
Document 1659C

Letter from Fr. General to Fr. Provincial, dated Rome 12 October 1659

Sources: Fr. Francisco García's book, vol. 1, chap. XIII, p. 79; translated by Fr. Juan Ledesma, as part of Fr. Risco's book: The Apostle of the Marianas, and also in the Cause of Beatification. The original copy of Fr. Sanvitores' vow, in Latin, is from Fr. Murillo Velarde's History of the Philippines.

Introductory note by Fr. Ledesma.

The result of the letter of Fr. Sanvitores' letter to Father General were two letters from His Paternity, one to him, giving him the permission he was asking for, and the other to Father Provincial (reproduced below).

The letter to Fr. General was dated 2 July 1659, on the feast of the Visitation of our Lady, as Fr. Sanvitores explicitly tells us. The letters of the General to him and to Father Provincial were sent on October 12 of the same year. The one addressed to Fr. Sanvitores was received by him on the following December 18, Feast of the Expectation of our Lady as he himself added to the translation of his letter to Father General which he gave to his father (Doc. 1659B).

Nowhere have we seen the letter of Father General to the Servant of God. Part of its content is contained in the letter to Father Provincial: "To the Father I write and I grant him this grace, and that I am informing you so that he may be sent with the first ones who shall make the trip to the Philippines."

Neither have we found the original letter sent to Father Provincial. It is the following, and its substance is expressed in the last words: "I beg Your Reverence not to put any obstacles, because that is what it should be, and you may not desist from putting it into execution."

Letter from Fr. Nickel to Fr. Provincial

Reverend Father Provincial: Pax Christi.

I have just received a letter from Father Diego Luís de San Vitores which gives me no less admiration than consolation. In it he refers to his vocation and admission into the Society, the desires he always had to go to the Indies and to work for the conversion of the infidels, the **vow** which he made with permission, the health that he so many times recovered in the manner Your Reverence knows. I have considered with particular attention in the presence of our Lord the vocation of this Father and I have judged that I would fail seriously in the obligation of my office and in my conscience if I did not grant to the said Fr. San Vitores the Mission of the Indies which he justly, but with great indifference desires and asks for.

It is God's will that he go there. And so in any case let Your Reverence send him to the Philippines. I am not giving this order with greater insistence because I am convinced that there is no need for it. I am writing to the Father that this grace is granted him, and that I am informing Your Reverence so that he may be sent with the first who may make the trip to the Philippines.

I am resolved not to change my decision, nor to desist until it is executed. If I know that he is a gifted subject and could be very useful to that Province, St. Francis Xavier was also so gifted and useful, as well as others who have gone. If God wants it that way we cannot oppose His will, I beg Your Reverence not to put up any obstacles, for that is what should be; you may not desist from putting it into execution.

Of Your Reverence,
Gosvino Nickel

The vow of 12 November 1657

Note: According to Fr. Murillo Velarde, who had the original in his possession, this vow was written on the back of a picture of St. Francis Xavier.

For the greater glory of God and the honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of our holy Father Ignatius, under the patronage of Saint Francis Xavier and the Venerable Marcelo Mastrilli and of the Blessed Father Francis Borgia, **I promise to Your Divine Majesty to employ all my life and strength in the ministry of the missions, specially among the infidels, or among the faithful, should the former be impossible, understanding all this according to the prescriptions of the Superiors and the spirit of the Institute of the Society.**

Of you, Father I.B. Davila, I humbly beg before God and the Blessed Mother of Good Counsel that, as during my sickness you fired my trust in the efficacy of this vow and, having made it, you helped me with the relics of the Saints and of Father Mastrilli, so also that you see to it that my sins will not be an impediment to the fulfillment of the will of God for His greater glory and my salvation as well as of the most helpless souls. Although I am not worthy I will do the same in your regard.

Diego Luis de San Vitores.