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## Document 1578

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### **Letter from Fr. de Jesús to the Pope, dated Manila July 1580**

*Sources: Vatican Archives, Rome, #Principi 32, p. 174; transcript (in Latin) in Chicago's Newberry Library as Ayer #1391, Vol. 23, doc. 6 (18 pp.); translated by Rev. T. C. Middleton, O.S.A. and published in B&R 34:316-324.*

### **Letter from Fr. Pablo de Jesús, O.F.M. to Pope Gregory XIII**

#### **Account of the journey to the Philippine Islands of Fray Paul de Jesús of the Congregation of the Discalced [Franciscans].**

To the Most Blessed Father Gregory XIII, chief pontiff, the humble congregation of discalced brothers residing in the Philippine Islands offer homage.

S. p. D.

...

For inasmuch as by order of thy Holiness we have come to these shores, we deem it our duty to relate the whole course of our journey and of our wanderings. From the place where Fray Pedro Alfaro, at the time guardian of our congregation, sent letters to thy Blessedness, we encountered a difficult voyage, all of us having been stricken down with illness, wherefrom six of the brethren our companions died.

At length, we reached New Spain, whence after a stay of six months in order to recover our strength and former good health, we set sail on the Ides of March in the year 1578<sup>1</sup>, and after a very long voyage of 2,100 leagues, we fifteen brethren landed at the islands known as the Philippines.

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<sup>1</sup> This should be March 15, 1577, for the first Franciscan mission arrived at Manila June 24, 1577. The date 1578 is also given by Gonzalez de Mendoza (see B&R 6:125) Ed. comment: If the name of the ship were given, the year 1578 could be confirmed. I think they left Spain in 1577 and crossed the Pacific in 1578..

### [Description of Guam]

While on our voyage thither we touched at a certain island 300 leagues distant from the Philippines, very fruitful in rice, and coconut-bearing palms. This island is inhabited by men who are savages going utterly stark, with no covering at all, the women, however, concealing their private parts with the leaf of a tree. The people are large of frame, robust, and given to pilfering, whence the name of the island, Ladrones.

The natives brought us fruits, fish, rice, and other eatables, which they bartered for iron, which they value more than gold. Some of our companions through pity for those islanders wished to remain with them, in order to bring them to the light of the faith. But we did not think wise to leave them alone and without arms among such a multitude of barbarians. Sailing thence we soon reached the Philippine Islands...

...

Manila, 14th kalends of July 1580.  
The most obedient son of they Holiness,  
Fray Pablo de Jesús,  
and all our congregation.

Extract from the Latin original

*Tandem aliquando ad novam Hispaniam pervenimus, ubi sex menses reparandum virium, pristinaeque valetudinis recuperandae gratia commorati anno 1578 idibus Martii iterum solvimus, et longissima duo mille et centum leucarum navigatione ad insulas quas Philippinas vocant quindecim numero fatres appulimus. In itinere ad insulam quandam accessimus quae 300 leucarum spacio distat ab insulis Philippinis. Ea est orizae et palmarum quae coccos ferunt uberima. Incolunt eam insulam homines quidem feri qui nudi incedunt nullo penitus tegumento praeter faeminas haec siquidem arboris folio verecundiora contegunt. Corpore grandi, robustoque; latrociniis dediti, unde latronum insula nomen accepit.*

*Ii ad nos fructus, pisces, origam aliasque ejusdem generis attulerunt, quorum pretio ferrum a nobis emebant, id quae auro pluris aestimant. Cupiebant quidam e nostris sociis illie permanere, insularum miserti, ut eos ad fidei lucem adducerent, sed solos eos et inarmes inter tot tantoque immanitate barbaros derelinquere consilium non fuit. Inde progressi dedimus vela ventis brevisque ad insulas Philippinas...*