
Document 1659B

Letter from Fr. Sanvitores to the Fr. General of the Jesuits, asking him to be sent to the Indies

Sources: ARSI Fil. 13, fol. 105v +; in the Process of Toledo (1689), fol. 529-545; partial copy in AGI Ultramar 562; translated by Fr. Juan Ledesma (op. cit. pp. 172-173).

Note: Fr. Goswino Nickel was General of the Jesuits from 1652 to 1661, at which time he was replaced by Fr. Juan Pablo Oliva.

Introductory note, by Fr. Ledesma.

This letter is not a mere copy of the one that reached the hands of Father General. What he wrote to Fr. General was written **in Latin**, of which we find some fragments in the *Narratio Historica* signed by six Fathers of the Marianas on the occasion of the Martyrdom.¹ This is the translation made by the same Servant of God [i.e. Fr. Sanvitores himself] and given to his father by order of the Superior, as we know it from the document itself and from the book of Fr. Francisco Garcia.²

We have not been able to find in the archives the original Latin text nor the complete copy of it. As regards the [full] Spanish version which we translate here, it was in the possession of Don Joseph San Vitores, brother of the Servant of God. The Process of Toledo required an authentic copy (fol. 528v), demanded witnesses of its authenticity; these witnesses were Fr. José de Alcaraz, S.J., and Pedro de Espinar, S.J. Having accomplished this the Judge Delegate declared the document authentic and ordered it to be included in the minutes of the Process.

1 Ed. note: See Doc. 1673L. It was also reproduced, in Spanish, in Doc. 1673K (see next page).

2 Ed. note: In Chapter 11. (see Bibliography, under 1665-1681); cited y Astráin, VI, p. 807.

Draft of the Spanish version made by Fr. Sanvitores himself.

Source: AGI Ultramar 562; inserted in one of the annual reports for 1672-73 (Doc. 1673K).

Reverendisimo Padre Nuestro.

Mis Padres espirituales me habian mandado hasta hoy me contentase con comunicar á los Padres Provinciales la materia de esta Carta, pero me dicen ya que para mayor gloria de Dios debo representarle y proponerle á Vuestra Paternidad; lo cual hago trasladando el primer exemplar que habia comenzado, y añadiendo de nuevo lo que diré abajo.

Desde los años de mi infancia que puedo acordarme me ocupó totalmente el deseo, segun y aun quiza mas de lo que era capaz á aquella edad, de la conversion de las almas, especialmente de los infieles, y del martirio: á los 12 años de mi edad por la gran misericordia de Dios, y de la Beatísima Virgen, fui llamado á la Compañía con tal ardor y sentimiento en la dilacion, que aunque hubo primero algun yerro en la edad conocido finalmente antes de entrar en la Compañía, que no tenia cumplidos los 13 años no fué embarazo para admitirme dispensando despues nuestro Padre Musio, á lo cual quizas le movió lo que aconteció entonces á mi madre.

*Como determinase mi madre embiarme de Madrid donde yo e[stuve en?] la compañía de [mi] Padre que asistia en Sevilla; temiendo yo por lo menos una larga detencion, elejí por mas segura la fuga al lugar de mi refugio, que era el Colegio de la Comp^a. Luego que supo esto mi madre acometio impetuosa á nuestro Colegio, cual tigre, a quien le habian quitado sus cochorrillos, buscandome y juntamente al Padre Provincial (que era el Padre Francisco Aguado) el cual le habia dado palabra de no recibirme en la Compañía sin su beneplacito: estando pues brotando llamas y amenazas esperando la respuesta delante de la puerta comun y antigua de nuestro Colegio Imperial: le parecio que por una ventana proxima á la puerta correspondiente al coche en que esperaba, miraba á Nuestro Padre S. Ygnacio, que tras sí me guiaba de la mano, vestido yo con la ropa de la Comp^a (que realmente aun no tenia) y con tales veras se persuadió que al punto mandó apretadamente á los criados me cogiesen clamando en alta voz **veis allí á mi hijo:***

*Que mientras los criados miran lo interior de la ventana, sin oir, ni ver cosa alguna: fixando mi madre mas intensamente la vista en la representacion mia que miraba, la vio rociada de sangre y señalada con insignia de martirio, y juntamente le pareció que oia á N.P. San Ygnacio que con distinta y clara voz decia estas palabras **dexale en la Compañía por que ha de ser martir:** estas (palabras) cosas y sucesso de tal suerte mudaron el animo de la muger por su natural propension y por la ocasion gravemente airada que oyendo decir que el Padre Provincial, estaba en la visita de la Casa profesa, sin preguntar mas por si se fué á verle, y declarandole como debaxo de sacramental sigilo todo el caso, prometio que jamas resistiria mi entrada en la Comp^a sino que con todas sus fuerzas lo fomentaria. Y esto mismo contó y prometió en confesion al Padre Diego Ramirez, mi amantisimo Padre espiritual, y al Padre Luis de la Palma, y (si no me engaño) al Padre Andres de Rada, ministro entonces del Colegio Imperial, y otros Padres de los mas graves. De tal suerte cumplió lo prometido, que habiendo un tio mio her-*

Letter from Fr. Sanvitores to Fr. Gosvino Nickel, dated Alcalá de Henares, 2 July 1659

Jesus, Mary, Joseph
Ignatius, Francis

Translation into Spanish of the letter which I wrote to our Father General, which I leave by order of the Superiors to my twice father and Lord because of the blessing he gave me in order to comply with my vow and obedience for the greater glory of our crucified Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Very Reverend Father.

May the Peace of Christ be with you. My spiritual Fathers had up to the present commanded me to content myself in communicating the matter of this letter to the Fathers Provincial. Now they seriously advice me that, for the greater glory of God, I ought to give an account of it all to your Paternity, which I am doing now, by transcribing from the first draft which I had begun, and adding yet what I will say below.

From the years that I can remember of my boyhood, I was all full of desires for the conversion of souls, especially of the infidels, as well as of dying a martyr, as far as or, perhaps beyond what I could think of at that age. When I reached the age of twelve through the great mercy of God and of His holy Mother, I was called to the Society with much fervor and urgency. At the beginning there was an error in my age. At last it was known that I had not yet completed 13 years, which became no obstacle for my admission, since later the dispensation of our Fr. Muzio¹ intervened. Perhaps this was motivated by what happened then to my mother.

Because when my mother tried to send me to Seville where my father was, (who had me called to examine my vocation), fearing that my desires might be at least delayed, I decided it more safe to flee from the place where I was detained, to the College of the Society. As soon as my mother learned about this she left with great annoyance in search of me. She also looked for Father Provincial, who was then Father Francisco Aguado, and had given his word to my mother that I would not be received without her consent. As my mother then was waiting in the old porter's lodge of our Imperial College, through a small window which was near that gate and overlooked the room of the porter and which was on a level with the coach where my mother was staying, it seemed to her that she saw me, and so clearly, that she cried out to the servants to get me, saying in a loud voice: "There goes my son."

But while the servants were looking through the window and neither saw nor heard anything, my mother looking at me more intently seemed to realize that I was dressed in the habit of the Society, (which I had not yet received, and I was quite a distance away in the farthest part of the house). At the same time it seemed to her that I was bathed in blood and with the marks of martyrdom, and that our Fr. St. Ignatius was

1 Ed. note: Fr. Muzio Vittelleschi, General of the Society from 1615 to 1640.

mano de mi Padre alcanzado del nuncio apostólico cartas para que (como dicen) me pusiesen en mi libertad, mi madre bien á deshora de la noche se fué al Padre Provincial, y le aviso eran contra su sentir tales cartas rogandole que á la presencia de un notario diese testimonio de dho contrario parecer y que luego me admitiese en la Compañía, segun mi ardiente deseo y ruegos; y finalmente ella misma sosegado el ánimo sin que la retardase el dolor y ausencia de mi Padre proveyó todo lo necesario para la entrada, y camino á la Casa de provacion de Villagarcia [sic]; lo cual de tal suerte admiró á los que la conocian, que sin saber cosa de la vision dha juzgaron habia intervenido algo sobrenatural, y los que supieron la vision le dieron por la novedad de su mudanza, y maravilloso suceso no poco credito.

*Sucedió otra cosa digna de notar, por que viniendo mi madre despues de la vision dha á verme y hablarme á la Yglesia de la Compañía, ella misma me llevó á la Capilla de N.P. S. Ygnacio, y poniendome delante de el altar entre las lagrimas (á que por lo magnanimo, y varonil de su natural, no estaba acostumbrada) dixo estas palabras: **Santo Padre Ygnacio este hijo te doy para que con sus ruegos me alcances de Dios la salud eterna.** Esto dixo jueves 19 de Julio de 1640 y el mismo dia jueves (por que buelbe la misma letra dominical) 19 de Julio de 1657 salió de esta vida no sin manifestos indicios de su eterna salud, como de la misericordia de Dios, y intercesion de nuestro Padre San Ygnacio confiamos.*

No olvidandome yo de modo alguno de estas cosas, y lo mas cierto faboreciendome la interior gracia, y vocacion de Dios (que por tal la conocieron muchos Padres espirituales que escudriñaban los senos de mi conciencia) creció en mi cada dia aquel innato deseo, ó por decirlo asi aquel deseo nacido fuera de lo que el orden natural pedia, de llevar y guiar á Cristo las almas principalmente de los infieles, y derramar por esta causa la sangre sin que jamas pudiese divertirse el -?- ni conseguir de mi otra cosa sino la resignacion en la obediencia, y paciencia en la dilacion, que cada dia como sacrificio de mi voluntad é inclinacion entre tanto ofrezco á Dios por espacio de 19 años: no refiero varias visiones en sueños &c. por que ni durmiendo ni despierto tenia otra cosa que mas frecuente pensase. Muchas veces declaré á los Padres Provinciales mi deseo, aunque no me acuerdo haver manifestado á alguno fuera de los que la sabian dha vision de mi madre; ya por alguna verguenza del animo, que conocia corresponder tan tibiamente en la observancia y costumbres, á tal cual fué aquella muestra de Dios; y porque esperaba conseguir mi deseado fin, solo con la interior y constante vocacion aprovada por los Superiores; aunque no pocas veces sintiendo la repulsa y tardanza, confieso deseé, y pedí si fuera mayor gloria de Dios se diese tambien á los Superiores alguna señal de la voluntad Divina; como embiandome alguna grave enfermedad que me apretase á hacer alguna promesa, y á los Superiores aceptarlas lo cual por la gran misericordia de Dios, finalmente lo conseguí.

Por que el año de 1657, por le mes de Noviembre me sobrevino una fiebre maligna (que para mi fué benignisima) y el mismo dia que los medicos de el cuerpo y de el alma me mandaron disponer Sacramentos, y hora yo casi ya persuadido que por mis meritos era desechado de otro mas precioso genero de muerte, á que con todas mis fuerzas y deseo me preparaba, me leyeron una carta de el Cardenal de Toledo, escrita el mismo

leading me after him by the hand, and that the same was saying in a clear voice: "Leave him, for he will become a Martyr." This transformed her so notably that she immediately quieted down, although previously she was so greatly annoyed and opposed my entrance into the Society, (at least until I should see my father and obtain his consent, which she on her knees had begged of me).

She stopped looking for me, and having heard that Fr. Provincial was in the professed house on a visitation, she immediately went to him and told him as if in confession what she had seen and heard. She promised him not to impede my entrance into the Society but would rather help me to enter with all her might. And she promised the same thing to Father Diego Ramirez, my very dear spiritual Father, to whom she reported in confession all that had happened. She also gave the same account to Fr. Luis de la Palma and other grave Fathers.

She kept her word in such manner that when my uncle obtained a written order from the [Papal] Nuncio to set me free, she herself went far into the night to Fr. Provincial to inform him that she had nothing to do with the Nuncio's letter. She begged him to write a reply to that letter before the notary public, and asked him to receive me immediately into the Society. Finally stirring it all up she ordered everything necessary for my reception and my journey to the novitiate of Villarejo, taking no account of the absence and feelings that my father might have, without waiting for his reply and consent.

Something else worthy of notice happened here. It was that, soon after my mother saw that vision, she spoke to me in the church of the Society, took me herself to the chapel of St. Ignatius and placing me before the altar (before I was received into the Society) she said: "Holy Fr. Ignatius, I give you my son, so that you may obtain from God my salvation." She said this on Thursday, 19 July 1640, and on the same day, also a Thursday (because it bears the same dominical letter), on 19 July 1657, she departed from this life, not without great signs of her salvation, as we hope from the mercy of God and the intercession of our Holy Father.

Although I tried in vain not to take this event so much into account, with the grace of God and my vocation made internally more certain which was known as such by many spiritual men who fathomed my conscience, there grew in me everyday that innate desire to bring to Christ especially the souls of the infidels and for that purpose to shed my blood, without ever having been able to turn my mind to any other direction, nor to gain for me anything else but to be resigned to obey and be patient in the delay, which I meanwhile offered to God since 19 years ago as a sacrifice of my will and inclination. I expressed my desires several times to the Fathers Provincial, although I do not recall having told to any one outside those who knew it already what happened to my mother, because of the embarrassment and confusion that I felt in being so different in my customs and with such bad correspondence to that manifestation of God. Also because I expected that with only the internal divine vocation, approved by the Superiors I could obtain the desired end. Although I have seen myself rejected many times and I resented the delay, I admit that I desired and begged our Lord to give also

dia en que me dió la enfermedad, en ella con ocasion de una mision me exortaba con santas y graves palabras, me diese todo el Ministerio de las Misiones por que para este me llamaba el Señor &c.

Estas palabras de tal suerte inmutaron mi animo, que en adelante, casi nada pensase en la cercana y deseada muerte; antes bolviendo á pensar en las Misiones con gran confianza me persuadí que Dios me habia de prorrogar la vida p^a emplearme y conseguir hasta el fin este mi deseado exercicio: rogué con mucha instancia, me truxesen unas cartas de S. Francisco Xavier firmadas de su propia mano, y juntamente otras del V.P. Marcelo Mastrilli que yo tenia guardadas, y comunicando el negocio con mi confesor y con el R.P. Rector alcancé grata licencia para hacer voto: por que luego que lo dixo á los de la Casa concibió grandes esperanzas de que me fuese prorrogada la vida.

*Con que para mayor honrra de Dios, y gloria de la Beatissima Virgen y de N.P. San Ygnacio, y por la materia de el voto singularmente debaxo de el Patrocinio de S. Francisco Xavier, y de el Venerable Marcelo, hize delante del Santisimo Sacramento que inmediatamente recibí este voto: es á saber **que en adelante habia de emplear toda mi vida y fuerzas en el Ministerio principalmente entre los infieles...***

[Part missing. Lost by Fr. Sanvitores himself]

[Lo que seguia de la carta que por lo menos es un folio entero [no] ha sido posible hallarlo, y la acababa pidiendo ansioso la mision de Filipinas para ayudar á los Padres que en ellas trabajan, con sus palabras.]

...y para amparar á las vecinas naciones si Dios diere ocasion ofrecirme á Vuestra Paternidad, para que qualquiera de estas Misiones de Filipinas, para lo cual por ventura hay ahora oportunidad, puesto que el Procurador de Filipinas trata ahora con Vuestra Paternidad de los Compañeros que se an de embiar; mas ruego á V.P. mire estas cosas no tanto como peticion como cuanto cuenta de conciencia, que en materia tan grave doy como a nuestro comun Padre a Vuestra Paternidad por que recelo no sea que siendo tan inutil me ingiera yo mismo en negocios tan arduos; pero me avisaron los Padres arriba dhos inmediatos Directores de mi conciencia me rezelase tambien que con un inprudente silencio y omision en las diligencias, no desagradase á Dios N.S. por lo cual obedeciendoles escribo, y obediente aguardo la voz de V.P. como voz de mi Señor Jesucristo cuya gloria y honrra solamente, y el logro y fruto de su precioso sangre en todos sus redimidos es el unico blanco de mis deseos y ansias que motiban estos ruegos y cartas.

Ojala mirando solo á Dios, y con obras de su agrado lo conseguia por su inmaculada Madre Virgen, y por nuestro bienaventurado Padre S. Ygnacio, y por los Patrones que son de mi devotos Xavier, con Marcelo, Borja, y todos los bienaventurados, por los cuales dirige N.S. á Vuestra Paternidad, y nos le guarde como deseamos y hemos menester para bien de nuestra Compañia y de tantas almas.

Alcala 2 de Julio de 1659.

Diego Luis de S. Vitores.

my Superiors some sign of his will, for instance a grave illness given me that would force me to make a vow and to have the Superiors approve it. This I obtained from the mercy of God.

Because in the first place around November of last year (1657), our Lord sent me a malignant fever, which for me was rather mild. The day came when the corporal and spiritual physicians informed me of the time to receive the last sacraments. I was almost convinced that because of my sins God was denying me another more precious kind of death. It was then that a letter from [the] Cardinal [of] Toledo, written on the same day that I fell ill, was read to me. In it I was being exhorted with holy and grave words, on the occasion of a mission, that I give myself completely to the ministry of the missions, for this was God's call for me.

This letter changed my attitude in such manner that since then I did not think anymore about the death which I so desired and was so near. Instead I turned my attention completely to the missions and asked that I be brought a signature of St. Francis Xavier and another which I had of the Venerable martyr Marcelo Mastrilli.¹ And, after consulting my confessor and Father Rector, I obtained permission to make a vow. This permission was willingly granted me by Father Rector because, as he told those of the house, he felt from it great hope that I would live.

Finally for the greater glory of God, honor of the blessed Virgin and of our Father St. Ignatius, and because of the matter of the vow, especially under the patronage of St. Francis Xavier and the Venerable Martyr Marcelo, I made this vow: **that from then on I would employ all my life and strength in the ministry of the missions, first-ly among the infidels, and while this is not yet permissible, among the faithful according to the mind of the Superiors and of the Institute of the Society of Jesus.**

I made this vow in the 30th year of my birth in Christ through the holy baptism. Because of this vow and of the call of my St. Francis Xavier I immediately began to feel better. And without any delay, I convalesced so well and in such short time that soon after, on the same day of St. Francis Xavier the physician decided that I could get up. For this reason those of the house and elsewhere attributed piously all this to the vow of the missions and to the merits of St. Francis Xavier.

As soon as Father Provincial came to know of my vow he approved it by letter and assigned me later to a mission. But this and another mission were up to the present not carried out because of my position as lecturer of Arts, in which I have been occupied

1 Ed. note: Fr. Marcelo Francisco Mastrilli was born at Naples in September 1603 and entered upon his novitiate in March 1618. In obedience to the command of an apparition of St. Francis Xavier which he believed he had seen (that saint also miraculously curing him of a dangerous wound), he asked for the missions of Japan. He left for his field in 1635, arrived at Manila (by way of India) in July 1606. At the request of Governor Corcuera, Fr. Mastrilli accompanied him in the expedition against Mindanao; soon after the governor's triumphant return therefrom, Mastrilli went to Japan, where he was almost immediately imprisoned and tortured. Finally, on 17 October 1637, he was beheaded at Nagasaki (B&R 27: 253).

for the past five years, obeying with good will, but not without pain, for I hardly have the time of vacations to give missions. I even have some fear, not in vain perhaps, of what I was told by that saintly man Fr. Jerónimo Lopez, who died in Valencia recently with great renown for sanctity, that I would lose the health God had given me for the Missions, should I not employ it in them. He also predicted in a letter written before his happy death that I would go to the Indies.

Our Lord seems to have deigned to confirm this through the following events. Before that last serious illness, in 17 years in the Society I hardly ever had even a day's fever. This past year of 1658, around September, I suffered certain serious malarial fevers, though not without signs also of the divine mercy. Because, after I had them for one month without improvement from the medications given, such as five bleedings etc., I received a letter, also about Missions, to which, and especially to the new Mission of the Kingdom of Arda, Fr. Alonso de Andrade was inviting me. Soon after, I received with the letter a great confidence that the following malarial fever would not recur.

This confidence was strengthened by the following. I noticed that the day for the first malarial fever to come would be on the feast of St. Francis Borgia. I prayed to the Saint that, since he was an especial advocate in these malarial fevers and, when he was General of the Society,¹ had instituted so many missions and offered to God the blood of so many sons, he would now obtain from God that on his feast-day and from then on the malarial fever would not recur anymore, if God had chosen me for the Missions. My first movement lead me to this, although I rejected what in the petition would be less agreeable to the Lord. In making this petition, I paid homage to a signature of the Blessed Francis Borgia, and as a special act of veneration of him I renewed the vow of the Missions, and I particularly promised to volunteer for the Mission of Arda. Besides this, in honor of St. Borgia and for the good of the sick I offered to keep in a reliquary the signature of the Saint.

My hopes were not in vain. Because while the last malarial fever had come with all that goes with it that is sufficiently painful, the one that would occur on the feast of St. Francis Borgia did not return without the intervention of any medicine. And it never returned again, except for the quality of the malarial fever of that time, which, although perhaps they erred, afflicted in Alcalá throughout the whole autumn and winter both interns and externs. For which reason with great consolation for me I was bound by my vow, according to the opinion not only of Fr. Andrés Junio, who was then my immediate and present Superior, but also of other teachers of this College, who with especial concern took care of me.

Your Paternity can see what enthusiasm, what fervor or fire were enkindled in me when I could believe that those our three saintly Fathers, Ignatius, Xavier with Marcelo (I shall add later what God added through them) and Borgia had approved my vow and desires; what courage I had for acknowledging and correcting my weakness, etc. what hopes for overcoming all the difficulties.

1 Ed. note: Francisco de Borgia was the 3rd General of the Jesuits, from 1565 to 1572.

Concerning the difficulty about the usefulness that can be imagined about me for certain positions in this Province: one is common to others who are sent; the other perhaps would vanish in my case who am well considered useless for many things: I would perhaps have died for one or other serious illness, of which I was cured through the vow of the Missions and the intercession of St. Francis Xavier, as is piously believed, and even now the hand of God is raised as that saintly man Jerónimo Lopez informed me. The only difficulty peculiar to my case is the opposition of my father to a mission outside Spain. I have heard this excuse several times, that the Superiors refuse to send me away against the will of my father...

The most merciful Lord who changed the mind of my mother, previously so opposed, and angry, and now so gentle and favorable to my entrance, could he not and would he not change in the same manner the resolution of my father?

That is what I hoped; this is what I wrote; or I had not yet finished the letter, since the Lord wished out of his goodness as it may be conjectured, to perfect it with his own hands. Because when my father at that time called me to Madrid to see a sick brother of mine the Lord visited me with a malignant fever which for me was no less benign than the first and second already mentioned above. For the physicians gave me scarce hopes to live. When I was about to receive the holy Viaticum God inspired me, as I believed, to talk to my father who was much afflicted, and carefully I told him: that if he wanted me to live he should consecrate totally my life for the service of God and of the souls in whatever place God would wish me to be through the Superiors of the Society.

My father soon agreed and promised that he would in no way oppose any disposition of the Superiors in my regard. With this promise I became absolutely pleased and full of hope that I would be saved from that danger for other greater ones for the glory of God and the good of souls.

Our Lord seemed later to confirm this most benevolently. Because I received the Blessed Sacrament and renewed the vows of the Missions with the greatest love that was burning in me. And by a happy coincidence ... I was carrying with me a signature of St. Francis Xavier and another of the Martyr Marcelo. It was in this handwriting of his own that the vow and prayers were signed and written. They were dictated by St. Francis. Through them he had consecrated himself to the Missions of India and renounced his country and parents. I heard this read with great consolation, and it remained deeply impressed in my heart.

Finally having received close to five hours later the Viaticum, in a dream ... which filled me with great comfort, I seemed to see my two patrons St. Francis Xavier and Fr. Marcelo assisting me and helping me in a manner I could not perceive well. And I seemed also to hear a voice which I did not know wherefrom it came, but it was as from a third party sent by the two. It seemed to come between the bed and the wall where the signatures of my two advocates were hanging.

And this voice seemed to me to say: "You are now cured," in such manner that this voice woke me up. Then I took my pulse as if to verify the truth of the voice, which I repeated within me: "I am already cured, I am already cured." At the beginning I seemed

to wonder and doubt; then the doubt passed, for I felt from the pulse and well feeling of my body and heart, that the fever had completely left me. I found myself as if I had gone through a very copious bath, and in time I realized it was the sweat that had covered me during my sleep.

One Brother heard me exclaim: "I am already cured," and that I should be brought a shirt to replace the one that was soaked in sweat. That Brother and the Fathers who soon came and the physicians found no trace of the fever, nor any aftermath of the sickness. This did not return, and I convalesced perfectly and fast.

I took this occasion as a sign from the hand of God that I could speak with Fr. Provincial and give him an account of the things that had happened to me and to my mother. No more of that embarrassment I felt before, whereby I dared not speak about them. I realized then my lack of gratitude and good manners that become a son of the Society. I told him how I felt interiorly that those sicknesses so often repeated within so short a time, and following my previous constant well being, seemed to be clear signs of God which urged the fulfillment of my vow, and that this last sickness seemed to have been sent to me in Madrid to be seen by my father, so that I might more easily obtain his permission to leave Spain.

Father Provincial listened to me with kindness and gave me great hopes that there were now in Europe Procurators from the Indies, and that I might perhaps be chosen, etc. At last, after reporting everything to Fr. Rodrigo Deza, to whom I had made my general confession before receiving the Viaticum, and to Fr. Alonso de Andrade, and here in Alcalá to Fr. Tomás de Rueda, my old confessor, and to Fr. Andrés Junio who, being the Vice Rector was my immediate Superior before the present one, all of these seriously advised me to give a complete account to Your Paternity.

For the love and blood of Jesus Christ I humbly beg you, that should you see it conducive to the greater glory of God you order that this little holocaust for the souls, those principally who are most deprived of the means for enjoying the Redemption, be offered to the same Lord who was offered on the Cross for all men; I mean this exceedingly small holocaust, which the Lord, overcoming with his infinite goodness my unworthiness, has deigned to reveal as acceptable to him, in so far as it may at least be permitted to conclude from the signs already mentioned above. Beyond this is the desire that has been of so long standing and so constant, insistent, and burning, that consuming fire which only our Lord God can enkindle in this heart of stone or iron, or, what is worse, of flesh.

Here I am, most beloved Father. Send me to any region of Barbarians whom Christ with his precious blood has also redeemed. I try to put myself in the hands of Your Paternity, totally indifferent as to what kind of Mission and nation you may decide. Because just as I would not take anything out of my own choice and free will, from which I do not trust there can be any good outcome, so also I will embrace with assurance any decision of the divine will and any disposition made by holy obedience, from which I have no reason to fear anything wrong.

But in order to reveal sincerely to Your Paternity all the movements of my soul, I admit that, while there is no possible entry of Ours into the Mission of Arda (to which in this vow that I made I had especially promised to offer myself, as I do it through this letter), I confess that, primarily because of St. Francis Xavier, the Japanese attract my sympathies. And many times it gives me great sorrow that the faith of that nation is considered to be such a desperate one. Their holy apostle Xavier, with so many words and labors, deserved great hopes for its promotion and great development. About which St. Xavier stated in the first letter among those which are in the hands of Fr. Mafeo: "I have great hope that if our sins do not stop God from favoring what has been begun, there shall be added to the body of the Church a great multitude of the Japanese people."¹

And further down, as if anticipating and dissipating the fears and manner of thinking of our time, he says: "Many times I have the fear that those who seem to be the more learned in the Society, if it should happen that any of them is sent to these parts, they would think that it is a reckless enterprise, and that it is like tempting God to put themselves in such manifest dangers. But later they were freed from this suspicion, because I hope that the indwelling Spirit of the Lord presides at the teaching of doctrines and lectures of our Society. And I remember many times what I perhaps heard from our B. Fr. Ignatius that all those who live in the Society should try with great study and effort to expel from themselves the various fears and all other things that are usually an impediment for placing all our trust in God."

All this was said by the Saint while on earth. But now that he is in Heaven how much does he promote this trust and the cause of the Japanese! He tries that at least with the shedding of blood the seed of the gospel may grow, that seed that was planted by the Saint and his companions and once sprouted, dried up through the dryness of the earth. Well was it demonstrated in Fr. Marcelo.

Also for the same reason the Chinese move me and attract me. And not without a special movement of the heart and regret I heard from Fr. Magino Sola (who now is in Madrid, having arrived recently from the Philippines) how the Chinese are with great desire and shortage of workers. They asked the Fathers of the Philippine Province, who refused because of their own shortage which is also prevalent in the Philippines.

While, therefore, there appears no other closer route (through my own fault) to that terminal, which in reality or apparently at least has been proposed to my desires, that is to shed my blood for the name of Christ and the salvation of the more abandoned souls, (regarding which, in spite of all of it, I do not feel inclined in such manner that for the palm of martyrdom I should desire the Missions but for the Missions I would not fear any labor or kind of death, ready to postpone not the life only, but also the most beautiful kind of death for one soul that I may gain for Christ and for only one

1 Ed. note: This quote was probably taken from one of the editions of Fr. Giovanni Pietro Maffei's book: *Historiarum Indicarum*, first published in 1588.

further degree of greater charity towards God and neighbors). If I were therefore to be of some usefulness to the Japanese or to the Chinese, by at least adding to the number of those working in the Philippines who are ready also¹ to help the neighboring countries, if God should offer an opportunity for this especial Mission of the Philippines, I would offer myself to Your Paternity. For which perhaps there is now an opportunity, since the Procurator of the Philippines is asking for volunteers from Your Paternity. However, may Your Paternity not consider what has been said above as a request, rather than as an account of conscience given in such a grave matter to our common Father. Because I am afraid to engage myself in any manner in such arduous matters, since I am so unworthy and absolutely useless. But my already-mentioned spiritual Fathers and immediate directors of my conscience have also advised me that I should fear lest an imprudent silence and omission of the proper diligence, I should give displeasure to our God. Wherefore in obedience to them I have written to Your Paternity and obediently I await the voice of Your Paternity as the voice of my Lord Jesus Christ whose only honor and glory and the efficacy of his precious blood is the only reason for my vows and desires and for the petition enclosed in this letter.

May I be able to obtain it with the heart intent directly towards the pleasure of God, and may my labors be pleasing to his Majesty through the Immaculate Virgin Mother, and our Fr. St. Ignatius and the patrons of my vows: Xavier with Marcelo and Borgia and all the Saints. May the Lord through them guide Your Paternity and may He preserve you for us for many years as we desire and have need of, for the good of our Society and so many souls.

Alcalá, 2 July 1659.

Diego Luis de San Vitores

[P.S.]

I wrote this letter through the most Blessed Virgin, on the day of her Visitation. And I received the reply on the most joyful day of the Expectation of the same Holy Mother, 18 December 1659. This reply and the letter of our Father to Father Provincial was written on 12 October, while I was making the spiritual exercises of our Father St. Ignatius, begging our Lord with great insistence that I might be given an answer that would be for his greater glory and the greater good of my soul and those of the most abandoned ones. Finally thanks to the great goodness of God and mercy of the Blessed Virgin I received the most happy decision of the Provincial and the blessing of my two times father and Lord on 2 January, Friday, the octave of the glorious Protomartyr Saint Stephen, 1660. May God and his Blessed Mother forbid that I spoil it all with my sins. Against this I ask my father and Lord Don Jerónimo, to whom by virtue of holy obedience I leave this paper, that he intercede intently for me before Our Lord Jesus Christ crucified and the Blessed Virgin so that his holy will may be fulfilled in me in conformity with his greater glory, the good of our souls and of our fellow-men.

1 Ed. note: Place in text marking the end of the lost folio of the draft copy.