

Queen Isabel of Spain
Deathbed Instructions to the Government
Regarding the Treatment of Indians

November 26, 1504

Whereas, when the islands and mainland of the ocean Sea were conceded to us by the Holy Apostolic See, our principal intention... was to procure, induce, bring, and convert their peoples to our Holy Catholic Faith and to send to the said islands and maintain bishops, religious, clerics and other learned and God fearing persons, to instruct the inhabitants and dwellers therein in the Catholic Faith, and to instruct them in, and to bestow upon them, good customs, exercising all proper diligence in this therefore, I beg the King my Lord very affectionately, and I charge and command my said daughter (Juana) and the said prince her husband (Philip I) to carry this out, and that it be their principal purpose, and that they put into it much diligence: and they are not to consent, or give permission, that the Indian inhabitants and dwellers in the said islands and mainland... receive any damage in their persons or goods, but are to order that they be well and justly treated, and if they have received any damage it is to be remedied: and it is to be provided that everything enjoined and commanded us in the said concession be strictly observed.