

resistance by members of the petitioner's family (especially in the case of noble households); and various Jesuit offices (rectors and local superiors who were able to support or hinder a missionary departure, as well as procurators of the overseas missions who had the means to bring with them dozens of missionaries). Finally, and often ignored by petitioners, was that the situation of the missionary country was of the utmost importance; for instance, during the Japanese *sakoku* (closure to any contact with strangers) it was impossible to send men there, even with the best-written of letters.

2.4. How to Bid Farewell to Relatives and Other Practical Questions

If petitioners for the Indies had had the chance to read it, another section of *Misión a las Indias* would have been very relevant: obtaining permission to leave was, in fact, not enough, because before sailing for the Indies, Jesuits had to decide whether to say farewell to their families or not.

Pallas dedicated a whole chapter to this thorny issue, asking himself and his public “whether it is convenient to say goodbye to your relatives before your departure.”⁴⁶ He considered it “one of the most important things” to know for an aspiring missionary. Pallas was aware that most of his readers would have considered it pure cruelty not to say a last goodbye to their families, even if only out of the obligation that sons felt toward those who gave them life and an education. Some Jesuits, on the other hand, would have preferred not to see their parents because of a “holy hatred and annoyance” they felt toward them. Pallas and his readers knew the Christian message: “If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.”⁴⁷

Leaving to become a missionary was a sort of death. It meant a definitive detachment from everything that was known and familiar; missionaries definitely never returned, and not all of their parents accepted this without protest.⁴⁸ They could try to dissuade their sons, crying and screaming, raising a flurry of emotions that would negatively influence the Jesuit, who had been happy before but was now upset after visiting them.

Among petitioners for the Indies, there are many examples of families who tried to stop their sons, both spiritual and natural. The Sicilian Ignazio Maria

46 “Si convien yrse a despedir de sus parientes antes de la partida.” Pallas, *Misión*, 242.

47 Luke 14:26. “Obligación . . . sancto odio y aborrecimiento . . . si quis non odit patrem suum et matrem . . . non potest meus esse discipulus,” Pallas, 242.

48 With a few exceptions; for instance, if a missionary was appointed as a procurator he had to return to Europe.

Romeo (1676–1724?), for instance, was afraid that his real and religious fathers would “try to obstruct [his] departure.”⁴⁹ He suspected that the Jesuit superior would “adduce the scarcity of [manpower in] the Sicilian province,” while the marquis Romeo would share with the general his “disapproval” of Ignazio’s missionary desire. Both of these reasons were, according to Romeo, “neither well founded nor of real concern” for the Roman selection process.

Pallas exclaimed, in Jerome’s words: “How many religious men have lost their souls because they pitied their fathers and mothers?”⁵⁰ Some parents did not agree in the first instance with their sons’ choice to become a Jesuit. However, if becoming a Jesuit meant being away from home but always available and reachable, leaving for the Indies implied “an eternal absence” that could cause the most heated reactions.⁵¹

What would have been the “assaults,” the “hard attacks of mothers, sisters, nephews and of the whole family?”⁵² They had the power to disorient and upset the Jesuit, who had been so fulfilled and serene before seeing them. Only the strongest vocation could have resisted this pressure; without it, “flesh and blood” were too weak. If his desire had only recently been born and was not sufficiently mature, the aspiring missionary would have doubts: What was the correct choice—pursuing a vocation or leaving loved ones sad and mourning him as though he were dead?

If a Jesuit was not sure about his family’s support, visiting them before leaving could lead to an epic battle between the veracity and goodness of his vocation and the earthly and egoistic desires of his relatives. The Jesuit could begin seriously thinking about whether it was really necessary for him to move to the other side of the world—Was it not enough to stay closer to home? Was taking care of one’s parents not a sacred principle? Pallas was inflexible, answering with “a severe sentence by Jesus Christ himself: anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.”⁵³

49 The full quotation reads: “Sarà di qualche impedimento . . . alleggerà egli le scarsezze della Provincia in verità non fondati né di sode conseguenze,” ARSI, *FG* 750, f. 151 (Palermo, December 21, 1703). On his case, see Elisa Frei, “*In Nomine Patris*: The Struggle Between an Indipeta, his Father, and the Superior Generals of the Society of Jesus (1701–1724 ca.),” *Chronica Mundi* 13, no. 1 (2018): 107–23; Elisa Frei, “The Many Faces of Ignazio Maria Romeo, S.J. (1676–1724?), Petitioner for the Indies: A Jesuit Seen through his *Litterae Indipetae* and the *Epistulae Generalium*,” *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu*, 85, no. 170 (2016): 365–404.

50 “Quanti monachorum dum patris matrisque miserentur suas animas perdiderunt?” Pallas, *Misión*, 243.

51 “una perpetua ausencia.” Pallas, 243.

52 “asaltos . . . fuertes las baterias de la madre, de las hermanas, de los sobrinos y de toda la familia entera . . . sangre y carne.” Pallas, 243.

53 “severa sentencia de Christo: qui amat patrem aut matrem plusquam me non est me dignus.” Pallas, 244. The sentence comes from Matt. 10:37.

After expressing such harsh words, Pallas approached the topic more good-naturedly, but never changed his mind about the uselessness and dangerousness of returning home one last time. It was detrimental not only to the almost-missionaries but to their families as well: seeing them again in the flesh, being reminded of their love, knowing that they were about to undertake such a perilous journey to unknown lands, aware that this was the last time they would speak to them.⁵⁴

In *Misión a las Indias* Pallas largely employed *exempla*; in this section, he drew from Christ's life. When preaching in Samaria, Christ met someone who wanted to become his disciple, but before leaving his hometown this man felt compelled to bury his father. Christ was unmovable: "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God."⁵⁵ Pallas also quoted John Chrysostom (ca. 344–407), who explained why Christ denied an apparently harmless and virtuous request. It was because the "thousand evils that could come from it . . . grief, sadness and tears . . . worries, concerns" could put an entire vocation at stake.⁵⁶ If Christ acted this way with a man he personally knew, Pallas imagined that his readers' souls were even more at risk.

Pallas reported a third *exemplum* to emphasize the importance of following the *modus operandi* he recommended. In the Old Testament, Lot and his wife were chosen by God: they could change their lives forever, but could not have any doubts. In the precise second the woman's vocation vacillated and she looked back to see the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, both were turned into pillars of salt. The situation was not different for aspiring missionaries: they had to break with their pasts, never looking back, ready to join God with their whole selves. Pallas concluded the paragraph with words by Cassian (359–434) and Luke: "Be careful not to fall," because "no one who puts his hand on the plow and looks back is worthy of the kingdom of God."⁵⁷

The examples provided in *Misión a las Indias* do not stop there; Pallas evidently considered this issue to be of the utmost importance. Christ himself loved his mother but went on toward his glorious destiny "not caring about the strong pain he was inflicting on her."⁵⁸ Should Pallas's confreres not do the same? The archetype of the Jesuit missionary, Francis Xavier, was sent to Asia while he was in Rome. He had to reach Lisbon in order to leave with the Portuguese ships, and it would not have been a problem for him to pass through Navarra, where his

54 Pallas, 244.

55 "sine ut mortui sepeliant mortuos tuos, tu autem vade et annuntia regnum Dei." Pallas, 244. See also Luke 9:60, Vulgata Clementina.

56 "mil males que se le podían seguir . . . pena, tristeza y llanto . . . cuidados, inquietudes," Pallas, *Misión*, 245.

57 "Cave, ne retro respicias" and "nemo mittens manum suam ad aratrum, et respiciens retro, aptus est regno Dei." Pallas, 245.

58 "no curando del gran dolor, que le causaría." Pallas, 245.

family was waiting for his last goodbye. Xavier, however, decided not to waste time with them—not only would it have been a pitiful secular indulgence, but he would have risked delay. Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) acted similarly: appointed for the Chinese missions, he had to leave Rome for Genoa, where the ship for Lisbon was waiting for him. Ricci chose not to stop in his native town of Macerata, which was at about the halfway point, showing in this way the “holy hatred” every Jesuit was supposed to feel for his family.⁵⁹

Pallas was aware that most superiors advised their pupils in a “prudent and sensible way” to take a civil leave from their families.⁶⁰ He was not afraid, however, to reaffirm his contrary view. Had he had a negative personal experience? Did his confreres in Peru tell him about similar negative experiences? The only certain sources for his statements are written *auctoritates*; in this case, Pallas mentions multiple places in the book of Deuteronomy where religious people were invited to address their relatives with words like “I do not know you,” and “I ignore you.” Pallas had no doubt that appointed missionaries must ignore even their superiors if they advised them to visit their families.⁶¹

Pallas knew, however, that theory and practice were two different things. For this reason, his manual also addressed Jesuits who had already made the serious (and potentially fatal) mistake of returning to their relatives before leaving for the Indies.⁶² He dedicated an entire chapter to this problem, explaining all the “reasons and arguments” that parents could possibly use in such circumstances in order to take advantage of a face-to-face meeting.⁶³

First of all, families would remind Jesuits of the biblical commandment to honor thy father. Pallas gave his readers the right answer, the already-mentioned Christian words: “Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.”⁶⁴ The obligation to love thy father referred only to the heavenly one. Pallas drew from Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153) and Gregory (probably Pope Gregory I, 540–604) to assert that the only merit that natural parents had was, in fact, to generate mortal children in carnal sin, feeding them with constant abominations. Thus, if a parent were reminded of how it was “inhuman and ungrateful” to leave him, the Jesuit should answer: “If it is wicked to disobey a mother, it is the most pious thing if it is done for Christ’s sake.”⁶⁵ Christ himself let his parents suffer. Why should a Jesuit do less?

59 “sancto odio.” Pallas, 246.

60 “prudente y cuerdate.” Pallas, 246.

61 Pallas, 246.

62 Pallas, 247.

63 “las razones y argumentos.” Pallas, 247.

64 “qui amat patrem aut matrem plusquam me non est me dignus.” Matt. 10:37 and Pallas, *Misión*, 247.

65 “inhumano y desagradecido . . . si impium est contemnere matrem, contemnere tamen propter Christum piissimum est.” Pallas, *Misión*, 248.

Pallas was aware that family members would try to dissuade the Jesuit in many ways. Those who abandoned their origins in the name of God, however, would receive hundredfold rewards, the most important of which was eternal life. The relatives would have been persistent about the risks of the journey; the Jesuit should remind them how Paul left Jerusalem and remained alive, invincible in the name of God. It was normal to leave one's native country: "No man is a prophet in his own land."⁶⁶ Jesuits would have been terrorized by their parents about their future poverty and misery without any help from their distant families, but they had to keep in mind their only model: Christ himself, his life, and his words.

Pallas knew that some families tried to donate money to their sons and urged his readers not to accept any offer of this kind. From the beginning of Christianity, managing money was never and could never be a religious person's occupation. When the first apostles split, in fact, they gave their money as alms to the poor, so as not to be distracted in their activities. When families offered money to Jesuits ready to leave, it was to instill in them doubts about their choice. A real son of Ignatius could not to be interested in vile, secular affairs. As Bernard of Clairvaux vehemently explained, when families tried to convince a Jesuit to take on these worries, it was nothing but "earthly wisdom, animal, diabolical, an enemy of salvation that suffocates life, the mother of tepidity, which provokes God's puke."⁶⁷

Parents could ask their sons to take care not of their money, but more "innocently," of their correspondence; this proposal should also be decisively rejected. The devil would have taken advantage of this apparently minor task to distract the Jesuit from his first and only commitment. Pallas knew that many missionaries would be tempted to accept this request in order to compensate for the pain caused to the family by their departure, but by doing so, they would end up dealing with something that should not even remotely concern them. Paul was Pallas's source in advising that "no soldier of Christ can deal with secular matters";⁶⁸ trade and correspondence between Europe and the Indies certainly belonged to this category. Being concerned with "such low and ephemeral" worries was for a religious person "terribly shameful," even "indecent."⁶⁹ Nothing was worse than abandoning the world by joining a religious order but then getting involved in it again.⁷⁰

66 "nemo propheta acceptus est in patria sua," Pallas, 248 (Luke 4:24).

67 "sapientia mundi terrena, animalis, diabolica, inimica salutis, suffocatrix vitae, mater tiepiditatis, quae solet Domino vomitum provocare." Pallas, 249.

68 "nemo militans Deo implicat se negotiis secularibus." Pallas, 249. Missionaries could keep strong ties with their families, even years after their departure. They could exchange mail and money, like it was extensively studied for the 17th century by Aliocha Maldavsky, for instance in *Vocaciones inciertas*, 392.

69 "tan bajas y transitorias . . . indignissima . . . indecente." Pallas, 249

70 On the complicated relations between Jesuits and the administration of money see Frederik Vermote in "Financing Jesuit Missions," in *The Oxford Handbook of Jesuits*, ed. Ines G. Županov (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 128–49, and "Finances of the Missions," in *A Companion to Early Modern Catholic Global Missions*, ed. Ronnie Po-chia Hsia (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 367–400.

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