
Document 1664C

Letter from Fr. General Oliva to German Jesuits, dated Rome 29 November 1664

Sources: In German or Latin, in Anton Huonder's Deutsche Jesuiten-missionäre, p. 21; translated into Spanish in Vicente D. Sierra's Los Jesuitas Germanos en Hispano-América, pp. 105-106.

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I have received from Spain such a happy news. It is going to be celebrated with music from trumpets. Missionaries will be able to go to Paraguay, Philippines, Mexico, Peru, Chile and New Granada. For years it was forbidden to whomever was not a Spaniard to go to these territories.¹ I have just received the news, by letter, that the Council of the Indies of His Majesty has lifted the previous dispositions, so that foreigners may now go to the missions in the Indies, with the new disposition which authorizes that the fourth part of each mission [band] may consist of subjects of the Catholic King and Queen, as well as those of the Emperor and some other prince of the House of Austria. In this permission are also included almost all those belonging to the [Jesuit] Province[s] of Austria, Bohemia, **Flandro-Belgium** and Gallo-Belgium, as well as some part of the Province of Upper Germany which is within the jurisdiction of the Austrian Prince of Innsbruck.

I was also advised that the permission is valid for the subjects of all the gentlemen who maintain friendship with the House of Austria. It would please me to have everyone share in this happiness, but only those who will be designated will be able to go,² because in those countries it is necessary to have healthy and strong people. So, those who cannot go should resign themselves to remain in their provinces.³

1 Ed. note: The Royal Decree dated Buen Retiro 1 June 1654 was the last one addressed to the Fr. General of the Jesuits forbidding the sending of foreign Jesuits to the Indies. Another decree even ordered the deportation of those already there, but the influence of Fr. Nithard, the German-Austrian confessor of Queen Mariana de Austria over an 18-year period (1648-1664), was responsible for the issue of the present decree.

2 Ed. note: In other words, no volunteers.

3 Ed. note: See Doc. 1674B for a even more generous decree in favor of foreign Jesuits.