
Documents 1590B

Two letters from Bishop Salazar to the King, both dated Manila 24 June 1590

Source: AGI 68-1-32; translated in B&R 7:239-261.

B1. First letter from Bishop Domingo de Salazar to King Philip II

Sire:

Five decrees of your Majesty came to me this year of '90 in the ship **Santiago** which arrived at this port on the last day of May. They are all dated at Madrid, four on the 23rd of June of the year '87, and the fifth on the 18th of February of '88.

...

May our Lord guard the royal person of your Majesty, and preserve you many years.
At Manila, 24 June 1590.

Fray Domingo, Bishop of the Philippines.

B2. Second letter from Bishop Salazar

Sire:

The letter which your Majesty ordered to be written to me from San Lorenzo el Real [i.e. El Escorial], on the 17th of August of '89, I received by the hand of the secretary of the Governor, Gómez Pérez Dasmariñas, in the village of Tabuco, outside of this city, on the 1st of June of this year '89.

...

With regard to what your Majesty orders concerning the remission of tithes for twenty years to those who now come to settle and who may come in the future, I would to God that the Spaniards were inclined to cultivate the land and to gather the fruits from it, rather than that we should ever afflict the natives by tithes. But your Majesty should know that when a man comes to this country, even if he were a beggar in Spain, here he seeks to be a gentleman, and is not willing to work, but desires to have all serve

him; and so no one will give himself to labor, but undertakes trafficking in merchandise, and for this reason military and all other kinds of training have been forgotten. From this fact not a little damage will come to this land, if the Governor does not regulate this.

...
In the next to last paragraph of his letter, your Majesty says that to remedy the present lack of instruction is my own special obligation, which I confess; and I have so appreciated this that, seeing the great present need of instruction and the little help which I can offer, I am so disturbed and so filled with anxiety that, if I were able to leave the bishopric, I would try to flee from it. But if, inasmuch as your Majesty declares to me my obligation, and puts in my charge what is lacking, you should give me, together with it, authority to right affairs, your Majesty would be relieved of responsibility, and I of anxiety, other than to make progress in learning my obligations. If I do not have authority and power to remedy this, I must live all my life in anxiety and perturbation of spirit, because every year I see them collect tribute from a race that is never given to understand why it is collected; nor is there any hope that they may be able to have instruction, because of the great difficulty there is in giving it to them.¹

...
May our Lord preserve the royal person of your Majesty for many years.
At Manila, 24 June 1590.
Fray Domingo, Bishop of the Philippines.

¹ Ed. note: It seems as if Bishop Salazar already knew one of the recognized modern principles of organization: that authority should be commensurate with the responsibilities.