
Document 1668A

Letter from Fr. Sanvitores to the Viceroy of Mexico, dated off Salagua (near Acapulco) 3 January 1668

Source: RAH 9/2676 part of doc. n° 11.

Note: The eastward crossing of the Pacific by the galleon San Diego took only 5 months (7 August 1667 to 5 January 1668), a minimum time in those days.

Original text in Spanish.

Exmo. Señor

Aunque espero no desmerezer el favor de V.Ex^a por el que siempre a echo a las cosas de Don Jeronimo San Vitores mi Padre y de mi Conde de Cabra del Santto Christto mi hermano por quien es y espeçialmente por la Virtud y buen zelo de mi Padre que aunque con artta confusion mia no puedo menos de reconozar pareze sea servido la Divina bondad suplir lo mucho que a mi me faltta de ttodo para las misiones y ministerios que sea dignado encargarme pero la piedad de la enpressa presentte es tal que ella sola confio en nuestro Señor que vastara a enpeñar en su amparo el jeneroso corazon de V.Ex^a tan zeloso del Divino y Real serviçio y de los aumenttos de nuestra Santta fee.

*El ffin Señor deste Viaje es llevar la luz del Santto Evangelio a las Yslas nombradas bulgarmentte los Ladrones que ya se llaman Yslas Marianas a [h]onor de la Santtissima Virgen Maria que refieren haverse apareçido en una de ellas que los nattuales llaman **Tinian** y los Esspañoles Buena Vista y que con tan buena vista de la Santissima Virgen se comienzo y murio reçien Baptizado el primero que se save de aquellos pobres nattuales y aora finalmente se Dispone la conversion de todos con el mismo amparo de la Santissima Virgen Maria por medio de la deboçion y piedad de la Reyna nuestra Señora Doña Mariana en buen logro del Santto zelo del Rey nuestro Señor Don Phe[lipe] quartto que este en gloria que asi lo dejo Dispuesto por Su rreal zedula ffecha en el Buen rretiro a Veyntte y quattro de Junio de mill y seisçientos y sesentta y çinco en que se sirvio mandar que a Diego Luis de San Vitores de la Compañia de Jesus se de la envarcacion neçesaria para la dicha mision y se le avie de suertte que consiga el ynttento de yntroduçir el Santto Evangelio en dichas yslas y passar a las provincias que conviniere*

*al servicio y enttrar finalmentte si se pudiere en el Pasen(?) el y ssus compañeros de la misma Compañia de Jesus que para esto tubieren licencia de sus Superiores &a. de todo tendra V.Ex^a cumplido ymforme en el Pliego del Señor Governador de ffilipinas Don Diego Salcedo a quien vienien dirixidas dichas zedulas en cuyo cumplimientto con singular punttualidad y zelo dedico su Señoria y consiguio en brevisimo tiempo la ffabrica y avio deste Bajel **San Diego** para esta mision que se espera a de ser prinçipio de la rreduçion de toda aquella Cordillera de Yslas y tierras que corren de norte a sur y diçen que es otra quaaarta parte del mundo y que junttamente sera disposiçion para rrestaurar la fe tan lastimamente malograda en el Japon no por lo que para esto aya de servir y immediattamentte la mision y asignaçion deste tan ynutile yndigno Ministro aunque suele servirse el Señor a vezes de los mas ynutiles para que se conozca mexor que es todo suyo lo que se hiçiere sino por el espiritu y travajo de los otros ministros de todas rrelixiones que una vez asenttada la escala destes Viaxes por nuestras Yslas Marianas vendran sin dubda a pobrarlas de Christiandad y haçer que como buenos ladrones arevatten y escalen el çielo las ynumerables almas que havittan dicha cordillera tan estendida y [h]açia al sur y a azia el nortte por donde se continuan estas yslas con la que llaman caveza del Japon de donde ay nuevas que la persecuçion esta mas mittigada aunque por el camino mas andado desde Manila no se aguarda tan proxxima y ffaçil entrada como por la dicha cordillera de los Ladrones o islas Marianas donde sin perder tiempo entrettantto, con ttan copiosa y dispuesta mies como el Señor tiene de parada en el passo se ira haciendo el camino para la entrada del Japon al tiempo del divino venepiazito asi con attençion junttamente al remedio de unas y otras almas a echo tantto empeño en el punttual cumplimientto de dichas Reales zedulas el Señor Governador Don Diego Salcedo y lo que en tiempos tan aprettados no se podia de la Real Caxa lo a suplido con gran liberalidad de limosna propia para poner a la vela este vaxel y aviarnos a mis compañeros y a mi con ttodo lo neçesario y aun superabundante para el regalo y alivio deste viaje pero en lo que mas a mostrado de su Señoria la eficaçia que pone en esta enpressa es en poner la ultimamente en manos de V.Ex^a encaminando este navio al puerto de Acapulco ademas de ser este el camino mas derecho para tomar determinadamentte la isla de **Guan** que ya llamamos San Juan juntto a la Sarpana y Buena Bista que es la que se ttiene por mas aproposito y ara escala de todos estos viaxes y que podra ser muy util al comerçio desta Nueva España y Filipinas y muy ffaçil su socorro sin nuevos gastos de vaxeles ni avios mas que lo ordinario que se despacha para el socorro de Filipinas que se encamina siempre a la bueltta por dichas Yslas de Guan y Sarpana ó Buena Vista.*

Por lo qual desde las primeras zedulas en que su Magd tiene hordenado se de doctrina a las pobres yslas de los Ladrones se da por ynstruçion que al yr desde Nueva España a Manila se dejen en dichas yslas relijiosos que las dotrinen y en su compañia unos diez soldados ó los que pareçiere convenientte, mas para dar ejenplo de christiandad que para defenssa por ser aquellos naturales tan paçificos y aun entonçes no tan tratados como agora dichos Españoles y reconoçidos por ttan amigables y sin malas calidades que los perturben que ni tienen secta de Mahoma ni de ydolos ni usan vino ni

otra cosa que les pueda embriagar &a. Por ajustarse pues mas puntualmente a esta instruccion y tomar seguramentte la dicha ysla de Guan y encaminar desde el principio el viaje del modo que sea de continuar en adelante sin nuevos gastos de naos &a.

*Y principalmente es que la divina providencia a querido que esta mision logre la eficacia y zelo de V.Ex^a dispuso en fin el Señor Don Diego que este navio se encaminase a dicho puertto logrando de camino como tan prudentte y zelosso del buen comun de las Yslas de su gobierno la ocasion de asegurar el socorro de Filipinas que thema algun rriesgo este año por no haver podido salir con mas tiempo la nao **Nuestra Señora de Buen Socorro** ffabricada de nuevo y destinada para el viaje deste año para el qual fin que estava ya con ttodo el Navio aviso se havia echo a la bela desde las provincias de Vissayas donde se fabrico quando nossotros desenvocamos de las yslas que fue a veintte y quattro de agosto por lo qual y ser la nao demasiadamente grande es muy de ttemer no tubiese bastantes tiempos para el viaje deste año de una vez pues esperamos de nuestro Señor y la Santtissima Virgen por mano de V.Ex^a el cumplimientto de todo lo que al presentte podemos desear asi para el remedio de las ynumerables almas de dichas yslas Marianas que se hallan en la mas extrema neçesidad que puede haver juntto con la mas prossima disposicion para rreçivir el Santo Evangelio cuyos ministros an pedido por medio de unos como enbajadores e ynterprettes que el Señor nos a depurado de los que quedaron alli desde el año de mill y seisçientos y treyntta y ocho con la nao **Nuestra Señora de la Concepcion** que se fue a perder en dichas yslas a trueque sin dubda de que se ganasen aquellas almas y traimos dos de ellos con nosotros con cuya ayuda nos a faboreçido Dios para poner en su lengua a los de la Dotrina christiana y disponer algun modo de artte o vocabulario de aquella lengua y por la escala de estos pobres que quantto mas pobres son mas aproposito para escalar el zielo y conseguir otras muchas enpresas del divino y Real Servizio esperamos tanvien el paso que deçiamos del Japon en el tiempo que el Señor save sera mas oporttuno para aquellas almas y de camino asegurar mas para en adelante los viajes y socorros de Filipinas dando vien principio agora para que sse bea quan util es aun en lo temporal para el bien comun de aquellas Provincias la misericordia espirittual con tales pobres almas que se dexavan ssin remedio en el camino pues les envia el Señor aora a los de Filipinas por mano de V.Ex^a tanvien socorro temporal como esperamos con el mismo vajel que lleva el socorro espirittual a los Ladrones para el qual determinadamentte en virtud de la Real zedula se fabrico y avio y a llegado a esta costa de Nueva España con ttan felix viaje y tal salud de los que en el nos embarcamos que no emos tenido asta aora difuntto ni enfermo alguno de peligro que la bondad Divina y protecçion de la Santtissima Virgen y nuestros Santtos patrones y esperamos bolver de la misma suertte a continuar nuestro viaxe favoreciendonos el Señor por medio de V.Ex^a con tan breve y buen despacho como se requiere para que los Santtos yntenttos de su Magd en la salvacion de las almas de su patronato y dominio en que sus zelosos ministros ponen tantta soliçitud no se malogren ni en una sola alma de una criatura que por alguna dilacion deste viaje se nos muera sin la graçia del Santto Baupismo.*

Para esto Señor por lo que toca al socorro de Filipinas y de la gente que viene y a de ir en este navio es menester lo que V.Ex^a save mexor y lo que rrepresenttaran en sus cartas el Señor Governador Don Diego Salzedo y el Almirantte Bartolome Muñoz que tiene por cavo deste navio y no sabre explicar a V.Ex^a lo mucho que le devo y las buenas parttes que en el e rreconocido de vilijançia[,] prudencia y zelo en el serviçio de Dios y del Rey y vien de los pobres de nuestras Yslas Marianas de quienes tiene espeçial conoçimientto y hermandad a su modo asenttada con ellos en barias ocasiones &a. Por lo qual me prometto a de lograr la merced que el Governador D. Diego Salçedo le a echo fiando de su cuidado el biaje y asientto desta Mision y la que en orden a su entera execuçion esperamos le hara V.Ex^a a el Almirantte y a ttodos los de su cargo que todos an proçedido muy bien y con espeçial vijilançia y açiertto el capitan Anttonio de Azevedo que viene por pilotto mayor.

Por lo que toca de partticular socorro de nuestras yslas Marianas sera menester añadir vien poco mas a lo hordinario de Filipinas para el Culto Divino y sustentto de quatro sazerdotes y otras doze personas seglares que llevamos en nuestra compañía y los que V.Ex^a gustare se añadan las quales a lo menos en esta primera entrada conviene que no solo no bayan forçados sino con enttera y pura bolunttad de ayudar a la conversion de aquellos pobres con sus buenos ejenplos de christiandad para lo qual ya que no ay otro tiempo nos servira de prueba el de la misma navegacion sirviendose V.Ex^a en conformidad de lo que el Señor D. Diego Salçedo dispusso en Manila de dar orden al Almirantte para que de la gente que trae de Manila y la que lleva aora de nuevo es-corta para dexar con nosotros en dichas yslas Marianas la que con buena açeptaçion dellos mismos y satisfacion nuestra le pareçiere mas convenientte para esta primer[a] enttrada que en adelante el tiempo yra mostrando que gente conbendra añadir.

Lo que a mi me rresta de añadir aora para alguna saçon del gusto de V.Ex^a en desquitte de lo prolijo desta cartta es la copia de un papel que mereçio ganar la primera graçia y zedula de su Magd para esta mision sin dubda por las clausulas que tiene del apostol de las Yndias San Françisco Javier que enpiezan ["]tiempo es ya de dar un desengaño al rrey pues esta mas çerca de lo que el piensa la hora en que Dios nuestro Señor le a de llamar a dar quentta &a.["] y dispuso el Señor sin cuya probidençia no se muebe una oja de marbol ni de un papel que llegase este tres meses antes del falleçimientto del Rey nuestro Señor Don Phelipe Quarto que este en gloria, y se diese por mano de mi Padre en la del Señor Presidentte de Yndias Conde de Peñaranda juntto con el memorial en que V.Ex^a presava tanvien lo del pasar ultimamentte al Japon para donde se haçia paso por dichas yslas de los Ladrones con que se enlaço uno y otro en el zelo y orden de su Magd. de que se ejecuttasse esta mision en esa forma. Otro papel fue el siguiente año dirijido a la Reyna nuestra Señora en pliego para su confesor el Padre Everardo Nitardo bien lejos de saverse en Filipinas el estado de cosas y gobierno que se alla en la cortte con que triay [=traza?] otra vez pareçe a junttado nuestro Señor las çircunstançias que pareçian mas conduçenttes al buen despacho que aunque nunca se podia temer malo en ttal caussa pero podian temerse las dilaciones que en otras las quales a querido evitar en esta la divina misericordia disponiendolo con la mayor breve-

dad segun diçen que se a visto en yda y buelta y execuzion de otros negoçios y zedulas Reales.

Porque sin dubda deve querer el Señor se desquitte ya la dilaçion tan lastimosa de mas de çien años que a que se thomo posesion de dichas yslas de los Ladrones en nombre del Rey nuestro Señor por el adelantado Miguel Lopez de Legazpi y se dijo misa en ellas, y se dio aquellos naturales la Real palabra de bolver ellos y enseñarles el camino del çielo el qual an perdido tantos millares de almas cada año por cuenta de quien ubiere sido caussa de tan desgraciada dilaçion sin haver aquellos pobres dado la menor muestra de resistencia ni haver otra cosa que dificulte el darles la luz del Santto Evangelio sino es que sea la pobreza de dichos naturales que segun el mismo Santto Ebanjelio antes devia conducir mas para esto pues para ebanjeliçar a los pobres diçe señaladamente Christo nuestro Señor que le envio su eterno Padre.

*El Ayudante Anttonio Bernal que lleva estas carttas dara a V.Ex^a cumplida relacion de nuestro viaxe y del buen aguantte de nuestro navio **San Diego** y felicidad con que el Señor nos a traído en el que aunque de pequeño portte y solas dos cubierttas y no mas capacidad de gente que la que es menester para lo que se hiço que es llevar la luz de el Santto Ebanxelio a nuestras yslas Marianas la fabrica y fortaleza es de las buenas que se abran visto en estos mares y en este viaje a querido el Señor se aya experimentado con lo bien que se a mantenido con bien rreçios tenporales ffaboreçiendonos el Señor por la inbocacion de su Madre y de sus Santos espeçialmente de nuestros singulares Patrones San Diego titular de nuestro navio y nuestro Padre San Ygnaçio en cuyo dia de su otava **siette de agosto nos hicimos a la bela** y despues nos salio en suertte entre las que se suelen echar en esta carrera para esexer el partticular abogado del viaje de cuya protecçion tiene dadas vien particulares muestras y no menos su Santto hixo y apostol y Padre nuestro San Françisco Xavier pattron ya de antes elejido por votto de Manila para todos estos viajes en cuyo dia tanvien de su otava Savado diez de Diciembre bimos las señas de la tierra que tantto se desean en estos viaxes de Manila a Nueva España y fue acavando de zelebrar una misa del Santto y otra de la Ymaculada Concepcion con el boto de defender y benerar este Santto misterio que hiçieron nuestro Almirante y los offiçiales y demas gente deste navio en la misma forma y protesta de la ymittacion del Apostol de las Yndias San Francisco Xavier que usan y tienen puesta en su Epittome los hermanos de su Venerable Congregacion en Mexico de la qual y de su S. ynsignes obras de misericordia havemos ya quien singular protector es V.Ex^a que no añade pequeña constança para los progresos de nuestra mission.*

Al dicho Ayudante Anttonio Bernal quando no uviera sido señalado para la funci-on de llevar el pliego en zircunstançias tan cordiales nuestras del despacho esta mision y de ttantto gusto de V.Ex^a, quantto de gloria de nuestro Señor Jesu Christo recenptor de aquellos pobres y de espeçial serviçio de la Reyna del çielo y de la ttierra le deviera yo al dicho Ayudante Anttonio Bernal toda atençion y espeçial memoria delante de V.Ex^a por lo que le deve nuestra mision y viaje asi en lo perttenezieinte al vien comun y execucion y logro de los hordenes y cuidado del Almirante en nuestra navegacion como al bien de los partticulares sanos y enfermos que a la buena mano y caridad del Ayudant-

te Anttonio Bernal se puede atribuir mucho el no haver peligrado ninguno por esto y por la neçesidad con que se halla dicho Ayudante Anttonio Bernal habiendo tomado estado con una pobre donçella guerfana solo por rremediarla me le prometto todo favor de V.Ex^a, asi en la merced de jinetta con que suelen honrrar los Señores Virreyes a los mensajeros del pliego como en lo que mas a menester que es el socorro mayor y mas adelantado que se le pudiere dar y las demas mercedes que sabra haçer mejor V.Ex^a que no son suplicarle asi para el dicho Ayudante como para los demas de nuestro navio aventtando siempre como por ttantos tittulos lo mereçe y no menos por la neçesidad y pocas comodidades con que se halla sobre sus enpeños y obligaciones de familia a nuestro Almirante Barttolome Muñoz.

El tiempo ya tan entrado y preçisso para proseguir nuestro viaje y conseguir el fin de nuestra mision me obligan a sacrificar a nuestro Señor el consuelo que tubiera llegando a essa ciudad y bessando en persona la mano a V.Ex^a y berdaderamente la cortedad de mi vista y poco desenvaraço de viajes de tierra por lo qual pareçe tiene mas naçido ó menos ynutil con la graçia del Señor para las misiones de yslas y viajes de mar no podian darme lugar a haçer dos viajes de yda y bueltta con la priesa que era menester que aun los correos y avios de las cosas neçesarias para el despacho abran menester vien la eficacia y ardor de V.Ex^a para que no se pierda el tiempo y monçon de nuestro viaje para la en ttoda en nuestras yslas Marianas y consecucion dexa que inportta no menos que la salvaçion de tantas almas como dice su Magd. en su Real zedula.

Lo poco que yo pudiera asistir en esa çidad para rreçivir el orden y merçed de V.Ex^a en nuestro despacho se mejora sin dubda con la asistencia de nuestro Procurador el Hermano Françisco Bello y demas Padres de nuestra Conpañia hermanos de la Congregaçion de San Françisco Xavier que sirvan no poco al çelo de V.Ex^a en lo que se serviere hordenarles como a procuradores desta mision y obra tan propria del Apostol de las nuevas gentes San Francisco Xavier, ó por mejor deçir aunque con peor letra V.Ex^a mismo sera el mexor Procurador del Santto Apostol y agentte mas efficaz de la Santtissima Virgen en esta su enpressa mariana y obra de tanta misericordia y gloria del amorosissimo redemptor de aquellos pobres ysleños a quien V.Ex^a hara en el rremedio de sus almas y aplicaçion del que nuestro Señor Jesu Christo las dexo con su sangre y el Rey y Reina Señores les disponen ya eficazmente a quentta de su Real haver y zelo de los ministros que representan no menos que su persona su piedad y patrozinio de stos pobres que de tal efficaçia y zelo tienen pendiente su salvaçion en que hara V.Ex^a Digo a la Magd. Divina y humana un obsequio tan grande como digno de su grandeza y piedad dando no solo el horden que conviene sino poniendo tanvien assimismo para que sea ygual la efficaçia y ejecucion necesaria en la brebadad de nuestro despacho y a buen seguro que el Señor agradecidisimo de sus rredenptor de dichas pobres almas y la medianera y Madre Santtissima y el agentte en la corte del zielo y apostol de las nuevas genttes con los demas Santtos patrones y angeles de la guarda sus procuradores.

Correspondan en sus offiçios a los de V.Ex^a con la justa y creçida recompensa de muchos aumenttos de graçia y salud y los demas que comunieren a su Exma. persona

y familia como suplicamos en nuestros sacrificios y oraciones y las que el Señor oyra de muy buena gana de los pobres e ynocentes que se convertiran con su divino favor en nuestras yslas Marianas asi las dos misiones [rather los dos misioneros] que venimos de Manila como las tres o quatro que esperamos de essa çiudad y Provinçia en que nos remitemos a la caridad del Padre Provinçial, y demas Padres y de nuestro Procurador de Filipinas que dara a V.Ex^a quentta de los que uvieren de benir este y los siguientes años si aora no estubieren a mano los que son menester vien tiene V.Ex^a que añadir de la boz perdonando los borrones que e añadido de mi lettra despues de haver dexado casi sin margenes el pliego con tan prolija cartta desquitteme la materia tan del gusto de la piedad de V.Ex^a y la copia del Memorial de San Francisco Xavier artto mas sustancial y breve que remito con esta.

Señor muy entrado esta el tiempo para que tengamos mas que dever a V.Ex^a en la brevedad de nuestro despacho que a lo menos el no coxer dia de março en Acapulco ynportta sumamente para el cumplido logro de nuestro viaxe y mision y de la merced que esperamos rreçiver de V.Ex^a a quien otra y mil vezes buelvo a rogar al Señor guarde con muchos augmenttos de su divino amor en compaña de mi Señora la Marquesa cuyas santas oraçiones y las de ttda la familia pido umildementte por el buen subçeso de nuestra mision y salvaçion de nuestros pobres Marianas[.] sirvase la verdad Divina nos beamos con millares della en el çielo a los pies de la santissima Virgen[.] las visijtas en esta vida son buenas para sacrificadas a Nuestro Señor por mexor conseguir aquella avista vien abentturada[.]

*Desta Nao **San Diego** y paraje de Salagua a tres de henero de mill y seiscientos y sesentta y ocho.*

*Beso la mano de V.Ex^a su menor Capellan y Siervo,
Diego Luis San Vitores.*

Translation.

Your Excellency:

Although I hope to deserve the favor of Y.E., as you have always collaborated with Don Gerónimo San Vitores, my father, and with the Count of Cabra del Santo Cristo, my brother, for whom, but specially for the virtue and good zeal of my father, although much to my confusion, I cannot but recognize that it seems as if Divine kindness has deigned to make up for my deficiency in everything for the missions and ministries that He has deigned to entrust me with, but the piety of the present enterprise is such that I trust in our Lord it will be sufficient to engage the generous heart of Y.E. so zealous in the Divine and Royal service to take under your protection the propagation of our holy Faith.

Sir, the objective of this Voyage is to carry the light of the holy Gospel to the Islands commonly named Ladrones, which are already being called Mariana Islands, to honor the Blessed Virgin Mary who they say has appeared in one of them that the natives call **Tinian** and the Spanish Buena Vista and so, with such a good vision of the Blessed Virgin Mary it began, with the first of those poor natives, who died recently baptized. Now,

finally, the conversion of all has been arranged, with the same protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary through the devotion and piety of the Queen our Lady, Doña Mariana, to carry on the holy zeal of the King our Lord, Philip IV (may he rest in peace). He had so arranged by his Royal Decree dated Buen Retiro, 24 June 1665, in which he was pleased to order that Diego Luis de San Vitores of the Society of Jesus be given the necessary vessel for the said mission and to supply him so that he might succeed in the objective of introducing the holy Gospel in the said Islands and pass to the provinces that might be convenient and enter finally, if possible, in the present(?) he and his companions of the same Society of Jesus, who would have received permission from their Superiors, etc. Y.E. will be fully informed about this by the letter of the Governor of the Philippines, Don Diego Salcedo, to whom the said decrees were addressed. To comply with them His Lordship dedicated himself with singular rapidity and zeal and managed in a very short time to build and outfit this vessel **San Diego** for this mission which, it is hoped, will be the beginning of the reduction of that whole chain of Islands and lands that run north to south, and which they say form the fourth part of the world. This will be as well the way to restore the Faith which has so unfortunately suffered in Japan. I am not saying that this mission and assignment of this useless and unworthy Minister will be of direct use for this, although the Lord sometimes uses the most useless so that it may be recognized better that everything is His doing. However, given the spirit and labor of the other ministers of all religious orders who, once the stopover of these Voyages at our Mariana Islands has been established, will no doubt come to make a Christian community out of them, and give these good Thieves the opportunity to carry off something and see the numberless souls climb to Heaven, who presently inhabit the said chain so spread out, both southward and northward where these Islands continue as far as the head of Japan, from which news have been received that the persecution is more mitigated, although the more beaten path to make an entrance there from Manila is not expected to be as available and easy as through the said chain of the Ladrones, or Mariana islands, where in the meantime without wasting time such copious and ripe harvest that the Lord has made ready, little by little the way to make an entry into Japan can be followed, at a time to be chosen by divine pleasure. Thus, taking into account the remedy of these and those other souls, Governor Don Diego Salcedo has complied with the said Royal Decrees with so many efforts and so readily, and at a time when the Royal Treasury was so obligated that it could not provide all the funds, he supplemented it with a great liberality of alms from his own pocket, in order to have this vessel sail and to outfit us, my companions and myself, with everything necessary, that is, abundant food supplies and relief for this voyage. However, more importantly, His Lordship has shown the effectiveness that he places in this enterprise by placing it finally in the hands of Y.E., by routing this ship to the port of Acapulco. Besides, this route is the more direct one can take to go decidedly to the Island of **Guan** that we already call San Juan, next to Sarpana and Buena Vista, which is the one considered more appropriate and where the port of call will be for all these voyages, one that may become very useful to the commerce of this New Spain and the Philippines.

It will be easier to bring succor to it, without the need for more expenses in vessels or outfittings, other than the ordinary ship that is despatched for the succor of the Philippines that is always routed through the said Islands of Guan and Sarpana, or Buena Vista, on the return voyage.

To this effect, since the very first decrees by which His Majesty ordered that the poor people of the Islands of the Ladrones be indoctrinated, an instruction is given that, upon going from New Spain to Manila, religious personnel to indoctrinate them be left in the said Islands and in their company 10 soldiers or so, or whatever convenient number, more to set an example of Christian living than for defence, as those natives are so peaceful; even then when they were not so used to dealing with the said Spanish as they are now, they were recognized as so friendly and without evil characteristics to perturb them. Neither do they have the sect of Mahomet, nor idols, nor do they make use of wine or other thing that might make them drunk, etc. That is the way then to obey this instruction as closely as possible, and to land more securely at the said Island of Guan, and organize from the beginning the method to be followed in future without new expenses of galleons, etc.

The main thing is that divine Providence, in deciding that this mission will benefit from the effectiveness and zeal of Y.E., arranged for Don Diego to route this ship to the said port, and, ever prudent and zealous of the public good of the Islands under his government, succeeding by the same occasion in ascertaining the succor of the Philippines, which he fears may be running some risk this year, as the galleon **Nuestra Señora del Buen Socorro** had not yet been able to leave. This new galleon was built expressly for this year's voyage; to this effect, she was all ready and the ship was advised of her having set sail from the provinces of the Visayas where she was built when we were going through the Entrance channel of the Islands, and that was on 24 August. For this reason, and because the galleon is overly large, it is much to be feared that she may not get good enough weather to make the voyage the first time around, this year. So, we hope in our Lord and the Blessed Virgin, through the hand of Y.E., the accomplishment of everything that we can hope at present, not only for the remedy of numberless souls in the said Mariana Islands who are found in the most extreme necessity that can exist, but also with the most ready disposition to receive the holy Gospel, whose ministers they have asked for, through some persons acting as ambassadors and interpreters that the Lord has offered to us, from those who were left there since the year 1638 by the galleon **Nuestra Señora de la Concepción** that was lost in the said Islands, no doubt to make us gain those souls in exchange. We bring two of those persons with us, with whose help God has favored us to make a translation of the articles of the Christian doctrine into their language, and to arrange for some sort of grammar

or vocabulary of that language,¹ and to provide a “ladder” so that these poor people can climb to Heaven—the poorer the more appropriate—and to achieve many other enterprises of the divine and royal service.² We hope also to open the way to Japan, as we said, at a time that the Lord knows, when it will be more timely for those souls and by so doing made the voyages and succors sent to the Philippines more secure, giving a good beginning now so that it can be seen how useful it will be even in the material sense for the common good of those Provinces the spiritual mercy toward these poor souls that were being left without a remedy along the way; indeed, the Lord is now sending them to those in the Philippines through the hand of Y.E., not only material succor as we hope with the same vessel that is taking the spiritual succor to the Ladrones. It was expressly for the latter purpose that, by virtue of the Royal Decree, it was built and outfitted and has arrived at this coast of New Spain, with such a prosperous voyage and so much health that among those of us on board we have not suffered a single death and no dangerous sickness, thanks to Divine kindness and the protection of the Blessed Virgin, and our patron Saints. We hope to return with the same luck during the continuation of our voyage, with the Lord favoring us through Y.E. with a quick and good despatch, as required, so that the holy intentions of His Majesty regarding the salvation of souls under his patronage and dominion, toward which his zealous ministers put so much attention, will not be made worse, not even by losing the soul of a single baby who dies without the grace of baptism, as a result of some delay in this voyage.

For this, Sir, concerning the succor of the Philippines and the people on board who must go on aboard this ship, suffice what Y.E. knows better and what Governor Diego Salcedo and Admiral Bartolomé Muñoz, who is in command of this ship, will represent to Y.E. in their letters. As for me, I do not know what to say exactly to Y.E. but this I know, that I owe you very much, and I recognize the good parts you played in it, with vigilance, prudence and zeal in the service of God and of the King, and for the good of the poor people of our Mariana Islands, about which you already have some knowledge and in some way share a fraternity with them on various occasions, etc. Therefore, I am confident that the favor made to you by Governor Diego de Salcedo by entrusting the voyage and the establishment of this Mission to your care, will be carried out in full, and we hope that Y.E. will do a similar favor to the Admiral and all of those under his command who have behaved very well, specially Captain Antonio de Azevedo, the Pilot Major, who acted with special vigilance and accuracy.

As far as the particular succor required by our Mariana Islands, it will be necessary to add very little to the ordinary one of the Philippines for the Divine Cult and food

1 Ed. note: Fr. Sanvitores has given us the name of these two Filipino interpreters who taught him the Mariano language before his arrival at the Mariana Islands. They were Francisco de Mendoza and Esteban Diaz (see Doc. 16678F).

2 Ed. note: The Spanish word “escala” doubly means “port of call” and “ladder”, hence the figure of speech.

supplies of 4 priests and 12 other secular persons whom we bring in our company,¹ plus those Y.E. would like to add, but, at least in this first entry, it behooves us not to bring convicts, but everyone should have the pure mind of a volunteer to help with the conversion of those poor people with their good examples of Christian living. Concerning the latter helpers, now that there is not much time, the men who came aboard this last voyage with us could be used as a test. In accordance with what Don Diego Salcedo arranged in Manila, Y.E. will be served to order the Admiral to select some from among the men whom he brings from Manila and those whom he takes now as new escort, to leave with us in the said Mariana Islands, as long as they accept willingly themselves and are acceptable to us, as proposed by him for this first entry. Time will tell which type of men should be added in future.

What is left for me to add now, that might be somewhat more agreeable to Y.E., to make up for the length of this letter is the copy of a paper that won the first favor and decree of His Majesty for this mission, no doubt because of the quotation it contains from the Apostle of the Indies, St. Francis Xavier, which begins: "It is time to admonish the King that the hour is much closer than he thinks in which God our Lord will call him to give an account, etc."² The Lord, without whose providence not one marble slab or sheet of paper can be moved, arranged for this paper to reach the King our Lord, Philip IV (who is in glory) three months before he passed away. It was handed over by my father to the Count of Peñaranda, President of the [Council of the] Indies, together with the memorial, also known to Y.E., in which it is mentioned that eventually the opportunity of passing to Japan by way of the said Islands of the Ladrones.³ Thus, both papers affected the zeal and gave rise to the order of His Majesty that this mission should go ahead as planned. Another paper was sent the following year to the Queen our Lady,⁴ enclosed in a letter sent to her confessor, Father Everardo Nitardo, as I was far from knowing in the Philippines the state of affairs and government overthere at court, with what twist(?) it seems our Lord has arranged the circumstances that seemed more conducive to the good despatch, although no evil can ever be expected in such a cause, but delays could indeed be feared, as in other cases, but divine mercy wished to avoid delays in this one case, by arranging it all with the greatest speed, they say, that has ever been seen in the mail going back and forth and in the execution of other affairs and royal decrees.

Because no doubt the Lord must love to make up for the pitiful delay of over 100 years since possession was taken of the said Islands of the Ladrones in the name of the King our Lord by the Adelantado Miguel Lopez de Legazpi and mass was said there, and the royal promise was given to those natives that they were to return and teach them the way to Heaven. That is why the loss every year of so many thousands of souls

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- 1 Ed. note: There were a total of 15 Filipinos. Fr. Sanvitores is not counting the two women and the child (see Doc. 1668F).
 - 2 Ed. note: The full letter is Doc. 1663C.
 - 3 Ed. note: This is probably Doc. 1668E1.
 - 4 Ed. note: Doc. 1665C.

must be charged to the account of whoever caused such a disgraceful delay, since those poor people have never given the least sign of resistance, or done anything else that might have prevented their being given the light of the holy Gospel, except perhaps the poverty of the said natives that, according to the holy Gospel itself, should have caused the opposite effect; indeed, Christ our Lord says specifically that His eternal Father sent Him to evangelize the poor.

Adjutant Antonio Bernal, the bearer of these letters, will give Y.E. a complete account of our voyage and of the good endurance of our ship **San Diego** and the prosperity with which the Lord had brought us in her; although she is of small tonnage and has only two decks and no greater crew than what is essential for what was done, which is to carry the light of the holy Gospel to our Mariana Islands, her construction and strength are the best that have been seen in these seas and in this voyage the Lord wished to have her tested fully with a few stiff storms, during which the Lord favored us through the invocation of His Mother and of his Saints, specially our special patron saints, San Diego [i.e. St. James] whose name is born by our ship, and our Father St. Ignatius in whose octave day, **on 7 August we set sail**. Afterwards we encountered the heavy seas usually encountered along this run, the more to exercise him as the special advocate of the voyage whose protection was made very obvious, and not least that of his saintly son and apostle, our Father St. Francis Xavier, who had already been elected in a vote in Manila as patron saint of all of these voyages, in whose octave day also, Saturday 10 December [1667] we saw the signs of land [off California] that are sought after so much during these voyages from Manila to New Spain. It happened at the end of the celebration of a mass to the Saint and another to the Immaculate Conception with a vow to honor this holy mystery made by our Admiral, the officers, and the rest of the people aboard this ship in the same form and protestation used by the Apostle of the Indies, St. Francis Xavier, such as the brothers of his Venerable Sodality in Mexico use and have printed with his Epitome. In this sodality and in their famous pious works of mercy we have already in the person of Y.E. found a special protector who adds not a small [element of] certainty to the progress of our mission.

Even though the said Adjutant Antonio Bernal had not been chosen for the function of carrying the letter in circumstances so dear to our hearts, those of the despatch of this mission, as much pleasing to Y.E. as it is to the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, Redemptor of those poor ones and of special service to the Queen of Heaven and Earth, I would nevertheless bring to the attention and special memory of Y.E. the said Adjutant Antonio Bernal, because our mission and voyage owe much to him, with regards to the common welfare and the successful execution of the orders and care of the Admiral during our navigation, for instance, by looking after individuals, healthy and sick. It is to the good hand and charity of Adjutant Antonio Bernal that one must attribute much of the result that no-one's life was endangered during the voyage in question. On account of the necessity in which the said Adjutant Antonio Bernal finds himself, hav-

ing married a poor orphan girl, only to help her out, I trust that Y.E. will do him the favor of a mount,¹ the usual favor granted by the Lord Viceroys to the mail couriers, in addition to something more necessary such as more salary and promotion that he can be given and other favors that Y.E. will know better how to do. This I beg, not just for the said Adjutant but also for the rest of the crew of our ship, by granting to our Admiral Bartolomé Muñoz the advantages that he has always deserved on so many counts, not the least of which is the need and few comforts in which he presently finds himself with his charges and family obligations.

The time which is already so advanced and urgent for us to pursue our voyage and achieve the purpose of our mission, obliges me to sacrifice to our Lord the consolation I would have of going up to that City and to kiss in person the hand of Y.E.² In truth, my shortsightedness and my little suitability for travels overland—for which it seems I am more suitable and less useless, thank God, for missions in islands and sea voyages—could not give me room to make a round trip with the speed that is required. Even for the correspondence and the supplies of necessary things for the despatch, the effectiveness and ardor of Y.E. are all that is necessary to expedite them, so that no time be lost and that we may take advantage of the monsoon [rather proper season] for our voyage to our Mariana Islands, given that the importance of this despatch is based on the fact that upon it depends no less than the salvation of so many souls, as His Majesty says in his royal decree.

The little that I could do in that city to assist in receiving the order and favor of Y.E. in our despatch will no doubt be improved with the assistance of our Procurator, Brother Francisco Bello, and the other Fathers of our Society, the brothers of the Sodality of St. Francis Xavier, who will no less serve the zeal of Y.E. in whatever you may order them to do in their capacity as procurators of this mission and pious work so appropriate to the Apostle of the new peoples, St. Francis Xavier. Or better said, Your Excellency, though it be with less flourish, will be the best Procurator of the holy Apostle and the more efficient agent of the Blessed Virgin in this her Marian enterprise and pious work of much mercy and glory of the most loving redeemer of those poor islanders, to whom Y.E. will give in the remedy of their souls and application of the one that our Lord Jesus Christ gave them with His blood and the King our Lord and the Queen our Lady arranged for them to have, efficiently already on the account of their Royal Treasury and zeal of the ministers who represent no less than their person, their piety and their patronage of those poor peoples, whose salvation is now pending in the efficient and zealous hands of Y.E. I say that Y.E. will give their Divine and human Majesties a gift so great as it is worthy of their greatness and mercy, by giving not only the convenient order but also by making sure also that it be executed efficiently and as fast as possible, in the light of the urgency of our despatch and the good guarantee offered

1 Ed. note: The exemption of paying for his own horses, between Acapulco and Mexico.

2 Ed. note: However, the Viceroy sent for him and he eventually had to go to Mexico City, on top of the horse loaned him by the Fort Warden of Acapulco, in spite of his avowed lack of horsemanship.

by the thankful Lord to the redeemer of these poor souls and the intermediary and Blessed Mother and agent in the heavenly court and Apostle of the new peoples with the rest of the patron saints and guardian angels their procurators.

The functions of Y.E. correspond to theirs, and so will the fair and ample reward, with many increases in grace and salvation, and more that will be communicated to your Excellent person and family, as we beseech in our sacrifices [of the mass] and prayers, as well as the prayers most pleasing to the Lord that will be made by the poor and innocent ones to be converted with His divine favor in our Mariana Islands, not only by the two of us missionaries who come from Manila but also be the three or four whom we hope from that city and Province, regarding whom we defer to the charity of the Father Provincial and other Fathers and our Procurator of the Philippines. They will inform Y.E. about those who are to come this year and in the following years, unless the necessary ones are available now. I still would have much to tell Y.E. verbally, and please forgive the draft copies and the additions I made with my handwriting,¹ after having left such a long letter with almost no margins. My excuse is the nature of the subject matter, so much to the taste of the piety of Y.E., and the copy of the Memorial of St. Francis Xavier, which is somewhat more substantial and brief, I enclose with the present.

Sir, the time is far advanced already for us to get our despatch with the urgency that we owe to Y.E. so that at least by picking a date in March for it to be at Acapulco. This is extremely important for the complete success of our voyage and mission, and it is a favor which we hope to receive from Y.E., whom once again and a thousand more times I beg the Lord to keep with many increases of His divine love in the company of my Lady, the Marquise, for whose saintly prayers and those of the whole family I humbly beg for the success of our mission and the salvation of our poor Marianos. May it please the divine Majesty to let us meet with thousands of them in Heaven at the feet of the Blessed Virgin. The [personal] visits in this life are good things to offer as sacrifices to our Lord, the better to obtain that final fortunate interview.

From this galleon **San Diego** and vicinity of Salagua, on 3 January 1668.

I, your minor Chaplain and servant, kiss the hand of Your Excellency,
Diego Luis San Vitores.

1 Ed. note: The main text of this letter was either dictated to or composed by Fr. Cardenoso, his companion aboard the San Diego.