
Document 1669D

Letter from Fr. Provincial Solana to Fr. Procurator Bermudo, dated Manila July 1669

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Note: One copy is dated 2 July, and the other 20 July.

Original text in Spanish

P. Pedro Bermudo, Procurador General de Indias en Madrid.

Pax Xpti &a.

Muy en la memoria he tenido a V.R. desde que vine de España acordandome de quando conversabamos en Madrid y despues en Roma; y despues aca se an refrescado en muchos ocasiones en que a todos assi de casa como de fuera he dado a conozer la religion, puntualidad, exaccion, y verdad que siempre reconocí en V.R. en todas materias, y assi ninguna cosa de lo que en contrario se escriviera fuera para mi verosimil, con lo qual nunca pude sentir a lo que se escrivio a los principios, que despues consto aver sido falso. Menos razones y excusas, y satisfacciones bastaban para mi, y siempre imagine de donde pudieron salir tales cosas. Quiera Nuestro Señor que quando esta llegue todo este compuesto y remediado.

Por muerte del P. Rafael de Bonafe Provincial de esta Prov^a le sucedi en el oficio, aunque si estuviera aqui el P. Sanvitores, a el le tocaba: Pero por averse quedado en los Ladrones, y no aver sido posible recabar con el gobierno que haga despacho a ellos, no se le ha podido avisar, y juzgar todos los de Casa y los de fuera que aunque llegara el aviso no viniera por no dexar desamparada aquella nueva Christiandad. Desde Mexico avisaria a Nuestro Padre General y a su Padre el Señor D. Geronimo de Sanvitores lo que negocio en Mexico con el Señor Virrey, que fue el averle dado diez mil pesos para su avio para los Ladrones con calidad de que si su Magd. no lo aprobava los avia de bolver a la Real Caxa dando abonados fiadores. De esto gasto su Rev^a siete mil y quinientos, lo demas remitió al Señor Governador de Philipinas, el qual quando supo lo que avia passado se alegro mucho, y dixo algunas vezes, que de su sueldo pagaria los

dies mil pesos. Mas no lo pudo cumplir, porque como en relacion aparte se dira, fue preso su Señoria a 10 de Octubre del año pasado de 68 por el Comisario de la Inquissicion asistido del Provincial y Guardian de Manila de S. Francisco con otros siete Religiosos de su orden con los dos Alcaldes de Manila con lo qual se deshizo esta paga, y assi sera forzoso el que en essa Corte se negocie que se den por bien dados, si es que quando esta llegue ya no estuviere esto negociado como creo lo estara. Los dos mil y quinientos pesos que embiaba dicho P. Sanvitores à dicho Governador tuvieron sus averias que hasta aora no las se, porque murio el Capitan que los traia a su cargo etc^a.

Dos Oydores que estan governando prometieron embiarian socorro al P. Diego Luis de Sanvitores que se quedo en los Ladrones con quatro Padres y un Hermano con unos pocos de Indios e Indias de estas Islas que llevo de ellas consigo a Acapulco para asentar essa Xpiandad. De buelta de Acapulco llegaron a la Isla de los Ladrones a donde fueron bien rezebidos dichos Padres de los naturales de aquellas Islas, y dieron a veinte y dos niños para que los bautizassen, y ellos daban buenas esperanzas de bautizarse quando fuessen instruidos de nuestra S. fee, y apenas pudieron los Padres escribir mas de esto que queda referido, y una carta para el Señor Governador y para el P. Provincial de que embiare un tanto con esta que sera la mas cierta noticia.

Tengo por casi imposible por la dificultad y gastos que se han de hazer, para que de Manila se pueda socorrer a dichos padres en los Ladrones por ser forçoso para ello un patache, y gente de mar, y para su apresto seran menester por lo menos mas de quatro mil pesos, fuera de lo que montare las cosas de que an de ser socorridos, y la Caxa Real no esta para tantos gastos con tan pequeños socorros que al presente se embian, porque la dificultad que ay de aqui a la Nueva España todo consiste en llegar a los Ladrones, que aviendo llegado a ellos nunca ha arribado nao que aya salido de Manila siendo los mares tan bravos que muchas vezes obligan a arribar a fuertes galeones.

Por otra parte sin gasto ninguno pueden dichos Padres que estan en los Ladrones ser socorridos de la Nueva España, pues forçosamente passan por donde ellos estan, y como salen las banquillas de los Indios a nuestra nao, podran salir los Padres con sus embarcaciones que ya tendran hechas a rezebir sus socorros, solamente tiene esto de inconveniente que sera forzoso que los que vinieren para vivir en los Ladrones vengán ordenados de sacerdotes, y acabados sus estudios, o que no ayan de estudiar mas para que trabajen en dichas Islas, y los que no se hallaren en ellas, o estuvieren enfermos, o viejos se embarquen en dicha nao que viene de la Nueva España a Manila, y si alguno que no sabe de los vientos de por aca dixere que quando va la nao a [Nueva] España passe por donde estan los Padres se responde que esto no puede ser por falta de vientos, y assi passan los Ladrones de 27 grados para arriba estando los Padres en 14. Avisolo a V.R. para que este en la materia. A Nuestro P. Genl. tambien lo avisare para que haga lo que mas bien le pareciere, y creo que ay aca tan poca gana de socorrer a los Padres de los Ladrones que dichas causas, que en caso que alguna vez lo hagan por obedecer las cedulas, no llegara dicho socorro sino que arribara.

Al H^o Francisco Vello escrivo socorra de un modo, o de otro a dichos Padres embiandoles vino, y trigo para ostias, y lo demas necessario aunque sea a costa de esta

Prov^a en caso que el Virrey de Mexico no mande que se de de lo que viene cituado para estas Islas. V.R. se sirva de comunicar esto con el Señor D. Geronimo de San Vitores para que ayude a que se despache Cedula de essa Corte, para que el Virrey de Mexico de al dicho Hermano a quenta del Cituado de Philipinas el sustento de dichos Padres.

...
Guarde Dios a V.R.^a como deseo en cuyos S[anto]s S[acrificio]s yo mucho me encomiendo.

...
*Manila y Julio 2 [or 20] de 1669.
 Siervo de V.R.^a,
 Miguel Solana.*

Translation

[To] Fr. Pedro Bermudo, Procurator General of the Indies in Madrid.
 Peace of Christ, etc.

I have had Y.R. very much in my memory since I came from Spain, remembering when we had conversations in Madrid and afterward in Rome. And later on here, this memory was revived in many occasions when I have let everyone, in and out of the house, know about the religion, punctuality, exactitude, and virtue that I have always recognized in Y.R. in all matters. So, none of the things that were written to the contrary seemed to me to be likely, and that is how I felt with what was being written at the beginning, which afterward turned out to have been false. I needed fewer reasons and excuses, or satisfactions, and I always wondered where such things could have originated from? May our Lord deign to have everything arranged and remedied by the time this letter gets there.

On account of the death of Fr. Rafael de Bonafé, Provincial of this Province, I succeeded him in the post, although if Fr. Sanvitores had been here, he would have inherited it. However, since he has remained in the Ladrones, and it was not possible to plead with the government to have a despatch sent to him there, it was not possible to advise him; besides, all those in the House and those outside were of the opinion that, even if the advice should reach him, he would not come, in order not to abandon that new Christian community. From Mexico, they probably advised our Father General and his father, Don Gerónimo de Sanvitores, about the business he did in Mexico City with the Viceroy, that is, about the 10,000 pesos given to him for his outfitting for the Ladrones, with the proviso that if His Majesty did not approve it, the money would be refunded to the Royal Treasury, having posted performance bonds. Out of this, His Reverence spent 7,500 pesos, remitting the rest to the Governor of the Philippines.¹ When the Governor of the Philippines learned what had happened, he was overjoyed,

¹ Ed. note: Fr. Sanvitores says that he spent 1,000 pesos himself, and gave the rest to Admiral Muñoz (see Doc. 1668J5); therefore, Muñoz must have spent 6,500 pesos before leaving Acapulco.

and said many times that he would pay the 10,000 pesos out of his own salary.¹ However, he was unable to carry it out, because, as the enclosed report says, His Lordship was arrested on 10 October of last year 1668 by the Commissioner of the Inquisition, with the assistance of the Provincial and Guardian of the Franciscan Order in Manila, and the two Mayors of Manila.² That is why this payment was not done, and so it will be necessary to have it negotiated in that Court [in Madrid] to have it approved, in case it be not yet done, as I believe it will by the time this letter gets there. The 2,500 pesos that Fr. Sanvitores was sending to the said Governor, have suffered some averages that up to now I do not know about, because the Captain who was bringing them under his care died, etc.

Two members of the Audiencia who are governing promised that they would send succor to Fr. Diego Luis de Sanvitores who has remained in the Ladrones with 4 Fathers and 1 Brother with a few Indian men and women of these Islands whom he took from here with him to Acapulco to establish that Christian community. Coming back from Acapulco, they arrived at the Island of the Ladrones where the said Fathers were well received by the natives of those Islands, who gave 22 children to be baptized, and they were giving good hopes of wanting to be baptized once they will be instructed in our holy Faith. The Fathers hardly had time to write more than I mention here, and a letter addressed to the Governor and one to the Fr. Provincial whose copy I will enclose, that will give more exact news.

I think it is almost impossible to send succor directly from Manila to the said Fathers in the Ladrones, on account of the difficulty and expenses that must be made, given that a patache is necessary for that, plus some seamen. For chartering a patache over 2,000 pesos at least would be necessary, not counting the amount to be spent on the things to be included in the succor, and the Royal Treasury is not able to make such expenses with the insufficient succors being sent nowadays. Also, the difficulty that exists in getting from here to New Spain lies completely in getting past the Ladrones; once a galleon leaves Manila and gets that far, it never turns back in distress,³ as the seas are so raging that many times the strongest galleons return in distress.

On the other hand, the said Fathers who are in the Ladrones may be succored from New Spain without any expense; indeed, they must forcibly pass where they are, and as the canoes of the Indians go out to meet our galleon, the Fathers could go out with the boats that they must have built already to receive their succors. The only disadvantage is that it will be necessary for those destined to live in the Ladrones to come already

1 Ed. note: Perhaps he had added "if the Queen Regent does not approve the loan."

2 Ed. note: The Inquisitor was Fray José de Paternina, who held the office from 1664 to 1672, when he was summoned to Mexico by the Tribunal of the Inquisition, but died during the voyage. He had also been assisted in the coup d'état by General Sebastian Rayo and other military officers. The full story is told in B&R 37:23+. The Franciscans seized all the Governor's papers, including books of accounts. The Audiencia, i.e. the judges of the Supreme Court, sought refuge in the Jesuit church, etc.

3 Ed. note: That was not true, witness what happened to the Santa Margarita in 1601, to mention just one famous case. It seems that 70 years later, the people in Manila had forgotten...

ordained as priests, and having completed their studies, or that they do not have to study to work in the said Islands, and for those who are not assigned there, or become sick, or old, they would board the said galleon coming from New Spain to Manila. If anyone, not knowledgeable about the winds overhere, declares that when the galleon goes to [New] Spain, it can pass where the Fathers are, it should be answered that it is impossible, on account of the winds, and so that is why they pass the [meridian of the] Ladrones at latitudes of 27 degrees or more, whereas the Fathers are in 14 [degrees]. I advise Y.R. so that you may be up to date. I will advise our Fr. General as well, so that he may decide what is best, and I believe that there is little desire here to succor the Fathers of the Ladrones for the said reasons; in case they ever do it, to obey the [royal] decrees, the said succor will not get there but will return in distress.¹

I am writing to Br. Francisco Bello to send succor to the said Fathers, one way or another, sending them wine, and wheat for hosts, and the other necessities, though it be at the cost of this Province, in case the Viceroy of Mexico does not order that part of the subsidy coming to these Islands go to them. Y.R. will please communicate this to Don Gerónimo de San Vitores so that he may help to have a decree issued from that Court, in order for the Viceroy of Mexico to give [money for] the food supplies of the said Fathers to the said Brother, on the account of the subsidy of the Philippines.

...

May God keep Y.R. as I wish. I commend myself very much to your holy Sacrifices.

...

Manila, 2 [or 20] July 1669.

Y.R.'s servant,

Miguel Solana.

Governor Salcedo's imprisonment had been predicted by Fr. Sanvitores

Source: Fray Casimiro Díaz, O.S.A., "Conquistas" (Manila, 1890); translated in B&R 37:266- 267.

Don Diego de Salcedo sustained that so grievous blow with so great steadfastness that he caused admiration in all people; for he was never heard to assign another reason for his imprisonment than that it was a present which God was sending him for his many sins...

I am witness of that, for I went often by order of the Father commissary and prior to amuse him when he was sick. I admired his great courage and prudence, as well as his strong mind; and it seemed as if he had no resentment that could give him anxiety. One may believe that so great conformity to His most holy will was gained by the aid of God.

¹ Ed. note: This was prophetic; the first attempts at direct voyages failed miserably, on account of the winds, as the author says.

That which I always heard to be a fact must have been true, namely, that that gentleman had great love and special veneration for the most venerable Father Diego [Luis] de San Vitores, of the holy Society of Jesus, whom the governor aided considerably by cooperation [with him] in his entrance into the Mariana Islands. It is said that he requested the said venerable Father to ask God to give him in this world his purgatory for his sins. The venerable Father replied that he should think well what he was asking, for the Lord's aid is necessary when He bears down His hand, in order that one may not refuse to endure His paternal correction. The Father told him that time after time, but Don Diego de Salcedo always persevered in asking the same thing. The venerable Father must have obtained that heroic petition from God; for when he bade farewell to him on going to the mission of the Mariana Islands, it appears that he gave Don Diego de Salcedo to understand that the Lord had granted his petition. Therefore, that very submissive spirit and the prayers of the venerable Father Diego Luis de San Vitores, one can believe, were the cause of his great patience and resignation.

Such was the imprisonment of Governor Don Diego de Salcedo, and the evil lot of that gentleman who possessed so great endowments of valor, discretion, and urbanity, besides his personal qualities; for he was tall and well-proportioned in all parts of his body, and his face was handsome, serious, and modest. His flowing hair was very long and white; and his mustache, a distinction in the men of that time, was very black. His complexion was very light, and his eyes blue, and all gave him a grave and noble appearance. Nothing could be seen in him that was not very chaste, and only in his covetousness was any transgression recognized in him.¹ As covetousness is the root of all evils, his lukewarmness in attending to many obligations belonging to a Christian governor proceeded from that. The consequences of his imprisonment lasted for 20 years, counting imprisonments, embargoes, exiles, and refuge sought in sanctuary by those who took part in that imprisonment... Father Fray José de Paternina, was summoned to Mexico by the Inquisitors... and died on the voyage to Acapulco... The rest of the matter does not concern me.

1 Ed. note: The main reason for the hate of the Inquisitor Paternina for Governor Salcedo was because the latter, while in Mexico, had carnal intercourse with a woman who was a relative of Paternina, who then declared himself the mortal enemy of the Governor (see B&R 37: 56-57).