they incur the sentence of excommunication by the act itself, from which they cannot be absolved, except at the point of death, even by the Holy See, or by any Spanish bishop, or by the aforementioned Ferdinand, unless they have first given freedom to these captive persons and restored their goods. We will that like sentence of excommunication be incurred by one and all who attempt to capture, sell, or subject to slavery, the baptized residents of the Canary Islands, or those who are freely seeking Baptism, from which excommunication cannot be absolved except as was stated above.¹¹¹

3.1.2 - Pope Nicholas V, in *Romanus Pontifex*, January 8th, 1455

With a new pope, a new policy on slavery emerged in the RCC. Exercising her power as the official religion, the RCC had authorized the Spanish and the Portuguese to sail to the hitherto unknown world where they would spread the Catholic Faith. They had recently been exploiting the natives of the Canary Islands and in 1435 Pope Eugene IV had condemned the enslavement of the new

¹⁰⁹ Papal Encyclicals Online, Accessed November 21, 2013 <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Eugene04/index.htm>

¹¹⁰ Catholic Encyclopedia <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05678a.htm>, accessed November 22, 2013

¹¹¹ Papal Encyclicals Online, Accessed November 21, 2013 <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Eugene04/index.htm>

converted people of those islands. Despite of that, in 1455 Pope Nicolas V through the bull *Romanus Pontifex* claims his spiritual lordship of the whole world and authorizes Portugal to conquer and enslave the non-Christians under the presupposition of christianize the world.¹¹² Those “pagans” named Saracens and other infidels inhabited the newly discovered West African coast. Concerning those people in the bull *Romanus Pontifex* he says:

This we believe will more certainly come to pass, through the aid of the Lord, if we bestow suitable favors and special graces on those Catholic kings and princes, who, like athletes and intrepid champions of the Christian faith, as we know by the evidence of facts, not only restrain the savage excesses of the Saracens and of other infidels, enemies of the Christian name, but also for the defense and increase of the faith vanquish them and their kingdoms and habitations, though situated in the remotest parts unknown to us, and subject them to their own temporal dominion, sparing no labor and expense, in order that those kings and princes, relieved of all obstacles, may be the more animated to the prosecution of so salutary and laudable work...¹¹³

The words of Pope Nicolas V clearly gave a motivation to the Portuguese to advance their plans of exploring the world and discovering new territories.¹¹⁴ With the support of the RCC, Prince Henry the Navigator¹¹⁵ and his immediate successors had no fear to venture new territories and enslave the non-Christian peoples. There are three main papal bulls which authorizes Portugal to imprisoned and enslave other peoples. The first one is the bull *Dum Diversas*, promulgated in June 18th 1452; the second one is *Romanus Pontifex*, January 8th, 1455 and the third one is *Inter Caetera*, March 13th, 1456.¹¹⁶ For a question of space and accessibility to the documents only the second bull named *Romanus Pontifex* will be exposed in this work, basically, the other two bulls express the

¹¹² Maxwell 1975, p.53.

¹¹³ The English text of *Romanus Pontifex* is found in *European Treaties bearing on the History of the United States and its Dependencies to 1648*, Frances Gardiner Davenport, 1917, Carnegie Institution of Washington, Washington, D.C., p. 20-26. The original text in Latin is in the same volume, p. 13-20. In the same book the author gives references to where is found the original manuscripts, see p. 13.

¹¹⁴ Boxer 1969, p.20.

¹¹⁵ Prince Henry the Navigator (4th, March 1394 – 13th November 1460) was an important figure in the Portuguese empire. He was the son of king John I and he was one of the first Europeans to explore the coast of Africa. Also, he contribute to the development of the caravels, which were one of the best sailing ships of his time. See Peter Russel (2000): *Prince Henry “the Navigator”. A Life*, New Haven: Yale University Press. Accessed on May 12, 2014 in <http://www.history.ac.uk/reviews/printpdf/review/144>

¹¹⁶ Boxer 1969, p. 20-21.

time idea as this one.

In this bull, Pope Nicolas V exalts the efforts and accomplishments of the discoveries made by the Portuguese explores, and he gives to the king of Portugal the authority to subjugate under slavery the new peoples who were found in those lands. The main reason the pope gave to the Portuguese explorers was that those peoples were pagans, thus enemies of Christ.

We [therefore] weighing all and singular the premises with due meditation, and noting that since we had formerly by other letters of ours granted among other things free and ample faculty to the aforesaid King Alfonso – to invade, search out, capture, vanquish, and subdue all Saracens and pagans whatsoever, and other enemies of Christ wheresoever placed, and the kingdoms, dukedoms, principalities, dominions, possessions, and all movable and immovable goods whatsoever held and possessed by them and to reduce their persons to perpetual slavery, and to apply and appropriate to himself and his successors the kingdoms, dukedoms, counties, principalities, dominions, possessions, and goods, and to convert them to his and their use and profit..¹¹⁷

The pope also mentions some Africans who were taken to Portugal by force and were converted to the Catholic faith. He authorized the enslavement of those Africans and at the same time the pope expected that they would continually accept Catholicism. In other words, their freedom was taken from them and the pope expected that they should accept the religion of those who enslaved them.

...Thence also many Guinea men and other Negroes, taken by force, and some by barter of unprohibited articles, or by other lawful contract of purchase, have been sent to the said kingdoms. A large number of these have been converted to the Catholic faith, and it is hoped, by the help of divine mercy, that if such progress be continued with them, either those peoples will be converted to the faith or at least the souls of many of them will be gained for Christ..¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ The English text of *Romanus Pontifex* is found in *European Treaties bearing on the History of the United States and its Dependencies to 1648*, Frances Gardiner Davenport, 1917, Carnegie Institution of Washington, Washington, D.C., p. 20-26. The original text in Latin is in the same volume, p. 13-20. In the same book the author gives references to where is found the original manuscripts, see p. 13.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

3.1.3 - Pope Paul III, in the decree *Motu Proprio*, November 9, 1548*¹¹⁹

The following documents give the reader a contradictory fact. In 1535 during his pontificate, Pope Paul III had shown a positive attitude towards the suppression of the slavery practices by bringing to life the old practices of emancipating the slaves who would flee to the Capitol.¹²⁰ However, some years later, due to shortage of slaves in Rome the magistrates requested the Pope to moderate the privileges that he had supported and granted to the slaves. Despite of the fact that the pope had shown a positive attitude in emancipating them, in 1548, one year before his death, Pope Paul III he abrogated the privileges given to the slaves in Rome¹²¹ and in *Motu Proprio* he decreed by his apostolic authority that the slave trade was legal.

and nevertheless, as a greater precaution [we decree] that each and every person of either sex, whether Roman or non-Roman, whether secular or clerical, and no matter of what dignity, status, decree, order or condition they be, may freely and lawfully buy and sell publicly any slaves whatsoever of either sex, and make contracts about them as is accustomed to be done in other places, and publicly old them as slaves and make use of their work, and compel them to do the work assigned to them...¹²²

In spite of the fact that he did not name the enslavement of the African people, by the midst of the sixteenth century the kingdoms under the Catholic jurisprudence were used to the African slavery trade which had begun during the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries.¹²³ Hence, the enslavement of the Africans was not a new practices and this fact suggests that when the pope addressed *Motu Proprio* he included all types of slaves, as well as the Africans who were taken to Rome. Here, the pope states that no freedom would be guaranteed to the slaves:

¹¹⁹ There were found two different dates: (1) 9th November, 1548 in *Slavery and the Catholic Church*, John Francis Maxwell, 1975, Barry Rose Publishers, Chichester and London, p. 75; (2) 8th November, 1548 by Wipertus Rudt de Collenberg, in *The Papacy: An Encyclopedia*, Vol. 3, Philippe Levillain editor, 2002, Routledge, New York and London, p. 1440.

¹²⁰ Maxwell 1975, p. 74-75. The Capitol was the office of the Senade chamber of Rome.

¹²¹ Maxwell 1975, p. 75.

¹²² The English text of *Motu Proprio* is found in *Slavery and the Catholic Church*, John Francis Maxwell, Barry Rose Publishers, 1975, Chichester and London, p. 75. In the same page is given the information where is found the original text in Latin.

¹²³ Shillington 2012, p. 178.

and with Apostolic authority, by the tenor of these present documents, we enact and decree in perpetuity that slaves who flee to the Capitol and appeal for their liberty shall in no wise be freed from bondage of their servitude... irrespective whether they were made Christians after enslavement, or whether they were born in slavery even from Christian slave parents according to the provisions of the common law...¹²⁴

3.1.4 - Sermon preached by father Antonio Vieira in the seventeenth century

During the seventeenth century the society in Brazil depended upon the slavery labor. During that time neither the State nor the RCC had supported the idea of emancipation of the African slaves in Brazil. In fact, the Brazilian society did not conceive the idea of declaring all men equal, based on the ground the workforce of the nation was based on the African slaves. It is important to remind that when it comes to the enslavement of the native people the RCC had another attitude, they were more engaged in the fight against the enslavement of the Indians. In this context, Father Antonio Vieira who was one the most important clergy of RCC in Brazil, he wrote hundreds of sermons which were collected and published with the title *Sermões*, consisting of fifteen volumes published in Lisbon largely during his life time. The book was first published in 1679 and the last volume was edited by him and printed one year after his death in 1697.¹²⁵ The selected sermon presented here is found in the section called *Maria, Rosa Mística* number XXVII. He preached this sermon in the church of the black brotherhood of the Rosary in the state of Bahia. The black brotherhoods were communities called *Irmandades* where slaves and freed Africans had organized their own communities to worship. Searching for integration in the Catholic faith, they built simple churches to worship God in their own place. Those churches would give them the opportunity to worship legally and to express their faith and also “gave to the slaves opportunities to advocate their own dignity and self-respect.”¹²⁶

He was well known for fighting against the enslavement of the indigenous people considering such practice as unlawful. Yet, the Jesuit preacher sought to justify the enslavement of Blacks. To Father Vieira, the enslavement of Africans was even considered a positive fact. It would be better for the Africans to have their body enslaved in a foreign country which could give them

¹²⁴ The English text of *Motu Proprio* is found in *Slavery and the Catholic Church*, John Francis Maxwell, Barry Rose Publishers, 1975, Chichester and London, p. 75. In the same page is given the information where is found the original text in Latin.

¹²⁵ National Library Foundation, accessed January 19, 2014

http://www.iphi.org.br/sites/filosofia_brasil/Padre_Antônio_Vieira_-_Sermões.pdf

¹²⁶ Conrad 1983, p. 179.

the opportunity to know the gospel of Christ and thus have their soul saved, then to be free in their homeland and have their souls enslaved by the devil due their pagan beliefs. He preaches:

However, the fact that you now live as slaves and captives is by a special providence of God and of Our Lady, so that same temporal captivity you may more easily acquire eternal freedom... I understand that some of these acts of enslavement are just: those which the laws permit, and supposedly also those slaves bought and sold in Brazil, not the natives, but those brought from other places.¹²⁷

Addressing the topic of the Black slavery, Vieira denounces the blameful and shameful motives which those people were condemned to live in. He condemns the profit of the slave trade, the exploitation of a slave until death and the misuse and abuse of authority and power over the slave. Nevertheless he asserts that the slaves should submit themselves willingly to their masters. He does not give any encouragement to rebellion, to fight for their freedom or for their rights. He simply encourages them to accept their task as slaves thus making their lives less miserable. The comfort he offers is that their master only can enslave their bodies, not the soul. He urges the slaves to be satisfied with the fact that if they be good Christians on earth, they will be eternally free from bondage in heaven with God. He says:

Behold in the following, black brothers of the Rosary... You are the brothers of God's preparation and the children of God's fire. The children of God's fire of the present transmigration of slavery, because in this condition God's fire impressed the mark of slavery upon you; and, granted that this is the mark of oppression, it has also, like fire, illuminated you, because it has brought you the light of the Faith and the knowledge of Christ's mysteries, which are those which you solemnly profess on the rosary. But in this same condition of the first transmigration, which is that of temporal slavery, God and His Most Holy Mother are preparing you for the second transmigration, that of eternal freedom... You, however, came or were brought from your homelands to these places of exile; aside from the second and universal transmigration, you have another, that of Babylon, in which, more or less moderated, you remain in captivity. And so you may know how you should conduct yourselves in it, and so that you will not yourselves make it worse... Therefore, black brothers, the slavery you suffer, however hard and grinding it may be, or seems to be to you, is not total slavery. You are slaves in your exterior part, which is the body; however, in the other interior

¹²⁷ The English text of the sermon "Children of God's Fire" by Father Antonio Vieira is found in *Children of God's Fire*, Robert Edgar Conrad, 1983, Princeton University Press, Princeton, p. 163-174. In the page 163 it is given the source for the original text.

and nobler half, the soul,... you are not a slave but free¹²⁸

3.2 - Papal bulls which discuss the enslavement of Africans during the nineteenth century

There is not an abundance of documents written prior to the nineteenth century concerning the African slavery and the RCC. Unfortunately, in that time, human exploitation was commonly accepted by the nations, even the Africans themselves they had the practice of enslaving the captives of war and other conquered peoples. But the nineteenth century experimented a changing of paradigm. The concept of all men are equal were getting stronger in the mind of the peoples, governments and in the RCC. As a result, in the nineteenth century period it is found a great number of documents concerning the slavery practice.

As it is today, the RCC was not an isolated institution. The church was made up of people who carried with them their culture and ideology. Thus, she was involved in the central question of the nineteenth century: the African slave trade.

3.2.1 - Pope Gregory XVI, In *Supremo Apostolatus* of December 3, 1839

During the first half of the nineteenth century the enslavement of Africans was coming to an end. In Europe the Congress of Vienna which was held in 1815 aimed at the abolition of the slave trade¹²⁹ and two of the biggest slave traders empires had abolished slavery: the British Empire (except India and other possessions in the eastern)¹³⁰ in 1833 and Spain in 1837¹³¹. In the Americas the abolitionist movement was getting stronger¹³². In 1823 Chile declared emancipation of slaves followed by Mexico in 1829¹³³. In this context of flourishing ideas and movements against the transatlantic slave trade, Pope Gregory XVI writes an apostolic letter condemning the practice of slavery towards the African peoples. In the bull *In Supremo Apostolatus* of December 3rd, 1839¹³⁴ the pope states:

¹²⁸ The English text of the sermon "Children of God's Fire" by Father Antonio Vieira is found in Children of God's Fire, Robert Edgar Conrad, 1983, Princeton University Press, Princeton, p. 163-174. The original text written in Portuguese is found in

¹²⁹ Maxwell 1975, p. 73.

¹³⁰ Miers and Roberts 1988, p. 10.

¹³¹ Maxwell 1975, p. 115.

¹³² Maxwell 1975, 115.

¹³³ Fogel and Engerman 1995, p. 33-34.

¹³⁴ Maxwell 1975, 73.

We have judged that it belonged to Our pastoral solicitude to exert Ourselves to turn away the Faithful from the inhuman slave trade in Negroes and all other men. Assuredly, since there was spread abroad, first of all amongst the Christians, the light of the Gospel, these miserable people, who in such great numbers, and chiefly through the effects of wars, fell into very cruel slavery, experienced an alleviation of their lot... this is why, desiring to remove such a shame from all the Christian nations, having fully reflected over the whole question and having taken the advice of many of Our Venerable Brothers the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, and walking in the footsteps of Our Predecessors, We warn and adjure earnestly in the Lord faithful Christians of every condition that no one in the future dare to vex anyone, despoil him of his possessions, reduce to servitude, or lend aid and favour to those who give themselves up to these practices, or exercise that inhuman traffic by which the Blacks, as if they were not men but rather animals, having been brought into servitude, in no matter what way, are, without any distinction, in contempt of the rights of justice and humanity, bought, sold, and devoted sometimes to the hardest labour.¹³⁵

There is a great number of church documents condemning the enslavement of the Indians in the New World, from the beginning of settlement up to the abolition of slavery. However, when it comes to the African slave trade, it is noticeable the lack of papal bulls, specifically before the nineteenth century.¹³⁶ In 1839, Pope Gregory XVI addressed the topic of the enslavement of Black together with the slave trade to the New World and the enslavement of Indians. He also includes a closing prohibition against clerics as well as laity who would attempt to defend slavery or the slave trade:

we reprove, then, by virtue of Our Apostolic Authority, all the practices above mentioned as absolutely unworthy of the Christian name. By the same Authority We prohibit and strictly forbid any Ecclesiastic or lay person from presuming to defend as permissible this traffic in Blacks under no matter what pretext or excuse, or from publishing or teaching in any manner whatsoever, in public or privately, opinions contrary to what We have set forth in this Apostolic Letter.¹³⁷

Here, we can clearly see a shift in the RCC opinion about slavery. As presented before, the church through Pope Paul III, in 1548 asserted that the slave trade was lawful. Now, in 1839 through Pope Gregory XVI the church asserts that walking in the footsteps of the previous popes, she condemned the slave trade.

¹³⁵ [Papal Encyclicals Online, Accessed November 05, 2013, http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Greg16/g16sup.htm](http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Greg16/g16sup.htm)

¹³⁶ Maxwell 1975, 73.

¹³⁷ [Papal Encyclicals Online, Accessed November 05, 2013, http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Greg16/g16sup.htm](http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Greg16/g16sup.htm)

3.2.2 - Pope Leo XIII, In Plurimis of May 5th, 1888

By the end of the nineteenth century the maritime powers had suppressed the African slave trade and all Western empires had banned slavery except for Brazil.¹³⁸ From 1869 to 1870 the first Vatican Council was held and “the revival of the study of scholastic philosophy had led to a critical re-appraisal of medieval notions concerning human society and human relationships.”¹³⁹ Within the context of transformation that the Western societies were going through, the RCC, as one of the main religious power, had an urgency to state her doctrines concerning the humanism.

In relation to the Empire of Brazil on May 5th, 1888 the church addresses the practices of Black slavery in the land. Pope Leo XIII finally writes two letters where he addresses specifically to the bishops of Brazil on the abolition of slavery. In the first one, he condemns the enslavement of the Africans that lasted for centuries and he praises the efforts that the RCC had made throughout the history to fight against slavery as well as the efforts that the church was making in Brazil in order to set the slaves free:

amid the many and great demonstrations of affection which from almost all the peoples of the earth have come to Us, and are still coming to Us, in congratulation upon the happy attainment of the fiftieth anniversary of Our priesthood, there is one which moves Us in a quite special way. We mean one which comes from Brazil, where, upon the occasion of this happy event, large numbers of those who in that vast empire groan beneath the yoke of slavery, have been legally set free. ... With the same forethought and constancy, other Pontiffs at a later period, as Urban VIII, Benedict XIV, and Pius VII, showed themselves strong asserters of liberty for the Indians and Moors and those who were even as yet not instructed in the Christian faith. The last, moreover, at the Council of the confederated Princes of Europe, held at Vienna, called their attention in common to this point, that that traffic in Negroes, of which We have spoken before, and which had now ceased in many places, should be thoroughly rooted out. Gregory XVI also severely censured those neglecting the duties of humanity and the laws, and restored the decrees and statutory penalties of the apostolic see, and left no means untried that foreign nations, also, following the kindness of the Europeans, should cease from and abhor the disgrace and brutality of slavery...¹⁴⁰

He urges the Catholics to unite their strength in order to put an end in the slavery practices which had led many Africans to perish. He states:

¹³⁸ It is important to notice that although Brazil is a developing country, it is geographically in the west and in that time, Brazil was considered a western empire.

¹³⁹ Maxwell 1975, p. 115.

¹⁴⁰ The Holy See, Accessed on November 11, 2013

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_05051888_in-plurimis_en.html

it is indeed manifest, by their testimony and word, that each year 400,000 Africans are usually thus sold like cattle, about half of whom, wearied out by the roughness of the tracks, fall down and perish there...Would that all who hold high positions in authority and power, or who desire the rights of nations and of humanity to be held sacred, or who earnestly devote themselves to the interests of the Catholic religion, would all, everywhere acting on Our exhortations and wishes, strive together to repress, forbid, and put an end to that kind of traffic, than which nothing is more base and wicked.¹⁴¹

Pope Leo XIII writes in a time where the emancipation in Brazil was at hand. Many laws to protect the Africans had been already enacted and the society was expecting the emancipation to come at any time. The papal letter was written on May 5th and some days later, on May 13th, 1888 the Empire of Brazil finally abolished the Black slavery.

3.2.3 - Pope Leo XIII, In *Catholicae Ecclesiae*, 20th November, 1890

By the end of 1890, Pope Leo XIII writes an encyclical to the missionaries in Africa addressing the slavery practices which still remained in the missions territories. Given in Rome at St. Peter's Cathedral, the letter refers to the relation between slavery and the church where he praises the effort the RCC had been making in order to eliminate slavery. He asserts that since the beginning the RCC fought to abolish slavery declaring that the slavery institution is against the human dignity. He defends the church saying that she had shown her love for all people like a mother would do to her children. To prove his statement, he provides a list of popes who fought directly against the slavery.

At the time he wrote this encyclical, the Brazilian nation had already abolished slavery and the very same society that had supported slavery for centuries had another point of view. In 1890 the words of the pope did not echo a different sound then of the Brazilian society. Had the encyclical being published some decades prior 1890, the result of such words would have a different weight and impact in the society.

the maternal love of the Catholic Church embraces all people. As you know, venerable brother, the Church from the beginning sought to completely eliminate slavery, whose wretched yoke has oppressed many people... This zeal of the Church for liberating the slaves has not languished with the passage of time; on the contrary, the more it bore fruit, the more eagerly it glowed. There are incontestable historical documents which attest to that fact, documents which commended to

¹⁴¹ The Holy See, Accessed on November 11, 2013

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_05051888_in-plurimis_en.html

posterity the names of many of Our predecessors. Among them St. Gregory the Great, Hadrian I, Alexander III, Innocent III, Gregory IX, Pius II, Leo X, Paul III, Urban VIII, Benedict XIV, Pius VII, and Gregory XVI stand out. They applied every effort to eliminate the institution of slavery wherever it existed. They also took care lest the seeds of slavery return to those places from which this evil institution had been cut away...We have taken every occasion to openly condemn this gloomy plague of slavery.¹⁴²

He also writes urging the missionaries to send the collected money to Rome from where the money would be divided among the missions and it would be used in the attempt to eliminate slavery in Africa. The pope asserts that there were some Catholic missions to free slaves, but he does not mention how they would do this, if the church would use the money to buy slaves and then set them free or if the church would use the money to publish against slavery. There is a question mark around the method, but the important relevant information is that the church seemed to be interested in the abolition of slavery in the decade of 1890.

The money collected in the churches and chapels under your jurisdiction should be sent to Rome, to the Sacred Council for the Propagation of the Faith. It will divide the money among the missions which now exist or will be established primarily to eliminate slavery in Africa. The money coming from those countries which have their own Catholic missions to free the slaves, as We mentioned, will be given to sustain and help those missions.¹⁴³

3.2.4 - Sermon about Slavery, November 13th, 1887

Pronounced during the feast of *Nossa Senhora do Rosário* (Our Lady of Rosary) in the main church of Pelotas¹⁴⁴, doctor Augusto S. de Canabarro dedicated the sermon to the Brazilian clergy and episcopate, represented by the Archbishop of Bahia, Luiz Antonio dos Santos. This sermon is originally found in Portuguese and I will make a free translation into English. Canabarro was a Canon and Vicar¹⁴⁵ in the RCC which means that he had an important voice in his religious

¹⁴² The Holy See, Accessed on November 11, 2013

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_20111890_catholicae-ecclesiae_en.html

¹⁴³ The Holy See, Accessed on November 11, 2013

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_20111890_catholicae-ecclesiae_en.html

¹⁴⁴ Pelotas was at that time an important city in Rio Grande do Sul, the most southern province of the Empire of Brazil.

¹⁴⁵ The title Vicar is given to a representative of an ecclesiastical person in the RCC. The title Canon is given to an

community. Preaching the current topic of African slavery, he criticizes the Brazilian society for the use of slaves. In 1871 the government enacts a law called *Free Womb* which gave freedom to all newborn of slaves parents. As a result a great hope that the slavery system was coming to an end was raised in the society, and in 1887 Canabarro preaches condemning the delay of the emancipation. In the sermon he asserts that such delay had deprived the slaves of all moral and religious instruction, and what was even worst was that the slave owners replaced in the farm's quarters the slaves who from overwork, or by the most unheard martyrdoms exhaled the last breath in the horrors of misery.¹⁴⁶ He draws the attention of the audience saying that

Slavery should not and cannot exist. It is not only condemned by divine and eternal laws, but it is also condemned by the progress and civilization of humanity. The consequences that come along with slavery, the consequences that emanate from it, they conspire against so wicked and barbarous institution. Therefore allow me gentlemen, to paraphrase the voices of the heroic apostles of freedom, which in all corners of Brazil attack in the strongest terms the last bastions of negro legions. I once again ask your benevolent attention to the most important issue of our days, I am frankly preaching the freedom of slaves.¹⁴⁷

Canabarro points out that the reason for the slavery practice in Brazil is due the lack of instruction that the first settlers had. Led by ambition, they came to the New World searching for wealth at all costs, they earned for gold but not for the work that came along with it. In consequence, they used slaves as a workforce to satisfy their ambitions. Interesting enough, he does not attribute to the church the liability for the lack of instruction of the people. He asserts that the RCC had always condemned the slavery but the people did not want to give attention her teachings. Hence, he blames the slave owners for the slavery system asserting that their fathers sinned and they keep committing the same errors due their ambition and pride.

Since its discovery [of Brazil] is was not taught to the first settlers their duties towards themselves and with their coequals. Abandoning the lands of Europe in search of gold, they, the enemies of work, from the moment that their homes, their wives and children were submerged in the horizon,

individual who is a member of body of clerics who «owes the bishop reverence in three ways: by conceding him the first place; by giving him assistance; by affording him escort.» Accessed November 27, 2013

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03252a.htm>

¹⁴⁶ Canabarro 1887, p. 6.

¹⁴⁷ Canabarro 1887, p. 6.

they disregarded all notions of fairness, honesty and morality only seeing in America the object of their dreams, the term of their ambition. Here, therefore, they threw themselves like hungry beasts into the legitimate owners of the land of the Americas to reduce them to slavery...what matters that the Church and her pontiffs have always condemned such infamous procedure, flipping on them the most severe penalties? The ambition and pride are unaware of all notions of obedience and righteousness! For that reason, generations succeed each other inheriting the negative traces of character from their ancestors, and still continue keeping in her bosom the greatest crime that human perversity can generate.¹⁴⁸

3.3 - Articles in the Catholic newspaper from the nineteenth century

O Apóstolo which means "The Apostle" was the main Catholic newspaper in Brazil during the nineteenth century. It was a moral and doctrinal newspaper devoted to the interests of the church and society. It addressed the current situation and events that occurred in the country as well as publishing sermons and opinions of bishops, priests and laity about different topics including the slavery issue. The edition was published in 1866 and at first, the newspaper was published only on Sundays but later it was published daily, circulating in Brazil for 35 years.¹⁴⁹ It was distributed in the entire country but each province had its own local news. The one I will present is from the most important Brazilian city at that time, the city of Rio de Janeiro.

O Apóstolo is a very important document to this research because it contains pastoral letters and other documents from the Brazilian episcopate and the Holy See. Through the articles in the newspaper, it is possible to understand the clashes of the time and see the strategies of the Catholic church, the set of internal clashes, the action of the reformers bishops, the dialogue with potential allies, and sermons about the slavery issue. In other words, the newspaper reproduces the voice of the RCC on that time. Through my research I found out that before the decade of 1880, very few articles were written about the slavery of the Blacks. Only as late as 1887, it is found a great number of articles written about the topic.

There is an interesting fact about the newspaper. When sermons were published, the editors gave the necessary information to identify the speaker or writer but when it comes articles, the newspaper omits the names of the writers or only gives the initial letters. This was not a common practice of that time, normally the newspapers would give the writer's names in the articles. Therefore, hovers in many cases a shadow on the identity of the writers. Since *The Apostle* was the

¹⁴⁸ Canabarro 1887, p. 7.

¹⁴⁹ Pinheiro, Alceste: "O Apóstolo, ano I: a autocompreensão de um jornal católico do século XIX, (7-9 May, 2009) Retrieved from <http://www.intercom.org.br/papers/regionais/sudeste2009/resumos/R14-0018-1.pdf>

official Catholic newspaper in Brazil, they would not publish ideas against the ideology of the RCC, perhaps they hide the name of the authors because the church wanted to save the authors from any prejudice or personal conflicts caused by their writings, specially when it comes to controversial topic such as slavery.

The documents are accessible through the digital newspaper archive of the National Library, Hemeroteca Digital da Biblioteca Nacional, on the webpage <http://hemerotecadigital.bn.br>. It is open to everyone and it is entirely free, without any charge or membership to access the documents.¹⁵⁰ All the articles of *The Apostle* were originally published in Portuguese, therefore, I made a free translation into English to present the texts in this research.

3.3.1- In *O Apóstolo*, number 41. Sunday, 8th of October, 1871

In this pastoral letter, the bishop of Rio de Janeiro exalts the recent law promulgated on September, 28th 1871 freeing the newborn children of slave women.¹⁵¹ Nevertheless, he expresses his wish that the RCC would have more freedom in order to act against the slavery practices and urges the Catholics who owned slaves and attended in his diocese to faithfully accomplish the new passed law.

Oh! And if the Church were more free to exercise her love of a tender Mother. Let us contribute as much as we can for that all may love or at least respect the law; to make clear that even when the law displeases and seems to go against some interests of this present time, it is necessary to obey it because it does not oppose to what God commends or to what the Church teaches and it was legally enacted and promulgated... the religion and the country require the law enforcement.¹⁵²

Around the year 1871, the idea of emancipation of slaves was not an utopia any longer. Since 1850

¹⁵⁰ As stated, the access to the documents are free. However, the sources can not be downloaded and in order to have access to them one needs to do as follows: First enter the webpage <http://hemerotecadigital.bn.br>. On the homepage there is a box numbered as 1. *Digite ou escolha um periódico* (Type or choose a periodic); 2. *escolha um período* (choose a period); 3. *digite para pesquisar* (type to search). Once you selected the document a new window will be opened. In this new window there are two boxes: the one on the left is to search and the one on the right contains folders. The folders are organized chronologically and contain subfolders which separate the newspapers by numbers in a chronological way as well.

¹⁵¹ Smith 2002, p. 256.

¹⁵² In Hemeroteca Digital Brasileira, s. v. «O Apóstolo (RJ), 1871, number 41» <http://hemerotecadigital.bn.br>, Accessed in November 29, 2013.

it was prohibited the importation of slavery to Brazil and the idea of emancipation was gradually being supported.¹⁵³ He asserts that the RCC was the first one to make efforts to extinguish slavery. Her effort was to convince the slave owners of their obligation toward God and society which implies they should not mistreat a slave. He states:

It was indisputable that the church of Jesus Christ was the guardian of Christian doctrine, being the first to establish the precepts to accomplish the *abolition of slavery in the world*. Without speaking to slaves about their rights, the Church showed to the slave owners their obligations. Ahead of the liberators is the Church carrying the cross, calling the masters, urging them, dragging them to the temples so that close to the altars they may liberate their slaves...¹⁵⁴

3.3.2 - In *O Apóstolo*, number 52. Sunday, 24th of December, 1871

In this pastoral letter, the Bishop of Maranhão, Luiz da Conceição Saraiva, announces the reform of the servile law and prescribes to his diocesan to fulfill what the law requires. He affirms that in 1867 the emperor of Brazil, Dom Pedro I, had stated his support to the emancipation of slaves but he had failed to lead out the people to achieve such aspiration.¹⁵⁵ In this social context, the Bishop of Maranhão assumes that the church had led the nation to earn for the extinction of slavery:

Let us praise therefore beloved co-workers, the precious fruit of the great ideas preached to the world by the Divine Master and without wavering propagated by the Church, which, softening the customs have changed the laws, and guiding the nation in her counsels, gave us that law of true regeneration, which was of immense power to the complete extinction of slavery in the Empire ...

He keeps asserting that the RCC had sought to free the slaves and she had never ceased in her efforts to accomplish this mission.

In order to a such good principles, through the vicissitudes of time and divergent opinions could be put into practices, the Church, the trustee of the doctrines of Jesus Christ ... she never ceased, says Pope Saint Gregorio, to advocate for the restitution of the benefit of the original freedom to men, who God created free. It was not the politics nor the petty human calculations that produced within

¹⁵³ Smith 2002, p. 58.

¹⁵⁴ In Hemeroteca Digital Brasileira, s. v. «O Apóstolo (RJ), 1871, number 41» <http://hemerotecadigital.bn.br>, Accessed in November 29, 2013.

¹⁵⁵ Smith 2002, p. 59.

the largest and most blessed peace such a great welfare... no, the victory belongs to religion.¹⁵⁶

In the same newspaper, there is found the section relate to the Minister of Agriculture, Commerce and Public Works. The government addressed to the Brazilian Bishops expressing the conviction that the RCC should be commission with the responsibility of using her authority to enforce the law, which would require the assistance of the bishops to make the law to be understood and respected. It says:

Well, our desire is that the reverends priests of this archdiocese may be worthy of the general recognition for the faithful performance of this duty, being son of charity and religion fully, and since by the law and public trust they are the custodians of the documents of freedom of thousands of people, may never deserve, even a warning, and much less be punished with fines for any carelessness and lack of registration.¹⁵⁷

3.3.3 - In *O Apóstolo*, number 127. Friday, 11th of November, 1881

In this article the unknown author writes in the cover page against the abolitionist propaganda. He argues that such propaganda was almost irrational, it would bring chaos because the emancipation would lead to lack of labour in the plantation fields. Also, he defends the RCC from some articles that had been published in the *Jornal do Commercio* which accuses the church of being negligent towards the slavery practice in the country. He asserts that the church was not the responsible for slavery in Brazil and as a matter of fact, according to him, she never supported such institution.

The Church has never been inclined to slavery, on the contrary, she has always been against it, and in her canons there are provisions against slavery, stating that nobody has the right to reduce an equal man, and if she has tolerated slavery, by circumstances which are not mentioned now, she has never ceased to promote and to adopt measures that would soften and gradually extinguish the slavery system. In Brazil, slavery was a way of having arms for land clearing, a way not adopted by the Church but by the State which consented with such practice. The Church, however, did not spread such need, she tolerated it so that she would not attack the authority of such practice recognized by the law.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶In Hemeroteca Digital Brasileira, s. v. «O Apóstolo (RJ), 1871, number 52» <http://hemerotecadigital.bn.br>, Accessed in December 1st, 2013.

¹⁵⁷In Hemeroteca Digital Brasileira, s. v. «O Apóstolo (RJ), 1871, number 52» <http://hemerotecadigital.bn.br>, Accessed in November 29, 2013.

¹⁵⁸ In Hemeroteca Digital Brasileira, s. v. «O Apóstolo (RJ), 1881, number 127» <http://hemerotecadigital.bn.br>, Accessed in December 2nd, 2013.

At the same time the unknown author says that the religious orders made use of slaves. He asserts that it was better for the slaves to be owned by the RCC clergy than to be out in the farmers where the treatment given to slaves would be much worse. The author has the understanding that the Catholic orders did not establish the slavery in Brazil, they only owned slaves as the law permitted.

Not even against her can be claimed that the religious orders had slaves because those orders did not establish slavery, the orders owned slaves who were legated to them with the task of supporting the orders: and it was so charitable, because if the religious orders had not accepted those legacies, the fate of the slaves would be terrible since the heirs of the testers or the authorities would take them and would reduce them to the overall conditions of slaves in Brazil.¹⁵⁹

3.3.4 - In *O Apóstolo*, number 36. Sunday, 30th of March, 1884

In this article, the author defends the concept of catechizing the slaves. He asserts that only religion would have the power to mold the slaves, making them to forgive and forget the cruelties done to them. By doing that, the slave owners would have a more elevated slave who would serve better the master.

If by religion alone the savages are tamed and civilized, then by religion alone, we will reform the slaves and we will be able to destroy their revenge and hatred... May the religious education be implemented to show them the path of duty, the obligations of the free man, the forgiveness of injuries, the respect and mutual love, either in the present time or when they are free indeed⁶⁰

The northeast province of Ceará had already declared emancipation in its territory and the author asserts that emancipation was at hand and nothing could stop it. He sees that a change was about to come and the society should be prepared for it. The idea that all men are equal was claiming its price of freedom and the Catholics should be on the right side in the fight for the emancipation cause.

Understand today those who own slaves that there is the need for religious education in their

¹⁵⁹ In Hemeroteca Digital Brasileira, s. v. «O Apóstolo (RJ), 1881, number 127» <http://hemerotecadigital.bn.br>, Accessed in December 2nd, 2013.

¹⁶⁰ In Hemeroteca Digital Brasileira, s. v. «O Apóstolo (RJ), 1884, number 36» <http://hemerotecadigital.bn.br>, Accessed in December 4th, 2013.

establishments and the duty applicable to them to recognize, in the naive slave, a man. It should not and it cannot continue the way of life adopted until today regarding to the slaves...In Brazil the idea of emancipation is like a loose rock into the abyss. Woe to those who wish to trim it , they will be crushed. It is the idea of the century, it is the aspiration of the nation . It is the duty of all to hasten the abolition of slavery, but not that we are required to do so by any circumstance ... we need to comprehend that slavery is incompatible with civilization.¹⁶¹

3.3.5 - In *O Apóstolo*, number 51. Sunday, 8th of May, 1887

The following text was taken from the news section under the title *O Clero e a Escravidão* (The Clergy and the Slavery). This section contains information about what was happening during that time in Brazil and also around the world. The author is unknown. This was a time where the topic of slavery had a wide dimension in the political discussions. On September 28th, 1885 it was enacted a law which regulated the gradual extinction of the servile element, which means that slaves over 65 years of age were set free. The unknown author informs that the bishop of Pernambuco, an important province located in the Northeast of Brazil, had advised the clergy in his diocese to set free all slaves they may own, urging them to do that in a great number, but he does not give any information neither about the press that published the text nor the exact date that the bishop had spoken so.

The clergy and slavery - The Bishop of Pernambuco, says the press, issued a pastoral (instructions) urging the clergy and his diocese to promote as many (slave) releases as possible, inviting all the priests of the church in Olinda to set free, from now on, all slaves they own. The prelate, insisting in this exhortation, manifest their joy in the hope that in the day of Pontiffs jubilee, the priests of his diocese will not own one single slave.¹⁶²

3.3.6 - In *O Apóstolo*, number 97. Sunday, 28th of August, 1887

This excerpt was taken from the news section under the title *A libertação dos Escravos* (The Abolition of Slavery). Referring to the Catholic community, the author asserts that they were never indifferent to the contemporaneous debate about the slavery issue, yet when writing about the emancipation cause he asserts that they would not be in silent any longer. By this fact, I have the

¹⁶¹ In Hemeroteca Digital Brasileira, s. v. «O Apóstolo (RJ), 1884, number 36» <http://hemerotecadigital.bn.br>, Accessed in December 5th, 2013.

¹⁶² In Hemeroteca Digital Brasileira, s. v. «O Apóstolo (RJ), 1884, number 36» <http://hemerotecadigital.bn.br>, Accessed in December 5th, 2013.

understanding that for a period of time, the Catholic community was silent.

If we were never indifferent to the issues which have been raised among us, much less would we be in concern to the servitude or the liberation of slaves; let us just consider for a while this important issue by another prism different than many others considered, and not stinting any effort on behalf of this fair, friendly and patriotic cause - the liberation of slaves - we will not be silent now, when it intends to take another direction... We have reached a point about the liberation of slaves, which is not lawful to anyone to keep more silent, under the penalty of being an enemy of the land ...

He also defends the concept that God created all men in his own image and that no human being should be subjugated as a slave. The bondage that Brazil had carried for a long time was a shame for the nation and the faithful Catholics should break the shackles of such iniquitous practices.

The idea of slavery is repugnant to the teaching of the Gospel, to the morality, to the civilization of our century, and its existence constitutes an invincible obstacle to our physical and moral progress ... the church never consented to slavery; many saints sacrificed themselves for the freedom of slaves, many bishops in Brazil raised their voices on behalf of those victims ... The religious who may still have slaves, under the inspiration of their patriarchs who never had slaves and sacrificed for the freedom of the enslaved, may wave these poor men who by iniquitous laws remain in slavery.¹⁶³

3.3.7 - In *O Apóstolo*, number 102. Sunday, 11th of September, 1887

This excerpt was taken from the news section under the title *A libertação dos escravos* (The abolition of Slavery). In this article the author P. L. asserts that the RCC had always fought for equality of men, asserting that many popes had stood against slavery including the Pope Paul III, Urban VIII and Benedict XIV as well as Pope Gregory XVI in *Supremo Apostolatus*, of December 3rd, 1839. For the author, slavery was an unjust practice that should be abolished and the reason for such practice was based on selfish motives.

If therefore the Church ever spoken by the voice of her pontiffs, it was condemning and never sanctioning traffic and which gave origin and explained the reason of slavery. But as it is demonstrated, that slavery is, with certainty and without the slightest doubt, contrary to all law, and thus an injury of it, glaring, undeniable, is still lawful for anyone to rely on the fact of possession to

¹⁶³ In Hemeroteca Digital Brasileira, s. v. «O Apóstolo (RJ), 1887, number 97» <http://hemerotecadigital.bn.br>, Accessed in December 8th, 2013.

justify slavery! No, no and no. We believe, therefore, that nothing remains in defense of slavery but a pure selfish motive¹⁶⁴

The author asserts that there was a conventional silence regarding the matter of slavery in Brazil, the society was sleeping and the RCC should protest against it. Nevertheless, he asserts that the Catholics should not anticipate the emancipation because it would come anyway.

We now draw the practical consequences of the doctrine here developed, consequences that already is so evident to any logical mind, and we believe that [the consequences] are already far away in the depths of consciences, but it is doomed to conventional silence, which we cannot help but protest against it; however, let us not anticipate what will further have its own place.¹⁶⁵

3.3.8 - In *O Apóstolo*, number 115. Wednesday, 12th of October, 1887

This article is entitled *O Episcopado Brasileiro e a Libertação dos Escravos* (The Brazilian Episcopate and the Abolition of Slavery). The author does not give any information about himself, however, he let a precious knowledge about what was the role of the Brazilian episcopate regarding the issue of slavery. He asserts that the RCC had not taken an important and decisive step towards the end of slavery before that time because there were laws concerning the rights of property in the great slavery market in Brazil. But now since the end of slavery was at hand, the RCC did not need to take a further step because on the eyes of the people, the problem was already solved. The farmers were making agreement with the slave workers and the idea of free labor was more acceptable than ever. With that in mind, the author argues that the RCC could not do much.

Two large considerations held the prudent prelates of the church to manifest in favor of this very just and holy cause. As the Archbishop of Salvador says in his brilliant pastoral letter of July, 28th “the fear of the consequences of a severe precipitation, which at first showed itself dangerous, held for some time the voice of the Church, which it was never raised in detriment of society.” In consideration and respect to the constituted laws, which, fair or not were laws that regulated interests so vast that it would be unwise to give the cry of alarm.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁴ In Hemeroteca Digital Brasileira, s. v. «O Apostolo (RJ), 1887, number 102» <http://hemerotecadigital.bn.br>, Accessed in December 8th, 2013.

¹⁶⁵ In Hemeroteca Digital Brasileira, s. v. «O Apostolo (RJ), 1887, number 102» <http://hemerotecadigital.bn.br>, Accessed in December 8th, 2013.

¹⁶⁶ In Hemeroteca Digital Brasileira, s. v. «O Apostolo (RJ), 1887, number 115» <http://hemerotecadigital.bn.br>,

The author asserts that some catholic orders still owned slaves and the explanation for that was the same that the majority of Catholics and non-Catholics had: they need slave labor for economic reasons. Nevertheless, the fact that Catholic orders owned slaves was not considered a problem, because sooner or later the government would enact a law to abolish the slave system, which was the current expectation. At the same time as he defends such Catholic orders, he says that everyone should give up of selfish feelings and be minded of the evilness which was carried by the slavery system.

It weighs only on the name of one or two religious orders the serious fact that still remain under their control a small number of slaves ... also having a particular economy to meet, the delay (of emancipation) is due to the same reason of opportunity, which is the universal justification of those who were said to have and still have slaves. Since it is known throughout the Empire the voice of the prelates which have already been manifested in favor of liberation, what would be the religious order, the Brotherhood or sisterhood that persists in holding slaves under their control? Even if not a word would be said for the sake of liberation, its extinction would not be something that could be held any longer... in a time much closer than the one that is as fixed by the laws of emancipation, we will have occasion to congratulate ourselves in the whole country, rejoicing saying: slavery is extinct!¹⁶⁷

3.4 – Books written by Roman Catholics Bishops

The Brazilian clergy not only wrote down some sermons preached throughout the country but they also published books where they discuss the role of the RCC in Brazil and her role in regard to the slavery system. It is important to notice that there were not many books written by Catholics during the slavery period concerning the slavery system in Brazil. The following primary sources were written in Portuguese and I made a free translation into English.

3.4.1 - Archbishop D. Sebastião Vide, 1707

The archbishop of Bahia, one of the most important province in Brazil at that time, wrote a book called *Contituições do Arcebisado da Bahia* (Constitution of the Archbishop of Bahia). It contains instructions about how the priests should do their work in order to assure that the slaves would be Christianized and thus follow the Catholic Faith. He exhorts all priests under his jurisdiction to

Accessed in December 10th, 2013.

¹⁶⁷ In Hemeroteca Digital Brasileira, s. v. «O Apostolo (RJ), 1887, number 115» <http://hemerotecadigital.bn.br>, Accessed in December 10th, 2013.

teach to slaves the Christian doctrines whereas the slaves in Brazil were the most in need of religious guidance. “The slaves are the most needed people to receive instruction due their rudeness; send them to the Church so that the priest teach them the Faith and they may learn the right beliefs.”¹⁶⁸ Hence, he asserts that the church was responsible for the instruction of those people. Many slave owners were not interested in catechizing the slaves, nevertheless he urges the priests to exhort the slave owners so that the slaves could have the chance to receive religious instruction and also be able to marry according to the doctrines of the RCC.

According to the Divine and human right, the slaves may marry other captives or free persons, and their masters cannot neither prevent them from marriage nor the use of it in a convenient time and place, nor should be the slaves mistreat in this matter selling them to other remote locations when married.¹⁶⁹

Interesting enough, he does not ask the priests to teach that the enslavement of the Black people was a sin, but he instructs them to teach the slave owners that they should take good care of them, providing them with enough food, clothes and a decent place to sleep.¹⁷⁰

3.4.2 - Bishop of Pará, A Questão Religiosa no Brasil, 1886

Antonio de Macedo da Costa was the bishop of Pará, a province located in the Northeast of Brazil which was very important due its economy based on rubber extraction. In 1886 the bishop publishes his book *A Questão Religiosa do Brasil* (The Religious Question of Brazil) where he defends the concept that for the development of Brazil it is mandatory the presence of the RCC in the country so that she can exercise her beneficial influence both upon the government and the people. In the book he gives precious information about how the government saw the RCC and its attitudes towards her. According to his account, the government had declared that they did not need the help of the church to solve social conflicts, the law by itself was the one and the only that should have importance to guide the nation. He brings to the discussion the curious fact that the government did not give any political power to the church in that period asserting that the constitutional laws were the foremost guideline for the country, not the church. Nevertheless, in 1873 the government sent a special diplomatic mission to Rome to ask the pope to help them in solving a social conflict which is not specify in the book.

¹⁶⁸ Vide 1707, pg. 12.

¹⁶⁹ Vide 1707, pg. 125.

¹⁷⁰ Vide 1707, pg. 151-152.

[the government] does not, can not tolerate that the pope exercises the acts of his sovereignty in Brazil. “The sovereignty of Brazil, the government vaunts, has no sovereign but if in addition to the sovereignty that has no sovereign (!) another would rise, I do not know what the outcome would be.” But then, what does this embassy to Rome mean? You do not admit that the pope be sovereign, exercising his sovereignty in the Empire. You do not admit and you can not admit it because the Freemasonry's burden would rise to stone you, yet you send an ambassador, an extraordinary envoy to the Pope so that he may convince the pope to intervene and put an end through his word an issue that stirs in Brazil? Has there ever been a most palpable contradiction?¹⁷¹

In connection with that, he brings to discussion the government apparent contradiction when the Brazilian representatives assert that they do not need any help from the RCC, yet, they send a special mission to Rome pleading for help. Reflecting on the government action he says that “it's conceived that having in hand two ways to finish the conflict, the government chooses one. But to employ both ways simultaneously, declaring each one of them effective and sufficient, it does not seem neither logical nor political.”¹⁷²

Now if the government was so convinced that a simple word, an admonition, a paternal counsel of the Pope was enough to immediately put and end in the conflict, and perhaps to cut the root of the issue so that it could no longer be raised up again, and precisely commands a mission to obtain the pontifical word, how come the same government declares itself as self sufficient to employ even greater severities?¹⁷³

This book is relevant to the research for the information found here. We see that the RCC had a great influence on the Brazilian society, not only on the people, but on the government as well. The government knew how important the church was and Costa asserts that that is the reason why they asked for the Pope's help on the issue discussed in the book. It leads one to think that the RCC was aware of her relevance for the government and if the church was willing to put and end in the slave system, perhaps she should not have kept silence for so long with the excuse of fearing the government.

¹⁷¹ Costa 1886, p. 20.

¹⁷² Costa 1886, p. 21.

¹⁷³ Costa 1886, p. 22-23.

Chapter IV – Documents Outside the RCC

In order to have a better understanding of the RCC and slavery in Brazil it is also important to look at some primary sources written from outsiders. It is sure that the RCC was not influencing the society alone, nevertheless the focus in this chapter is what others had said about the RCC and her influence in relation to the slavery practice. In this chapter I will present some texts from books which deal directly and indirectly with the topic of slavery in Brazil.

There is an scarcity of resources related to the RCC and slavery before the nineteenth century and the period in focus here is the nineteenth century specially from 1850 – 1888, therefore it was not necessary to add many documents before this date.

4.1 - Culture and Opulence of Brazil, 1711

In 1711 André João Antonil writes a book entitled *Cultura e Opulência do Brasil* (Culture and Opulence of Brazil) where he describes the economic situation at his time. His book is important for this research because it gives information about the daily life in the plantations and the gold rush activity which was changing the society. In this context, he asserts that slaves are the hands and feet of Brazil and without them the economic would collapse.¹⁷⁴ Not only that, he gives the reader the current structure which the society was build upon, including the role of the RCC in that time. He dedicates his book to all those who wanted to follow the steps of the Father José de Anchieta, known as the most important father defending the native people. It is important to remind that Father José de Anchieta lived in the seventeenth century and was fighting against enslavement of Indians, not against the enslavement of the Africans.

When it comes to RCC and the current society, he describes the RCC as being of vital importance to the administration of the plantation, on the grounds that when planning the logistics of plantations and its respective administrative staff, the priest was the first to be selected. The plantation owner would build the chapel and would be responsible for supplying the priest's needs. In compensation, the priest would be responsible for teaching the Christian faith to the plantation owner's family and servants including the slaves.¹⁷⁵

The plantation owner do not obligate the slaves to attend the Mass in the Holy days; instead, they keep the slaves busy with work so that the slaves may have no time to attend the Mass. The plantation owners do not charge the chaplains with the mission of instruct the slaves, giving to the

¹⁷⁴ Antonil 1711, p. 22.

¹⁷⁵ Antonil 1711, p. 11-14.

chaplain, if necessary, a better wage.¹⁷⁶

Even though the priest would be allowed to teach the slaves, it was not his primary task, he would do so only if the plantation owner would give him an extra payment and many slave owners were not interested in educating the slaves in the Christian faith, hence they kept the slaves for a long period of time only working in the plantations with no religious instruction at all.¹⁷⁷

4.2 - A Journey in Brazil, 1868

Louis Agassiz was an eyewitness who wrote a book in English entitled *A Journey to Brazil*. In that book he gives a short account about what he had beheld in relation to the RCC and slavery where he criticizes the behavior of the Brazilian clergy. Agassiz was a Swiss researcher who had plans to establish a great zoological museum in Brazil. His plans were taken as a good idea in the eyes of the Brazilian government and in 1865 he departed from New York to the city of Rio de Janeiro. In 1868 he wrote a book called *A Journey in Brazil* where he explored in depth the Brazilian nature and also gives some comments about the current situation about the society of that time.¹⁷⁸ In his account, he asserts that he does not intend to give a sociologist's point of view, he only reports a situation he witnessed which caught his attention due to the inconsistency displayed in the occasion.

On July 30th, Agassiz meets with Mr. Sinimbu who was the senator from one province in the Northeast region. The senator explained to him that emancipation was to be accomplished in Brazil by a gradual process which had already begun. In this conversation, the senator gave precious information about how was the current situation concerning the slavery in Brazil. The senator asserted that a large number of slaves were freed every year by the will of their masters. Since it was prohibited the importation of slaves, the end of the slavery system was at hand. Yet, the process was a slow one, and in the mean while a great number of Africans were held under bondage.

While in the city of Rio de Janeiro, Agassiz had the opportunity to see a marriage between two Blacks. He vividly describes the scene giving the reader a glimpse of how some Catholics priests horribly treated the Africans when they needed the church services.

The Portuguese priest, a bold, insolent-looking man, called them up and rattled over the marriage service with most irreverent speed, stopping now and then to scold them both, but especially the

¹⁷⁶ Antonil 1711, p. 25.

¹⁷⁷ Antonil 1711, p. 25.

¹⁷⁸ Agassiz 1868, p. iii-x.

woman, because she did not speak loud enough and did not take the whole thing in the same coarse, rough way that he did. When he ordered them to come up and kneel at the altar, his tone was more suggestive of cursing than praying, and having uttered his blessing he hurled an amen at them, slammed the prayer-book down on the altar, whiffed out the candles, and turned the bride and bridegroom out of the chapel with as little ceremony as one would have kicked out a dog.¹⁷⁹

Agassiz asserts that by the treatment that those Africans received, there was nothing in such wedding ceremony which deserved the name of religious instruction. Nevertheless, he affirms that there were few priests who instructed their Black parishioners.

4.3 - Historical Studies, 1876

In 1876 doctor Joaquim Caetano Fernandez Pinheiro published his book entitled *Estudos Históricos (Historical Studies)*. He was a very educated man, a professor in poetic rhetoric and literature in the Imperial College of D. Pedro II and the first secretary in the Brazilian Institute of History and Geography. In his book, he makes a historical account of the construction of the Brazilian society, where he describes the RCC in relation to the Indians and the African slavery practice. He asserts that the RCC in Brazil as well as in other countries fought for defending the natives. “The zeal of the missionaries was above all praise: tireless in spreading the faith they did not hesitate at the thought of martyrdom.”¹⁸⁰ He quotes a protestant man who wrote a book about Brazil saying “these missionaries were every way qualified for their office. They were zealous for the salvation of souls, they had disengaged themselves from all ties which attach us to life, and therefore they were not merely fearless of martyrdom but ambitious of it.”¹⁸¹ It is important to note that he praises the efforts of the Catholic missionaries in Brazil to catechize and support the natives in their freedom, not the Africans. Despite of that, Pinheiro asserts that the missionaries effort to support the natives did not have a great effect, after all, the native population of the Americas was almost extinguished by the conquerors.

When it comes to the African slavery, Pinheiro has the understanding that the RCC did not care or fought for them or sought for their welfare. He supports his argument in the example given by one of the greatest missionaries in Brazil, the Jesuit Father Antonio Vieira. He asserts that Vieira was the soul of the Jesuits of his time both in Brazil and in Portugal and he was the head

¹⁷⁹ Agassiz 1868, p. 130.

¹⁸⁰ Pinheiro 1876, p. 92.

¹⁸¹ Pinheiro 1876, p. 92.

responsible for all thinking. Pinheiro affirms that Father Vieira protected the natives from slavery and the colonizers where without free labor to work for them, so Vieira as the main RCC authority in the region of Maranhao, counseled them to turn to Africa in order to have supplied their longing for free labor.

...and settlers losing hope of having the Indians as slaves turned their eyes to the coast of Africa, as they had been remembered by the virtuous Dominican Las Casas, and later by Father Antonio Vieira, offering the government a plan to send slaves and then distributing them for free to the residents, as the only way to remedy the lack of workers, which by then was felt.¹⁸²

By giving such advices, Pinheiro says, the Father Vieira and the jesuit order would have the freedom to work in the Indian villages as they pleased, without the intervention of the settlers who looked at the natives as slaves.

4.4 - The Abolitionism, 1883

The abolitionist movement began around 1879 in Brazil. The idea existed in the mind of some Brazilians who fought for their ideology, many of them criticized the RCC for not only being a silence voice but for given a bad example. One of the greatest abolitionists, Joaquim Nabuco, wrote in 1883 one of the most important books against slavery practice in Brazil: *O Abolucionismo – The Abolitionism*. Nabuco was a politician in the province of Ceará and under his influence the province became the first one to emancipate the slaves. In his book, he criticizes the Brazilian clergy by making an analysis of its behavior. Also, he presents a great number of arguments against the inheritance that the Portuguese left in Brazil: the practice of slavery.

The book is filled with denunciations of the society where he also accuses the RCC in failing to contribute to the end of the slavery system. He states that in other countries the propaganda of emancipation was a religious movement preached and taught from the pulpit and diligently taught in different churches, however, in Brazil, the abolitionist movement unfortunately had nothing to do with the church. “The Catholic church, despite its immense power in a country fanatical for her, never raised her voice in Brazil in favor of emancipation.”¹⁸³

If what gives strength to the abolitionism is not primarily the religious feeling, which is not the arm of progress that it could be, because it had been distorted by the clergy itself, it is not also the spirit

¹⁸² Pinheiro 1876, p. 123.

¹⁸³ Nabuco in Fonseca 1887, p. 27-28.

of charity or philanthropy. The war against slavery was, in England, a religious and charitable movement... In Brazil, however, abolitionism is primarily a political movement, for which undoubtedly is powerfully interested in the slaves and has compassion for their fate, but that comes from a different thought: to rebuild Brazil on freed workers and the union of races in freedom.¹⁸⁴

4.5 - Speech in the Abolitionist Society of Ceará, 1884

The following speech was printed in a form of book containing only 16 pages. Here, the counselor of the abolitionist society of Ceará, J. Liberato Barroso, gives a speech in a solemn session of the society. The province of Ceará is located in the northeast region in Brazil which had an important port for transporting slaves. He asserts that without the incentive or support from the RCC, the emancipation idea began to take shape around 1879, when slave prices were low, and the province had suffered with severe drought which disrupted food production and caused many deaths by starvation. The farmers could not keep their slaves, so they were forced to sell them. In this context came a strong abolitionist campaign articulated by the media, intellectuals, bourgeois and even rural oligarchies segments, which were all infected by the liberal idea circulating in Europe where for decades the slave system had been condemned. Hence, in 1879, to commemorate the eighth year of the Free Womb Law, a small organization called *Perseverança e Porvir* (Perseverance and Hereafter) appeared, founded by young people in good financial conditions. Later, the small organization became bigger under the name *Sociedade Abolicionista Cearense* (Abolitionist Society of Ceará) and in 1881 they launched the newspaper *O Libertador* (The Liberator) aiming to mobilize the public opinion to support the abolitionist cause. They succeeded in their goal and on March 25th, 1884 the president of the province of Ceará, declared the abolition of slavery. The province makes history by being the first to emancipate, at least officially, all the slaves in its territory. To celebrate the accomplishment of such goal, in same day the emancipation was declared, J. Liberato Barroso, gives a speech:

The free and strong man, accustomed to measure his strength with the tempests of the ocean, has affirmed to the government of his country the unwavering, indispensable, unavoidable, inescapable necessity to break the irons of slavery in the Brazilian Empire, the necessity of breaking the moral obstacle which separates us from the civilized world.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁴ Nabuco in Edições do Senado Federal 2003, p. 38.

¹⁸⁵ Barroso 1884, p. 7.

He urges the citizens of Brazil to stand up for the cause whereas the slavery system hindered the country of growing and developing. Such system was a nuisance that the government had been ignoring, however, the people of Ceará and all Brazilians could not ignore it any longer. “we must have the courage to abolish such baleful institution, which has defiled the work and corrupted the family structure by attacking the society in its foundations.”¹⁸⁶ The interesting fact is that the RCC was not even mention for any contribution to help the emancipation movement in that region.

4.6 - The Christian Religion and its Relationship to Slavery, 1886

Eduardo Carlos Pereira was a priest in the Independent Presbyterian Church of Brazil. In 1886 he writes his book *A Religião Cristã e Suas Relações Com a Escravidão* (The Christian Religion and its Relationship to Slavery). In the book he criticizes the RCC and other churches which had not done much in fighting against the slavery system. He says that all Christians should be in deep sorrow for the enslavement of others and it was a shame that many defended with the Bible the rights of property over a slave.

It is a must to speak up frankly to slaveholders how slavery is offensive to the laws of God and to humanity, how is despicable the exploitation of a race that has as much right as any other when it comes to freedom that God gave them. I will proclaim and I will denounce to the new children of Israel this crime that still stains, with very great detriment of the Gospel, the bosom of the evangelical churches in Brazil.¹⁸⁷

He asserts that the RCC had being silent, an attitude which was not in accordance with the teachings of the Bible. He condemns the behavior of the priests by comparing their deeds with the example of the Apostle Paul. In relation to the slavery system Pereira states that “it would be ridiculous to assume that the position of St. Paul in the Roman Empire is identical to the current preachers of the Gospel in the Empire of Brazil. So why the impasse, the fearful silence before such a serious crime?”¹⁸⁸

4.7 - Slavery, the Clergy and the Abolitionism, 1887

Luis Anselmo Fonseca, was a defender of the abolitionist cause and had a critical view about the RCC asserting that the church did not do her duty in Brazil. He stood up for the cause of

¹⁸⁶ Barroso 1884, p. 10.

¹⁸⁷ Pereira 1886, p. 7

¹⁸⁸ Pereira 1886, p. 31.

emancipation becoming one of the most important persons who contributed to the emancipation in Brazil. In 1887 he wrote *A Escravidão, o Clero e o Abolicionismo* (Slavery, The Clergy and the Abolitionism). He dedicates the book to the emancipation cause, calling the reader to analyze the current situation and to ask him/herself what is the role of every single individual and institutions towards the misfortune of slavery. At his time, the emancipation was at hand; however, there were still some institutions which were working in various ways against the fulfillment of the emancipation, whether openly against it or by acting as if the slavery did not exist. The fact is that the abolitionist campaign had already spread throughout the country as well as in the province of Bahia, which was one of the most important provinces at that time, where the author lived and published his book. Fonseca asserts that the resistance attitude of slaves was generating apprehension and tension in the society. The situation was increasingly aggravated by the actions of radicalization of some abolitionists. Many activists promulgated the scape of slaves, causing great anger among owners. In 1887, e.g., the abolitionist Cesario Mendes after several incidents was arrested on a charge of having given shelter to many slaves who fled from the cities.

Fonseca enumerates some factors that determined the delay of the emancipation comparing to other places, asserting that the Brazilian society was highly dependent upon slaves and therefore the people gave little attention to the emancipation campaign. Among the reasons for such delay, he also points out the RCC. He asserts that the church did not care at all for the cause of emancipation and that the very same church that preached the love of God to all men, she was acting indifferently towards the suffering of the Black people. “In Brazil the slavery still exists, and for what our clergy has done and does against the love they dedicate for freedom, surely slavery would last forever.”¹⁸⁹

When it comes to the priests who have captives, which really is abominable, they have the same cruelty toward the victims, the same open hostility, the same fury of the other masters regarding the abolitionism, the same hypocritical and ridiculous claims of the right to property, the same feigned zeal for the interests of farming, the same war on the generous idea and its proponents, the same contempt for justice and true interests of Brazil. When it comes to those [in the clergy] who do not have slaves, we find the greatest indifference to the cause of the poor victims, to the stripping of their rights, and all personal considerations go towards the masters, whose interests they serve and support.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁹ Fonseca 1887, p. 140.

¹⁹⁰ Fonseca 1887, p. 12.

Later, Fonseca asserts that the church kept silence, she did not raise her voice to denounce the horrors of slavery. When trying to explain the reasons for the lack of attitude of the church, he argues that perhaps the RCC was not sure about the illegitimacy of slavery, and he concludes that if it is the case, there was no reason to doubt about the slavery institution.

How can we explain the inertia and the quietism of the clergy before the epochal social issue of the abolitionism? Perchance, do they have doubts about the illegitimacy of slavery? Do they judge the Black people out of the Gospel?... Slavery is not something which one may have doubts on any sphere.¹⁹¹

Many priests think they can justify their negative procedure by giving personal considerations, by the duty of keeping convenience towards the received customs, by the respect for the traditions. No value have these excuses.¹⁹²

Fonseca asserts that the RCC had no reason for fearing. If the Brazilian priests had acted as the should, they would have the support of God, the sympathy of the people and the support of some laws which were gradually promulgated in order to abolish slavery. Above all, their cause would be a just one for the reason that for a long time ago it had been proved the advantages of free labor over slave labor.

If our priests had wanted and had been able to fulfill their military duty against slavery and in favor of freedom, they could count as a point of support not only the Christian doctrine, but also count on the philosophy both as metaphysic and as positive, and with both private and public rights. From their side would also be the legitimate and well understood material and economic interests of the nation, because for a long time the political economy has shown the most positive statistics of the advantages of free labor over slavery.¹⁹³

The priests would not have to fear for being considered as revolutionary and disturbers of the peace, because they would preach what the law and morality teach, what is already a scientific and moral dogma, which is in the consciousness of all truly civilized men, what is claimed by humanity speaking through the mouth of its most worthy representatives.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹¹ Fonseca 1887, p. 42.

¹⁹² Fonseca 1887, p. 47.

¹⁹³ Fonseca 1887, p. 130.

¹⁹⁴ Fonseca 1887, p. 131.

Chapter V - Discussion

The practice of slavery is very ancient and it existed in various types even before the 15th century, i.e., when a kingdom conquered another, when a person had a great debt and had no other way to pay it unless serving as slave and so soon. However, it was not until the 15th century and with growing frequency from the 16th to the 19th centuries, that racial slavery became the main type. As we learnt before, the history of Brazil is stained with slavery and since the discovery of the country the RCC had the so called religious monopoly in Brazil. This fact brings us back to our initial question: What was the role of the Catholic Church regarding African slavery in Brazil during the emancipation period? We can look at this main question from different perspectives, however, in order to answer it more precise we need to take into discussion some points: (1) the statements of the RCC as an institution in regard to the practice of slavery, and (2) the historical account of eyewitnesses regarding the church and slavery. In order to have a fuller understanding of the topic, it is necessary to analyze the church teachings and deeds before the emancipation period and during the emancipation period.

It is important to notice that I do not have a separate theoretical chapter for the reason that the disposition of the thesis goes as follows: in the first chapter, I explain the method by which the research is done. In chapter II, I present the background so that the reader can be acquainted with the necessary information about Brazil, the RCC and slavery. In chapter III and IV, I present the primary sources in their historical context. Such documents are the most important because the research could not be done without the information found in there. Hence, in the previous chapters I give the background for the debate and in this chapter I bring in to discussion the eyewitnesses who assess the relationship between church and slavery in Brazil, the assessments of modern scholars as well as the position of the Catholic church. In addition to that, I give my own evaluation on each part of the discussion based on the previous assessments related above. Therefore, there was no need of having a separate theoretical chapter.

Here, I use some discussion partners who have written books specifically about the RCC and slavery. Some authors are Catholics and others are not. The first one is John T. Noonan, he is a Catholic judge who has written important books about the interaction of the Catholic moral doctrine with the law system. For the present work his book *“A Church That Can And Cannot Change: The Development of Catholic Moral Teaching”* will be of more importance. The second one is John Francis Maxwell. He is a priest and he was released from his parochial duties between 1966 and 1973 to make his research about the history of Catholic teaching concerning the legitimacy of slavery which resulted in the book *“Slavery and the Catholic Church”*. The third one is Robert

Edgar Conrad, who wrote many books about the relation of the RCC and the African slavery. Nevertheless, it will only be taken into consideration two of his books: “*Children of God's Fire*” which is a documentary history of Black slavery in Brazil and “*World of Sorrow: the African Slave Trade to Brazil*”. The fourth one is the theologian Laennec Hurbon who wrote the the book “*The Church and Afro-American Slavery*”. All authors above discuss the relationship between the RCC and slavery. Also, I take into consideration the books written during the period under investigation due to their important historical account.

As stated before, the focus of the study is on the emancipation period, from 1850 to 1888 and in order to better answer the research question, it is necessary to make use of the past. The reason why the prior centuries to the emancipation are presented is due to the holistic aspect of the research question. The history helps to assess the present and therefore it is mandatory of go back in time starting in the fifteenth century. Thus, the reader can have access to the necessary historical account.

5.1 - Slave Status According to the Law and Practices in Brazil

During the emancipation period in Brazil, there were some laws which somehow could offer a glimpse of rights to the slaves. The concept that slaves were human beings became stronger only during the emancipation. However, slaves were still considered as properties. It is relevant to notice that although slaves were considered as properties, they were not considered as chattel so that slave owners would not have the power of death upon slaves, at least in the eyes of the law.¹⁹⁵ The law would use different terms to define the slave rights. Agostinho Perdigão Malheiro, who was Minister of the Supreme Court of the Empire of Brazil, he asserted that as an offender, or an agent of offense, the slave was considered as a human entity, a person, not a thing, he/she would be held as responsible for a crime. However, when the slave was a victim, or a sufferer, he/she would be considered only as “an instrument of labor, a machine.” Hence, all rights were denied to him, e.g. the right to make an accusation against his master, the right to have an established family, sentiments, etc, he/she was reduced to the status of a thing.¹⁹⁶

The very same law that would regard a slave as a thing would also offer somehow a protection prohibiting the master to punish a slave to the point of dehumanizing or degrading him. However, in practice, the law only would regard a slave as a human being when it would suit the interests of the masters, which means only when the slave was the aggressor. Little the law did to grant humanity to the slaves. In the vast plantations of Brazil’s countryside the State was not

¹⁹⁵ Tannenbaum 1947, p. 97-98

¹⁹⁶ Malheiro, p. 14-15; 34-35; 39-40; 67.

present; the master would reign in his property as he pleases and the slaves were under his power. The government in that time was not highly organized, it could not be present in many areas and its power to improve the life condition of a slave was limited. Another interesting fact is that the Brazilians of that time were known for finding a special way to do things. There was even a popular expression “*dar um jeitinho*” which means that there was always an alternative way to find a solution to work things out even if such alternative way is not entirely according to the law.¹⁹⁷ Having that in mind, I would suggest that the slaveowner would make things to work out to his own benefit, thus, limiting any glimpse of human rights that the law could offer to slaves.

The church also had difficulties to grant a better life to the slaves, even if it was of her interest. Even though the priests would be present in some plantations, they were completely depended upon the landlords and that could imply that the priests would find very difficult to protect the slaves’ humanity.

5.2 - The RCC Theology Concerning Slavery

Through centuries the RCC accepted some types of slavery based on the idea of the consequences of people's own choices and on the doctrine of original sin. Before the nineteenth century the Catholic clergy generally followed St. Augustine asserting that although slavery was not written into the natural moral law it was not absolutely forbidden by that law. Father John Maxwell asserts that only during the Second Vatican Council in 1965 the church declared that slavery was an infamy that dishonored the Creator and, therefore, was a poison in society¹⁹⁸.

Some historians assert that the RCC did not make any statement to condemn the transatlantic slave traders before the nineteenth century¹⁹⁹, nonetheless what she did was to make a separation between just and unjust enslavement and “theologians proposed four legal titles to justify slavery: capture and war, sale, punishment for a crime, and nativity.”²⁰⁰ Perhaps the most known theologian to suggest the division between just and unjust enslavement was St. Thomas.²⁰¹ By that division, the RCC could support the just enslavement and condemn unjust enslavement. In 1866 Pope Pius IX affirmed that it was not against divine law for a slave to be sold, bought or exchanged.²⁰² Until the 19th century the RCC did not develop a theology against the enslavement of

¹⁹⁷ The Brazilian popular expression “*Dar um jeitinho*” would be better translated into English as *to pay off*.

¹⁹⁸ Maxwell 1975, p. 13.

¹⁹⁹ Some historians as John T. Noonan, Laennec Hurbon and John F. Maxwell

²⁰⁰ Curran 2008, p. 15

²⁰¹ Jarrett 1968, p. 121-126.

²⁰² Maxwell 1975, p.78-79.

the Africans and it was common to believe that the slavery was in accordance to the divine will to the world. The clergy preached that the Africans should accept their condition and the slave owners should treat well their slaves. Some historians suggest that the RCC supported the practice of slavery based on the Aristotle's theory of natural inferiority of some races, where they grounded the enslavement of the Black people on account of biblical narrative, preaching that slavery was a divine sanctioned institution, both in the Old and New Testament.²⁰³ They taught that the biblical account of slavery was presented at almost the start of humanity. In the book of Genesis, where Noah, the survivor of the flood, curses his son to be servant of the others. "And he said, cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren", Genesis 9:25. The conclusion taken from this text is that the Africans were descended from the cursed son, Canaan. Some took the text and twisted it in order to corroborate the practice of slavery, where the Africans wrongly became Canaan's offspring. Others would claim that the Africans were descended from Cain, who was cursed by God himself.²⁰⁴ "Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth", Genesis 4:11-12.

The RCC taught that the Old Testament reviews that slavery was a common practice and God was never against it, on the contrary, in some accounts God even curses people condemning them to slavery.²⁰⁵ Here are some examples of the theology the RCC carried to support the just enslavement:²⁰⁶ God blesses Isaac with two twin sons who were constantly clashing in Rebecca's womb and when she asks God why, he explains that two peoples would come and one would be the servant of the other, Genesis 25:21-23. Such prediction is fulfilled with the enslavement of the Edomites, the descendants of Esau. In the book of Numbers 31:18, the Israelites were supposed to enslave the virgins as a reward of the victory upon the Midianites. In Deuteronomy 20:14, the Lord commends the Israelites to spoil and plunder the people and the cattle of their enemies. In the book of Joshua there is a notion that the Hebrew people had the divine permission to enslave the other nation they would conquer with the help of the Lord, Joshua 9:16-24. I Kings 9:20-21 describes the fate of different peoples who were subdued to slavery by the command of the Lord of Israel. There is also a prophecy in the book of Isaiah 14:2 which says that "many nations shall escort Israel to her place, and she shall employ them as slaves and slave girls in the land of the Lord. She shall take her captors captive and rule over her task-masters."

²⁰³ Roberts 2008, p. 62-63.

²⁰⁴ Hayes 2003, p. 72-74.

²⁰⁵ Hayes 2003, p. 73

²⁰⁶ Maxwell 1973, p. 25.

When it comes to the New Testament the RCC taught that a Christian master should take into consideration his responsibility to treat their slaves with respect, noting that the Lord, the Master of the masters, he was watching over them, Ephesians 6:9; also, a slave should not go against his master, but the slave should be obedient, Ephesians 6: 5-8. The slaves were expected not only to be obedient but to perform their duties well because God would reward them by doing so, Colossians 3: 22-25.

The RCC had not seen anything absurd or contradictory in simultaneously enslaving and baptizing the African peoples.²⁰⁷ Based on the book of I Corinthians 7: 21-24, the clergy sought to comfort the slaves by teaching that they should accept their bondage, because there would be more hope for them being a slave, having the opportunity to convert from darkness to light and go to heaven than to be free in their homelands and go to hell due their original condition in paganism. Hence, the Brazilian clergy and laymen were convinced that slavery was authorized by God and therefore there was nothing wrong in enslaving the Africans.

5.3 - The RCC and Slavery Prior Nineteenth Century

The Catholic teaching about the African slavery trade found expression through the documents issued by some popes. As previously stated, it is hard to find church documents regarding the African slavery trade dating the fifteenth and sixteenth century, specially because the African slavery was taking shape during that time and it was not conspicuous. After the sixteenth century the African slave trade was already very known as a stablished practice of colonizers who had taken to the Americas as many African slaves as they could. Meanwhile, the RCC expressed her opinion about the slave trade. The church was the main religious power in Europe, exercising her influence upon the people and no less upon the government.

Some scholars assert that the RCC did not condemn slavery until the end of the nineteenth century, where she had been influenced by the circumstances acting to her own welfare. Others defend that the RCC have always been against the African slavery through the times.

5.3.1 - The Popes and Slavery

The bull *Sicut Dudum*, written by Pope Eugene IV on January 13th 1435, is the first document found which was written by a pope regarding the enslavement of the Black people. Concerning the enslaving of Black natives from the Canary Islands, pope Eugene IV explicitly condemns the enslavement of the natives, where he states he would excommunicate those who did not want to

²⁰⁷ Clark and Gould 2010, p. 162.

listen to his words. Nearly 60 years before the Europeans reached the Americas a pope had demonstrate a positive attitude against slavery. Would that be alone an evidence or argument that the RCC had rejected and fought against the enslavement of the Africans during the centuries to come? According to Father Maxwell what happened in this case was that the church had only censured the unjust enslavement, which would be: (1) forcedly enslave the free natives of the islands on the ground that their territory was conquered, (2) the slave traders had broken the tradition that prohibited them to enslave other Christians and (3) they had subjugated such people from which Christendom was not at war with.²⁰⁸

Some years later in 1455, with a new pope a new policy emerged. Pope Nicholas V issued many papal bulls where he allows the Portuguese and Spanish conquerers to do as they pleased with the people of West Africa and also the peoples from the New World. There are three main papal bulls which authorizes Portugal to imprisoned and enslave other peoples. The bulls are *Dum Diversas*, promulgated in June 18th 1452; the second one is *Romanus Pontifex*, January 8th, 1455 and the third one is *Inter Caetera*. It is important to note that at that time Christendom was at war with the Saracens who were Muslims. They were considered to be the enemies of the gospel and therefore the RCC had understood that they should to be kept as slaves. Maxwell makes an interesting observation:

In conclusion, these Popes could only have addressed these documents to the Kings of Portugal if they had been led by the Portuguese to believe that the military situation in West Africa was an extension of the military conditions already existing in the Mediterranean, in the unending conflict between Christians and Saracens would also apply in the relations between the Portuguese and the West African Negroes. If a fifteenth century canonist had been informed of this misrepresentation of facts by the Portuguese it is likely that he would have been of the opinion that this grant of permissions, etc., through the Pope's exercise of his *plenitudo potestatis* was therefore null and void.²⁰⁹

As presented above, Maxwell asserts that the pope would only have addressed such documents if he had been led to believe that the situation was not in favor of the Christendom. However, how could the pope address documents in a such important matter without even bothering to look further into the real situation? Noonan argues that the Portuguese would have done the same even if the RCC had not said a word. What the explorers wanted was just a reaffirmation by the pope so that their

²⁰⁸ Maxwell 1975, p. 52

²⁰⁹ Maxwell 1975, p. 55.

cause would be a pious one.²¹⁰ In other words, as I see it, for the RCC it was acceptable to enslave other peoples if they were from other faith, the church did not consider the enslaving of other peoples as a sin, if only the explorers would be fitted in what the church called just enslavement. As the main religious power in the Europe in the fifteenth century, the church could have stood against the practice of slavery if they were willing to.

5.3.2 - The Brazilian clergy and Slavery

One of the most famous Father in the colonial Brazil was the jesuit Antonio Vieira. As stated in the document presented in the chapter III, 3.1.4, the Father Vieira sought to justify the enslavement of the Africans. Conrad describes in his book that the Vieira criticized the slaves owners for mistreating their slaves, yet the Father used the bible to justify the enslavement of the Africans. Conrad also asserts that the RCC had conflicting roles in regard the slavery practice.²¹¹ In his sermon Vieira asserts that the Our Lady of Rosary, which is another name of the Virgin Mary, had approved the bondage of the Africans in this world “so that they may be granted freedom in the second.”²¹² As I see it, Conrad makes a well-grounded observation when asserting that the church had conflicting roles. Father Vieira was the most important Jesuit of his time in Brazil, he represented the voice of the Brazilian clergy defending the natives in Brazil, asserting that they should have their rights of freedom as the white men. However, his message to the Africans slaves was different. He affirmed that the slaves should accept their bondage and that they should be satisfied with the promise of a better life after death.

When searching for documents written by people who lived in that time, I presented the book of André João Antonil in chapter IV, 4.1. Antonil witnessed that the slave owners and the Brazilian clergy were not very much interested in catechizing the African slaves who worked in the vast plantations of the country. He writes that the religious representatives were not so active in teaching the slaves in the plantations, many slaves would get baptized in the Christian faith without even knowing in what to believe.²¹³ The author provides us the account that the Brazilian clergy apparently was not engaged in teaching the Africans about their value and rights as human beings. At the same time, as presented in the Chapter 3, 3.4.1 the Brazilian clergy apparently had a positive attitude. The archbishop of Bahia, Sebastião Monteiro da Vide writes in 1707 *Contituições do Arcebispado da Bahia* (Constitution of the Archbishop of Bahia) where he defended that the African

²¹⁰ Noonan 2005, p. 66-67.

²¹¹ Conrad 1983, p. 163.

²¹² Conrad 1983, p. 164.

²¹³ Antonil 1711, p. 25.

slaves should receive instruction, a fair treatment, and should have their rights respected when it comes to marriage and constitution of a family. The archbishop severely criticized the slaves owners who did not give a decent life to their servants, neither respecting them as human beings nor giving them the right to get married or even to live together with their families. Also, the RCC recognized the Black Brotherhoods presented in 3.1.4. The slaves had organized themselves in those brotherhoods having Our Lady of the Rosary as their protector. Conrad asserts that the church had encouraged them to organize their own brotherhoods where they could have at least a glimpse of dignity.²¹⁴ In 1757, the Dominican Friar, D. Domingos Loureto Couto wrote his account on the religious activities of slaves in Recife. The RCC recognized the brotherhoods but did not give her support. Couto writes that ²¹⁵“the black people, and captives, have proved themselves so devoted to the service of the Mother of God, Our Lady of the Rosary, that they themselves, although poor, resolved to establish a beautiful church, in which they alone are the founders and administrators.”²¹⁶

As we have seen before, the archbishop of Bahia in 1707 did not write defending the slaves, though he recommended that they at least should receive some instructions. Conrad asserts that in 1794 with a new archbishop the scenery for the slaves gets even worst when the archbishop gives his full support to slavery and the slave trade. When he was informed that an Italian friar in Brazil was preaching the equality of men and that the Africans should not be subjugated as slaves, the archbishop asked the governor to deport the friar who had been living there for nearly fourteen years.²¹⁷ As my own consideration, I would assume that as a representative of the RCC in Brazil, the archbishop of Bahia did not act according to what he was supposed to. I see that he should give somewhat a support for this friar and his attempt to open the eyes of the society for the shame of slavery. Hence, I would affirm that the Brazilian clergy did not have a great man who stood against the enslavement of the Africans before the nineteenth century, neither in the most important state on that time, Bahia, nor anywhere else.

5.4 - The RCC and Slavery During the Emancipation Period

The RCC had recognized the legitimacy of slavery when the church herself had bought and used slavery labor, to a certain extent several religious orders owned slaves in convents and colleges and

²¹⁴ Vide 1707, p. 125.

²¹⁵ Conrad 1983, p. 179-180.

²¹⁶ The English text of the book of Domingos Loureto Couto is found in *Children of God's Fire*, Edgar Conrad, Princeton University Press, 1983, Princeton, p. 180. In the same page is given the information where is found the original text in Portuguese.

²¹⁷ Conrad, 1983, p. 180.

even slave trade was also exercised by the clergy.²¹⁸ The church, with rare exceptions, did not discuss the legitimacy of African slavery. Such system was accepted as legal and it was enough to discuss only the form of its practical application. The Brazilian historian, Serafim Leite, made a research about the work of the Jesuits in Brazil and Africa, where he analyzed the attitude of the missionaries toward slavery. He stated that the Jesuits were commissioned with the task of defending the native's freedom in the Americas, however, such task was not extended to the Africans because they had been slaves even before going to the Americas. Hence, he asserts that the Catholics missionaries, did not have the task to defend the African's nonexistent freedom. He also asserts that in the context of slavery only two paths could be followed by the priests: (1) stand against slavery and be expelled from Brazil, which according to the author would add nothing to the nation or (2) accept the slavery system and try to fight against it by the exercise of charity.²¹⁹ I agree with him when he asserts that the RCC had to take a position and face the consequences and as presented above, before the emancipation period the RCC did not stand against the enslavement of the Africans. Now, during the emancipation period, it is notable the shift of attitude.

5.4.1 - The Popes and Slavery

The theologian Laennec Hurbon affirms that no Pope before 1890 condemned slavery. "One can search in vain through the interventions of the holy See—those of Pius V, Urban VIII and Benedict XIV—for any condemnation of the actual principle of slavery."²²⁰ Through my research I have learnt that some popes wrote about the slavery practices before 1890. As presented in chapter III the nineteenth century experimented a paradigm shift and the RCC followed that change. The first one to write in the nineteenth century against the enslavement of the Africans was Pope Gregory XVI who wrote in 1839 the *Supremo Apostolatus* where he states that the enslavement of the black people was morally unlawful and the unfair human slave trade should come to an end.²²¹ In Maxwell's opinion, the pope was only condemning the unjust enslavement of peoples, not the slavery system as a whole. He affirms that "there is no contradiction of the common Catholic teaching concerning just enslavement and just slave-trading. And there is no excommunication of those who carried on this unjust Negro slave trade."²²² Commenting on the bull, Noonan asserts that pope Gregory tried to defend the church when he listed several popes who had fought to abolish the

²¹⁸ Cintra 1985, p. 106.

²¹⁹ Leite 1945, p. 350-351.

²²⁰ Hurbon 1992, p. 372.

²²¹ Papal Encyclicals Online, accessed April 10, 2014, <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Greg16/g16sup.htm>

²²² Maxwell 1975, p 74.

slavery, however, according to him what the pope did was to give an unrealistic historical account, the pope Gregory even did not base his statements on a theological platform. Noonan affirms that

the prohibition, when it was announced, was not anchored in natural law or in the Gospel. A theologically literate reader would see that these remarkable omissions there are what a modern observer accurately notes as “ambiguities and silences.” The pope stigmatizes the trade as “inhuman” without developing an argument.²²³

Noonan concludes that the pope was led by the Protestant British Empire to write the bull repudiating the enslavement of other peoples specially the Africans. When it comes to the impact of the bull in the Brazilian society, Noonan asserts that the bull had not reached great impact. Despite of the papal recommendation and the attempts of Britain to persuade Brazil, the transatlantic slave trade kept going in Brazil until 1850 when finally the British enforced a law that authorized the royal navy to seize Brazilian slaves ships and only by force the slave trade came to an end in Brazil. “In *supremo* had taken away any claim to moral legitimacy. It was British resolution and sea power that brought a stop to the business.”²²⁴

As I see it, the RCC was just reflecting the ideology of that time. Before the bull *Supremo Apostolatus* was written, the British and the Spanish Empires, who were among the biggest empires which had spread the slavery practice around the world, together with other nations had already abolished slavery. The RCC was not the institution who came up with the idea of abolishing slavery. Therefore, I understand that until 1839 when *Supremo Apostolatus* was written, the church had only condemned the slave trade, not slavery itself.

From 1888 to 1890, Pope Leo XIII wrote two letters, the first one was specifically to the bishops of Brazil on the abolition of slavery and the second one was addressed to the bishops of the whole world.²²⁵ In both letters, *Plurimis* and *Catholicae Ecclesiae* written in 1888 and 1890 respectively, the pope condemns the slavery practice in Brazil and praises the efforts that the church had made to fight against slavery in the world. In the letters the pope gives a historical account of the events concerning the previous popes and the slavery practice. According to Maxwell the RCC teaching was mainly based in the Roman civil law and the question of that time was whether the RCC would change her teachings or not. In the attempt to answer the question, Pope Leo XIII tries

²²³ Noonan 2005, p. 107.

²²⁴ Noonan 2005, p. 109.

²²⁵ The Holy See, accessed April 11, 2014 http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_20111890_catholicae-ecclesiae_en.html

to give the perspective that the RCC had always had an anti-slavery position which would imply that they would not need to change anything, because the church had always been anti-slavery.²²⁶ Maxwell asserts that the significance of these two letters was that the pope himself was expressing an antislavery sentiment. Nevertheless, Maxwell asserts that the statements written in the two letters were

about 100 years too late to be of any effective value in the anti-slavery campaigns and civil wars and revolutions of the nineteenth century; the lay reformers and abolitionists had won their campaigns without much effective help or moral leadership from the teaching authority of the Catholic Church which had hitherto consistently refused to condemn the institution of slavery or the practice of slave-trading as such.²²⁷

Another important perspective pointed out by Maxwell is that pope Leo XIII had listed several other pontiffs who supposedly had stood against slavery. Maxwell argues that the popes listed in the letter had written documents which condemned the unjust enslavement, not the institution of slavery as a whole.²²⁸ Also, the pope did not mention other documents enacted by the RCC which authorized the enslavement of other people. For that reason Maxwell concludes that the historical account given by Pope Leo XIII was inaccurate.

Noonan does not find another conclusion different from Maxwell's. As he analyses the two letters, he says that the pope triumphantly claimed that the church had stood against the slave trade and slavery practice, however, the reality is that the pope inaccurately boasted that the RCC from the beginning had sought to eliminate slavery completely.²²⁹ For Noonan, the letters marked a change in the centuries-old position of the church on slavery. Yet, none of the two letters seemed to have an effect on the RCC dealing with the issue of slavery in Africa and Asia. He concludes that Pope Leo XIII was using an image of antislavery to have an influence on the current question of the labor condition in Europe.²³⁰

As I see it, the context in which the two letters were written was a period of change. The Brazilian society was changing its view on slavery and only after that the church acted. I agree with Maxwell and Noonan when they assert that the pope did not make an accurate historical account when he described other pontiffs who had raised their voices against slavery.

²²⁶Maxwell 1975, p. 116.

²²⁷Maxwell 1975, p. 119.

²²⁸Maxwell 1975, p. 117.

²²⁹Noonan 2005, p.114.

²³⁰Noonan 2005, p.114.

It is important to notice that in the debate of what was the role of the church regarding the African slavery, some historians and theologians defend the opinion that the RCC had always fought against the enslavement of the Africans playing a vital role in the history. Cardinal Avery Dulles, who holds a Chair in Religion and Society at Fordham University wrote an article criticizing Noonan's conclusion on the issue of RCC and slavery. For Dulles

no father or doctor of the Church, so far as I can judge, was an unqualified abolitionist. No pope or council ever made a sweeping condemnation of slavery as such. But they constantly sought to alleviate the evils of slavery and repeatedly denounced the mass enslavement of conquered populations and the infamous slave trade, thereby undermining slavery at its sources.²³¹

Dulles asserts that the RCC was far from silence, the church throughout the history had popes who stood against the enslavement of Indians and Africans. Interesting enough he also assumes that for many centuries the church as part of a slave holding society had made use of slavery labor, the popes themselves held slaves. Through my research I have seen that some popes and church officials wrote many documents over the centuries condemning the enslavement of the Indians, the primary sources are clear on it. But when it comes to the enslavement of Africans we clearly see that the RCC did not have the same attitude towards them, as they had towards the Indians. As I see it, cardinal Dulles makes an inaccurate analysis of what Noonan concluded. Noonan makes an accurate observation when he asserts that the church from 1962 - 1965 during the Second Vatican Council made a mutation in her teachings concerning the slavery.²³² Hence, the attitude that the RCC had towards the enslavement of the Africans in the beginning of the sixteenth century was not the same as they had in during and after the emancipation period.

The church, as late as 1866 upheld the slave trade as acceptable and moral when Pope Pius IX assert that the slavery was not in itself contrary to natural or divine law. It reviews that the RCC did make a classification between just and unjust slavery. Looking at this perspective, I see that the church did not classify the enslavement of the Africans, the racial enslavement, as been unjust.

Slavery itself, considered as such in its essential nature, is not at all contrary to the natural and divine law, and there can be several just titles of slavery, and these are referred to by approved theologians and commentators of the sacred canons ... It is not contrary to the natural and divine

²³¹ Dulles, Avery: "*Development or Reversal?*" October, 2005. Accessed April 21, 2014

<http://www.firstthings.com/article/2005/10/development-or-reversal>

²³²Noonan 2005, p. 119.

law for a slave to be sold, bought, exchanged or given.²³³

Another author who defends the opinion that the RCC had always fought against the enslavement of the Africans is the professor of sociology and comparative religion at the university of Washington, Rodney Stark. In his book, he affirms that the RCC taught through St Thomas Aquinas “that slavery was a sin, and a series of popes upheld his position, beginning in 1435 and culminating in three major pronouncements against slavery by Pope Paul III in 1537.”²³⁴ Although Stark holds this point of view that slavery was considered a sin, he asserts that Aquinas made distinction between just and unjust forms of subjection. He asserts that when slaveowners worked for the advantage and benefit of their slaves then the enslavement would be entitled as justifiable. For him, the unjust slavery was done when slaveowners used slaves to their own benefit, not the slaves'. Nevertheless, Stark concludes that the official view of the RCC is that slavery is sinful and “that the common assertion that the Catholic Church generally favored slavery is not true”²³⁵ As I see it, although Stark attempts to see that the RCC did defend the rights of freedom of all peoples, he reveals that the church did accept one type of slavery by what was called just subjection.

In his argumentation, he cites the Code Noir, which defined the conditions of slavery in the French Empire, as a “church inspired-code”²³⁶. Such code was far from being that. First, the code was enacted by the French king Louis XVI with the intention of restricting the activities of the Africans in the French colonial islands. Second, the code did not give freedom of worship to the slaves, on the contrary, it declared that only the RCC could be the present religious institution and that all slaves should be baptized in the catholic church and only Catholic marriages would be recognized.²³⁷ Thus, the code had no intention of promoting the welfare of the slave population, but to have control over them. Bearing that in mind, a question is raised: how such code could be entitled as a “church inspired-code”? In my point of view, such code restraint even more the choices of slaves, if such a thing ever existed. I would not use the Code Noir to show that the RCC had seen the slaves as humans being and thus there were entitled to be baptized. Rather, I would use such code to show that the French empire imposed to the slaves the Roman Catholic religion, taking from them even their religious freedom.

²³³Maxwell 1975, p. 78-79.

²³⁴Stark 2003, p. 329.

²³⁵Stark 2003, p. 337.

²³⁶Stark 2003, p. 335.

²³⁷ Garrigus, John transl.: *The Code Noir*, Paris: Prault, accessed April 29, 2014

https://directory.vancouver.wsu.edu/sites/directory.vancouver.wsu.edu/files/inserted_files/webintern02/code%20noir.pdf

5.4.2 - The Brazilian Clergy and Slavery

As we have seen, prior to the nineteenth century the Brazilian clergy neither had a strong voice against the slavery nor kept silence regarding the slavery practices, instead some of the main representatives of the RCC supported the enslavement of the Africans by owning slaves. Following the example of the popes, in the midst of the nineteenth century, the Brazilian clergy finally stirred up the interest in protecting the slaves, at least through their words. In 1866 the Bishop of Pará, Antonio de Macedo da Costa, writes a book called *A Questão Religiosa do Brasil* (The Religious Question of Brazil), see Chapter III, 3.4.2. In his book the bishop asserts that the RCC had a great role to play in the Brazilian society, the church was the mother of the nation and her presence was imperative. Costa points out that the church exercised a great influence on the people as well as on the government. The question one could raise is what did the church do with her influence when it comes to the African slavery practice? Costa asserts that “the reason why we have a free country, is the reason why we should have a Catholic country.”²³⁸ According to him, to achieve a high degree of culture and to be among the great, free and prosperous people, Brazil would need the Catholic faith which was the religion Brazil was baptized. Here, the bishop binds up the church with the freedom that people had. Furthermore, the bishop asserts that the RCC contributed to the development of Brazil and I see that such assumption is true, the church in Brazil did make a great job and it comes to defending the natives of slavery, giving them education, not only to them, but to the first “Brazilians” who were born after the discovery. Yet, when it comes to the African we may not completely affirm that the RCC as an institution gave them freedom. Where was such freedom when in his time Brazil still had slaves? The answer could be that the RCC had nothing to do with the freedom that some people enjoined.

The newspaper presented in Chapter III called *O Apóstolo* (The Apostle) is an important tool to this research because it was the biggest Catholic newspaper on that time. Through it, it is possible to understand the hardships of the time and look at the strategies of the RCC, the action of the bishops, the dialogue with potential allies, pastoral letters and other documents originating from the Brazilian episcopate and the Holy See. In a time when the press was not so wide spread and the information was not available to all, *The Apostle* is a valuable source of news about clerical and secular activities.

Although the first newspaper was published in 1866²³⁹, the decade of 1880 is the period where there are found a great number of sermons and articles regarding the slavery practices,

²³⁸Costa 1886, p. XIII.

²³⁹ Pinheiro, Alceste: “O Apóstolo, ano I: a autocompreensão de um jornal católico do século XIX, (7-9 May, 2009) Accessed April 22, 2014 <http://www.intercom.org.br/papers/regionais/sudeste2009/resumos/R14-0018-1.pdf>

specially in the year 1887. In spite of the fact that by 1866 Brazil had already started the emancipation process and the slavery issue was part of common conversation among the people, the Catholic newspaper did not give much attention to the subject, even though the aim of the newspaper was to inform the reader about the activities of the church and the current happenings in the society. I have researched in the newspaper archives and from the period of 1866 to 1881, only 3 articles were written about the African slavery in Brazil. As the main religious power, how could the most important church's newspaper have not given much attention to the fact that the emancipation was at hand?

The first text published on the topic of slavery was in 1871 (see Chapter 3, 3.3.1). Indeed, it was not an article but rather a copy of a pastoral letter from the bishop of Rio de Janeiro exalting the recent law promulgated on September, 28th 1871 which freed the newborn children of slaves. The bishop recognized that the law was good and he urged the Catholics who had slaves to accomplish the law. As I see it, the least the bishop could do was to urge the people to accomplish the law. In the same edition, they published a petition made by the government requesting the Brazilian bishops to use their influence upon the people to make sure that they are accomplishing the law.²⁴⁰ Here the government recognizes that the RCC had a great influence on the society and this fact brings up a question: How did the RCC use her influence to fight against the slavery system? When it comes to the practical field we see that even when the law enforced the enslavement of the Black in Brazil, the clergy did not go against it, instead, they urge the Catholics to accomplish the law being reminded that they should treat well their slaves, giving them food, a place to sleep and maybe to give the right to them to get married and live with their spouses but only if they were baptized in the Catholic faith. Therefore, what the RCC did through her bishops was nothing extraordinary or a deed which could be seen as a supporting attitude towards emancipation.

Another important fact is that the bishop writes that the RCC was “the first to establish the precepts to accomplish the abolition of slavery in the world.”²⁴¹ Unfortunately such assumption is inaccurate. First, the abolition of slavery neither in Brazil nor in the world started with the efforts made by the RCC. The Portuguese and the Spanish conquistadors received many times the approval of the RCC in the sixteenth and seventeenth century to subdue the Africans as slaves, transporting them as cargos to other countries, specially to the Americas. Also in Brazil, as presented before, the first step taken to abolish slavery was the prohibition of the transatlantic slave trade made in 1850

²⁴⁰ In Hemeroteca Digital Brasileira, s. v. «O Apostolo (RJ), 1871, number 41» <http://hemerotecadigital.bn.br>, Accessed in April 22th, 2014.

²⁴¹ In Hemeroteca Digital Brasileira, s. v. «O Apostolo (RJ), 1871, number 41» <http://hemerotecadigital.bn.br>, Accessed in April 22th, 2014.

and the credits to this accomplishment goes to the British empire that sent their navy to block any Brazilian ship transporting slaves from Africa.

The second text was published few months later. The text is a copy of a pastoral letter, from bishop of Maranhão, Luiz da Conceição Saraiva. Here, Saraiva claims that the Brazilian emperor had failed to put an end in the slavery system, and the bishop assumes that the RCC was accountable to guide the nation to lay up a claim to the emancipation.²⁴² Furthermore, he asserts that the church never ceased “to advocate for the restitution of the benefit of the original freedom to men, who God created free.”²⁴³ From my point of view, if what the bishop stated is right, why did the RCC hold slaves in Brazil if they were the ones who had to lead the nation to long for emancipation? Why the Brazilian clergy did not preach against the African slavery as they did against the enslavement of the native peoples? I would suggest that they did not preach against the enslavement of the Africans because they understood that the African slavery was legal and it was not against neither the divine will nor the nature law. Thus, they preached and taught that the slaves owners should not mistreat their slaves.

The third article is very contradicting. It was published in 1881 (see Chapter III, 3.3.3) and differently from the two previous article, this one attacks the emancipation movement asserting that such act would cause a chaos in the Brazilian society. As explain in the chapter III, the Catholic newspaper did not give the name of the author, therefore it is impossible to know if the article was written by a priest or a layman, but what matters here is that the article was published in “The Apostle” which means that the RCC decided to give voice to the author. Why would the church allow someone to write against the emancipation? I would suggest that the answer is found in the purpose of the article. In one of the biggest newspaper of that time, *Jornal do Commercio*, an abolitionist accused the church of being negligent towards slavery in the country. So in the attempt to be an apologist of the RCC the unknown author wrote his article asserting that the RCC had never partaken in the slavery system, that she had never been inclined to such practice. He affirmed that the RCC had been always against it and fought for it, but she did want to be affiliated with the emancipation movement, due to the tumult that such movement was causing in the country. Notwithstanding, there is a contradiction in what he writes. First he asserts that the church had always fought against slavery and then later he affirms that the church tolerated the slavery practice because she did not want to attack the authority of such practice recognized by the law. How could

²⁴² In Hemeroteca Digital Brasileira, s. v. «O Apostolo (RJ), 1871, number 52» <http://hemerotecadigital.bn.br>, Accessed in April 22th, 2014.

²⁴³ In Hemeroteca Digital Brasileira, s. v. «O Apostolo (RJ), 1871, number 52» <http://hemerotecadigital.bn.br>, Accessed in April 22th, 2014.

the church have always fought against the slavery system and at the same time had tolerated it? If the RCC in Brazil had always fought for the emancipation cause, she could not have tolerated it. To begin with, she should not have owned slaves. The author asserts that the RCC did own slaves because it would be better for them to be under the servitude of the Catholic clergy, then to be with anyone else. In my opinion, the best for the slaves would be their freedom, having the right to work as paid workers for the church, not as a slaves. To conclude, I understand that the author fails in his attempt to defend the RCC and that there is a great incoherence of the church, through her printed voice, allowing a man who is against the abolition to write an article where he defends the church as if she were a great abolitionist!

From 1887 on, the newspaper published a great number of articles about the RCC and slavery. The Brazilian clergy was now more than ever interested in preaching about the evilness of the slavery system. On July 28th the archbishop of Salvador city, which was the former capital of Brazil, wrote a pastoral letter asserting that “the fear of the consequences of a severe precipitation, which at first showed itself dangerous, held for some time the voice of the Church, which it was never raised in detriment of society.” (See chapter III, 3.3.8). His letter was quoted in one article in “The Apostle” where the author follows the same argument. In the article the unknown author asserts that the RCC could not have done much on the issue of the African slavery and the reason is that the Brazilian clergy could not go against the law. In addition, it would not be wise to give a support to the abolitionist movement because it could cause too much trouble. He asserts that “in consideration and respect to the constituted laws, which, fair or not were laws that regulated interests so vast that it would be unwise to give the cry of alarm.”

Based on the articles written in “The Apostle” and other primary sources such as sermons and books originated from the RCC I have the understanding that the Brazilian clergy were not a strong and important voice in the emancipation process. With her great influence on the Brazilian society, the church preferred to avoid conflict with the government, not fighting for the extinction of the African slavery system implemented in Brazil.

Another important primary source related to the Brazilian clergy is a sermon preached in 1887 by vicar Canabarro (See Chapter 3, 3.2.4). In the Black Brotherhood of Our Lady of Rosary, the vicar condemns the slavery system saying that it was against by the divine law. He quotes the pastoral letter of archbishop of Salvador asserting that the Brazilian clergy never raised its voice in detriment of the society. In other others, the clergy would not go against the interest of a society which highly depended on slave labor. As the same time, he preaches that the emancipation was delayed and should have already taken its place, that the RCC had always condemned the slavery bu the people and the government did not want to give attention to the teachings of the church.

Reading the primary sources, I have observed that the RCC asserts that she had always condemned the African slavery system. I understand that such assumption is inaccurate based on the ground that (1) before the nineteenth century there are many papal bulls, as presented in Chapter III, which allows the Portuguese and the Spanish to subdue the Africans to slavery based on the teaching of just and unjust slavery; (2) the Brazilian clergy owned slave, like other Catholic clergies around the world. The clergy did not give freedom to their slaves, nor the RCC enacted an ordinance where the slaves of the church should be freed; (3) The Brazilian clergy did not fight against the enslavement of the Africans as they did with the native people. Hence, The clergy was engaged to protect the Indians, not the Africans.

5.4.3 - The Outsiders

Few books were written prior the nineteenth century about the RCC and African slavery. I found one book entitled *Culture and Opulence of Brazil*, written by José Antonil in 1711 (see chapter IV, 4.1). Antonil describes that in the vast plantation was very difficult for the Brazilian clergy to teach the African slaves properly. Furthermore, he asserts that the priests who lived in the plantations or would come to visit the plantation owners, they would receive a payment, however they would be commissioned to teach the plantations owner's family, not the slaves. He points out that the Catholic priests found hard to teach the slaves due the (1) difficulties in accessing the villages and inland territories, (2) there were not enough priests in Brazil on that time to cover all the plantations spread throughout the country and (3) the plantation owners were not interested in giving religious instructions to their slaves. My assumption is that on the one hand, those were reasonable circumstances which hindered the priests to have contact with the slaves, on the other hand, however, the priests did had contact with the plantation owners. So what would a priest teach to those families? Would he dare to say that their only workforce should be freed? As we have analyzed previously, the church was the only religious institution in Brazil and she had great influence on the people and government. If the Brazilian clergy had preached against the slavery practice since its beginning, in my opinion, the African slavery would not have last until 1888.

When it comes to the nineteenth century there are a great number of books written during the emancipation period in Brazil. The great abolitionist Anselmo da Fonseca wrote in 1887 the book *A Escravidão, o Clero e o Abolucionismo – Slavery, Abolitionism and the Clergy*, where he describes that the clergy at that time did not defend, as it should, the abolition of slavery or fought for the cause of the oppressed (see chapter IV, 4.6). Fonseca asserts that the abolitionist movement in Brazil started in 1879 but that the idea of emancipation already existed in the minds of the people. Nevertheless, he criticizes the clergy saying that they did nothing to advance the abolitionist

idea in the country.²⁴⁴ To ground his arguments, he gives different examples of priests who owned slaves, including an extract from the national newspaper, where one Father gives a reward to whom finds and captures his runaway slave. Also, he makes reference to the Bishop of Pernambuco, Jose Cunha de Azevedo Coutinho who was in favor of slavery. The bishop wrote a book in 1806 called *Ensaio Econômico sobre o Commercio de Portugal e suas Colonias*, (Essay on Economic Commerce of Portugal and its Colonies), which was reprinted in 1816 and it was dedicated to the prince Don Pedro.²⁴⁵ I research the book that Fonseca mention and I found that bishop Coutinho looked at slavery in two different perspectives. (1) In the religious prism he asserts that the slavery was a dubious matter because it existed since the beginning of the world and (2) in the economical prism he saw that the slavery system was necessary in Brazil, because the Portuguese depended on the slavery work.²⁴⁶ Coutinho was an influential bishop that later became a Brazilian delegate to the Court of Lisbon, representing the Province of Rio de Janeiro.²⁴⁷ He had a great influence on the society of his time and as a presentative figure of the Brazilian clergy he was the “outmost embodiment of the spirit of the national clergy, in which he was one of the most notable members.”²⁴⁸ Unfortunately, as I see it, bishop Coutinho neither spoke out nor published a material against the enslavement of the Africans.

Giving different reasons for the delay of the emancipation of slaves, Fonseca points out that the RCC was guilty of collaborating for the delay and the reasons were that (1) there was a great number of priests who owned slaves who did not want to give them freedom due to economic reasons, claiming their rights of property on the slaves and (2) those who did not have slaves were indifferent to the situation showing disregard toward the slaves condition. Being an eyewitness of such contradiction he asserts that the clergy did not care about the Christian moral. "Greater than the crime of indifference is the crime of conscientiously give bad examples."²⁴⁹ It's possible that sometimes he exaggerated in his description of the Brazilian clergy, i.e. when he writes that “in Brazil the slavery still exists, and for what our clergy has done and does against the love they dedicate for freedom, surely slavery would last forever.”²⁵⁰ By the time he wrote his book there were some archbishops, bishops and fathers who had preached against the slavery practice, they were following the steps of the popes as we have analyzed previously. The fact that he exaggerates in his words does not mean that his argumentation is inaccurate. He was a fighter for the

²⁴⁴Fonseca 1887, p. 26.

²⁴⁵Fonseca 1887, p. 29-32.

²⁴⁶Coutinho 1816, p. 129-132.

²⁴⁷Carvalho 1979, p.57.

²⁴⁸ Fonseca 1887, p. 32.

²⁴⁹ Fonseca 1887, p. 45.

²⁵⁰ Fonseca 1887, p. 139-140.

emancipation and he did not receive the support of the Brazilian clergy, on the contrary, he affirms that the clergy attacked the emancipation cause because they believed that such act of protest was precipitated and it could lead the nation to an economic and social disaster.²⁵¹

He was very critical of the example the clergy was given in Brazil as well as the level of education and instruction of them. He asserts that the Brazilian clergy was deprived of intellect and was unable to contribute to the development of the nation. Fonseca was not alone when he affirmed that the Brazilian clergy lacked instruction. Louis Agassiz a biologist traveler to Brazil wrote in 1868:

As a general thing, the ignorance of the clergy is universal, their immorality patent, their influence very extensive and deep-rooted. There are honorable exceptions, but they are not numerous enough to elevate the class to which they belong... every friend to Brazil must wish to see its present priesthood replaced by a more vigorous, intelligent, and laborious clergy.²⁵²

Another fact is that the Brazilian clergy was meanly formed by Portuguese or Brazilian-Portuguese male. The Portuguese people of that time did not look at the labor with good eyes. For them, labor was an activity associated with the lower class or with the slaves. An eyewitness of that time asserted that “the whites and the natives of Portugal even though they be reared with hoe in hand, in setting foot in Brazil not one of them wants to work.”²⁵³ Having in mind that the Brazilian clergy was formed of Portuguese, it is not surprising what Agassiz asserts about them.

Due to their historical account I would assert that the clergy in Brazil was never completely established as in any of the Catholic European empires based on the fact that for centuries Brazil lacked laborers and there had never been a clergy representative who had with vigorous voice as of the Spanish-Dominican Bartolomeu de Las Casas, who lived in Santo Domingo and Mexico in the sixteenth century, or the Peruvian Jesuit Antonio Ruiz de Montoya, who denounced the massacres and enslavement of the Guarani in the seventeenth century. There was the Jesuit Vieira though, however, little he did against the enslavement of the Africans, his efforts were towards the Indians.

Fonseca asserts that the clergy did not follow the footsteps of Jesus in Brazil and more than that he asserts that the influence of the RCC produced negative results for civilization and freedom. Those who fought for the freedom of the Africans slaves had no arguments to excuse the church of her duty to proclaim liberty and to denounce injustice. He also asserts that the clergy did not follow

²⁵¹ Fonseca 1887, p. 503-506.

²⁵² Agassiz 1868, p. 497.

²⁵³ Azevedo in Degler 1971, p. 246

the footsteps of Jesus in Brazil and more than that he asserts that the influence of the RCC produced negative results for civilization and freedom.

I have the understanding that the priests would not need to fear of being considered revolutionary and troublemakers, because with the abolitionist message they would preach and teach both the law and the justice, which was already a moral dogma. It was in the conscience of all men truly civilized, and therefore it should be proclaimed by the mouth of the church's most worthy representatives. In Brazil the slavery practice persisted for a long time because the church did not accomplish her task of preaching the equality of all people.

5.4.4 - The Abolitionist Movement and the Church

The abolitionist movement and the feeling of change that was spread throughout the Americas had achieved Brazil. The fight for the abolition of the African slavery took decades. After the Independence of Brazil, the discussions in this regard were spread throughout the land, which acquired relevance in 1850 with the end of the transatlantic slave trade. In 1880, in Rio de Janeiro, it was created the Brazilian Society Against Slavery, which stimulated the formation of dozens of similar societies in Brazil. Lawyers, artists, intellectuals, journalists and politicians were engaged in the movement and raised funds to pay for manumission letters, which were documents where slave owners would grant freedom to their slaves. The RCC, that proclaimed herself as the representative of gospel, she was an important institution on of that, and what did she do to grant freedom to slaves during the fight for emancipation in Brazil? According to Maxwell, "in Catholic countries the abolition of slavery has been due mainly to humanist influences."²⁵⁴

When it comes to the RCC in Brazil, the sources to examine the Brazilian clergy are based on the account of the eyewitness and on the account of the church herself. Clóvis Moura, a Brazilian sociologist and historian wrote a dictionary of the African slavery in Brazil where he states that the RCC in Brazil was never involved in the abolitionist campaign. Presenting documents where the church participated in the commerce of selling and buying slaves, he asserts that the RCC and her clergy enjoyed the benefits of the slave system, hence they had no interest in the end of such system.²⁵⁵ Another historian, Evaristo de Moraes asserts that the RCC did not give any attention to the abolitionist campaign. He states that only in 1887 through the newspaper *The Apostle* the church represented ideas of emancipation. The church in 1887 “excessively apologized for the old indifference they had, saying that before that time the church had viewed the question

²⁵⁴ Maxwell 1975, p. 124.

²⁵⁵ Moura 2004, p. 195-197.

from another perspective.”²⁵⁶ He concludes that the RCC had an absolute discrepancy with the Law of Jesus.

In 1883, Joaquim Nabuco, one of the greatest diplomats of the Empire of Brazil and one of the most renowned intellectuals in Brazil who fought against the slavery, he criticized the clergy in his famous book *O Abolucionismo - The Abolitionism*. His book became a real profession of faith, a radiograph of Brazilian society of the second half of the nineteenth century, in which he envisioned all evils caused by slavery in the formation of the Brazilian nation, which are present still today.

in other countries, the propaganda of emancipation was a religious movement preached from the pulpit and earnestly taught by different churches. Between us, the abolitionist movement unfortunately had nothing to do with the State Church ... The Catholic Church, despite its immense power in a country fanatical for her, never raised her voice in favor of emancipation.²⁵⁷

He asserts that the slaves did not see redemption in the clergy but rather, they saw men who would buy them and make them slaves. I understand that Nabuco held this point of view because in his time many Catholic orders owned slaves. The historian Moura corroborates this idea when he presents in his dictionary different texts and documents where fathers and Catholic orders had purchased slaves and made use of them up to the the emancipation in 1888.²⁵⁸ Manuela Carneiro da Cunha, who is an anthropologist, asserts that not only the religious orders owned slaves until almost the end of abolition, but some orders even were specialized in the reproduction of slaves, which means that they would sell slaves to the people.²⁵⁹

When it comes to the position taken by the RCC in regard to the abolitionist campaign, Nabuco asserts that the church was pleased with the slavery system and therefore she did nothing to stop it. He affirms that the Masonry and the Positive Church (Igreja Positivista) were the main collaborators for the emancipation movement. He asserted that a

large number of priests have slaves without that the clerical celibacy forbids them. This contact with, or the contagion of slavery, gave to religion in the country the materialistic character that she has, it destroyed her perfect face, and took away from her every opportunity to play in the social life of the country the role of a conscious force.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁶ Morais 1934, p. 380.

²⁵⁷ Nabuco 1883, p. 38.

²⁵⁸ Moura 2004, p. 195-198.

²⁵⁹ Cunha in Moura 2004, p. 195.

²⁶⁰ Nabuco 1883, p. 164.

Nabuco is very critical about the RCC and the behavior of the Brazilian clergy. He says that the Brazilian clergy did not raise its voice in favor of the abolitionist campaign. Although I agree with him, one can not ignore the fact that there were some sermons, articles in the Catholic newspaper and bullets dating the late 1880's which contains words of condemnation regarding the slavery practice. The archbishop of Bahia, one of the most important states in Brazil, asserted that it was unacceptable the existence of slavery and that they should fight for ending that shame.²⁶¹ I see that the RCC took a position against the enslavement of the Africans but such position was taken only when the emancipation as about to take place!

My final assessment in this chapter is that there are many contradictions between (1) theory and (2) practice in the RCC regarding the African slavery in Brazil. There are many contradictions (1) in theory because as we have seen previously, the RCC and the Brazilian clergy throughout the history condemned the enslavement of the native people, not the Africans. As late as 1887, we have abolitionists writing that "at the moment the only Christians who still own slaves are the Catholics, if not in all countries affiliated to the Roman Church, at least in one - the Empire of Brazil."²⁶² I see that through the history some important figures in the RCC fought against the enslavement of the native people such as pope Benedict XIV who condemned the indiscriminate enslavement of natives in Brazil, nevertheless, he does not denounce the African slavery system, nor the importation of slaves from Africa.²⁶³ And finally, there are many contradictions (2) in practice because in the vast plantations and in the bustle of the construction of a nation, the representatives of the RCC were free to act as they wished. As a result, late as 1888, when the final emancipation of slavery in Brazil took place, there were some Catholic orders who still owned slaves.²⁶⁴

²⁶¹ Canabarro 1887, p. 9.

²⁶² Fonseca 1887, p. 112.

²⁶³ Fonseca 1887, p. 103-112.

²⁶⁴ Cunha 1985, p. 46.

Chapter VI – Conclusion

This research had as its main investigation the question set out in the introduction: *What was the role of the Roman Catholic Church regarding slavery in Brazil during the emancipation period from 1850 to 1888?* In order to answer the main question there are others sub-questions (1) what were the teachings and practices of the church regarding the African slavery prior to the emancipation, when the dream of freedom was only an utopia?; and (2) what were the teachings and practices of the church regarding the African slavery during the emancipation period? Having those questions in mind, the research focused on the theory, on the theology taught, and on the practice - the example of the clergy to the society.

In order to answer the research question I used a holistic approach, which means that I presented documents written in the fifteenth century, even though the period of investigation was the nineteenth century. I started presenting the background of Brazil, slavery and the RCC. In this way, the reader could have a better picture of these three elements and the correlation among them. After that, I represented the primary sources so that the reader could be acquainted with the theoretical teachings of the RCC, the practice of the Brazilian clergy in regard to the slavery system and the historical background. It is extremely important to the reader to understand the documents in the light of the society of that time to avoid anachronism that can cause confusion and can lead to an inaccurate understanding of the reality. Finally, I discussed the documents based on modern scholars as well as the eyewitnesses account. To conclude, I represented my findings based on the RCC teachings and practices, the historical account made by people who lived in that period and the modern scholar's view, taking into consideration Catholics and non-Catholics writers.

The first sub-question: (1) *what were the teachings and practices of the church regarding the African slavery prior to the emancipation, when the dream of freedom was only an utopia?* When it comes to the period prior nineteenth century/or prior to 1850, a period where the slavery practice was heavily accepted both by the government and population, the church did not raise her voice to fight against the shameful act of enslaving the Africans, neither in teaching nor in practice. The Brazilian society followed the steps of the Portuguese, which constituted the majority of the white population in Brazil. They did not have the concept of the moral value of work and for them, labor was as an activity to black slaves. The RCC was an important institution in the society and her clergy consisted of whites who had their origins in Portugal, hence it is not a surprise that they also had a similar attitude as their fellow countrymen. Although the church had taught that slaves should be treated humanely, and that it was good to give slaves freedom when it would fit the master, the clergy did not have set free the slaves they owned. Therefore, I understand that her attitude was of

incoherence and acquiescence.

Through this study I observed that the RCC, in general, did not have an attitude which befitted with her message of love. It can be stated that the church in Brazil was not against slavery prior the nineteenth century/or prior to 1850 mainly for three reasons: (1) The clergy throughout the country had slaves working for them in the schools, convents and farms. (2) The church defended the idea that the slave labor was needed for the economic development of Brazil and (3) the clergy taught that slavery was not against the will of God and that the slave should accept their conditions. The theological substrate on which such concept was developed, was a theology of retribution where pain and suffering should be accepted with patience and obedience, because the slaves could have hope in enjoy a better life after death. By such inaccurate interpretation, the RCC taught that slaves should accomplish their purpose in Brazil of serving their master, after all, the clergy asserted, it is better for them to be slaves in a foreign country and yet have the opportunity to know Christ and enjoy the eternal life after death, than to be free in their own country and go to hell after death due their paganism. Hence, I have the understanding that during this period, the church used religion as an ideological cloak to justify, in the name of the sacred, the injustices of the African slavery.

The second sub-question: (2) *what were the teachings and practices of the church regarding the African slavery during the emancipation period?* Here the attitude regarding slavery started to change mainly towards the end of this period, in the 1880s. In 1839, Pope Gregory XVI wrote a bull about slavery where he condemned the unjust enslavement of peoples, not the slavery system as a whole. Also, In 1866 the Holy Office in an instruction declared that slavery was not contrary to the natural and divine law. Again, the church declared that the enslavement of other peoples was accepted. In Brazil, the RCC first newspaper was published in 1866. Yet, only in the 1880s they started writing about the slavery system. Specially in the year 1887, the RCC wrote in articles and taught in sermons that the Africans should be freed. However, for many centuries the RCC was part of a slave-holding society and only during the emancipation period they openly stood against slavery in Brazil. When it comes to the abolitionist campaign, I did not found a single abolitionist who made a reference to the church saying that she made some efforts towards the end of the slavery system. On the contrary, all books that I read about the abolitionist movement criticize the attitude of the RCC and her clergy in Brazil. Hence, I have the understanding that during the emancipation period, the RCC through her written words criticized slavery, through her spoken words the clergy preached the end to the African bondage, but it comes to the behavior of the clergy, the RCC was still the same. Until the abolition on 13th May 1888, there were some Catholic orders who still had slaves working for them.

Finally, the research question: *What was the role of the Roman Catholic Church regarding slavery in Brazil during the emancipation period from 1850 to 1888?* I had as a pre-understanding that the church changed her opinion about the African slavery in Brazil during the emancipation period. I did not find any document which proves that the RCC and her clergy in Brazil had openly condemned the African slavery system as such before the emancipation period. We found some archbishops who advised the slaves owners to treat well their slaves, and even to teach them the Catholic faith, but it does not imply that they were against the slavery system as such. As presented before, the first important step to emancipation was taking in 1850 when the law of the free womb was promulgated and the transatlantic slave trade came to an end. Until there, the RCC, as far I could research in the primary sources, did not stand up against the enslavement of the Africans, neither in teaching nor in practicing. Therefore, I have confirmed that when it comes to the enslavement of Africans, the RCC changed its moral teachings and practices to suite the times.

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