
Document 1667C

Letter from the Bishop of Cebu to Fr. Sanvitores, dated Cebu 24 May 1667

Source: AGI Fil. 82-2-21.

Note: Fray Juan Lopez, O.P., was Bishop of Cebu from 1665 to 1671. The Mariana Mission was to depend directly upon the diocese of Cebu.

Original text in Spanish

M. R. P. Diego Luis San Vitores.

No abia visto los Indios de las Islas de los Ladrones asta esta segunda vez que vine de España, y un dia entero que nos rodearon la Nao con sus embarcaciones se me fue en considerar los ocultos, y incomprehensibles juicios de Dios viendo aquellas criaturas racionales, en la natural tambien dispuestas, y tan sin repugnancia para reçivir la luz del Evangelio, ciegas con la ignorancia de su gentilidad, por falta de ministros y en-señança, despues tantos años que se tiene noticia de aquella gente: han pasado los obreros a otras eredades mas distantes, y dejada de cultivar aquella; Dios solo puede saver las causas. Por los effectos vemos no habia llegado el tiempo de la labor. Asta este en que su divina Magd. ha sido servido imbiar operarios y a V.P. [=Vuestra Paternidad] por mayoral suyo. Yo no dudo de que todo lo que en esta mission concurre es derigido por la divina disposicion, porque atendiendo a los tiempos en que nos hallamos no se podia esperar la consecucion de fin tan santo, y en si espero felices sucesos en la conversion de aquellas almas; imbio la licençia que V.P. me pide; y en todo lo que me to-care acudir, y solicitar obra tan del servicio de Dios lo are como debo y tengo obligacion y ofrezco pedir a su divina Magd. todos los dias en mis sacrificios y oraciones, labea [habra?] devida execuçion tan santos propositos, y a V.P. y a sus compañeros le de mucha salud y vida para que la ocupen en la exaltacion de su fe y aumento de su Yglesia.

Zibu Mayo 24 de 1667.

Sierbo de V.P.M.R. Q.L.M.V.

Fr. Juan Obispo del Santo Niño de Jesus

Translation, by Fr. Ledesma

Very Reverend Father Diego Luis de San Vitores.

I had not seen the natives of the Islands of the Ladrones until this second time in which I came from Spain. They surrounded our ship with their canoes for a whole day. I went some time considering the hidden and incomprehensible designs of God, when I saw those rational creatures, naturally so well disposed and with such absence of reluctance to receive the light of the Gospel. They are blind in the ignorance of their paganism through lack of Ministers and instruction after so many years that we know about those people: the workers of the vineyard have gone to other farther fields of work, and have neglected to cultivate that one.

God only knows why. The results show us that the time had not yet come for the labor of evangelization until the present in which his divine Majesty has deigned to send pastoral workers and Your Paternity as his principal envoy. I have no doubt that whatever leads to this Mission is guided by the divine will, for taking into account the present time one could not hope for the execution of such a holy purpose.

And so I wish that the conversion of those souls be happily successful. I am sending you the license Your Paternity asks for.

And whatever I can do to help and solicit for an enterprise so much for the service of God I will do it as I should, it being my obligation. And I offer myself to beg the divine Majesty every day in my sacrifices and prayers that He may bring to fruition such holy projects and that He give much health and life to Your Paternity and your companions, so that you may employ them in the exaltation of the faith and the progress of the Church.

Cebu, 24 May 1667.

Your Very Reverend Paternity's servant who kisses your hands,
Fray Juan [Lopez], Bishop of the Holy Name of Jesus.



Statue of Our Lady of Conception, in Sumay, Guam.
(From Fr. Repetti's book: "Pictorial Records...")