

Part I: A Handwritten Manuscript from Ingolstadt

1.1. “For the Candidates to the Indian Missions”

The family archive of the Lucerne-born Jesuit Franz Xaver Amrhyn (1655–1731) preserves dozens of his homilies.¹ Among them, a list of twenty-one spiritual points for aspiring missionaries stands out: each of them provides instructions and help with meditating on their vocation for all of the Jesuit *Indias petentes*; these points will be the focus of this section.²

The importance of “well examining your vocation to the Indies”³ is highlighted immediately, in the first paragraph; this is the starting point, indispensable for avoiding the risk of not obtaining salvation in the course of exposing one’s soul to the worst dangers. Aspiring missionaries seemed aware of this; for instance, the German Jesuit Franz Xaver Gump (1683–1755) clearly indicated in 1708 that his departure should come only after a proper self-examination.⁴ Even if his letters may appear “selfish” to a superficial reading today, Gump listed, from an Ignatian perspective, all of the arguments related to salvation that a missionary needed to keep in mind. Amrhyn’s document provides a severe warning in this regard: examining and testing one’s vocation was fundamental because a desire for the Indies could have been sent by the devil. This *modus operandi* is grounded in Ignatian spirituality and in Ignatius’s doctrine of the discernment of spirits, both of which consistently appeared in early modern *indipetae* and continue to offer food for thought today.

Every member of the Society of Jesus shared in common goals and tasks. A Jesuit was required to behave with “insightful obedience,” practice “self-responsible obedience,” and make “common deliberation.”⁵ Ignatius carefully describes in the *Spiritual Exercises* the right way to make any choice:

In every good choice must the eye of our intention, as far as it is up to us, be easy/straight, as I should only look after what I am created for; namely, to praise God our Lord and to pursue the salvation of my soul. Thus, whatever I choose must be what

1 This according to Beckmann, “Missionsaszetische Anweisungen,” 202, citing Familienarchiv Amrhyn (Lucerne), III. Dept. 59, “Predigten des P. Franz X. Amrhyn.”

2 Beckmann, “Missionsaszetische Anweisungen,” presents a transcription of the original Latin text with a German translation but without any interpretative guidance.

3 “bene examinent suam ad Indos vocationem.” Beckmann, 203.

4 See ARSI, *Germ. Sup.* 18 I, f. 133, Franz Xaver Gump on March 15, 1708 from Lucerne.

5 “einsichtigem Gehorchen . . . selbst verantwortetem Gehorsam . . . gemeinsamem Überlegen.” Reinhold Sebott, “Sachlichkeit im Orden,” in *Ignatianisch: Eigenart und Methode der Gesellschaft Jesu*, ed. Michael Sievernich and Günter Switek (Freiburg: Herder, 1990), 592f.

helps me to achieve the goal I was created for; I should not put the goal before the means, but the means before the goal. . . . I therefore should not move in order to employ these means or to deprive myself of them, but only to serve and praise God our Lord and the eternal salvation of my soul.⁶

Every decision had to be “considered” and “ordered” with two focal points in mind: the “service and praise of God” and the “eternal salvation of one’s soul.” As for the decision to apply for the Indies, every Jesuit needed to simultaneously show both “desire” and “indifference.”⁷ Candidates should always focus on the latter, even while putting the first on paper. They had to examine their own vocations and suitability for the task, thus making a responsible and obedient choice. The terms “choice” and “obedience” seem to contradict each other, but their etymological roots are not different: “obedience” in German is “Gehorsam,” from “hören,” “listen to”; in Latin, “oboedio” means “lending an ear.” In this case, “listening” means “listening to yourself”—while praying, meditating, and trying to identify one’s path of salvation emerging from the chaotic background of life. This brings us back to the Lucerne instructions, which state on this point:

Please remember that the missionary path to India brings much heavier consequences and labors than a generic religious vocation. You have to carefully think about it. An extraordinary grace is needed to be saved from falling amid so many dangers. God is the only one who can give it to those he has called.⁸

Becoming a missionary was not only something every Jesuit should consider as such, but also as a binding choice corresponding to a divine call:

You may highly estimate the honors and apostolic dignity of this call to India, put aside all the quiet temptations, and tell yourself that everybody who resists the divine call to India can expect heavy punishments, here and in the other life; you should believe that God’s plan is for many Indian souls to be saved just by you.⁹

6 Ignatius of Loyola, *Geistliche Übungen: Nach dem spanischen Autograph*, trans. Peter Knauer (Würzburg: Echter, 1998).

7 Anna Rita Capoccia, “Per una lettura delle *Indipetae* italiane del Settecento: ‘Indifferenza’ e desiderio di martirio,” *Nouvelles de la République des Lettres* 1 (2000): 7–43.

8 “Sie mögen bedenken, dass der Missionsberuf für Indien viel schwerere Folgen und Anstrengungen mit sich bringt als der Ordensberuf einfachhin und dass er darum auch viel reiflicher überlegt werden muss. Es braucht außerordentliche Gnaden, um unter so vielen Gefahren vor dem Fall bewahrt zu bleiben. Und diese pflegt Gott nur denen zu geben, die er berufen hat.” Beckmann, “Missionsaszetische Anweisungen,” 203, point 1.

9 “Sie mögen die hohe Auszeichnung und apostolische Würde ihrer Berufung nach Indien immer sehr hoch einschätzen und alle noch so leisen Versuchungen zu Zweifeln stets vorlegen und sich klar sagen, dass alle hier und im anderen Leben von Gott schwere Strafen zu erwarten haben, die dem göttlichen Ruf nach Indien widerstreben; denn vielleicht sollte nach Gottes Plan eine Reihe von Seelen der Inder nur durch sie zum Heil gelangen.” Beckmann, 204, point 2.

In case the candidate decides all by himself that he wants to leave for the Indies, the only acceptable reason is that “I want to go to the Indies because God wants it. I want to do there what God wants of me in light of the instructions he gives me through my superiors.”¹⁰ His main goal must always be the pursuit of fulfillment in God: “Only afterwards may he strive for martyrdom, the salvation of many souls, and greater perfection and holiness.”¹¹ The document then elaborates on the possible consequences that may arise from erroneous ideas about the apostolic ministry:

If you set yourself such ideals as your goal, countless confusions and temptations will open further doors, because it may be that you will find in the Indies much larger and more numerous obstacles to achieving perfection than those you would have encountered in Europe. You may not be able to convert a single soul; you may have to teach Spanish children or take care of other offices in the colleges; you may never be sent to the actual missions or reductions of the Indians; you may be forced to become a martyr of inaction; and all the good you wanted to do for the salvation of souls may never be achieved at all. It can happen that those who go to the Indies for such motives become completely confused when something like this happens to them. What happens then is that they succumb to a bottomless melancholy, fill the whole college with their whining, complain about how they have been deceived, grumble to their superiors, finally get sick from sheer melancholy, wilt miserably, and come to an untimely end.¹²

The Lucerne document also provides practical instructions on how aspiring missionaries should apply. It seems inappropriate to immediately contact Rome—it is better to start by communicating this wish to the provincials during

10 “Ich will nach Indien gehen, weil Gott es will. Ich will dort tun, was Gott von mir will und durch meine Obern mir anweist.” Beckmann, 204, point 3.

11 “Erst in zweiter Linie mögen sie streben nach dem Martyrium, dem Heil recht vieler Seelen und größerer Vollkommenheit und Heiligkeit.” Beckmann, 204, point 3.

12 “Wenn sie sich nämlich solche oder ähnliche Ideale zum Ziel setzen, würden sie zahllosen Verwirrungen und Versuchungen weit die Türe öffnen, denn es kann wohl sein, dass sie in Indien viel zahlreichere und größere Hindernisse für die Erreichung der Vollkommenheit finden, als sie in Europa gehabt hätten. Vielleicht kommen sie nicht dazu, auch nur eine einzige Seele zu bekehren, müssen den Kindern der Spanier Schulunterricht geben oder andere Ämter in den Kollegien verwalten, werden nicht in die eigentlichen Missionen oder Reduktionen der Inder geschickt, sind gezwungen, Märtyrer der Untätigkeit zu sein und können das meiste Gute, das sie zum Heil der Seelen wirken wollten, überhaupt nicht ausführen. So kommt es dann, dass die Leute, die aus solchen Motiven nach Indien gehen, ganz verwirrt werden, wenn ihnen dergleichen zustößt. Dann verfallen sie einer bodenlosen Melancholie, erfüllen das ganze Kollegium mit ihrem Gejammer, klagen, wie sie getäuscht worden seien, beschwerten sich bei ihren Oberen, werden schließlich vor lauter Melancholie krank, siechen elend dahin und finden ein vorzeitiges Ende.” Beckmann, 204, point 3.

their periodic visits. Only after a first “local” phase is it recommended to write to the superior general. After that, the readers must

leave the whole thing to God with full equanimity, because it is not uncommon for the evil enemy to challenge the missionaries in this task, convincing them that a departure for the Indies does not depend on God’s will, but on their impetuous insistence.¹³

This advice is given to petitioners, but it also involves the German superiors, who evidently did not want to be bypassed in their authority by Jesuits applying directly to Rome.¹⁴ Among aspiring missionaries, there were often those who performed valuable work in their own provinces and were the most difficult resources to replace. This worried, for instance, the provincial superior for the Lower Rhine, Peter Schmitmann (1666–1739), who expressed his concern in a letter to General Michelangelo Tamburini (1648–1730). In 1723 Schmitmann complained about a few Jesuits who wanted to leave for the missions on the grounds that he could not find any replacements for their offices and skills and that sending them overseas would cause a heavy loss for his and their province.¹⁵ For this reason, Father Fitterer (1687–?) and Father Bell (1687–1771), who were on the list of Jesuits contained in the letter, were never sent, and their names were removed from the list. Other more replaceable Jesuits were chosen for the imminent departure instead.

The author of the Lucerne document goes on, suggesting not to send those who had not professed all of the vows: poverty, chastity, obedience, and the peculiarly Jesuit vow of blind obedience to the pope. Having taken all of these vows was expected of a future missionary, and those leaving without having done so would bitterly regret it, comparing themselves to someone who, “while trying to flee from Scylla, bumped into Charybdis.”¹⁶

13 “dann aber die ganze Sache Gott mit vollem Gleichmut überlassen, denn nicht selten pflegt der böse Feind nachher die Missionare in ihrem Beruf zu prüfen mit dem Gedanken, dass ihre Sendung nach Indien nicht die Frucht göttlicher Berufung, sondern ihres ungestümen Drängens gewesen sei.” Beckmann, 205, point 4.

14 See Beckmann, 214 and Bernhard Duhr, *Geschichte der Jesuiten in den Ländern deutscher Zunge*, 4 vols. (Freiburg: Herder, 1907–28), 2:598.

15 Petrus Schmitmann wrote on April 25, 1723 from Cologne: “Pater Ferdinandus Bell, natus anno 1687 per omnia idoneus; sed quo sine detrimento magni fructus spiritualis non possumus carere” (Father Ferdinand Bell, born in 1687, qualified in all things; but with which we cannot employ as a missionary without losing great spiritual fruit) (ARSI, *Rhen. Inf.* 15, f. 307).

16 “auf der Flucht vor der Charybdis in die Scylla stürzt.” Beckmann, “Missionsaszetische Anweisungen,” 211, point 16.

These missionary-ascetical instructions also warn future missionaries about harboring false illusions about their geographical destination and concrete tasks. Many hoped that an overseas appointment necessarily led to martyrdom and were too keen on proselytizing non-Christians. The document underlines that, on the contrary, many missionaries would never be able to “save a single soul.”¹⁷ They had to be ready and willing to teach the offspring of Spanish settlers in local schools. They should resist any melancholy that might result and not complain about becoming “martyrs of inaction” instead of “real” ones.

The geographical destination was important. The document claims that “there is a great difference between a missionary in the East or West Indies: as much as between a Jesuit and a Carthusian.” Therefore, anyone who had a real interest in the apostolic ministry should carefully study the differences between these two almost-opposite poles. Information had to be obtained before applying, “in order not to follow just a blind urge, at the risk of a later repentance after plunging into something completely foreign and unknown to you.”¹⁸

The first five points of the instructions examine the suitability of the candidate, his honest and well-considered motives, and his calling. The following sections dive deeper, giving the prospective missionary a sort of guide as to how to behave once in the new environment. It begins with a stern admonition concerning the loyalty of each Jesuit to his order because, especially in the Indian territories, the Society was exposed to all kinds of slander and persecution.¹⁹ Even so far away, every missionary should try to “form a bond of unity through which the Society in the Indies will remain connected to Europe in indissoluble love and submission.”²⁰ To achieve this, Amrhyn suggested that missionaries always have nearby at least a short summary of the Jesuit statutes and that they read it frequently.

Some problems might arise because of the international character of the Society; for instance, among the Spanish-born fathers and those born in the Indies. The recommendation to the German fathers was not to join either group if

17 “auch nur eine einzige Seele.” Beckmann, 206, point 5.

18 “dass zwischen einem Missionar in Ost- und Westindien in dieser oder jener Gegend, ein größerer Unterschied besteht als zwischen einem Jesuiten und einem Kartäuser . . . damit er nicht einem blinden Trieb folgend, auf die Gefahr einer späteren Reue hin, sich in etwas hineinstürzt, was ihm völlig fremd und unbekannt ist.” Beckmann, 206, point 5.

19 Beckmann, 206–7, point 6.

20 “dass sie ein Band der Einheit bilden müssen, durch das die Gesellschaft in Indien mit der in Europa in unauflöslicher Liebe und Unterordnung verbunden bleibt.” Beckmann, 207, point 7. There is a supplement specifically concerning the “Indian” provinces, which explains “how this whole body should be preserved and improved.” Anton Huonder, “Die Eintracht unter den Missionären (Ein Kapitel aus dem Leben des hl. Franz Xaver),” *Die katholischen Missionen* 38 (1909/10), 53–55; 83–86.

possible but rather to try to foster harmony among them.²¹ In the case of German missionaries, it was recommended that they diplomatically stay away from any kind of nationalism, always praising Spanish and Portuguese ways of life, customs, and institutions. When this was not possible, at least they should not blame them but instead try to keep silent.²² The author's assessment of the southern European mentality culminates in advice that the German fathers be friendly to everyone but that they not entrust personal secrets to anyone because "German sincerity and the Spanish, and especially the Portuguese, mentality do not go well together."²³

After these recommendations about appropriate behavior toward confreres, the document focuses on the missionaries: "You should cultivate a fatherly, loving attitude toward the Indians, have pity for their misery, their poverty, their illnesses, and in general for them. As far as possible, you should defend and protect them against unjust oppression by the Spaniards and Portuguese."²⁴

During his daily work with the "Indians," the missionary must always exhibit patience because, "even if now they are not as you want them to be, in the end they (or at least their offspring) will change as you like."²⁵ Dealing with them always required "angelic chastity" and strong virtue because their lifestyle could seem dissolute and their lack of clothing could induce any missionary to

21 Point 10 warns against becoming involved in conflicts: "Sie mögen sich hüten, irgend einer Partei oder Sondergruppe sich anzuschließen oder sich der einen von den beiden in denen sich die in Europa geborenen Spanier und jene, die in Indien geboren sind, gegenüberstehen, gewogener zu zeigen als der anderen. Sie sollen vielmehr suchen, durch unparteiische, allen gleich bezeugende Liebe die feindlichen Parteien zur Eintracht zu bringen." (You should be careful not to join any party or special group, or to show yourself to be more favorable to one than the other between the Spaniards born in Europe and those born in India. Rather, they should seek to bring the opposing parties into harmony through impartial love that treats everyone equally.) Beckmann, "Missionsaszetische Anweisungen," 208.

22 Beckmann, 209, point 11. National rivalries constituted a serious problem and the Society of Jesus addressed it in many ways. Superior General Goschwin Nickel (1584–1664), for instance, did so in his letter "De Nationali provincialique pernicioso spiritu in societate vitando," in *Epistolae praepositorum generalium ad patres et fratres Societatis Iesu, tomus secundus, complectens epistolas from 1650 to 1847* (Rollarii: Typis Iulii de Meester, 1909), 120.

23 "Deutsche Aufrichtigkeit und spanische, besonders portugiesische Geistesart passen schlecht zusammen," Beckmann, "Missionsaszetische Anweisungen," 208, point 9.

24 "Gegen die Inder selbst sollen sie eine väterlich liebevolle Herzensgesinnung pflegen, Mitleid haben mit ihrem Elend, ihrer Armut und ihren Krankheiten und sie, soweit es geht, verteidigen und schützen gegen ungerechte Bedrückung durch die Spanier und Portugiesen." Beckmann, 209, point 12.

25 "auch wenn sie jetzt nicht ganz so sind, wie er sie haben möchte, so werden doch einst sie selbst oder wenigstens ihre Nachkommen so werden." Beckmann, 212, point 19. On the problem of indigenous resistance to the missionaries and their plans, see Enrique Dussel, *Die Geschichte der Kirche in Lateinamerika* (Mainz: Grünewald, 1988), 116.

temptation.²⁶ Furthermore, indigenous people had many shortcomings and educating and evangelizing them was often difficult. This might lead the missionary to treat them like “unwary children,” but he always had to keep in mind his high ideals while saying to himself again and again: “I want to become a saint, an even greater saint.”²⁷

Point 13 is particularly relevant if seen in the context of the suppression of the Society of Jesus (1773) and of accusations of the Society’s accumulation of wealth in the missionary areas.²⁸ The Lucerne document, which was written in 1690–91, clearly describes the need to defend the Ignatian order against these kinds of allegations as part of preparing aspiring missionaries for the conflicts that might result:

You must be deeply convinced that there is no true love and appreciation toward the Society of Jesus if you try to increase its properties and the income of the colleges, and if you focus on the rise of temporal goods. You have to work on self-improvement and on the salvation of souls instead. This is why you must love poverty as your mother and protect it like your eyeball. You should flee like it was the plague all contracts, business, trades, and similar engagements that involve avarice, worldly spirit, and greed. If you act differently, you will be seen as businesspeople and traders, and not as missionaries. You will have no success whatsoever, neither with the Indians nor with the Spaniards.²⁹

26 “engelgleiche Keuschheit.” Beckmann, “Missionsaszetische Anweisungen,” 210, point 14; 211, point 17 on chastity. See the letter sent by Francis Xavier to Ignatius, Cochin, January 12, 1549, in Georg Schurhammer and Joseph Wicki, eds., *Epistolae S. Francisci Xaverii aliaque eius scripta*, 2 vols. (Rome: MHSL, 1944–45, vols. 67 and 68), 2:1–16, here 2:6.

27 “ungeratene Kinder . . . Ich will ein Heiliger, und zwar ein großer Heiliger werden.” Beckmann, “Missionsaszetische Anweisungen,” 208, point 8. It continues: “Sie mögen immer wieder überlegen, was unter den gleichen Umständen ein hl. Franz Xaver, ein Anchieta oder Azebedius getan haben oder getan hätten und auf diese Glaubenshelden unserer Gesellschaft mögen sie ihre Augen richten und an ihnen ein Beispiel nehmen für ihr Handeln.” (You may always consider again what a St. Francis Xavier, an Anchieta or Azebedius did or would have done under the same circumstances, and look upon these heroes of the faith or Society of Jesus, and take them as an example for your actions).

28 Cf. Bernhard Duhr, *Hundert Jesuitenfabeln* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1913), 54–59; Theodor Grentup, “Das kirchliche Handelsverbot für die Missionare,” *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft* 15 (1925): 257–68.

29 “Sie müssen tief davon überzeugt sein, dass die wahre Liebe und Hochschätzung gegen die Gesellschaft nicht in der Vermehrung des Besitzes und der Einkünfte der Kollegien und in der Sorge für das Wachsen der zeitlichen Güter besteht, sondern in der Arbeit an der eigenen Vervollkommenung und am Heil der Seelen. Darum sollen sie die Armut als ihre Mutter lieben und wie ihren Augapfel schützen und sollen alle Verträge, Geschäfte, allen Handel und Ähnliches, was nach Geiz, Weltgeist und Habsucht aussieht, wie die Pest fliehen. Handeln sie anders, so werden sie als Geschäftsleute und Händler und nicht als Missionare betrachtet und keinerlei Erfolg haben, weder bei den Indern noch bei den Spaniern.” Beckmann, “Missionsaszetische Anweisungen,” 209, point 13.

After this appeal to embrace evangelical poverty, the document concludes with a detailed description of the conditions in the missionary countries. It never loses sight of the most important issue: choosing correctly and chasing “one’s own salvation” together with “the salvation of the souls” of the indigenous people.³⁰ The basis for a successful outcome for both goals lies in chastity (especially when dealing with the locals), obedience (toward the superiors and the Ignatian *Constitutions*), and poverty. The fundamental key for this discernment process is highlighted in point 20 by an almost *verbatim* quotation from Francis Xavier (1506–52). In a letter dated 1549 to his confreres in Goa, the “Apostle of the Indies” advised (through Amrhy’s words):³¹

It is a trap by the devil to lead one to believe that God has better plans for him elsewhere, whispering in his ears that he would do better in another office and place. The devil does this in order to worry, confuse, and distract those who work to the advantage of God where they are right now. He wants to take them away from the area in which they are successfully active into another, where they are supposed to serve the salvation of a smaller number of souls. He wants to redirect their zeal toward other tasks and places, causing them to work more negligently in their current office. On the one hand, such people never achieve anything in the place where they want to be because they never reached this place. On the other hand, neither do they achieve anything where they are because they are constantly distracted thinking about themselves in another place.³²

In any case, as the document concludes, every Jesuit should “trust God deep in his heart because He will always put him in the right place at the right time, sending him straight where his work will be most fruitful.”³³

1.2. “For the Missionaries in the Indies and in the Americas”

The second document of this German section is a collection of spiritual and practical advice for aspiring missionaries. Over a number of years, a few texts on the topic were collected at the Jesuit *collegium* of Ingolstadt and put into a single booklet. It ended up consisting of six “chapters,” individually analyzed below.

30 “eigene Vervollkommnung . . . Heil der Seelen.” Beckmann, 209, point 13.

31 Schurhammer and Wicki, *Epistolae*, 2:166–211, here 2:194. Letter to the confreres in Goa, Kagoshima, November 5, 1549.

32 Cf. Beckmann, “*Missionsaszetische Anweisungen*,” 213, point 20.

33 “Zugleich muss ihn das Vertrauen beseelen, dass Gott schon zur rechten Zeit den Vorgesetzten eingibt, dass sie ihn gerade dahin schicken, wo seine Arbeit am fruchtbarsten sein wird.” Beckmann, 213, point 20.

Interview with the Missionary: Frequently Asked Questions for Jesuit Petitioners for the Indies
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