

3.3. Book IV: “Some Spiritual Warnings for Religious Who Wish to Undertake a Mission to the Indies”

Girolamo Pallas

*Foreword*⁴

My main goal in this little work is to share information about things that may be useful to those undertaking an Indian mission; I have not reached this goal fully in the aforementioned account dedicated to the history of Peru. It is thus convenient to add a fourth book of warnings; if I had received them before starting my trip it would have greatly benefitted me—these kinds of warnings are drawn from the very experience that teaches those who undertake this endeavor, so that they can understand how to handle themselves and their relatives before the departure and their superiors and laypeople afterwards. These warnings also scrutinize the afflictions and temptations usually connected to this endeavor and the solid virtues with which they have to be rejected and overcome by those who will go to such remote parts. The setbacks and hindrances on the path must be understood in order to avoid stumbling over obstacles because one does not see the danger they pose.

Chapter I.

The Purpose of This Mission

Saint Thomas demonstrates in the *Prima Secunda* that our free works (as opposed to those that are not free) can be good or bad, meritorious or useless, agreeing in this with what Saint Augustine said, “According as their end is worthy of blame or praise, so are our deeds worthy of blame or praise.”⁵ It follows that, whatever target we have in this mission, such will be the benefit and dignity of it—if vain and earthly, useless and harmful; if supernatural and heavenly, divine and

4 The translation is based on Pallas’s manuscript as edited by José Jesús Palomo Hernández in Gerónimo Pallas, *Misión a las Indias: De Roma a Lima; La Misión a las Indias, 1619 (Razón y visión de una peregrinación sin retorno)* (Sevilla: Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia; Consejo superior de investigaciones científicas, 2006). Elisa Frei wishes to thank Benedetta Albani (Max Planck Institute for Legal History and Legal Theory) and Luis Sancho Perez (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt) for their help in the last phases of this work.

5 “Secundum quod finis est culpabilis, vel laudabilis, secundum hoc sunt opera nostra culpabilia vel laudabilia.” Thomas Aquinas (ca. 1225–74), *Summa theologiae* I–II, question 1–70, article 3, which is the contrary of what Augustine says in *De Moribus Ecclesiae et de Moribus Manichaeorum, Of the Morals of the Catholic Church and On the Morals of the Manichaeans*, book II, 13 (available online at <https://aquinas.cc/la/en/~ST.I-II.Q1.A2.Rep3>). Not knowing which edition Pallas had at his disposal in Lima (and assuming he had not learned it by heart), the sources will be mentioned using books and chapters, in the old traditional style.

celestial. And it would be a sad thing if someone approached this exile and went through so many efforts only to find himself afterwards empty-handed, without any result, or at least not with as much as he could have had, nor with the pleasure and consolation he wanted, only because the intention he had was not the one that was appropriate and required in order that this work be meritorious; thus, it seemed to me necessary to say something about the aim that one must have in this mission so that one does not err in something of such importance, and on which so much good or evil depends.

Different people can have different goals for this endeavor of the Indies; leaving aside the goals of merchants and laymen, which are usually the profit and increase of their properties, I pass on to those of the religious, who are the main addressees of these words. The first of these goals is the curiosity and appetite to see many new lands and regions, and other admirable and strange things, with the aim of converting gentiles. I will not spend too much time on this, because it seems to me strange that religious, merely for the delight of seeing new lands and worlds (“the poison of curiosity,” as Saint Augustine used to say⁶), risk their own health and life, and even more their soul, undertaking such long and laborious journeys, and that for this vanity alone they dare to cross so many seas and take on so many risks; that is, those we talked about in the previous chapters about the journey. And even though the appetite for seeing and knowing things is very natural for all men, and the Philosopher says⁷ that it does not occupy the worst place among the world’s pleasures, because it is spiritual and of the soul, it is still incommensurate with what is suffered to reach this delight in particular, and it is difficult to believe that there is any sane man in the world who wishes or does such a thing. And although we read of many who traveled infinite leagues amidst great dangers to discover new worlds, these men did not have curiosity itself as their main goal, because they were moved either by ambition and the arrogance of being those who undertake such difficulties, or because they wanted to spread the light of the gospel everywhere, thus disposing the Holy Spirit so that nobody and “nothing escapes its heat.”⁸ We can find only in a few historical works people who undertake such an endeavor out of curiosity, and we can ignore it as something almost impossible for good religious, who are focused on their heart and its desire. I will thus skip to another purpose that one may have in this mission of the Indies—the desire to improve their state and way of life. It could happen that some people, not being able to find in their own lands the esteem and reputation they would like to have, or not being too fond of and delighted with the

6 “Propter curiositas venenum.” Augustine of Hippo (ca. 354–430), *Confessiones*, book XIII, par. 30.

7 It was not possible to ascertain what Pallas is writing about.

8 “Se abscondat a calore eius.” Ps. 19:7.

people they live with, because they find them annoying, try to make a getaway, thinking that they will find among strangers the credit, esteem, and love they could not find among their own people. And because this deception is more frequent than we think, to apply a remedy to it, it is necessary to show how mistaken are those who think they can realize their goal in this way.

For a religious, the thought of being not (or not so much) worthy among his own community comes either from a lack of natural talent, or from not living with strong devotion to his rule, or from the fact that our Lord needs him to be unworthy for his just and holy purposes. From whichever of these causes it comes, the change of climate is a disproportionate remedy, as if the divine will depended on it, or as if by changing places they will also change conditions and customs, as if they will not carry with them, wherever they go, themselves and the same badly dominated passions that are the cause of their restlessness and ill will: “When you have wandered a long time,” as Justus Lipsius says about disordered affections, “when you have gone around all the lands and seas, no land or sea will drown and overwhelm you; they will follow you, and you will sit behind the footman and the horseman.”⁹ Socrates explained the reason for this to a young man, who asked him why, having traveled many lands, he was not able to improve his customs, and the answer was: “You were of no help” because you took with you yourself, who are the cause of all evil. And likewise continues Lipsius: “For you have not served yourself. . . . wherever you flee you will have a corrupt and corrupting spirit with you, not something good.”¹⁰ We can say with Seneca that this is typical of those who “do not want to suffer too long and use changes as remedies. From there wanderers are taken up on journeys and wander along the shores, and just like the sea itself, just like the land, experience a precariousness hostile to those ever present,” because “even though they traveled abroad, they did not abandon themselves”¹¹ who is the source and origin of his illness; and because, as the adage says: “They change their sky, not their soul, those who

9 “Cum diu multumque erraveris cum terram omnem et mare circulator fueris, nullo eos mari elues, obrues nulla terra, sequentur te, et post peditem, equitemque sedebit.” Justus Lipsius (1547–1606), *De constantia in publicis malis* (*On constancy in times of public evil*) *libri duo*, first book, chapter II. This book was first published in Antwerp in 1583; it attempts an accommodation between Stoicism and Christianity.

10 “Non enim te deservistis . . . quocunque fugies corruptum corruptoremque animum tecum habebis, comitem non bonum.” This quotation is supposedly from the same source as in the previous note, even if it was not possible to identify it.

11 “Nihil diu pati et mutationibus ut remediis uti. Inde peregrinationes suscipiuntur vagae et litora pererrantur et modo mari se, modo terra experitur semper praesentibus infesta levitas,” from the Latin philosopher and author Seneca (ca. 4 BC–AD 65), *De tranquillitate animi*, chapter 2, par. 12. The last part of the sentence “non se deserit, secumque peregrinatur” seems to be an addition by Pallas.

rush across the sea.”¹² And so, it can happen that, after having gone through such a dangerous journey like that to the Indies without gaining any other advantage than communicating his illness to many, one regrets his inconsideration and lack of agreement, and lives with great concern in front of his superiors and confreres, not helping in any way but only disturbing them.

No less deceived are those who expect to increase their esteem and attain better achievements with their limited talents by leaving their provinces not to follow the banner of Christ (which is of utmost importance), but that of the world, seeking in foreign lands the honor and esteem that they could not achieve on their own. “The voice is Jacob’s voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau,”¹³ say those who leave their homeland, friends, honors, and hopes to follow the redeemer of the world in the conquest of souls; the voice is Jacob’s voice, but actually their goals are Esau’s, because they follow only vanity: “And they shun honors to receive honors (as the learned Hugo says); they despise glory to obtain it, and leave the world to obtain it.”¹⁴ The Savior threatened the Pharisees with a thousand misfortunes because they love the first places and their own honor and esteem, so imagine what misadventures await those who love these things so much that they expose themselves to troubles and dangers reachable only by traveling such long paths. Undoubtedly, they will find themselves empty-handed, since their wealth is poor and “the poor man stands badly everywhere” (as Ovid says);¹⁵ and seeing that “they neither seize glory nor gain peace from it,”¹⁶ they will sadly come to spend their lives with a dark heart, incurring in this way the toll deserved by those who stop pursuing God, the one and only consolation of the soul, and instead chase vain things, which cannot be obtained without much work, and even if they are obtained, leave the soul empty of consolations and as full of bitterness as before.

It is necessary now to say some things that can be useful to dissuade those who look to the missions for such purposes. There was in Europe a lay student who had spent much time in universities with little result; he decided to move to Peru, believing that his lack of ability and application to his studies could be hidden among people not so learned like him. He embarked on S. Lucar and began to brag to the people of the ship he was on, acting as if he were a master of arts and a bachelor of theology, speaking at all times in logical and metaphysical

12 “Caelum non animum mutant, qui trans mare currunt,” from the *Epistulae*, I, 11, v. 27 by the Latin poet Quintus Horatio Flaccus (first century BC), who remembers how people cannot escape themselves.

13 “Vox quidem Jacob est, sed manus sunt Esau.” Gen. 27:22.

14 “Et fugiunt honores, ut honoribus obviunt gloriam contemnunt, ut acquirant, et mundum relinquunt, ut obtineant.” The precise source is not clear.

15 “Pauper ubique iacet.” Ovid (ca. 43 BC–AD 18), *Fasti*, I, 218.

16 “Nec gloriam apprehendunt . . . nec pacem inde retinent.” This is a quotation from the *Sermones de Sanctis: De diversis*, by the abbot and mystic Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153).

terms—which is common among the least wise (as Sallust says) “because they lack the good skills to contend for glory, they use tricks and deceptions.”¹⁷ As those who heard him did not know those terms and he was extremely loquacious, he came to be considered the wisest man in the fleet. As soon as he arrived in Lima, however, he saw that its university was prosperous and full of learned men, with so many illustrious people, with such ingenious productions in the theaters, causing him to admire them but at the same time causing so much confusion that he tried another way of life that was very different from the one he had in mind, but not having the money to walk the streets with a suitcase full of wares, and not being a huckster, as they say here, he had to go to work in a newly discovered mine. From this example we can understand very well the disappointment of those who promise themselves that in the Indies (including the Eastern ones) they will have better positions than those they deserve, thinking that if they cannot conquer large crowds of souls, at least they could worthily occupy the offices necessary to teach in schools, manage religious institutions, preach in pulpits, and fulfill similar positions.

There are also other purposes that can propel people toward the Indies: for instance, helping their relatives with the abundance of wealth that they think they will find after arriving in the Indies and living freely in comfort. They persuade themselves that, because these lands are so remote, there is not much religion or cloisters and similar things, but they deceive themselves. Although it is true that the Lord filled the Indies with many riches, so that the Catholic kings, encouraged by profit, could better execute their good zeal for the conversion of the souls, still these riches are not so many and easy to obtain, because either they have to be achieved with great industriousness and work, as merchants do, and this does not interest us, or asking their friends, which can seem easier for some religious, convinced that everyone will give them what they ask for, not considering that one gives not so willingly what he achieved with effort and sweat. But even if this is the case, how indecorous it is for a religious man to subject himself to secular people for such a vile thing, and to crave what he once despised, in order to better and more clearly enjoy the highest good and perfect bliss. Who does not see that even though these people vowed poverty, they deprive themselves of its good effects because they crave what they should hate and they fill their souls with earthly worries that hinder their way into heaven and, with all the related concerns, prevent the peace and stillness of the soul? And from these people we can understand the words the Holy Spirit addressed to Job: “They wander and die in the desert.”¹⁸ They will wander, he says, and labor in vain and perish. These people labor in vain because they do not obtain any fruit from

17 “quia bonae artes illi desunt dolis atque fallaciis gloriam contendere,” from the Roman historian and politician Sallust (ca. 86–35 BC), *Bellum Catilinae*, 11.

18 “Ambulabunt in vacuum, et peribunt.” Job 6:18.

their work, and after spending their sad life in acquiring something vain, they do not find this fruit, and even if they achieve some of it, they will bring none of it before God.

But what shall we say of those who undertake this enterprise in order to enjoy freedom and comfort? Without a doubt, these people are tired of the religious manna and want the onions of Egypt;¹⁹ despising the spiritual delicacy of the soul, they want to return like dogs to the vomit and like animals to the quagmire. Moreover, even this happiness will not be enjoyed by these unfortunate men because, without offending Europe, there is such a great religion and observance in the monasteries of the Indies that they can compete with what happens in Europe, especially because they are often more remote from worldly temptations, careful, and zealous in good, and on the other hand, evil is punished more rigorously. We must also add what it costs to these people in troubles and dangers to reach the end of their intentions, as is witnessed by those who suffer storms on such long trips; who knows how a heart reacts when the sea is stormy, the sky throws lightning, the pilot's compass is lost, the rigging is loosening, the passengers are tied to the masts in moaning and pain, some asking for confession and others making vows, and the storm grows stronger before it calms down, with a thousand dangers to salvation because of the lack of preparation before then and the carelessness of their life up to that time? These religious do not consider that after these cloudy days, the second burden that overwhelms them is to see themselves walking in this way, contradicted by their own religion and the purposes of their greed for either money or pleasure, without being able to reply to the charges made to them. And a terrible confusion arises in them when they open the eyes of their soul and see where they have ended up, once believing they could find what they were looking for in abundance. Oh, how much they will regret it then! Oh, one might say, how pitiful am I, I could have stayed in my corner, enjoying the calm and rest that God gave me, but I wanted to improve my state and now I find myself in the worst situation ever—I craved riches and power, and now I will enter the water naked, without being able to save myself; I thought to help others, and now I cannot help myself; I wanted goods other than God, and now I find myself without God and without goods, and as an unfaithful servant I will sadly pay the toll of my madness!

Apart from these purposes, there are others that may look good but easily end up going against the spirit and religion. Among them we can count the desire to live among fierce and barbaric people, facing remarkable effort and many deathly dangers; to be the first ones to bring the light of the gospel to new lands; to convert and baptize many Gentile souls; to reach the crown of martyrdom, and others similar to it; these goals, when considered as first and principal motivations, are not very sure and can cause—if not as much disgust

19 Num. 11:4–6.

and sorrow as we described above—at least concern and much discontent: they can be (and usually are) absent in these times because the biggest part of the Indies has already been converted and enlightened by the light of truth, even if these territories are still in need of ministers and spiritual help due to the many sins that often sprout like new roots and ancient customs. And there is much to be feared in such attempts because we can find rooted in them much vanity; some people desire such things not for the good that can be gained from them, but for the honor and the good name that accompany them, caused by the noise and roar with which they are done. If we would say to these people who want to reach those parts that there they will find no martyrdoms, nor conversions of gentiles, but only an infinite number of the souls of devastated men, who need many and diligent workers to take them out of sin, they would probably say that they do not want to go to these Indies anymore, or at least their desire would be softened. And since it is true that the Lord will make use of both kinds of conversions—conversions of gentiles and the more “silent” conversions of these devastated men—their will cools down because it lacks all the roar and noise that accompany the seeking of much honor and good names, which were the real reasons behind the good aim they proposed.

From what we have said, we understand how important it is to look for a safe and profitable purpose in this endeavor, and we are sure that this aim can be achieved; not finding ourselves without it when the time comes and the well-being and consolation of our whole present life and the security of reaching the other depends on this. And before we explain what this aim must be, let us analyze two things so that we understand what we are dealing with.

The first thing is that, when a religious asks permission for the mission to the Indies from his superior, he should not do it based on his own will (as they say), no matter how much he wants and desires it, but as the will of God our Lord, because I suppose that, if this is a true vocation and spirit from heaven, inspired and excited by supernatural aids, which they call *prevenient*, he cannot but correspond to the divine callings; similarly, when one by inspiration of the Spirit Holy does a good deed, such as sharing his property with the poor, choosing a state of penance, or entering religious life and leaving the lay world, we cannot say that he does his own will but the will of God. Similarly, in the case we are dealing with, although the religious asks for the missions with great insistence, even if it seems that he does so to fulfill his own gratification, what he does is actually to comply with the will of the Lord who calls him, and also with his own because in doing so he desires to conform to the will of God. And even if the subject asks for and is inclined to it, it takes nothing away from perfect obedience, since it is in things that are difficult and sensually repugnant, in which, as Saint Gregory says, “obedience must exist per se, inasmuch as in adversities, because it is so much more glorious inasmuch as it is joined to the divine order also from desire.” And below: “We fight against the prosperity of this world by command

alone, but against adversity also from devotion.”²⁰ In this way the religious is far from doing his own will; on the contrary, he would do that if he resisted the inspirations of the Holy Spirit and the divine calls that we can suppose he feels in his soul, making his heart perpetually restless, as happened to Saint Job: “Who has hardened himself against him, and succeeded?”²¹

The second thing is that, when the superior gives his permission, in this and other things that are requested with indifference and due resignation, it does not mean that he creates the will of the subject, but that he consents to the will of the Lord, and consequently to the reasons that the Holy Spirit inspired to follow God’s will. I said “in the things that are requested with indifference and due resignation” because it frequently happens that the superiors grant some things to the subjects because they are bothered by their requests and to avoid greater inconveniences; in those cases it is not clear whether it is God’s will because the superior consented to it, and not the opposite, according to what Saint Bernard said—that when without due indifference the subject seeks the superior’s permission to do what he wishes and asks for, he (the subject) does not do the will of the superior and consequently not the will of God, but the superior creates the will of the subject; this does not happen when someone asks with indifference and resignation because then the superior, having considered and consulted in prayer what is most convenient, as interpreter of the divine will, explains and manifests it to the subject, and “God is faithful,”²² not allowing him to fall.

Assuming these two things, it will be easy to discern the purpose we must have in this mission, which is executing the will of the Lord, as manifested in divine inspirations and excitations, whose effect comes to an end when the superior grants the license without the person having in mind the success or fruit that will follow later, or having in mind anything other than executing in this way the divine will that calls him to this endeavor in order to become available in any way he can, be it in these or those things, great or small, heroic or of less importance. In the eyes of His Majesty, one or the other are not of more or less esteem and pleasure as long as they are done according to his most holy will and with the same charity and love, like when mathematicians deal with the quantities and figures of bodies without paying attention to whether they are gold, silver, or wood, these being a means to their end, be it this or that; in the same way the spiritual mathematician in this endeavor must not restrict his desire to this or that exercise but, expanding it generously, he must desire and intend to do

20 “Debet obedientia ex suo aliquid habere, quatenus et in adversis tanto sit gloriosior quanto divino ordini etiam ex desiderio iungitur . . . prosperis huius saeculi ex sola iussione, adversis autem etiam ex devotione militemus,” supposedly quoted from *Moralia in Job*, a commentary on the *Book of Job* by Gregory the Great (ca. 540–604).

21 “Quis resistit ei, et pacem habuit?” Job 9:4.

22 “Fidelis est Deus.”

all of the things that serve God, whatever they may be, having God's satisfaction as the target of all.

This is apparently what the son of God wanted to teach us in those words Saint John refers to: "Anyone who does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother also,"²³ and in another place: "He that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven will enter the kingdom of heaven."²⁴

We must note that he did not say that he would convert many souls, because what would become of those who attend just to their own salvation (and it is by law and holy statute that he did not say that)? Nor did he say that he would carry the cross on his back with rigors of penance and mortification, because what about those who do not have strong enough health for that harshness? Nor did he say many other similar things that he could do, except that he would do the will of my Father who is in heaven, which can be done by those who travel through various parts of the world to help souls when God wants it, but also by those who are shut up in their cells contemplating the divine attributes and perfections, when the Lord is served in this way. And the main purpose of the Eternal Word in his mission to the Indies of this world was to do the will of his Father, as Saint John said very clearly: "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work,"²⁵ and elsewhere: "For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me."²⁶ If that will would have been that, coming into this life, he would not have had to suffer, nor die for the chosen ones, that he would have executed this and not any other will; in fact he came as a poor beggar and gained the opprobrium of men and the contempt of the people just for doing his father's will, but if that will would have been different, he would have come in another very different dress and manner and thereby redeemed the world and freed the souls from the captivity of the devil without converting a single one, if his eternal Father had wanted him to do so; but if in fact he redeemed men, saved souls, taught the people, and suffered and died on the cross for the chosen ones, it was because God commanded him to do so and because "my food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work."²⁷ And this is what a good religious must attend to in his mission, not demanding to do more than what God wants and offers him through his superiors, whatever it may be, and to say with David: "My heart is ready, O God, my

23 "Qui fecerit voluntatem Patris mei, hic frater, soror et mater est." Matt. 12:48–50.

24 "Qui facit voluntatem Patris mei, qui in caelis est, ipse intrabit in regnum caelorum." Matt. 7:21.

25 "Cibus meus, ut faciam voluntatem Patris mei qui misit me." John 4:34.

26 "Descendi de caelo non ut faciam voluntatem meam, sed voluntatem eius qui misit me." John 6:38.

27 "Cibus eius erat facere voluntatem eius, qui misit eum." John 4:34.

heart is ready.”²⁸ Through which, beyond an indescribable treasure of goods, he will enjoy two other incomparable and inestimable gifts.

The first is the peace and stillness of the mind, where no disturbance can enter because, even if someone is prevented from walking among the gentiles and converting many souls, and even if all of the profit and fruits of his mission are hindered by diseases encountered on the road or by the superiors wanting to use him in other ways, he is never disturbed or afflicted because nothing can prevent him from pursuing his main intent, which was to do God’s will, which can be accomplished also by praying, reading, working, writing, etc., as God wants it to be done for his love.

The second is the remarkable consolation that your heart receives in all of the troubles and dangers of life, in which you must see yourself if you undertake such an endeavor; in these dangers it is possible to say to God without embarrassment that it is for you, my Lord, and for your cause, fulfilling your holy will, that I find myself here—look at me, because through your grace I tried to be with you and I put my life in this predicament. Oh, what consolation, oh what happiness will your heart receive then! How bathed in joy and gladness! How little will the threat of death afflict you! How little will you care about losing your life, seeing that you will die as a faithful servant who made a good deal with the multiplication of talents! And blessed are those who, at the beginning of or during their work, will hear the gracious words of the Lord: “Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful in a few things, so I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”²⁹

Chapter II.

How Should the Religious Present His Wishes to the Superior in Asking for Permission for This Mission?

The sadness or repentance in which some may fall after having obtained the license for this endeavor, is born from the little consideration and sudden fervor with which they put themselves into it, throwing themselves at it without first examining their desire, whether it comes from a good or bad spirit, whether it is a vocation from heaven or just an illusion of the very cunning deceiver of humanity, who, not being able to easily deceive spiritual men with openly bad things, attacks them frequently with others that have the appearance of goodness. Among these, a very dangerous temptation can be the idea of undertaking the missions because it has a greater appearance of good and it well embodies a highly praised zeal and the desire to help your neighbor. This is an often-used trap of the common enemy; he has caught many people in it, and the easiest victims are the most religious ones. This is why we need to have great modesty in

28 “Paratum cor meum Deus, paratum cor meum.” Ps. 107:2.

29 “Euge serve bone et fidelis, quia in pauca fuisti fidelis supra multa te constituam, intra in gaudium Domini tui.” Matt. 25:21.

such wishes and examine them well before putting them into practice; in this, we must imitate Saint Joshua, who, seeing the angel of God in the army, did not trust him without first asking him where he came from. Similarly, we should not trust just any thought or inspiration that comes to us in this matter, because we know that the angel of darkness transfigures himself into the angel of light, and as Saint Augustine says: “Now here, now there, now a lamb, now a wolf, now darkness, now light,” and also, “He hides (as the saint says) his arrows in his quiver and his snares under the appearance of light.”³⁰

It is therefore appropriate in order to attain to the greatest success in this endeavor that we say something about how the religious must examine his vocation, and how he must master the steps leading up the final decision, from which no one can go back without embarrassment. Let us assume that a spiritual person prayed and felt in his soul great inspirations and desires to suffer and to undertake this mission with the intention of spending his life in the service of his Lord, and other signs of a divine call and vocation from heaven. The first step recommended in such a serious business, is to treat this matter familiarly and alone with His divine Majesty, offering to him many times his life and strength, and asking him to declare his will, in accordance with what is said in the Psalm: “Teach me to do thy will,”³¹ and, being very ready to do it, meditating for a few days with the help of those words of the Psalmist: “Let me hear what my Lord is speaking to me,”³² etc., or these: “As the eyes of the handmaid are on the hands of her mistress: so are our eyes unto the Lord our God,”³³ etc. And putting himself in reverence before God, making Himself present at the throne of the Most Holy Trinity, of his angels and holy devotees, he should await the divine commandment to execute it, because a humble servant stays ready and hangs on her mistress’s words so that he can execute what she wants upon the slightest signal; “as well-obedient servants,” says Saint Gregory, “they are always attentive to the faces of their masters, so that they listen quickly to what they have ordered and strive to fulfill it.”³⁴ And not being happy waiting at the behest of God, he should make an offering of himself, giving and sacrificing himself to his Lord, who is looking at him. Moving on to particular things, to be used in order to serve His divine Majesty, he should make himself available to this mission with joy, encouraging

30 “Nunc hic nunc illic, nunc agnum, nunc lupum, nunc tenebras, nunc lucem in se ostendit . . . Abscondit . . . sagittas suas in pharetra, et laqueos suos sub specie lucis.” *Soliloquiorum Animae Ad Deum*, chapter 17, which was traditionally attributed to Augustine of Hippo.

31 “Doce me facere voluntatem tuam.” Ps. 142:10.

32 “Audiam quid loquatur in me Dominus meus.” Ps. 84:9.

33 “Sicut oculi ancillae in manibus dominae suae, ita oculi nostri ad Dominum.” Ps. 122:2.

34 “sicut bene obsequentes famuli . . . Dominorum suorum vultibus semper intenti sunt, ut ea quae praeceperint festine audiant et implere contendant.” Gregory the Great, *Moralia in Job*, 16, 35.

in his soul various desires and saying: “Oh, if for your love, Lord, I will find myself in those seas sailing to please Your Majesty! Oh, if I had already suffered in the tasks I promised or faced a thousand deadly dangers with my hands!” and other words like these, calmly waiting in the presence of his Lord, who is looking at him, receiving and enjoying his offerings and desires. It would also be good to repeat from time to time the verse: “How sweet are thy words to my palate,”³⁵ and other similar ones, manifesting the contentment his soul would receive in hearing that his Wife had sent him something.

After having engaged in these exercises for some time, one must carefully consider whether the inspirations and calling to the Indian missions are frequent, and whether the desires persevere with the same fervor or increase.

This is because, if the vocation was of God, when considering and exercising he would have been able to communicate this to His Majesty, with a soul so desirous of hearing the command to do His will. If you find that your desires increased and it seems that you would receive great satisfaction in being already with all hands on deck, you can take and climb another step necessary for the success of what you are looking for, and this is to consult with your spiritual father and other people who govern you, faithfully disclosing to them the desires and inspirations your soul often receives, and everything that happened to you in this regard.

This advice was given to us by the Holy Spirit in Ecclesiastes and is valid for everything: “Do nothing without advice; and when thou hast once done, repent not.”³⁶ All the saints and spiritual fathers gave us this counsel for similar circumstances, in particular through the words of Saint Vincent Ferrer: “If by a revelation or a feeling, or in some other way, your heart is moved to do some work, and especially a heavy and significant work that is not usual for you, about which you have no certainty whether it pleases God; nay, if you doubt reasonably, contract a delay in doing the said work until you have examined all the circumstances, and especially the final ones, and know that it pleases God; seek the advice of approved persons in life and learning, and the advice of the whole truth.”³⁷ If they think that doing so would avoid any chance for deception, the superiors

35 “Quam dulcia faucibus meis eloquia tua.” Ps. 118:103.

36 “Fili sine consilio nihil facias, et post factum non paenitebis.” Eccles. 32:19.

37 “Si per revelationem . . . vel sentimentum, vel alium modum cor tuum moveatur ad faciendum aliquod opus, et maxime opus grave, et notabile, non tibi consuetum, de quo non habeas certitudinem an Deo placeat; imo dubitas rationabiliter contrahas moram ad faciendum dictum opus, usque quo inspexeris omnes circumstantias, et maxime finales, et cognoscas quod Deo placet, et si per te metipsum non potes venire in notitiam, an placeat Deo, petas consilium a personis approbatis in vita et doctrina, et consilium totius veritatis,” which is supposed to have been quoted by Saint Vincent Ferrer (1350–1419), a Valencian Dominican friar and preacher, in *Tractatus de vita spirituali* (*Treatise on the Spiritual Life*), chapter 13.

may examine the disposition and resignation of the subject, testing his will and ordering him (if necessary) to desist from that conclusion and thought to see if he receives a disturbance in his soul. If this is the case, then it is a great sign that those inspirations and desires were not from heaven but from the evil spirit, increased by the honor and noise that ordinarily accompany this mission, and that in undertaking it the person had in mind not purely the Lord but himself, because where the desire is imprisoned, there you find restlessness when what you desire is denied. And it is true that even when one loves something purely to please God, he ceases to desire it if he knows that God is not pleased with it; because inasmuch as he wants it, insofar as he understands it to be his will, when he ceases in this cause, it is necessary that the effect that he intends to follow ceases too. But, if one is indifferent and resigned in his intention and obedient in carrying out these instructions and warnings, this is a great sign of the rectitude and simplicity of his intention, so then he will be able to take and climb another step, trying to commit himself with greater certainty in the endeavor, offering himself for it to his superior and asking him to grant the license to him, preparing himself before doing it with the following two things, which further ensure the success of the enterprise.

The first is that he leaves the “when” in the hands of his spiritual father, who (according to what experience will have taught him) will be able to determine if it would be convenient to hold back the subject for some time to test the perseverance of the vocation (particularly if he desired this mission with the fervors of the novitiate, and after clarifying his intentions with serious people, still showed an inordinate desire, which is very dangerous for both young and older people) in order to determine if it is not up to the standards of those fervors and first spirit, and, by promising other Indies with different outcomes, the first good purposes cease altogether; there is no doubt that these people should be freed from the obligations to which they wished to commit themselves.

The second thing to keep in mind at this time, and with greater resignation and obedience than ever, is to surrender to the father who governs your soul, in whose charge it is to instruct you on what you should meditate on and pray about, with mortifications and all the rest, according to your condition and needs; in particular what a spiritual father of our order, very experienced in governing souls, recommended to a certain religious is a very good exercise. This was that for a whole year, every day, in the hour of mental prayer or during Mass, he renew his religious vows, and offer himself as a holocaust for serving the Lord and the Indian endeavor, and to meditate many times on that meditation of the Exercises of our blessed Father Ignatius, which is entitled “The Call of the Temporal King.”³⁸

38 One of the most important meditations in the *Spiritual Exercises* is the Call of the Temporal King, in which the exercisant imagines that he is called by Christ to realize his kingdom on earth.

This meditation reflects on the reasons to follow the eternal king, who invites us to the spiritual conquest of the whole world, offering us for it with the prayer that our blessed father composed with a heavenly spirit, which is at the end of the meditation (or the following one) drawn from the devout friar Luis de Granada, and is very appropriate for this purpose:

“All the reasons and causes that compel me, Lord my God, to love you, also compel me to give and offer myself to you, to resign myself into your hands; it is because I am all yours, and yours by so many and just titles—yours, because you raised me and gave me this being that I have; yours, because you keep me in it with the benefits and gifts of your providence; yours, because you brought me out of captivity, and not with gold or silver but with your blood; and yours, because so many other times you have redeemed me, so many times you have taken me out of sin. If I am yours by so many titles, you are by so many titles my king, Lord, redeemer, and liberator, and here I return to you your property, that is me; here I offer myself as your slave and captive; here I give you the keys and homage of my will so that from now on it will no longer be mine, nor anyone’s, but only yours; so that I do not live for myself but for you; nor will I do my will but yours, so that I neither eat, drink, sleep, or do anything else that is not according to you and for you. Here I present myself to you, so that you may dispose of me as your property at your will—if you want me to live, die, be healthy, be sick, be honorable, be dishonored, I offer and resign myself into your hands for everything, and I dispossess myself so that I am not mine but just yours, so that what is yours in justice may also be yours in my will; and this forever and ever. Amen.”

Besides this way of offering and praying, which this religious advised by his spiritual father recites every day, it could be useful to meditate on the most holy sacrament, and meditating while reciting it according to what the Holy Spirit teaches, provided that in all these activities (and this is what is mainly intended) you notice what the Lord says to you, and the inspirations and desires you feel in your soul, whether they were still from the Indies as before, or greater; then you could trust His Majesty that it is His most holy will, and a vocation from heaven he feels in his soul, because He will not allow to be deceived those who so truly seek His paths, where they are certain to find Him and not be fooled.

With this examination and equipment, you will be able to safely ask the superior for a license, but to do this properly it is necessary to provide some information about what this asking means, how respectable it is, and in which way it has to be done. This act means corresponding on your part to the divine call, a desire to execute the final decision of the Lord, opening your soul to the husband who is knocking on its doors, and, finally, saying yes to God; even if this yes [sí] does not contain more than two letters, it means a great interior consent to the most heroic and excellent things that can be done in this life, because through them the soul commits itself to suffer as much as is necessary on the difficult journey to the Indies, to go through all of its dangers, to overcome all of the difficulties of such

long and rough roads, on seas and lands, and to suffer a perpetual exile in the sadness and bitterness that such an undertaking brings with it. It is such a yes (speaking with reverence of such a sovereign mystery) that the Virgin pronounced to the angel Saint Gabriel in the Annunciation that informed her of the incarnation of the Eternal Word, to which she subjected herself, as the contemplatives feel, in order to suffer all the pains that such a son would cause to his mother, and to suffer the cruel knife of passion. It is the divine yes that the son of God gave to his eternal Father when he told him that if he wanted to redeem the world, he would need to adopt a human nature, subjecting himself to its imperfections and needs, becoming an abomination to men, drinking the chalice of passion, facing everything we know he suffered in this life. This is what the Divine Majesty asks of God's servant: Do you want to leave your country, relatives, and friends for my love? Answer yes. Do you want to travel such a long journey through rough roads and over cliffs for my love? Yes. Do you want to travel through so many seas with so many dangers of losing your life for my love? Yes. Do you want to live your whole life among unknown people, barbarians and gentiles, for my love? Yes. Do you want to pass through water and fire, in which all those who undertake the spiritual conquest of the Indies pass, until they give up their lives for my love? Yes. This happy yes covers so much, this happy voice resounds in so much, because its sound reaches heaven and, passing through the choirs of the angels, it reaches the ears of God.

I will describe now, briefly and simply, what the soldier of Christ does when, after receiving a favorable opinion from his spiritual father and kneeling before the Lord, taking the pen he writes to his superior about the inspirations that the Lord communicates to him, the vocation with which He calls him, and how on his part he gives the yes that is asked of him; from then on he is committed to putting his intentions into action when he is ordered to comply with and execute them.

About how this license should be requested, we should note that deciding on the kingdom or province, remains absolutely at the will of the superior; one must not indicate this region or that, but be happy with communicating his desire with indifference, as if he does not feel called with a particular and well-known vocation of the Lord to one region more than another, and even if he does, it is appropriate to report his will with indifference and resignation. This warning is more important than it seems, because it can happen that someone who specifically requested and named a certain province later lives in it with little pleasure, longing to move to others, because he did not find in it what he thought, or he expects bigger successes in other lands. This will not happen to those who, accepting to be governed by divine providence through their superiors in the aforementioned manner, go where they are shipped safely and calmly, close to the will of the Lord. In this way there is no room for the common saying if I knew this, if I thought this, I would have asked for other Indies, because the best ones for everybody is where God puts them; the attitude behind the common saying can justify the sadness that may come afterwards, because the person sees that

his will and choice caused him to go to a place he does not like, and it usually happens, many times, that strong sadness and melancholy come to depress the subject and cool him down and lead him little by little to greater evils, such as failing in his vocation or slowly dying out. But the peace and consolation of those who accept guidance in this, as I said, is indescribable because, even if they find everything contrary to what they thought, seeing that they have nothing to do with it but everything happened by the disposition of heaven, they do not grieve but instead rejoice immensely. We heard this recounted by some companions on our trip to Peru: the extraordinary consolation and contentment they felt, remembering that in asking for the Indies they did not designate a certain province but were sent to Peru as a matter of total obedience to divine orders. A letter written to our father general asking him for the Indies seems to confirm this, so I offer it here as an example of similar requests:

Several years have now passed (our very reverend Father) since I noticed that my mind was wonderfully affected by a certain inner force toward the so-called Indian missions; that is, to the farthest regions of the world. I decided to subject these desires to a long, accurate examination, which I tried to do every day by offering myself to the Divine Majesty, to every danger of death, going there for the love of Christ. After consultation with our spiritual father, it was deemed necessary to open up with the superiors about what God had instilled in us as his greatest madness. Wherefore this decision of my soul, this extreme desire to suffer for Christ, I offer into the hands of the holy obedience before you, our very reverend father; I offer myself in the most humble way for all the missions, Chinese, Peruvian, Japanese, or any other, whether among infidels, or schismatics, or heretics—spontaneously, willingly, and voluntarily—for no reason other than the sole desire to perfectly imitate Christ in enduring hardships, so that naked I may follow naked Jesus, and act as a true soldier of his cross, with many prayers, so that this divine will that I bear in me, your reverend father, I may be deigned to pursue, kindly accepting your wishes, and to your paternal direction I submit all that I owe with the humblest resignation of my soul.³⁹

39 “Aliquot iam anni elapsi sunt (R. admodum Pater noster) ex quo interiori quadam vi animum meum erga missiones quas vocant Indicas ad ultimas orbis plagas mirifice affici animadverti. Diuturno, accurato que examini subicere placuit haec desideria, quod offerendo memet in conspectu Divinae Maiestatis, ad ultima quaeque mortis pericula, pro amore Christi subeunda, quotidie facere conatus sum. Donec tandem consulto prius Patre spirituali, hunc a Deo pro summa sua in nos dementia inditum animum superioribus aperiendum esse visum fuit. Quare hoc animi mei decretum, hoc extrema pro Christo patiendi desiderium in manus sanctae obedientiae coram te, admodum R. P. noster, humillime depono, me totum ad qua suis missiones indicas, sinenses, Peruanas, Japonicas, aut quas cunque alias, sive inter infideles, sive schismaticos, aut haereticos, sponte lubens, volensque offero, nulla alia re illectus, quam sola perfecte Christum imitandi in laboribus perferendis cupiditate, ut nudus nudum sequar Iesum, ac verum eius crucis militem me exhibeam, summis obtestans precibus, ut hanc divinam in me voluntatem Reverenda Paternitas tua perficere, et votis benigne annuere dignetur, cuius ego paternae directioni totum me debita cum animi resignatione humillime trado, et consecro.”

The end of this chapter offers another piece of important information relevant to after the time the license has been requested. And this is that the religious should keep alive in his soul the fervor of his desire and be ready at all times for its execution, even after many years, because it is not infrequent that the superior, either because he wants to put the subject to the test or for other just purposes, spends a long time before giving the “fiat.”⁴⁰ It could thus happen that treating this desire carelessly and almost forgetting about the yes given to the Lord, the person intends to exempt himself from it, showing a great inconstancy, or he executes it but with sadness and without the fervor and effort necessary for such a mission. To show the importance of this warning, I will describe here a case involving a religious of the Society of Jesus, which a serious father related to me as an eyewitness. This person, trusting perhaps in a sudden fervor, asked our Father General Claudio Acquaviva,⁴¹ God rest his soul, for the Indies, and because at that time the license was not granted quickly, his name was written as is customary in the catalog of those petitioning for the Indies. After some time, some people were appointed for this mission, and he was too: the news caused him the greatest sadness because he had already forgotten what he had asked for, and also because at this stage his wishes had cooled down, and he was busy with other useless things that were not generating the outcome he expected, and he was not in a position to undertake such an endeavor; after this his perdition happened so quickly that it appeared to be a punishment for his inconstancy; the very afternoon of the day he answered that he was not in a position to go to the Indies, such a great abhorrence for his religion and his confreres fell on him so quickly that it seemed to him that he lived in hell and that they were demons; this happened with such harshness and strength that he said he could not stay in the college an hour more, and so he left the Society shortly after and died disastrously outside of it. From this we can well infer how important it is that when someone offers himself to God our Lord, he not allow his desires to dampen because even if they remain momentarily unfulfilled they will later receive a reward from such a liberal Lord who welcomes the will of such a pleasant sacrifice as the work itself, according to what all the saints and specifically Saint Augustine say: “Whatever you want and cannot do, God imputes what has been done,” and who explains in another passage “because God,” he says “searches the heart, the heart looks within when you can confess with your mouth for salvation, but when you cannot with your mouth and heart, with your heart you praise, with your heart you bless, with your heart you lay the sacred sacrifices on the altar of conscience.”⁴²

40 “Let it happen,” “so be it.”

41 Claudio Acquaviva (1543–1615), superior general of the Society of Jesus from 1581 to his death.

42 “Quicquid vis, et non potes, factum Deus imputat . . . quia Deus . . . cor quaerit, cor inspicit intus, cum potes ore confitere ad salutem, cum autem non potes ore, corde ad iustitiam, corde laudas, corde benedicis, corde in ara conscientiae victimas sacras imponis.” The quotation supposedly comes from Augustine of Hippo, *Super Psalmos*.

*Chapter III.**If You Should Go and Say Goodbye to Your Relatives Before Leaving*

One of the most important things to understand is whether it is appropriate for the religious undertaking the mission of the Indies, when he is ready to embark, to say goodbye to his parents and relatives; because today the world is so vicious that too many people (also religious) may see it as too brusque and even ungrateful not to do so, due to the obligation that children have not to cause pain and disappointment to their relatives. And it may happen that some confrere, instead of helping the person by advising him that it is appropriate to have a holy hatred and abhorrence of parents and relatives according to Christ's words: "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,"⁴³ on the contrary does not help (as Saint Gregory warns) in his spiritual improvement and advises him to condescend to unjust prayers and requests from friends. Consider what great dangers these people put the religious in by saying: "Go say goodbye to your parents before leaving," not only not stopping the person from doing so, but recommending to do it against the reasonable suggestions of all the saints, who teach us to flee, as much as possible, the sight and presence of those who are bound to us through flesh, and much more in this case which, as we shall see, is the most dangerous of all that one can imagine.

Because this farewell is not for a few months or years but for a lifetime, so that when a religious person says goodbye to leave for the Indies it is the same as dying because we know that there is no hope of returning, or at least that this happens very rarely, and on our part we should not promise ourselves anything else, nor welcome any other thought than that we are going to die during this endeavor, knowing that the person "who puts a hand to the plow and looks back"⁴⁴ is not worthy of the kingdom of heaven. What pain will such a separation and farewell cause to parents! How many tears will be shed! What tenderness and heartbreak will be seen on both sides! But the natural and ordinary compassion and tenderness tied to conversations with relatives has been enough to lead many religious people away from their vocation, as can be seen in thousands of examples; as Saint Hieronymus remarks: "How many monks, when they felt compassion for father and mother, have lost their souls?"⁴⁵ What would this person do, seeing that he causes such great and strong pain to his parents, reacting as if they are losing a child? And if the diligence and means used by father and mother to

43 "Si quis non odit patrem suum et matrem etc. in super et animam suam non potest meus esse discipulus." Luke 14:6.

44 "mittens manum suam ad aratrum respicit retro." Luke 9:62.

45 "Quanti monachorum dum patris matrisque miserentur suas animas perdiderunt?" Saint Jerome (ca. 342–420), priest, confessor, theologian, and historian, letter to Fabiola, *Epistulae*, 3, 64, 4.

convince the son not to become a religious person are so strong that many times they succeed, what will they do on such an occasion when there is no hope they will see their son again, like they do when he enters a religious order, but with the certainty of a perpetual absence? How effective can be the reasons of friends and sometimes of people who practice religion? How strong are the artillery of the mother, the sisters, the nephews, and the entire family, who with their eyes pouring tears and sad sobs, sadly lament their misfortune, and when, as Saint Hieronymus says, “with torn clothes, she shows the breasts with which she had nursed him, when the little one will hang from her neck, when the widow sister, the old man, and the nurse, after natural piety, will cry out to the father, to whom you leave us to die.”⁴⁶ Well, what would the sad young man do, seeing himself surrounded by such a beloved, albeit afflicted company, with one and all begging him on their knees for something that seems just and fair? What would a young religious with a recent vocation do against such assaults, a person who just yesterday began to pray with a thousand imperfections, although he seems fervent while he is alone in his cell? And how could he resist and withstand such hard and strong blows and suffer the pikes that hit his blood and flesh from so many directions?

You will start to think whether it is appropriate for you to change your mind and meditate about the business, and the reasons not to undertake such a mission will begin to look effective, seeing that your religious life will be separated from the world, and that if you go to convert souls, you will be fed up wherever you are—which is the common saying of unwise people in such circumstances. Beginning to open up to new consultations, wishing to console the sadness of your parents, it could be that you allow yourself to surrender little by little to these bombings, and so we will see the soldier of Christ, once so brave and full of generous intentions to undertake heroic endeavors in order to spread the most holy name of Jesus and of the divine glory, turn his back on his captain who is calling him to the apostolic conquest, and before entering into battle abandon the position and pass over to the side of his parents, who are his domestic enemies, a victim of that very severe sentence of Christ: “Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.”⁴⁷

And if he does not say to them “good riddance,” you will see his spirit afflicted and full of sad thoughts and pitiful memories of the affliction and anguish in which he leaves his parents and relatives, and he will see himself return to his cell laden with a care and sorrow that can seize his heart so that, accompanied by

46 “scissis vestibus ubera, quibus eum nutrierat, ostendit quando parvulus ex collo pendeat nepos, quando blandis vidua soror haeret lacertis, quando anus et nutritius, secundus post naturalem pietatem father clamitabit, cui nos morituros relinquit?” Saint Jerome, *Epistulae*, 1, 14.

47 “qui amat patrem aut matrem plusquam me non est me dignus.” Matt. 10:37.

other pains, he will often face roads and painful journeys, and all together parents and relatives will challenge him with such a strong barrage that, not being able to resist them without great difficulty, he will live a life full of anguish and bitterness. From this, we can see the great danger and damage to which the religious person subjects himself in such circumstances, and at the same time the pain and sorrows he causes to his parents when he goes to say goodbye to them to please them; although it is true that leaving without seeing them causes pain, it is without a doubt worse if they see him arrive and leave so quickly because naturally the sight of something that is loved so much ignites the blood and intensifies the feeling, and the pain has stronger effects. Considering this, not seeing parents will be a sign of more love and gratitude toward them, avoiding causing them greater affliction; and on the other hand, this will help the person to fight off such a strong artillery, and make his vocation more secure and his soul freer from cares and his heart from bitterness.

In addition to these reasons, which seem conclusive to me, we have an example in the holy gospels in which Christ our Lord expressly declares to those who wish to follow him what they should do in these circumstances, and whether it is suitable for them to go and say goodbye to their parents. The sacred text tells that when the Savior went preaching through the towns of Samaria, not wanting to welcome as a disciple someone who asked him with bad intentions, he then invited another to follow him: “He said to another man: follow me,”⁴⁸ and the person replied that he would very willingly follow him, but wanted to be allowed to bury his father first: “Jesus said unto him, let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.”⁴⁹ These words seem perfect for the religious person we were talking about, the one who undertakes a mission to the Indies. Because as soon as Christ invites him to follow him along the paths of Samaria in the conquest of this world, telling him to “follow me,”⁵⁰ he replies that he is very willing and that he is getting prepared, but it happens that, in remembering his parents and saddened by his decision to enter religion, before embarking to follow Christ, he asks for permission to go and see and console them, as well as the other one who left them (the parents) dead and asks for leave to bury them.⁵¹ But the Savior tells him: “Let the dead bury their dead: but go

48 “Ait autem ad alterum, sequere me.” Luke 9:59.

49 “Dixitque ei Iesus: sine ut mortui sepeliant mortuos suos, tu autem vade et annuntia regnum Dei.” Luke 9:59–61.

50 “Sequere me.” Luke 9:59.

51 “He said to another man, ‘Follow me.’ But he replied, ‘Lord, first let me go and bury my father.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God.’ Still another said, ‘I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family.’” Luke 9:59–61.

thou and preach the kingdom of God.”⁵² Saint John Chrysostom studies the reason why the Lord did not give him license in response to a request that seems so fair, and the saint says that spending time in explaining it is not worth it because it is very clear. He answers that the Lord did not allow him what he asked so as to free him from a thousand evils that could come from this, such as sorrow, sadness, crying, cares, concerns, and other similar worries that could squelch his vocation and make him desist from his purpose, “because” (as another person adds) “from this there might arise an opportunity for him never to return to Christ, because the affection of his relatives might cause him to have a contrary desire, or at least some lukewarmness of his former desire, and thus he would not return to Christ.”⁵³ From this we infer how seriously the religious who asks permission to go and say goodbye to his relatives should take these words: “Let the dead bury their dead”;⁵⁴ the sorrows and afflictions, the concerns and cares, and finally the danger of leaving behind his true purpose do not diminish but on the contrary increase, as with the young man who wanted to be at his father’s funeral. This person accepted Christ’s advice and followed him without paying attention to his relatives, and our religious should do the same, forgetting his relatives and regarding as valueless everything that is earthly: he should start, then, the journey and announce the kingdom of heaven throughout the world with the preaching of the divine word. What the angel said to Lot is valid for him too: “Flee for your lives! Don’t look back,”⁵⁵ or do like that young man from the gospel who, before following Christ, renounced those people at his home, got rid of his things, bade farewell to his friends and parents,⁵⁶ as the saints counsel, and if you do so you will be able to fear the strong threat of Christ: “No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back (is fit for service in the kingdom of God);”⁵⁷ “Remember” (so you do not do it, says Cassian) “Lot’s wife, who was turned into a statue, not of marble, but of salt, to serve as an example, and the story, whence others leaping, she looked back, and was turned into a statue: beware that you do not look back.”⁵⁸

52 “Sine, ut mortui sepeliant mortuos suos, tu autem vade et annuntia Regnum Dei,” see supra.

53 “Quia ex hoc . . . forte oriretur et occasio, ut nunquam rediret ad Christum, quia affectio cognatorum causaret ei forte contrarium desiderium, vel saltem tepiditatem aliquam desiderii prioris, et sic non rediret ad Christum.” The source of this sentence is not clear.

54 “Sine, ut mortui sepeliant mortuos suos.” Luke 9:60.

55 “Salva animam tuam, noli respicere post tergum.” Gen. 19:17.

56 “Renuntiare his, quae domis sunt . . . valedicere amicis tuis et parentibus.” Luke 9:61.

57 “Nemo mittens manum suam ad aratrum, et respiciens retro, aptus est regno Dei.” Luke 9:62.

58 “Memento uxoris Loth, quae in statuam versa est, non marmoris sed salis, ut exemplum fieret, et condimentum, unde alii salirentis respexit illa retro, versaque est in statuam: cave, ne retro respicias,” which is putatively from John Cassian (ca. 360–435), Christian monk and theologian.

For our greatest consolation in this matter, we do not lack examples of Christ himself, who, not caring about the strong pain he was inflicting on his most holy mother by going to the temple without saying anything to her, did it anyway for the divine glory. The most holy Virgin went looking for him pierced with pain, and when she found him, instead of consoling her, Christ replied in an apparently harsh manner: “How is it that ye sought me?”⁵⁹ etc., making clear, as Saint Bernard says, how we must treat our relatives when they interfere with serving God; that is, by not paying attention to their sorrows and afflictions, understanding, as Saint Hieronymus says, that “if the father grieves, Christ will rejoice” and “if the family mourns, the angels will also congratulate them,”⁶⁰ and what is even better, as Saint John Climacus advises, “to grieve the parents rather than the Lord Jesus.”⁶¹ The blind world sees us as inhuman and ungrateful, but we are like that only if we put our parents before Christ, our true father and Lord, who says to all of us: “Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.”⁶²

The example of our S. Francis Xavier⁶³ confirms what we have said—when going from Rome to Portugal to embark for India, he passed about four leagues from his homeland, where he had a mother and relatives, and seeing that that was the last chance to see them again, he let it pass, even if his travel companions begged and tried to persuade him, until the ambassador of the king of Portugal himself intervened in the prayers.

None the less did Father Matteo Ricci,⁶⁴ the first apostle who established the light of the gospel in the kingdoms of China. When he was going from Rome to Genoa and from there to Portugal to sail to the East, it was not possible to convince him to pass through Macerata, his homeland, which was almost directly in their path, and he did so in order to excuse himself from seeing his parents on such a dangerous occasion, showing in this the holy hatred he had for them, a hatred that all religious who want to be disciples of Christ and soldiers of his militia should have.

Some superiors may invite and almost force us to see the parents before leaving for a place that is so far away, but usually they tend, as is wise and prudent in such cases, to leave it in our hands and freedom without forcing us to do so,

59 “Quid est, quod me quaerebatis?” Luke 2:49.

60 “Si contristabitur pater, laetabitur Christus . . . si lugebit familia gratulabuntur et Angeli.” Saint Jerome, *Epistulae*, 3, 54.

61 “Contristare parentes quam Dominum Iesum,” which comes from John Climacus (sixth-seventh centuries), a Christian monk on Mount Sinai.

62 “Sine, ut mortui sepeliant mortuos suos, tu autem vade et annuntia Regnum Dei.” Luke 9:59–61.

63 Pallas identifies Francis Xavier (1506–52) as a saint even though he was canonized only in 1622.

64 He refers to the famous Italian Jesuit Matteo Ricci (1552–1610), a missionary in China.

and if it ever seems that they send us to the parents, they do so reluctantly and to condescend to importunate pleas; in such cases he who considers himself a true and constant disciple of Christ must take every possible step to avoid such a visit, exposing the superior to the danger in which it would put him, taking care of satisfying his relatives so that they understand that it does not depend on the superior, who sometimes feels obliged to invite his subjects to make this visit, but on the subject himself, who does not want to go and is disgusted by it. And if he does so and says to his father and mother: “I do not know you,”⁶⁵ and to his brothers: “I do not know you,” he will be counted among those blessed in Deuteronomy who “have observed thy word, and kept thy covenant,”⁶⁶ and he will be like those daughters of Israel who, forgotten by their father’s people and house, made the king of heaven fall in love with their beauty—“and the king will covet their beauty”⁶⁷—and he will be like those blessed souls, those wives of Christ, who, stripped of the tunic of carnal affection after entering religion and seeing their feet shaken and washed of the dust of earthly love, do not return to wear them or stain them, but while resting in the flowery bed of the heavenly husband say: “I put off my garment; how could I put it back on? I bathed my feet; how could I soil them?”⁶⁸ and finally he will be like those to whom Christ said that “in the new world of the resurrection, when the Son of Man shall sit on the seat of his majesty, you also shall sit on the twelve seats, judging the twelve tribes of Israel,” and of those who “shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit eternal life.”⁶⁹

Chapter IV.

How Should the Religious Behave with His Parents If He Goes to See Them before His Departure?

It can happen that, after the religious diligently decided, according to what said above, to avoid the sight of his relatives on this occasion, the superiors still send him to them out of fair respect. In this case, it is appropriate (because by doing so he starts a fight in a situation where so many have been in danger) that in executing this task he takes some advice and warning from the saints, who teach us how we have to behave to come out victorious in such conflicts, and how to respond to the reasons and arguments we are faced with in order to reach our purpose. And let Saint Hieronymus be the first to give us courage to overcome the strongest weapons that attack the flesh, which are tender prayers:

65 “Ignoro vos.”

66 “custodierunt eloquium Dei et pactum eius servaverunt.” Deut. 33:9.

67 “et concupiscet Rex decorem eorum.” Song of Sol. 5:3.

68 “expoliavi me tunica mea, quomodo induar illa? Lavi pedes meos, quomodo quo inquinabo illos?” Song of Sol. 5:3.

69 “in regeneratione cum sederit filius hominis in sede maiestatis suae, sedebitis et vos super sedes duodecim, iudicantes duodecim tribus Israel . . . centuplum accipient, et vitam aeternam possidebunt.” Augustine of Hippo, *The City of God*, book XX.

“Even if a little nephew” (he says) “hangs from his neck, even if with scattered hair and torn clothes the breasts with which the mother nursed you are shown, even if the father lies on the threshold, go through the trampled father, fly with dry eyes to the flag of the cross, only pity is cruel in this matter. The day will come, the day will come later, when you will return victorious to your country, when you will enter the heavenly Jerusalem crowned as a mighty man.”⁷⁰ Nor does Saint John Climacus say less in these few words: “Let not the tears of yours move you, lest you yourself shed eternal tears: when your parents and relatives surround you like bees, nay, like wasps, weeping and lamenting, you lay before yourself your sins, that you may overcome pain with pain.”⁷¹ Let us hear also Saint Augustine who, teaching Laetus how to deal with relatives when joining a religious order, seems to be speaking about the religious we are dealing with here: “Behold, the duty of evangelical preaching seizes you: the Lord gives a sign that we may watch in the camp, that we may build a tower, from which we may be able to look out and repel the enemy of eternal life. The heavenly trumpet abducts Christ’s soldier to battle, and the mother holds him back, but what does she say? What does she allege? Perhaps those ten months, during which you burdened her bowels, and the pains of childbirth, and the labors of education? Slay this with a salutary word, destroy this mother, that you may find her in eternal life.”⁷²

But if they quote the precept of God that “you shall honor your parents,” hear what Saint Bernard well noted: “He says to honor father and mother, but he also said that he who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.”⁷³ And if they mention the obligation that children have to obey their parents, listen to Christ in Saint Matthew: “And call no man your father on earth,

70 “Licet parvulus . . . ex collo pendeat nepos, licet sparso crine, et scissis vestibus ubera, quibus te nutrierat mater ostendat, licet in limine pater iaceat, per calcatum perge patrem, siccis oculis ad vexillum crucis evola, solum pietatis genus est in hac re esse crudelem: veniet, veniet postea dies, quo victor revertaris in patriam, quo Hierosolyman caelestem vir fortis coronatus incedas.” Jerome, *Epistola ad Heliodorum monachum*.

71 “Non te moveant . . . tuorum lacrymae, ne tu tibi ipsi aeternas lacrymas parias: cum te parentes et propinqui circundant, sicut apes, imo sicut vespae, plangentes et lamentantes, tu tibi propone peccata tua, ut dolorem dolore vincas.” This is a putative quotation from *The Ladder of Divine Ascent* by John Climacus.

72 “Ecce rapit te evangelicae praedicationis officium: dat signum Dominus, ut vigilemus in castris, ut aedificemus turrim, de qua hostem sempiternae vitae, et prospicere et propellere valeamus. Rapit militem Christi tuba caelestis ad proelium, et retinet mater, sed quid dicit? aut quid allegat? Forte decem illos menses, quibus viscera eius onerasti, et dolores parturitionis, ac labores educationis? hoc interfice verbo salutari hoc perde matrem, ut in vitam aeternam invenias eam.” Augustine of Hippo, *Epistola* 243 to Laetus.

73 “Quid dicit honora patrem et matrem, ipse etiam dixit: qui amat patrem aut matrem plusquam me, non est me dignus,” which is putatively from Saint Bernard.

for you have one Father, who is in heaven.”⁷⁴ If they tell you they gave you your being and everything you have, answer them with what, on the advice of Saint Bernard, Elijah said to his parents, who disturbed him and tried to divert him from his purpose: “What do I have from you but sin and misery? Only this, that by a gesture I confess and acknowledge that I have the corruptible body of yours. Is it not enough for you that you have brought me into this world of miserable misery? That in sin and sinners have you begotten sinners? That in sin you have nurtured a child born of sin, unless even envying me the mercy that I have obtained I go away, who does not want the death of a sinner; do you make a son in hell?”⁷⁵ If they say you do not have the love due to them, then do not listen nor accept their advice. Answer them with Saint Gregory: “He who is carnally wise is loved as if through hatred; while he inculcates evil in us, he is not heard.”⁷⁶ If they call you inhuman and ungrateful, answer them again with Saint Bernard: “If it is impious to despise one’s mother, to despise for Christ’s sake is most pious;”⁷⁷ or with what we said of Saint Hieronymus a little earlier: “The only kind of mercy in this matter is to be cruel.”⁷⁸ If they say that your absence afflicts them and causes pain, report to them what Christ caused to his most holy mother: “And a sword shall pass through thy soul.”⁷⁹ If they try to divert you with promises, remind them of Christ: “You also shall sit on twelve seats, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall possess life everlasting.”⁸⁰ If they confront you with the efforts and difficulties of the roads and the dangers of navigation, tell them what Saint Paul said to those who tried to stop him from going to Jerusalem: “Why are you weeping and breaking my heart?

74 “Et patrem nolite vocare vobis super terram, unus est enim pater vester, qui in coelis est.” Matt. 23:9.

75 “Quid a vobis habeo, nisi peccatum et miseriam? hoc solum, quod gesto corruptibile corpus de vestro habere me fateor et agnosco. Non sufficit vobis, quod me in hanc seculi miseriam miseri miserum induxistis? quod in peccato, et peccatorem peccatores genuistis? quod in peccato natum de peccato nutristis, nisi etiam invidendo mihi misericordiam, quam consecutus sum ab eo, qui non vult mortem peccatoris, filium in super gehenae faciat?” Saint Bernard, *Epistola 111, Ex persona Eliae monachi ad parentes suos*.

76 “Quasi per odium diligitur, qui carnaliter sapiens, dum prava nobis ingerit, non auditor.” Gregory the Great, *Homiliae in Evangelia*, 2, 37.

77 “Et si impium est contemnere matrem, contemnere tamen propter Christum piissimum est.” Saint Bernard, *Epistola CIV, ad magistrum Gualterum de Calvo-Monte*.

78 “Solum pietatis genus est in hac re esse crudelem.” Saint Jerome, *Epistola 4 to Eliodorum*.

79 “Et tuam ipsius animam pertransibit gladius.” Luke 2:25.

80 “Sedebitis et vos super sedes duodecim, iudicantes duodecim tribus of Israel; et omnis, qui reliquerit domum, vel fratres, aut sorores, aut patrem, aut matrem, aut uxorem, aut filios, aut agros propter nomen meum: centuplum accipiet, et vitam aeternam possidebit.” Matt. 19:27–29.

I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.”⁸¹ If they try to stop you by telling you that you could generate more fruit in your own country, bring to their memory what the Savior said to the holy apostle: “Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about me.”⁸² And if they still say what Saint Paul said to Christ, that being known in your land you will become the best example, more alive and effective than words, add what Christ said to the holy apostle: “Depart, for I will send you far from here to the Gentiles,”⁸³ because “no prophet is acceptable in his hometown.”⁸⁴ If they represent to you that they are poor, and that it would be a greater mercy to stay and help them, instead of going and leaving them helpless, remind them of Saint Luke, of what we mentioned before: “Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God,”⁸⁵ and what Saint John Chrysostom says about these words: “By this we are taught that not even the least amount of time should be spent in vain, even if there are thousands of compulsions,”⁸⁶ with which agrees the example of the apostle, who stopped distributing alms to the poor so that he would not have to leave evangelical preaching: “It is not fair for us to leave the word of God and to serve at tables.”⁸⁷ Lastly, they could approve your thoughts but accuse you of having considered the matter too little and too fast, telling you what Saint Bernard said: “Do not act rashly: consider for a long time, look carefully: what you propose is great, and having a task at the end of deliberation, try what you can; consult friends, so that you do not regret it after the fact.” Then reply first with Saint Bernard that these advices are “the earthly, animal, devilish wisdom of the world, the enemy of salvation, the suffocator of life, the mother of tepidity, which usually causes the Lord to vomit.” And then recall the words of the same saint, who says: “Be careful, for what? When you doubt that there is no word from God, what is the need for greater deliberation? For who is more faithful, who is wiser than him?” And turning to God,

81 “Quid facitis flentes et affligentes cor meum? Ego enim non solum alligari, sed et mori in Ierusalem paratus sum propter nomen Domini Iesu.” Acts 21:3.

82 “Exi velociter ex Ierusalem, quoniam non recipient testimonium tuum de me.” Acts 22:18.

83 “Vade, quia ego in nationes longe mittam te.” Acts 22:21.

84 “Nemo propheta acceptus est in patria sua.” Luke 4:24.

85 “Sine ut mortui sepeliant mortuos suos, tu autem vade et annuntia regnum Dei.” Luke 9:59–61.

86 “Per hoc docemur, quod nec minimum temporis frustra ducere decet, et si millia cogentia sint: imo proferre spiritualia cunctis admodum, id est, valde necessariis,” which is putatively from John Chrysostom.

87 “Non est aequum nos relinquere verbum Dei et ministrare mensis.” Thomas Aquinas, *Liber contra impugnantes Dei cultum et religionem*, part II, heading 3.

go on: "Lead me, Lord, and I will lead you: be stronger and be strong: I know what they are, what must be done quickly."⁸⁸

And it will be appropriate to add here to what has been said something else that is of equal importance, which is a warning to leave with the desired freedom and ease from the presence of the relatives, completely untied from earthly cares, free of the straw and mud of Egypt, singing songs of joy in following Moses through the desert. The warning is not to take care of correspondence and business, no matter how much your relatives and friends ask and beg, because it could happen that the devil, not being able to twist you from your purpose, tries to disturb you on the mission or concerning its greatest outcome, forcing you to negotiate your family's business, filling yourself with other people's worries. As the trade and correspondence between Europe and the Indies is so frequent, it can happen that the religious, in order not to completely disappoint his relatives since he refuses to stay at home, wants to please them by promising to manage their causes and needs, helping them with what he can, and this means to voluntarily put himself into another danger, from which should flee more than from a poisonous viper the person who prides himself on being a disciple of Christ and a soldier of his militia, remembering the words of Saint Paul: "No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs, but rather tries to please his commanding officer."⁸⁹ For this reason they do not promise their diligence and care in such cases, not only because they are agents of their institute, and this is a hindrance to the end and intent of their mission, but because this is something a religious must never do. Because what could be more indecent than the authority and gravity of an apostolic man, set apart from the world and consecrated "to proclaim the kingdom of God, and to carry his name before the nations"⁹⁰ than to occupy himself with such low and transitory things? And must a person who fled his homeland and province, banished himself to the end of the world to serve the Lord with more freedom and released from such worries, to extend his most holy name, be linked later to earthly things and correspondences of the world? Must he allow the peace and quiet of his soul to become entangled in secular

88 "Noli praecipitanter agere: diu considera, diligentibus intueri: magnum est, quod proponis et opus habens fine deliberatione, experire quid possis: amicos consule, ne post factum poenitere contingat . . . sapientia mundi terrena, animalis, diabolica, inimica salutis, suffocatrix vitae, mater tepiditatis, quae solet Domino vomitum provocare . . . cave tibi, ut quid enim? cum a Deo verbum non esse dubites, quid opus est maiori deliberatione vocat magni consilii Angelus, quid aliena consilia proestolaris? quis enim fidelior, quis sapientior illo? . . . Deduc me Domine, et deducar: fortior esto, et invalesce: novi ego, quanam sint, quae oportet fieri cito." It was not possible to find the source of this quotation, putatively from Saint Bernard.

89 "Nemo militans Deo implicat se negotiis secularibus, ut ei placeat, cui se probavit." 2 Tim. 2:4.

90 "Ad enuntiandum regnum Dei, nomenque eius coram gentibus portandum." It was not possible to find the source of this quotation.

businesses that are just as vain and harmful? And if Saint Paul wanted that the office of judge, which at that time was necessary in the church, and responsibility for charitable works, were given to the less perfect, as it was something unworthy of those committed to virtue and evangelical preaching to be busy with temporal things—"If you have disputes about such matters, do you ask for a ruling from those whose way of life is scorned in the church?"⁹¹—how imperfect and less valuable will be the religious who, following their own will and not out of obedience (which sanctifies everything), get involved in mundane and wholly terrestrial things? Who does not see how great are the damages to someone who chokes and disturbs his soul with these thorns and flies of Egypt? Saint Gregory says that they not only slow down the spirit for divine things, but also darken it, and as God resides in a "light so brilliant,"⁹² and to know this light it is necessary to be very purged and clean, having it weighed down in this earthly rudeness one will not be able to rise to the content and pleasures of heaven, as the saint himself said very well elsewhere: "The mind is by no means raised to the higher if it is occupied with the tumults of cares in the lower."⁹³ Therefore, it is appropriate in this matter to take the advice of Saint Basil, where he says that we should flee from such requests and cares as from an arrow of the devil, with which the enemy intends to bring us down: "Knowing therefore the intolerable loss of this affection toward our kindred, let us flee from their cares as if they were diabolical, having armor to attack us."⁹⁴

Let us end this chapter with another warning, taught to me by experience; it will be of some benefit for the religious who wishes to succeed in every aspect of this mission. And it is not to carry cases and small boxes with devotional objects, pictures, reliquaries, and other precious things, so that they have something to give the Indians to attract them so that they hear better the doctrine we have to teach them. Apart from the fact that coming without these objects we will resemble the apostles of the primitive church, who by the advice of Christ undertook their missions "without purse and bag,"⁹⁵ which means (as the authors say) saved from embarrassments and hindrances; we will also imitate our blessed Francis Xavier, of whom we read that, in leaving Rome for the East Indies, he did not want to take with him more than his ordinary clothing and a breviary. The religious who will do so will walk free from the care of keeping these objects, a worry

91 "Secularia iudicia if habueritis contemptibiles, qui sunt in Ecclesia, illos constituite ad iudicandum." 1 Cor. 6:4.

92 "lucem inaccessibilem." 1 Tim. 6:16.

93 "nequaquam mens ad superna attollitur, si curarum tumultibus in infimis occupatur." Gregory the Great, *Moralia in Job*, 05, 11.

94 "scientes itaque intolerabile detrimentum huius erga cognatos affectus, fugiamus illorum cura tanquam diabolicam, ad impugnandum nos, armaturam habentem," which is putatively from the *Constitutiones monachorum Ordinis* of Basil of Caesarea (ca. 331–79).

95 "sine sacculo et pera." Luke 22:35.

that could be enough to make him restless throughout the trip, because it is not easy to explain the anger caused by embarking and disembarking with them so many times, taking and returning them on so many roads, and the care needed to keep them safe among thousands of dangers and misfortunes. Moreover, it is not so necessary to bring such things nowadays because the superiors, who usually receive a larger quantity of them, usually distribute them to the workers for this purpose. Considering this, if I had to undertake another similar trip, I would take with me just what we said in reference to our Saint Francis Xavier, and what in imitation some of my companions brought when we came to this kingdom—adding a Bible and a crucifix to the breviary. And really, it is indescribable the peace and consolation of those who, not wearing anything, only care to preserve their fervor, good intentions, and desires, and to please our Lord, advancing in their virtues, which are the only things necessary to gain friends and increase one's spiritual benefit.

Chapter V.

How the Religious Should Deal with His Superior on This Trip

The glorious Saint Antiochus, famous for doctrine and sanctity, after discussing in one of his homilies how much we owe to our parents according to the flesh, concludes that the obligations we have toward our superiors and spiritual parents are even greater: “But we repeat to those who are ignorant of it, that we must repay our parents according to the flesh, yes, but we owe so much greater honor and worship to those who are our fathers in spirit, so that through them we may inherit the blessing of God,” and explaining the reason for this he continues: “For they are not less afflicted because of us, or are pressed by less care, than they are afflicted much more,” etc. Whence it seems that the cause on which he bases this obligation that we subjects must love and obey our superiors, is that “they are afflicted for our sake, and are pressed by care for the living word.”⁹⁶ In whose consideration, it seems to me obvious that, a religious must have reverential love for and must obey his superiors at all times and places, even more and incomparably in those days in which the work and afflictions are greater and more extraordinary, because if we look at it, we will see that from the moment the trip begins until it ends, the superior does not allow a sea of worries to emerge, which continually afflict his soul, all for the love and comfort of the subjects he is in charge of. If the concern and longing that everyone feels about himself and

96 “At qui . . . ne illud quidem ignorare conveniat, a nobis non id repeti solum, ut parentibus secundum carnem vicem redhibeamus; verum tanto amplio rem honorem, cultumque nos debere iis, qui secundum spiritum patres sunt nostri, ut per hos haereditate assequamur benedictionem Dei . . . neque enim minus, nostri causa isti affligantur, aut minori cura premuntur, quin maiori multo . . . nostri causa affligantur, et cura premuntur.” All of these quotations are putatively from the *Homilies* by Antiochus of Palestine, Christian monk and author of the seventh century.

his cares is enough to make him walk many times with a restless heart, what will become of the superior who carries worries other than his own? Nor does he feel less sorry for the care he has that his companions do not lack something, even something small, that they need in schools and monasteries; he feels this so much that he can work night and day to avoid it, but what will be the feeling of the superior of this mission when he sees not one but many, and not small but large, faults without being able to put a remedy to them? How many times does he think about how to help the sick? How many nights will he spend awake, thinking, while the others carelessly sleep, about what he should do so that our Lord may be glorified in his trip, the good name of his religion increased, and the neighbor edified? To this we should add the diligence of reinforcing the spirits of his subjects, so that their fervor stays firm and they do not lose their good intentions and desires; and if this is observed and sought with such vigilance in the monasteries, where the frequency of the sacraments makes it easier, how much greater must it be concerning whomever the superiors put on those paths, where the occasions for relaxation in spiritual things are so big and so constant! But what will be his concern if his apprehensions and cautions pass to others, apprehensions and cautions more related to success and the many other matters that the religious superior is in charge of, on which the good name of his religion hangs, and that all together and each one by itself, as if they were thorns, do not allow him to have any rest? From which it is inferred how great the obligation is, among the others that we have, to love, obey, and help the superior in such days. Because if the law of charity obliges everyone to console the afflicted, how much more obliged are the subjects to seek the consolation of their superior, who is so anxious! And how great is the attention we should put into not upsetting him and not adding worries on top of worries! And if the law of gratitude obliges us to be thankful to the servants and slaves who serve us with fidelity, how much more will it force us to be grateful to our superior, who travels those paths with paternal love as our father, and provides us with spiritual and temporal help, and as a mother consoles us and keeps us awake, “because of the help (as Saint Antiochus says) and the concern by which I was successful during the day and the night, while he was terribly afraid, lest something should happen to his children by chance and adverse events?” And if each of these things asks as payment and reward something we cannot give (as the saint himself says), “How can we repay all of them in a way that is worthy of them?”⁹⁷ Why don’t we give him something that costs us so little, and that our Lord uses so much, such as our efforts to obey him, avoiding causing him disappointments and dislikes by not

97 “Propter auxilium . . . et sollicitudinem, qua inter diu, noctuque angitur, dum male metuit, ne quid filiis suis occurrat fortuiti, et adversi casus? . . . quam quaeso vicem universis his condignam rependere possimus?” These quotations should once again come from Antiochus’s *Homilies*.

paying the right attention to his orders and precepts, but instead revering him with humility and submission and conforming our will to his, knowing that this is the will of God our Lord, and that these are the presents and gifts that are asked of us by the superiors as rewards for the many benefits they give us, according to the words of Saint Gregory: “We give spiritual gifts to our rulers, when we offer them due respect and reverence and keep those things which they set forth with great devotion.”⁹⁸

Besides this, it is very important to the religious on this trip not to forget that very profitable exercise he engaged in when he lived in convents and colleges—unveiling to the superior his conscience, temptations, and thoughts, not letting himself be deceived by the enemy and thinking that starting this endeavor has already made him a spiritual man and that he does not need advice from anyone, knowing that “he that will teach himself in school (as Saint Bernard says) becomes a scholar to a fool,”⁹⁹ and that “the way of perfection, as Cassian says, is shown to no one by the Lord, who, having learned what it is worth, has despised the teaching of the elders, or has despised the institutions; ask your fathers and elders and they will tell you”¹⁰⁰ that if the Lord with his divine light does not teach and show us the way, wherever we may walk, we will walk astray because “he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going.”¹⁰¹

But apart from the obvious reasons that this warning is so necessary, we must also note that on this trip there are frequent occasions that force us to put ourselves in great danger if we do not follow this advice. When the superior, who should lead by giving different tasks to each person according to the different talents of each, misses information about and special knowledge of the subject’s inclinations, this may lead to ordering things that are not good for the spirit of the person. If this holy exercise of unraveling your conscience to the superior is done punctually in the monasteries, where there is not so much danger, and the masters of the spiritual life consider it very necessary in order not to be left alone, deceived and defeated by the enemy, how much more will it be necessary on roads that every day offer a thousand temptations and as many occasions to stumble and fall into all kinds of faults. This happens with much greater ease due to the greater freedom that there is for it, since the guard of the superiors cannot

98 “Spiritualia munera rectoribus nostris tribuimus, quando debitam eis honoris reverentiam offerimus, et ea, quae proecipunt cum magna devotione servamus!” This quotation is putatively from Gregory the Great.

99 “Qui se sibi magisterium constituit . . . stulto se discipulum subdit.” Bernard of Clairvaux, *Epistola* 87, section 7.

100 “Nulli a Domino . . . via perfectionis ostenditur, qui habens unde valeat erudiri doctrinam seniorum, vel instituta contempserit, parvi pendens illud, interroga patrem tuum, et annuntiabit tibi seniores tuos, et dicent tibi,” which is putatively a quotation from John Cassian.

101 “Qui ambulat in tenebris, nescit quo vadit.” John 12:27.

be constant, and it may happen that the religious person finds himself forced to walk alone among people leading depraved lives with no defense other than the asset of virtue, and if this (may God forbid) happens to be little, it will become further damaged, as everybody should consider. All of this will be avoided by unveiling your conscience and your big or small assets because it is according to these that the superior will guard you carefully and will keep you from danger; nor will he assign you something beyond your gifts, distributing the tasks and businesses to each according to their talents, with everything safe and well governed. Because (as Cassian says) this holy exercise of the subject revealing his conscience to the superior not only makes the religious go the right way, without slouching toward one side or the other, but also “will protect them from all frauds and scheming enemies.”¹⁰² And if after declaring his insufficiency, the superior still puts the person on dangerous paths, he may trust heaven to give him the strength to do so, having done what he could, being aware that (as Saint Paul says) “God is faithful”¹⁰³ in giving him the appropriate assistance and help, and he will be able to say to God with great confidence: “Grant what you command, God, and then command what you will.”¹⁰⁴ And in this respect, I saw some of my companions on our voyage remarkably comforted and cheered amidst troubling occasions, and I heard them say that even if they thought they would have been very distressed imagining themselves involved in these occasions, they had not informed the superior of how little or how much they could have tolerated of them.

Nor will I stop talking about what happened to one person in this regard, because this seems to be needed to show how one can overcome temptations, calm the spirit, and live in peace and comfort. This person suffered stimuli and temptations that were contrary to chastity; he feared how the Lord was watching over him and was looking for the best way to overcome them, mortifying with great rigor his flesh with fasts, staying awake, disciplines, and cilices; he prayed for many hours and often entrusted himself to the Blessed Virgin, who usually offers a great refuge for such issues; but as the Lord wanted to show the efficaciousness of this means of which we are speaking, the temptations not only did not go away but were increased more and more every day. Although he thought it would be good to express them to the superior, he did not do so because he believed that, from what he had read, he already knew what the superior would advise and that there was no reason to go to him. But as he became more restless every day, he finally decided (as Cassian advises) to express his discomfiture to the superior. He did this with humility and regret for not having done so

102 “Cunctis fraudibus et insidiis inimicis servabit illae sum,” putatively from Cassian.

103 “Fidelis est Deus.” *Epistola ad Corinthios* II 1:18.

104 “Da Domine quod iubes, et iube quod vis.” Augustine, *Confessiones*, repeated several times in book 10: 29, 31, 37.

before; in this way our Lord was served (oh, admirable case!) and from that hour he remained very calm, happy, and free from the bombings of his temptations, according to another saying of Cassian: “As soon as the thought was revealed, the slanderers withered away.”¹⁰⁵

It is now necessary to warn the subjects of the reverence with which they should encounter the affability and simplicity of the superior, because, as is proper to the good superior, according to what the saints and teachers of the spiritual life recommend, the subjects must find in him a good reception, approaching him without any fear and with great confidence, expressing their consciences, so that he should be more loved than feared by them, more of a father and mother and less of a master and judge, as Saint Bernard warns: “Learn, you who judge the earth, learn that you ought to be the mothers of your subjects, not their lords; show affection as a mother would, correct like a father. Be gentle, avoid harshness, do not resort to blows, expose your breasts; let your bosoms expand with milk, not swell with passion.”¹⁰⁶ Because it is necessary for these long trips, the superiors tend to put more care into being much more affable and gentle than usual; as they see their subjects every day and hour, they treat them better and speak to them so familiarly that they acquire great confidence, which may end up in the subjects taking advantage of this affability, corrupting (as they say) his courtesy, diminishing due respect and reverence. Because although it is up to the superior’s prudence to behave with the subjects both with gentleness and gravity, not using one without the other, it can still happen that by doing what they have to, we subjects do not do what we should, and so it is appropriate to take care that we join, at all times and on all occasions, love with the reverence we owe to the superiors, which we will do easily if we recognize in them the person of Christ our Lord, as did the seraphic Saint Francis of Assisi, as written in his testament: “I desire (he says) to fear, love, and honor them and all others as my masters; and I do not wish to consider sin in them, for in them I see the Son of God and they are my masters.”¹⁰⁷ Our father Ignatius agrees with this, as he writes in the letter concerning obedience: “I desire to devote you diligently to this care and training, so that you may strive to acknowledge Christ the Lord in everything superior,

105 “Tam diu suggestions noxiae dominantur in nobis, quam diu coelantur in corde . . . illico ut patefacta fuerit cogitatio malignant marcescit.” Both quotations are putatively from John Cassian.

106 “Erudimini qui iudicatis terram, discite subditorum matres vos esse debere, non Dominos, studete magis amari, quam metui, et si interdum severitate opus est, paterna sit, non tyrannica; Matres fovendo, patres vos corripiendo exhibeatis; mansuescite, ponite feritatem, suspendite verbera, producite ubera, pectora lacte pinguescant, non typho turgeant,” which is putatively from Bernard of Clairvaux, *Cantica Canticorum*.

107 “Et ipsos, dize, vole timere, amare et honorare, sicut meos Dominos, et nolo in ipsis considerare peccatum, quia filium Dei discerno in ipsis.” Testament of Saint Francis of Assisi (ca. 1181–1226).

and in him to perform the highest reverence and obedience to the divine majesty with religion.”¹⁰⁸

Chapter VI.

How the Religious Should Deal with the Laypeople with Whom He Sails or Walks, to Improve Them.

My goal in this chapter is not to persuade the religious who undertakes this enterprise of the Indies to seek with every effort the perfection and spiritual benefit of those close to them, with whom they deal and converse during this journey, putting before them the innumerable goods and sovereign excellencies that this holy and laudable work includes, because we suppose his zeal for divine glory and souls is much greater than what we can depict or convince him of here. If the love and zeal of the daughters of Israel burned their hearts and their entrails so much that, not being able to endure the fire, they left their lands and provinces, without a doubt this will be very sufficient and powerful so that they fulfill their desire with these people we talk about, and to bring them as close as possible by the most appropriate means and paths, to their conversion and profit. And I am sure that “the secondary effect will be lacking, as far as opportunity allows,” as Saint Bonaventure says, “where there is such an affection,”¹⁰⁹ and if the opportunity that the religious have to attract those with whom they converse and communicate during the journey, which is all that can be desired, is worth putting forth an effort, I will offer some examples, of which the books are full, but we are talking about certain places and times and people that are something different, and there are some particular things that are necessary to write about.

But first of all, it would be good to say something about the most important thing, from whom, as a source and origin, all the rest must flow, as we will see later. This is a good example, and without a doubt, a very important thing at all times and places for achieving the fruit we aim for, be it at sea or on land, in the cities where we are going to settle or on the paths and sea routes in between, because this example has a great strength to lead men to good or evil, according to the saying of the sage: “Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise (but the companion of fools will suffer harm).”¹¹⁰ With this agrees Saint Leo, who says that strong persuasion can do a lot, but a living example is even more important and deeds teach better than words; the reason for this is given by Saint

108 “Sedulo vos in eam curam, atque exercitationem incumbere cupio, ut Christum Dominum in superiore quolibet agnoscere studeatis in eoque divinae maiestatis reverentiam atque obedientiam summam cum religione praestare.” *Regulae Societatis Iesu, De obedientiae virtute, Epistola N.P. Ignatii*, par. 4.

109 “Deerit subventionis effectus, quantum patitur opportunitas . . . ubi talis in est affectus,” which is putatively present in the works of Saint Bonaventure (1221–74), Franciscan bishop, cardinal, scholastic theologian, and philosopher from the Italian peninsula.

110 “Qui cum sapientibus graditur, sapiens erit, etc.” Prov. 13:20.

Bernard: “A living and effective discourse is the greatest example of persuasion possible”;¹¹¹ because the imperfection of man is so great (said Saint Augustine) it is only with difficulty that he does something good, when he does not see first an example of it. And in this regard Saint Paul advises Titus to lead a good and holy life so that he may bear fruit with his doctrine: “In all things, set yourself an example of good works in doctrine, in integrity, in seriousness of sound word, blameless.”¹¹² Because sanctity is something supernatural and divine, everyone naturally has a certain veneration and respect for it more than for anything human, and it seems that what they see and hear are not men but angels, and thus they take what they say as something from heaven, and this moves them and impresses them in their hearts, which will not happen to the religious who spends the time of his sea voyage in little futile things, entertaining himself with the seculars in talking and having fun, which, besides being very harmful to his profit (because “sin is not ended by multiplying words”¹¹³), leads laypeople to lose respect for them, seeing busy in similar things people they considered holy and separated from the world, whom they looked at as people *with something divine*. From this derives the fact that, although the religious wants to dress seriously in order to exercise the ministries of his religion, he does not manage to do so, and if he does, it is with no benefit due to the low esteem in which he is held; they do not esteem or venerate him, and they do not hear or obey him, believing that what he says to them does not come from a heart that is holy and zealous of divine glory, nor from a true desire to be helpful to souls, because they saw him so playful and secularized, as if he had nothing religious other than the habit.

Although it is legitimate and convenient to relax sometimes while facing the anger of the sea and the hardships of the road, as Saint Gregory says, entertaining oneself for a while in honest recreations, “that it may be tended to with advantage in its time,”¹¹⁴ this should, however, be done in such a way that the seculars see that it is not done because the religious likes such amusements, but in order to avoid breaking the bowstrings of weak human nature falling under such heavy loads, and the seculars should understand from this that, even in that time of bodily recreation, the heart is set on eternal and heavenly things. The seculars will be confirmed of this if they see that, after having a brief entertainment, the religious return to their occupations of prayer, lessons, studies, etc., and that they always exercise the virtues and mortification of the passions,

111 “Et efficax exemplum operis est plurimum faciens suadibile, quod monstratur factibile,” putatively from Bernard of Clairvaux.

112 “In omnibus, dize, te ipsum proebe exemplum bonorum operum in doctrina, in integritate, in gravitate verbum sanum, irreprehensibile,” from Paul’s epistle to Titus.

113 “In multiloquio non deerit peccatum.” Prov. 10:19.

114 “Ut in suo tempore cum utilitate tendatur.” Gregory the Great, *Moralia in Job*, Part V.

retreating, as Saint Gregory says, “as wisely as they had valiantly advanced from the onset of the attack.”¹¹⁵

And it is true that if our confreres generated much fruit with their neighbors by using other means and ministries than those necessary on our sea journey, as we said before, nothing is better than their good example, because the seculars know the good intentions of these people who want to save souls, and saw how people from so many different nations and with so few gray hairs always came united among themselves as brothers, and that, leaving the comforts or the pleasantness of their lands and the love of their relatives, they joyfully carried out the work of this long journey, suffering with joy religious poverty and the need of so many things, and with calm and constancy the adverse things, and with a calm spirit the contrary, and they are admired extraordinarily as something difficult to understand and superior to human strength; and from such circumstances some repudiated the world, joining religious life and choosing a better way of living than what they had before. The orderly way in which the fathers spent the day in various exercises and occupations, sometimes spiritual, sometimes studying and doing other things, moved them no less. Everything was so well arranged and planned that it seemed more like a well-run monastery than a passenger ship. This affected the laity in such a way that they did not dare to do anything in front of the fathers that was negligent, and at the same time, they were encouraged by the example to imitate virtue and to undertake the same exercises, impressed by this way of being.

And the force of a good example goes so far that, even without being accompanied by doctrine or words, this helped to produce great outcomes in souls, as we saw in particular when we talked about the life of the humble and virtuous brother Gerónimo Martínez, who was venerated and respected throughout the ship more than anyone else, who was the one they listened to and more easily obeyed; in front of him the passengers feared to do things they would dare to do in front of the other fathers.

Besides this way, there are others very proportionate to the place and circumstance we are dealing with, and very efficacious in allowing other people's souls to attach to virtue. And this is: to try as much as one can to help with, or at least show a desire to help with, the temporary needs of the passengers and companions with whom the trip is made, taking care of them with some alms, even if this means renouncing part of one own's sustenance, and curing their illnesses and commiserating with their efforts and poverty, if one cannot do more; acting like this will steal their hearts and make you loved by all, even by the most heartless. After having received such good affection, the person will be closer to the path to virtue because it is natural for those who love to do everything in a

115 “Valenter . . . quanto a percussione interim prudenter cessaverunt.” Gregory the Great, *Moralia in Job*, Part VI.

good way and not to see any difficulties; and in this way they will hear and obey as soon as a father teaches and advises them; whatever is said to them with this love is impressed on their souls, and no matter how you reprimand them they will not be irritated because they will take it as coming from a true friend who does not seek anything other than their good and salvation.

The blessed Francis Xavier used this way (the Lord gave us in this way an example of the missions nowadays) to win over all of the people of the ship on which he went to India. Since many were sick due to bad meals and the long journey, he began to cure them and help them in everything he could with extraordinary charity; and when it came to a great pestilence, when for fear of contagion the passengers fled from each other without finding anybody who could cure anyone, only blessed Francis, turning the fear of everybody into mercy, continued to come to them with a tireless soul, night and day. He used a large portion of his food ration as alms and distributed it among the neediest; he cooked and managed the food for them, putting it with his hands into their mouths, giving them purges and syrups, and giving as much as possible of himself for all the hardships the disease brought. And this charity and paternal love had such force in the hearts of all of those people (there were more than a thousand people on board) that he was loved by all of them, good and bad. From which it turned out that, loving him greatly, they all confessed their faults to him with great confidence and surrendered their souls, and in such a way they obeyed him who in a short time had led them to a more praiseworthy life, adjusted to the divine law. From which we deduce how much force this way of helping the others in temporal things can win them in spiritual terms.

To this way we can add another, explained by Saint Xavier himself to those teaching the new Christians. The apostolic man told them many times to overlook and tolerate their faults and vices and to bear with their weakness, going along with them and waiting for a good opportunity to correct them, patiently waiting, like good laborers of Christ, for the harvest of their sowing and the fruit of the labors. And he warned that, if initially the passengers could not be adjusted as the father wanted, he should act with them like a good parent with bad children; putting trust in the goodness of the Lord, who tends to improve things in due time, he should not despair of seeing things as he wished them to be in the future; and so, he should not stop from teaching and cultivating with all care and diligence. This warning is very important for the religious who want to make progress with those he travels to the Indies with, because if they leave with lively desires for divine glory and to convert souls, they would like to see in a moment the whole world converted; and since the people who wander through various lands usually have not been very devout before their ravaged life, and some are so entrenched in their vices and bad habits that it seems impossible to change them. The religious become extraordinarily distressed and are unable to contain themselves due to their zeal, and burst out in harshness and severity

toward them, often without producing fruit, but rather causing harm due to the horror and hatred they breed. Saint Dionysius taught us this using the example of Christ: “Even our most divine teacher instructs in meekness those who oppose God’s doctrine;”¹¹⁶ and he adds that with these kinds of men we have to deal as with the blind who do not know the way nor know where they have to go, and we cannot be angry with them because of that, but rather we take them by the hand and guide them, commiserating with them. It is like this that we must act with these sinners, who are ignorant and blind, as the prophet Zephaniah says: “They shall walk like the blind because they have sinned against the Lord.”¹¹⁷ This is what our blessed Francis Xavier did, of whom we read that, as soon as he entered the ship and the voyage began, he converted those who were on board by treating everyone at the beginning with affability and love, bearing their faults and mistakes, pitying the wicked and doing good to all. He first began to love them and then, guiding them gently, put them on the path of virtue. From this we see how better and more appropriate it is, at the beginning, to use mildness and softness instead of rigor and indiscreet zeal, because otherwise they will be worthy of how the Savior blamed Saint James and Saint John when they asked with such zeal for the fire to come down from heaven and consume the Samaritans: “Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.”¹¹⁸

At the end of this chapter, it is good to point out something of the greatest importance about the souls we can win on the sea journeys and other travels—it is useful to know the divine word in sermons, common practices, and Christian doctrine because more and more people need them, for they tend to be less devout, and on the other hand the means that the holy church uses for this purpose in towns and cities are lacking with respect to the sacrament of sacraments, the holy sacrifice of the Mass, and the celebrations connected to it; this means that it is appropriate to supply part of this great lack with the divine word, which like a steely knife with two edges cuts and penetrates even the most lively of their disordered passions, and like arrows of blazing fire, scorches the bowels of heaven’s love. And for this reason the religious will take particular care in sustaining these people with this divine manna, and in curing their souls, cutting off with this very sharp sword the cancer and dryness of their bad habits and scorching their hearts with this vehement fire, which prompted the prophet David to say: “Thy word is exceedingly refined.”¹¹⁹

116 “Noster etiam divinissimus praeceptor in mansuetudine docet eos, qui Dei doctrinae adversantur,” which is putatively drawn from Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite’s *Epistula VIII ad Demophilum*. Dionysius (first century CE) was one of the first Athenian converts of the apostle Paul; Pseudo-Dionysius is an author of the fifth century who pseudepigraphically portrays himself as Paul’s convert.

117 “Ambulabunt ut coeci quia Domino peccaverunt.” Zeph. 1:17.

118 “Nescitis, cuius spiritus estis.” Luke 9:54.

119 “Ignitum eloquium tuum vehementer.” Ps. 118:140.

*Chapter VII.**Of the Obstacles and Inconveniences That You Can Meet on This Trip*

In the gospel, the Savior says that the king who has to fight another king first tries to learn about the forces and power of his opponent, and that he does not throw himself into the fight until he has long considered whether, with the forces that he has, he can attack. And the careful traveler who must cross some great stream first looks at its width to see how he can run and jump through it. We make this comparison on purpose, because in this mission the religious has to fight a pitched battle with an army of obstacles, to undertake great dangers, and to overcome great difficulties. He also has to take farewell of his past, life, homeland, relatives, and friends, to leave for an exile in unknown regions, sometimes populated by unfaithful and barbaric people—we can say passing from the Arctic pole of his comforts to the Antarctic of unspeakable eagerness and bitterness. Whoever must take such a great leap and fight with such strong enemies clearly sees how far he must run, and with how much precision he must try to understand the forces of the opponent and examine his own because when this examination is missing he may fall due to his recklessness, and, as in the Gospel be the subject of ridicule: “This man began to build and was not able to finish.”¹²⁰ Thus, following the advice of Christ our redeemer, we will first scrutinize the forces of the opposing army; that is, the obstacles and dangers that this mission offers and the difficulties that must be overcome, and from these we will understand how solid the weapons and virtues one undertaking this battle should be. And even if what we have seen up to now is enough at first, we will add here some other orders and instructions, so that the religious can more easily have a clearer picture.

All these labors and inconveniences can be divided into two groups, which are 1) internal and of the soul and 2) external and of the body; the latter are hunger, thirst, nakedness, pain, illness, and other things to which our miserable nature is subject, and there is no reason to spend much time on these because it is known that whoever undertakes such journeys will pay these taxes many times. Because what happens more easily than a prolonged sea voyage caused by various circumstances, and lacking sustenance one experiences extreme hunger and thirst, painful and insufferable, or a ship is caught in a storm and lands on lands deserted or populated by enemies? Or what is more ordinary than falling ill in the middle of this journey, forsaken of all consolation, being forced either to die without any help or suffering the afflictions of the disease and the road, or being taken (as happens every day) by corsairs or thieves who, after ill treating you sentence you to perpetual prisons or servitude? Who does not know that the dangers of life are every day as many as the enemies that fight them? In my case, I can say that we had barely escaped from some of these when others began, which is so common for pilgrims that you can hardly find anyone who left his land

120 “Coeptit aedificare, et non potuit consummare.” Luke 14:30.

without having many bad events to recount; the stories are full of pitiful cases of this kind, and of entire armies swallowed by the sea without leaving any trace. All of this and much more can be found in a few words of the apostle Saint Paul who, when giving an account of his missions, said: "Thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I was in the depth of the sea; in journeying often I was in perils of waters, perils of robbers, perils from my own nation, perils from the gentiles, perils in the city, perils in the wilderness, perils in the sea, perils from false brethren; in labor and painfulness, in much watching, in hunger and thirst, in frequent fastings, in cold and nakedness."¹²¹

The other category of difficulties is of the interior and of the soul, and those described above belong here as well, particularly the fear of death; however, there are some special ones with which such missions are full. In the first place, we can find the low consideration that the religious thinks he will receive in a foreign land, and no matter how much he has been esteemed in his province or his talents shone, he thinks that he will look like a child in front of others who live on their land as in their own home, and for the religious everything will be new because the local language is foreign to him and he needs to learn to speak again and to be taught to pronounce like a child; he must accommodate himself to various customs, sometimes completely different from those he was used to; and when after many years he learns something, he must always be short in conversation and in public ministry (except when helping the Indians) without using it for other things. And it is true that, even if this usually does not happen because of the charity of the people one lives with, it can happen sometimes, and those who undertake this mission cannot promise themselves something different from what we have said, because if he finds his hopes vain, he can fall into melancholy and bitterness that make him restless all of his life, or that take the very vocation away from him. And this enemy must be feared more the less the men are aware of it, from whence it arises that they are extremely afflicted and continually lament their misfortune. Because what is more difficult to overcome and strong to suffer, than to be judged so lowly, and to be despised for your talents and dejected in your hopes every time you consider your successes at the end of the day? And this happens in things that touch the most alive part of the soul, due to the natural and vehement appetite of men for their own reputation and esteem; because in order not to lose it, many undertook great work and danger, and many lost their estates and great states, and many their very life. This is an enemy that demands great forces from whoever attacks it, so as not to be defeated, and it may be that in this battle the religious will remain, if not defeated, at least afflicted and sad,

121 "Ter naufragium feci, nocte et die in profundo maris fui, in itineribus saepe, periculis fluminum, periculis latronum, periculis ex genere, periculis ex gentibus, periculis in civitate, periculis in solitudine, periculis in mari, periculis in falsis fratribus, in labore, et aerumna, in vigiliis multis, in fame, et siti, in ieiuniis multis, in frigore et nuditate." 2 Cor. 11:25–33.

especially after considering what he left behind in his province, where it seems to him that he held certain hopes and sure intentions.

Another work no less to be feared, through which the soul must pass in this mission, is the sadness and affliction that the religious feels every time he considers that he is far from his relatives and friends, without any hope of going back to them; on the other hand, he sees himself alone, among people unknown to him and of different customs and conditions, surrounded by worries and yearning for his own success. Although it is true that virtue is a powerful means to overcome and resist these desires, still this does not cease to feel like something quite contrary to his natural love and inclination. And so that it can be seen how strongly this enemy fights, without other victories that could be recounted, I will take just the example of an elderly religious of our Society. He reached the mission of the Indies, fervently requested, and afterwards, on the road, he began thinking about being far from his acquaintances, in the midst of strangers; such thoughts came in and out of his heart and afflicted and tormented him; he began to judge his act as reckless and regretted it; and his bitterness increased so much that, no longer being able to suffer it and promising himself better fortune if he went back, he did indeed go back, but because later he learned of his poor understanding and felt great shame, he also left the Society, showing the force that the melancholy we talked about had had in his chest.

This is followed by another torment not inferior to the past ones—an army of various temptations that assault the religious continuously and very annoyingly. This force has many chances to attack, appears many times, and in all of them must be fought vigorously, not without great care in resisting it; among these the tribulations caused by stimuli against chastity is not the least, because they are frequent and their causes to be feared very much. To these we can add the ambiguity and perplexity caused by the pusillanimity and dismay of not being able to persevere in your own decision without falling under such a load of work that you fear will come in the future; there is also the pain caused by seeing foreign diseases, spiritual as well as physical, sometimes without any remedy, and finally the great pain that you experience from the sight of so many offenses and insults that the men of the world hurl every day against their Lord, whom you love so much; you will have to hear some people blaspheming, some vowing falsely, some gossiping, some lying, and see with your own eyes many things that you would not want to see done against your creator—if a friend cannot suffer that in front of him people say or do anything offensive against his friend, even less can you stand these things to be said and done in front of your eyes against the law of your God, who truly loves you. And it is in this way that the religious who decides to go into the world will go through many other tribulations, and he will continually have his soul pierced with pain and sorrows that are difficult to bear, particularly by those who were not formerly used to going through them, previously living a quiet and restful life.

To this we can add the strong batteries of the devil who, making use of all these difficulties and efforts as very strong weapons, tries to bring us down, watching over his prey like a hungry lion “looking for someone to devour.”¹²² And this happens with all the more effort and diligence, the greater the damage he [the devil] fears the religious can do to him with such holy and heroic intentions, because, as Saint Gregory says: “The more our enemy sees us rebelling against him, the more he strives to conquer,”¹²³ and as Saint Peter Chrysologus noted: “In the exodus of Israel from Egypt, Pharaoh became more violent.”¹²⁴ I have so extensively described the strength of the obstacles the religious will fight so that he can intentionally prepare his soul by arming it with solid virtues and weapons for such a hard battle, but also to disillusion many of those who desire the fruitfulness and good name of the mission, but who look just at the sweetness of and relief provided by their goals, thinking that the means will be restful and sweet as well, and consequently do not arm themselves, nor do they perceive what determination and strength this big jump requires; and this is why they fail later in the middle of the road, because they were attacked without proper preparation.

Chapter VIII.

With What Virtues in Particular the Religious Who Undertakes This Mission Must Be Armed, in Order to Overcome the Above-Mentioned Pain And Difficulties

One who knows how to use the appropriate weapons against such a strong opponent is the mighty and experienced captain, the apostle Saint Paul, who fought these battles while surrendering to him (God), so that he used to say that the crown and the triumph of his victories were due him: “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith, now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me.”¹²⁵ Then Paul, teaching us in one of his epistles about the weapons we must arm ourselves with for this battle, after having described the strength of the enemy, says: “Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day,”¹²⁶ as if to say, as some doctors explain, dress and arm yourselves from head to toe with the weapon of charity that is proper to God, because not only is He armed with it, but He is made one with it, according to the saying,

122 “Circuit quærens quem devoret.” 1 Pet. 5:8.

123 “Hostis noster quanto magis nos sibi rebellare conspicit, tanto amplius expugnare contendit.” Gregory the Great, *Moralia in Job*, 24, 11.

124 “In exitu Israel de Aegypto Pharaoh vehementius scandescit.” This is the beginning of Psalm 113, but it was not possible to find the source, which is assumed to be the bishop of Ravenna, Peter Chrysologus (ca. 380–450).

125 “Bonum certamen certavi, cursum consummavi, fidem servavi, in reliquo reposita est mihi corona iustitiæ, quam reddit mihi Dominus in illa die iustus iudex.” 2 Tim. 4:7.

126 “Propterea accipite armaturam Dei, ut possitis resistere in die malo.” Eph. 6:13.

“God is love;”¹²⁷ but also because with this divine weapon you can face and resist the enemy in times of temptation and of pain and adversities and facing the danger that everything is lost. And with heavenly wisdom, the apostle advises us to arm ourselves with charity for this battle, since it is very hard to ward off the enemy’s tricks, suffer with patience, and successfully carry the entire army of pains and adversities we have talked about. Concerning the words of the apostle, Saint Bernard clearly says that “love is patient and kind.”¹²⁸ Charity, he says, does not falter in times of adversity because it is complacent; in injuries it does not seek revenge because it is benign; the prosperity of others does not torment it because it does not envy; its conscience does not regret anything because it does not do bad things; it does not puff up with honors because it is not arrogant; it does not become confused when held in contempt because it is not ambitious; it does not allow itself to be overcome by greed because it does not seek its own benefit; it does not get mad when insulted because it is not angry; nor is it nourished by suspicions because it does not think badly of anyone; it is not delighted by others’ misfortunes because it does not rejoice in wickedness; it is not deceived by errors because it rejoices in the truth; it is not broken by persecution because it bears everything; disbelief does not harden it because it believes everything; despair does not bring it down because it waits for everything; not even death can kill it, because although the works of the other virtues cease in glory after death, this one will never cease. These are the words of Saint Bernard, which by themselves are enough to make us understand the strength of these heavenly weapons of the divine love, and how much the religious who must fight all of these enemies and vices needs them, which is what the saint refers to, as we saw above.

But aside from this, the same apostle who advises us to take up these weapons, shows us his great strength in these fervent words written to the Romans: “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?”¹²⁹ “I am certain,” he continues, “that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor virtues, nor the present things, nor the things to come, nor strength, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else, will be enough to separate us from the love of God.” From this we understand his great strength in attacking and defeating all of the enemies he lists, and many others, because as soon as a soul loves God, it will defeat these armed forts. This is confirmed by Saint Augustine’s explanation of the words “love is as strong as death.”¹³⁰ The love of God, he says, is as strong as death because just like death, when it comes it cannot be resisted by any medicine

127 “Deus Caritas est.” 1 John 4:16.

128 “Charitas patiens est, benigna est etc.” 1 Cor. 13:4.

129 “quis nos separabit a Charitate Christi, tribulatio, an angustia, an fames, an nuditas, an periculum, an persecutio, an gladius?” Rom. 8:35.

130 “Fortis est ut mors dilectio.” Song of Sol. 8:6.

or artifice, nor does it help to be a bishop, or king, or pope, or emperor because it suffuses everything, it wins out over everything, nothing can be put in front of it, so that when one is truly captivated by the love of God, there is no hindrance for him nor can he be separated from this love by all the things that are in the world, neither honors, nor horrors, nor riches, nor poverty, nor prosperity, nor adversities; this love overcomes everything, this weapon from heaven can do everything, it defeats everything, subjects everything to itself, cuts everything.

Our blessed Francis Xavier armed himself with this weapon in order to overcome the shipwrecks and dangers he experienced during his pilgrimage; it gave him the courage to become a slave and servant of the sick, imprisoned, and miserable; it made him volunteer to cure pestilent and contagious illnesses; it gave him the spirit to meet fierce and barbarous people who presented a manifest risk to his life; finally, despising the terrible and frightening waves of the ocean, the dangers of the corsairs, and the immense pain of such a long voyage, it helped him reach the ends of the earth, and not happy after covering thousands of leagues, announcing the gospel to so many and diverse nations, he broke and overcame the strong locks and invincible impediments that stood at the entrance to the Chinese kingdom.

Therefore, whoever wishes to undertake this mission to the Indies and be victorious in it must arm his heart with this heavenly armor; with it he will not be tormented by hunger, thirst, or nakedness, nor will contempt afflict him, nor the absence of relatives, nor loneliness in the desert, nor the storms of the frightful sea, nor will the dangers of life make him surrender, but overcoming it all he will triumph over hell, convert many souls to the Lord, and, meriting a worthy reward for his works, he will receive the crown of his triumphs.

But to go into more detail, it seems to me that one of the most necessary weapons with which the religious must garrison himself in order to overcome these difficulties without becoming exhausted is to make a certain, strong, and valiant resolution to attack them and not rest until his attempt succeeds, being ready to die for Christ while working on it and exhausted by pain, always imploring the divine grace with great humility, without letting any kind of dismay enter his soul due to the tribulations and contradictions that are offered to him along the way; striving courageously against them, doing like those who are rowing against the current of a mighty river, which with the strength of the oars confounds the fury of the waters, and if the latter sometimes prevail, they do not give up and with doubled strength and diligence they struggle on, continuing on their way; such must be the resolution of those who undertake this mission. It is good for you to understand that you have to row bravely, with firmness and determination, against the torrent of pains and dangers, sometimes physical and sometimes spiritual and sometimes both, and if it ever happens that you are defeated, you will not faint, allowing into your heart sad thoughts of repentance and the desire to go back, but you will ask heaven for help, collecting new courage and

expending new effort, renewing your resolutions and refreshing your memory of the considerations that helped you before.

I must now warn you about what the teachers of the spiritual life warn of—pride. You must make a resolution not to be touched by pride, which must be founded on two solid foundations: First, a deep knowledge of your weakness, humiliating yourself before the mighty hand of God and presenting yourself before him as a child, who can do and knows nothing; because although it is very necessary to have great courage to work as much as you can in this and do everything possible to achieve it, you must do this in the right way; you cannot reach your goals through your own work and strength but only through divine grace, without which we cannot, as Saint Paul says, either work, or desire, or begin, or finish anything that is necessary for our salvation, because according to the sage: “The race is not to the swift or the battle to the strong, nor does food come to the wise,”¹³¹ and “there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone.”¹³² And if this happens in all human things, how much more in divine ones, all guided by heaven!

In this, then, you must place your hope (this is the second foundation on which your resolution must be based and ensured) and trust in the Lord, who will give you the strength and aids necessary for your aim; and considering that the Lord is the maker of this endeavor, and the one for whose glory and honor it is undertaken, so he will look after his work and will defend and perfect it because our Lord never calls anyone to any undertaking or office without providing the appropriate means, strength, and grace to achieve it and to work in the office he places us in, as is amply proven by Saint Thomas, founded on holy scripture and natural reason, when he states that “the work of God is perfect.”¹³³ And in this regard, the saints say that each religion has a particular grace and favor, which they call vocation, that God communicates to all the members of that religion in order to achieve its purpose, giving them the necessary means and a particular help to reach the state of perfection they are called to. From this we can deduce that, if one undertakes this enterprise for the glory of the Lord and the obedience of his superior, he will have help and a particular grace from heaven to go on with it; because God will take part in it, and will give him strength and efficaciousness (as long as he does not place an impediment in the way) to overcome difficulties, resist temptations, and carry out in the best way the obstacles that are offered along the way; if sometimes they seem to be more powerful than our forces, this is not a reason to give up; we have to resist them, knowing that the divine help is more certain and sure the greater the need of it we have. If we see delicate men and fragile, weak men drinking in these pains that others consider immense as if they

131 “non est velocium cursus, nec fortium bellum, nec artificum gratia.” Eccles. 9:11.

132 “operatur omnia in omnibus.” 1 Cor. 12:6.

133 “Dei perfecta sunt opera.” Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Quaestio LXVI.

were water, we can well presume that it is not only the weakness of their shoulders that sustains them, but that they have some great help within them, with which they are able to tolerate the pain and finish. If we consider their rejoicing, there can be no doubt that it is God who offers his shoulder to lighten the load for them, giving strength for the weight, making the strong weak and the timid courageous. “For is it not certain,” says Saint Bernard, “that, beyond human strength, beyond nature, it is contrary to custom, which you support? Another, then, bears these things; it is he, without doubt, who, according to the apostle, bears all things by the word of his power,”¹³⁴ even greater trials than those faced by Paul: “For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again.”¹³⁵ Well, who will consider these pains, which come with the work of converting deluded souls, unbearable with such help? And if the spirit weakens in thinking about it, and you begin to consider your weakness, strengthen yourself with the example of Paul himself, who, knowing how little he was worth, rushed intrepidly into such predicaments, striving with them, saying: “By God’s grace I am what I am,”¹³⁶ and, setting your eyes on the divine favor, the more you distrust yourself, the more you will recognize the truth that “those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.”¹³⁷ You were a coward before—wait on the Lord, and he will change that cowardice into vigor; the summit of the mountain of this mission seemed very steep to you, and the ascent very dangerous and rocky, but confide in His Majesty because he will give you eagle wings so that, with ease and without effort, rather with joy and rest, you will find yourself at the end of the journey before you realize you have set foot on the path.

As an example of strength and encouragement in this matter we have our model blessed Francis Xavier who, despite being so humble on the one hand, trusted in the divine help and undertook great difficulties and glorious endeavors; there was nothing so arduous and difficult that he did not plan to obtain

134 “Non ne enim certum est . . . supra vires humanas ultra naturam contra consuetudinem esse, quae sustinetis? Alius igitur portat ista, ille sine dubio, quae secundum Apostolum portat omnia verbo virtutis suae, quid igitur timendum nobis si adest, qui portat omnia,” which is putatively from a sermon by Bernard de Clairvaux.

135 “Supra modum gravati sumus supra virtutem, ita ut tederet nos etiam vivere, sed ipsi in nobis met ipsis responsum mortis habuimus, ut non simus fidentes in nobis sed in Deo, qui suscitavit mortuos, qui de tantis periculis nos eripuit et eruit, in quem speramus, quoniam adhuc eripiet.” 2 Cor. 1:8–10.

136 “Non ego autem sed gratia Dei mecum.” 1 Cor. 15:10.

137 “Qui sperant in Domino, mutabunt fortitudinem, assument penas, sicut aquilae current, et non laborabunt, ambulabunt, et non deficient.” Isa. 40:31.

by putting his trust in heaven. And because two letters he wrote for this reason can benefit us, I offer their contents here so that the reader can have them more at hand. In the first, he wrote to the father provincial of Portugal that when he wanted to embark on a ship of corsairs in order to enter Japan:

My friends are very scared that I dare to undertake such a long and dangerous boat journey, talking to me about great storms and great dangers of quicksand and corsairs, but I am more scared for them because of the little trust they have in God our Lord, in whose hand all things are placed and by whose providence all things are governed. Knowing things to be this way, I do not fear anyone other than the Lord himself, and what I fear is to be punished by him for the laziness and lukewarmness with which I serve him and try to spread his holy faith and religion: in this I put all my fears; other frights, dangers, jobs, crosses, and certain deaths I do not fear, but I only fear the creator and governor of all things, who allows harmful things to do to us no more harm than is needed.

In the other letter, blessed Francis Xavier wrote to Father Francisco Pérez, who was in Malacca on that last and most difficult day when he decided to entrust his person and life on the word of a Chinese merchant, which was no less doubtful and dangerous than the entrance into China itself. He wrote:

My friends, there are two dangers I have in front of me; one is, after having received the money this merchant breaks his word and either throws me on a desert island or in the depths of the sea, so that nobody knows about his betrayal; the other is that he keeps his word, but the mayor of the city punishes me exemplarily because as a foreigner I dared to enter his kingdom without a pass or license from the king, doing something against the law, and either he kills me tormentingly or throws me in a dungeon. But even greater dangers may happen: first, for my spirit not to trust the divine goodness and providence, because for God's glory alone did I come to these parts, to preach his holy law and to make known to these people Jesus Christ, his son and our redeemer, which is the goal that led me here, of which the Lord, who inspires me with this desire, is a good witness; so I judge that there is much more danger and inconvenience in failing to trust in the goodness, providence, and power of this great God in the face of the few difficulties and dangers that my friends imagine are threatening me, than there is in all of the damage and evil that the enemies of God and of men can do to me, particularly knowing that neither the demons nor their ministers can harm us if not permitted by God. If the Lord approves and favors my attempts, he will not only free me from these and other greater dangers, but he will give me ears to hear the voice of Jesus Christ, our Lord, who says: He who loses his life in this world for me will find it later. And so, I consider the damages that my soul can experience due to distrust much greater than the dangers in which my body can succumb; I recommend that it is better and safer to face the evils that threaten the body, than to succumb to those of the soul, in this way putting my salvation at risk. And so, I am fully determined to enter China with the help of God despite his enemies, because in the end, if God is with us, who can do anything against us? There is no doubt that the danger I put myself in is great, at least of perpetual servitude, but I console myself with this, since it is better to serve and be a slave for the love of God than to be free by running away from the cross.

*Chapter IX.**Of Another Much-Needed Weapon to Be Victorious in This Mission*

As our main intent is to avoid a great evil that can happen in this mission, which is the regret and sadness of those who undertake it, after having said something about the most important weapons, it is appropriate that we remember to keep in our hearts the good intentions and desires that were the reasons for us to start the journey, because it is of little use to want to suffer and die for the love of God if, when then the chance to do so comes, the spirit is disturbed, afflicted, and unsettled. Read of the sad events and the labors and calamities suffered with joy for God by those who love him, and look in the cloisters at the paintings of martyrdoms and torments of the saints, meditate on them with the pleasure of a religious who, with burning fervor, desires and aspires to be in them, with great strength and joy becoming excited about nailing himself on the cross with Christ to enjoy his embraces. And I know that, if these wishes are preserved in their fervor, his works will accord with the divine grace. This is the pain, this is the evil that he fears: that a heart so on fire and armed with strong intentions gets colder while meditating along the road and with the circumstances that may come. And this is why the first and most important care that the religious must have on this pilgrimage is to guard his soul from all those things that can change his purposes and desires, or at least to cool them down, always attempting to increase them every day with prayer, mortification, and other means appropriate for the time and occasions in which he finds himself.

The wise man in the Proverbs strongly advises us in this regard because our life depends on it, as he says: “Take hold of my words with all your heart . . . and you will live.”¹³⁸ And we could say that it is from this that the mission can bear fruit and benefits for himself and those close to him, in the glory of the Lord and with the satisfaction of superiors, according to the divine approval; if this is absent, our soul will face perdition and total ruin; if it does not happen, the religious will feel at least great concern and sadness, and the same will happen to his superiors as well, with the scandal of the neighbor and to the detriment of the good name of his religion, because when this zeal ceases, the heart is filled with impertinence and novelties, which he will always find in great quantities in the overseas empires; and the heart will be as a public street, not closed day or night; all the winds of vanities and worldly afflictions will come and go, the exercise of prayers will decline because such hearts cannot pray well, and the good intentions and fervent desires that he had will disappear in the presence of other vain people. This evil can reach such a point that God neglects such a restless and noisy house; His Majesty dwells in a temple where the noise of a hammer is not heard nor of any tool of various passions. This divine turtledove only perches in

138 “Omni custodia serva cor tuum, quia ex ipso vita procedit.” Prov. 4.

lonely places, without any earthly things, nor can the spirit of heaven be found in the whirlwinds of this world, but in the mild and quiet aura of the contemplation of divine things; and it could happen that, without the help of the master, the seven evil spirits enter the house, as is mentioned in the gospel, and finding it rid of divine things, they call out the other vices and sins; thus the temple of the Lord becomes a hideout for thieves and the heart once quiet and calm, master of its passions, becomes restless and the slave of them, and once full of good and holy desires to suffer and die for God and interested in the others, it becomes full of self-love, comfort, and gifts, and unable to suffer hunger or thirst the one who thought to suffer torments and to give himself up to martyrdom, without being able to bear in patience being rejected, the one who left his province in search of opprobrium and self-abasement.

In order to avoid these and other inconveniences that can happen in this mission, the servant of God must try, as he leaves his cell to embark, to be the master of his heart, which we can suppose is well prepared and ready for such a day, so that he does not get carried away by what may come, but instead, so that he keeps himself firm in good wishes and intentions, he exercises them and puts them into practice.

For this, it is a convenient and necessary remedy to pay attention to the senses, because it is said that “death has climbed in through our windows.”¹³⁹ Many times we hear and inadvertently see things that could cause distraction and serious temptation, so for this reason the fervent religious should work to not allow his heart to cling to them, behaving like a very well-caulked ship that, when the waves of useless and harmful thoughts arrive, he dismisses them and lets them pass over him, without allowing them to penetrate inside him or soak into him. Among other means commonly used against this, we should advise of what experience teaches to the religious who will walk long roads—something that is necessary for the protection of the heart and its good wishes and purposes, which is to never stop doing daily mental prayers; and by mental prayer I understand here everything that is included in meditation, consideration, and contemplation. It would be a lie to say or think that this kind of prayer cannot be done outside the material concentration and enclosure of four walls and in the silence of the night; it is fine to walk while simply pronouncing some vowels because you need to know that, although it is true that solitude and bodily concentration help a lot for this kind of prayer, as the holy scripture and the saints teach us; nevertheless, it is not true that without the preceptor you should skip the prayer. The teachers of the spiritual life teach that it can and must be done in all times and places, with Saint Basil saying specifically: “Not a place, but the beginning of the purpose is required, for Jeremiah was in the mud and drew God; Daniel

139 “Ascendit mors per fenestras.” Jer. 9:21.

appeased God in the lion's lake; three boys in the fireplace to earn God; the thief was not forbidden by the cross, but he did not attain paradise; He challenged Job in the dunghill to mercy, so pray wherever you are."¹⁴⁰ Saint Paul advises us to "pray continually,"¹⁴¹ which is fulfilled (as a serious doctor says) by keeping with extreme rigor the times indicated to pray, without skipping them for any human reason absent a manifest necessity that forces us to interrupt them. Saint Daniel, who had the habit of praying three times a day and never wanted to neglect it, neither because of the multitude of businesses he was in charge of, as one of three princes the king neglected, nor because he feared death when the king threatened those praying for thirty days to God, did not cease praying. And the punctuality in prayer of Father Juan Vásquez and his companions during their journey is commendable—they did not change for even one day the customary time of their mental prayer in the morning; if they were at sea, they did this saintly exercise all together, and if they were on dry land, they began their itinerary with an hour of silence in which the said prayer was done and then the litanies of the saints all together. This custom of praying while walking was widely used by the holy father Baltassar Álvarez, of whom we can read that he used to walk a stone's throw ahead of the others in order to pray. The saint friar Gil used to say that there are two types of birds—some that do not know or eat anything other than what is on the earth and moves very slowly, and others that fly and take their sustenance from the air; so must be the religious of this mission, who walks through the world eating his daily bread and doing mental prayer at the same time, in this way sustaining in the soul good intentions and preserving good desires to work and suffer for the love of God.

Last Chapter.

Of the Last Weapon to Overcome the Adversities of This Mission

It seems certain that too much sadness in our work and adversities comes from not understanding that all are ordered by God our Lord, and that no matter how contrary they may seem to us, they are for our greatest good and benefit because human beings naturally love themselves and want the good for themselves and hate the bad; rejoice in the one and are saddened by the other in such a way that, if they consider that the divine providence is involved in the things that seem harmful to him, but actually are very profitable and relevant, instead of being afflicted, they will rejoice as if for their own good and thank God for it.

140 "Non locus, sed propositi initium requiritur, Ieremias enim in luto erat et Deum attraxit; Daniel in leonum lacu Deum placavit; tres pueri in camino Deum promeruerunt; latro non cruce prohibitus, quin paradisum assecutus fuerit; Iob in stercore ad misericordiam provocavit, igitur ubi cunque fueris ora," which is putatively present in an exhortation to baptism by Basil of Caesarea (ca. 331–79).

141 "Sine intermissione orate." 1 Thess. 5:17.

In this regard, it seems useful to me to show in this chapter how everything that happens in this life, other than sin, is arranged and ordered by divine providence, and for this reason it is the best and most convenient thing for the glory of His divine Majesty and our greatest advantage. If the religious who undertakes this mission is well founded in this knowledge, he will not lose the peace of his soul, becoming too sad in the adverse things and hindrances of his journey, nor will he stop conforming to everything the divine will wants and disposes for him, and his heart will rejoice and sing songs of joy, and he will begin and end his day with all of the pleasure and comfort he desires.

It is therefore necessary to know from the roots that nothing of this world—past, present, and to come, natural and supernatural, great and small, of harm or benefit, happened or happens by necessity, as Epicurus and Democritus thought, thereby affirming that divine providence is superfluous; nor it can happen by chance or fortune, as some gentiles dreamed of and Ovid said, believing, ignorant of our holy faith, that a goddess ruled and governed all the events and movements of this world; neither are men governed by fate or by luck, as other philosophers were deceived about, followed by the poet; nor, finally, there is nothing in the republic of this world that is disposed by something else but the paternal providence of that supreme monarch who made and sustains it with his finger, as the eternal wisdom says: “But it is your care, O Father, that steers it.”¹⁴² In this way the theologians explain that wisdom “stretcheth forth from the end till to the end strongly, and disposeth all things sweetly”;¹⁴³ that is, he takes care of all things, first preserving them in being how he made them, according to what Solomon says: “How would anything have endured if you had not willed it,”¹⁴⁴ and also concurring and cooperating with all of the operations of creation, because creatures depend no less on God in being than in acting, or as Saint Bernard explains: “He reaches from the end to the end, that is, from the birth of the creature to the end destined by the creator, whether to that which nature urges, or reason accelerates, or grace allows; he reaches with strength, while none of these comes to pass if he does not predestinate the powerful as he wills providence.”¹⁴⁵

And this is not to be understood only for men and noble creatures worthy of the divine government, but also for all animals, plants, elements, even the smallest atoms of the air, no matter how little and vile they may be. In this the most illustrious ancient philosophers erred, particularly Aristotle, who said that

142 “Tu autem Pater gubernas omnia providentia.” *Wisd. of Sol.* 14:3.

143 “Attingit a fine usque ad finem fortiter disponens omnia suaviter.” *Wisd. of Sol.* 8:1.

144 “Quomodo enim potest aliquid permanere, nisi Deus voluisset.” *Wisd. of Sol.* 11:25.

145 “Attingit a fine usque ad finem, hoc est ab ortu creaturae usque ad finem destinatum a creatore, sive in quem urget natura, sive quem accelerat causa, sive quem concedit gratia, attingit fortiter, dum nil horum evenit, quod non pro ut vult potenti praeordinet providentia.” Bernard de Clairvaux, *Liber de Gratia et libero arbitrio*, 33, 1.

it is something unworthy of God to be concerned with things of little notice, and that these were governed by the movement of the prime mover, which is that superior sky that with its rapid course carries away and makes spin from East to West in twenty-four hours all the other orbs; the philosopher explains it like this: “Because he did not teach the first mind to think about certain things, it is better not to see certain things than to see them.”¹⁴⁶ But the Catholic truth is that divine providence “reaches from end to end, that is, from the highest heaven,” as Saint Bernard explains in that same place, “even to the lower parts of the earth, from the greatest angel to the smallest worm.”¹⁴⁷ And so Christ said, “Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father.”¹⁴⁸ He provides sustenance for the chicks of crows when they are abandoned by their father, he dresses the flowers of the fields, moves the waters and the winds, is the lord of poverty and wealth, of health and illness; he commands prosperity and adverseness, and nothing happens “without your Father’s will”¹⁴⁹ because “Father you govern all things by providence”;¹⁵⁰ and whoever says “all things” does not exclude anything, since he governs and disposes even evils, as is said in Ecclesiasticus: “Good things and bad, life and death, poverty and wealth come from the Lord.”¹⁵¹ But to understand this better, since it is so important for us, we must know that there are two kinds of evils, one of guilt and one of punishment; of the first type, since they are sins, God neither is nor can be the author, because he is infinitely and essentially good, thus he cannot do evil, and to him it is infinitely more repugnant than drying up water, or cooling fire, or darkening the Sun, as the prophet Habakkuk said: “You who are of purer eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong,”¹⁵² “because,” as the Psalmist says, “thou hatest all workers of iniquity.”¹⁵³

The other kind of evil, that of punishment, such as death, famine, pestilence, dangers, storms, and others like these, which we call adverse things, together with more vexations, insults, affronts, and damages that men do to each other,

146 “quia non docebat primam mente de quibusdam cogitare, et melius esse quaedam non videre, quam videre.” The quotation putatively comes from the *Stromata* (mistaken for *Stromateis* in Greek “patchwork,” miscellanea), attributed to Clement of Alexandria (ca. 150–215), part of a trilogy of works regarding the Christian life.

147 “Attingit a fine usque ad finem, hoc est a summo caelo . . . usque ad inferiores terrae partes, a Maximo Angelo usque ad minimum vermiculum,” both quotations putatively from Bernard of Clairvaux, *De Gratia Et Libero Arbitrio Tractatus*.

148 “Non ne duo passeresset assidue veneunt, et unus ex illis non cadet super terram sine Patre vestro super terram sine Patre vestro.” Matt. 10:29.

149 “Sine patre vestro.” Matt. 10:29.

150 “Omnia tu Pater gubernas providentia.” Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, Prima pars, Quaestio 103, Articulus 1.

151 “Bona et mala, vita et mors, paupertas et honestas a Deo sunt.” Sir. 11:14.

152 “Mundi sunt oculi tui, ne videas malum et respicere ad iniquitatem non poteris.” Hab. 1:3.

153 “Non Deus volens iniquitatem tu es.” Ps. 5:5.

happen according to one's exterior operation and movement and not according to the malice of his will; this latter is an evil of guilt, and as much as man is the only cause of sin, since all the evils we call punishments now come through natural causes and irrational creatures, now through rational creatures, by whatever means and in whatever way they come, they come from the hand of God, ordered since eternity by his divine wisdom, decreed by his most holy will and recorded by his most perfect providence, so that God is the one who sends death to a person, sends the lightning which kills another one and propels the winds and stirs up the waters in the storm; he is the one who causes hunger, thirst, and disease, and finally he is the one who governs and rules all of these evils, the one who gives them and the one who takes them away, the one that preserves them and their causes: "Good and bad, life and death, poverty and wealth, all come from the Lord",¹⁵⁴ and so said the prophet Amos: "Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?"¹⁵⁵ Seneca did not seem like a gentile when he said: "Whatever we suffer as a mortal race, whatever we do, comes from on high."¹⁵⁶

But apart from this, the holy scripture is full of examples and sentences that attribute all of these evils to God as the supreme and greatest author. "Here I am" (says God himself, speaking with the prophet David, after the latter had committed that great sin of adultery) "out of your own household I am going to bring calamity on you. Before your very eyes I will take your wives."¹⁵⁷ And Saint Augustine ponders very well about what we know of Saint Job: "He did not say that the Lord gave to Job, the devil took it away,"¹⁵⁸ but referred everything to God: "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord,"¹⁵⁹ and later: "Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?"¹⁶⁰ and thus Saint Augustine infers: "Bring your scourge completely to your God, because not even the devil can do anything to you unless he permits it, who has power from above."¹⁶¹

We can thus deduce that all of the things happening in the republic of this world, big and small, bad and good, adverse and prosperous, in sorrow or in happiness, on sea or land, in the convents or outside, concerning rational or

154 "Bona et mala, paupertas et honestas a Deo sunt." Eccles. 11:14.

155 "Si erit malum in civitate quod Dominus non fecerit." Amos 3:6.

156 "Quidquid patimur mortale genus, quidquid facimus venit ex alto." Seneca, *Oedipus* 980–94.

157 "Ecce ego . . . suscitabo super te malum de domo tua, et tollam uxores tuas in oculis tuis." 2 Sam. 12:11.

158 "Dominus dedit, Diabolus abstulit." Augustine, *Sermo 22/A (Sermo de Responsorio Psalmi LXX)*.

159 "Dominus dedit Dominus abstulit, sit nomen Domini benedictum." Job 1:21.

160 "Si bona suscipimus de manu Domini mala, autem qua re non suscipimus." Job 2:10.

161 "Prorsus ad Deum tuum refer flagellum tuum, quia nec Diabolus tibi aliquid facit, nisi ille permittat, qui de super habet potestatem." Augustine of Hippo, Psalmum 31, *Enarratio II, Sermo ad plebem*, par. 26.

irrational creatures, and finally in any time or place—they are all to be traced back to and arranged by the hand of the Lord our God, and ordered by his eternal and perfect providence.

But to strengthen our intent more, it will be good to add another reason of no less strength for our purpose, which is peace and quiet in adverse things, patience in work, joy in danger, and resignation in the face of obstacles we will find on this journey; and this is that all the things we said come from God's hand of any kind are those things that are the best for our greatest good and benefit. Although it is true that for perfect men it is enough to know that adversities are ordered by the Lord in order to enjoy them, as we know Saint Tobias did, of whom the holy scripture says that “he was not grieved against God because the plague of blindness had come upon him, but remained immovable in the fear of God, giving thanks to God all the days of his life”;¹⁶² it is because they have deep knowledge of God and love him more than themselves, with the highest love, and they want what he wants without regard to its benefit and usefulness, but in the case of us imperfect men, who have our sights set on our own good in mind, we could be saddened by such things, even though we know that God sends them and wants them, because we do not know they are the most beneficial for us.

And to prove this, the greatest and most effective argument is the paternal and caring love with which God, our only and true father, loves and wants us to be his children; in his love and goodness we must be very confident and sure because everything he sends us is for our greatest good and benefit and to achieve the purpose for which he created and raised us— that is, to be blessed as God himself is, seeing him clearly, loving him and enjoying him in his eternal glory and everlasting vision of the three divine persons. Because if the son of a king, whom his father loves very much, is very sure that whatever the king decrees and sends is for his greatest good, and with such confidence he sleeps safe and is satisfied with the love and care of his father, how confident and sure should we be, who have for a father the one in whose hands there is all the power of heaven and earth, and to whom nothing can happen without first passing through his hand, and compared to whom the others do not deserve the title of “fathers,” because there is no love so deep that can be compared to what God has for us, a love that infinitely surpasses all the loves that all parents on earth can have! And if he gave us his only-begotten child for our own good, what will he deny to us of what is in store for us? Or what will he give to us that is not? He who gave us the most, how can he not give us the least? “He who did not spare his own Son,” says Saint Paul,

162 “Non est contristatus contra Deum, quod plaga coecitatis eveniret ei, sed immobilis in Dei timore permansit agens gratias Deo omnibus diebus vitae suae.” Tob. 2:14.

“but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?”¹⁶³

It is not because sometimes these things can seem harmful and disorderly to us that they are so; our eyes are like those of an owl, as the philosopher says—to see divine things, which we neither know or understand, and what is our good, seems bad to us, and harm seems like profit; and on the contrary, how many times does the disease seem harmful to us, not only to the body but also to the soul because it hinders us from attending to our obligations, but in fact it is our health and spiritual life, according to Saint Paul: “For when I am weak, then I am strong!”¹⁶⁴ How many times the men of the world are saddened too much by the loss of children, honor, wealth, and by persecution, and with all of the things we know their salvation depends on, because they take the opportunity to consider the vanity of the world and its deceptions, already leaving it behind as a liar, becoming religious or improving their lives! What is sadder for those who sail than a terrible storm, during which they see themselves on the verge of ending their days! But what is more useful than the storm because the passengers confess their faults, mourn their faults, and reconcile with His divine Majesty! How many times does our Lord make us wait against our will in the port, without being able to sail due to the lack of favorable wind, which if he gave to us and we sailed we would go through a storm or fall into the hands of corsairs!

We said that the confreres from the province of Sicily on the aforementioned day were detained fifteen days in Scilla due to bad weather, and this was, as later became known, so that they did not fall into the hands of the Turks, who were in the middle of the road, awaiting hauls. The same thing, and with even greater evidence of the divine protection, happened to them while they were in Liguria,¹⁶⁵ where they were even sadder to be detained because of the desire to sail quickly to Spain, but the same day they wanted to leave for Genoa, another vessel left the port for the same destination as the fathers, and the corsairs took it and kept it captive on the Berber Coast; thousands of such events happen every day, and daily experience teaches us that we do not know what is best for us, and that God, who is our father and sends us all things, knows this in his eternal and infallible wisdom, so we must accept everything with joy and peace of heart as things that come for our greatest good and benefit.

And if this is what all the men of the world should do, good and bad, faithful and unfaithful, because God provides for all of them: “He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust,”¹⁶⁶

163 “Qui proprio filio suo non pepercit . . . sed pro nobis omnibus tradidit illum, quo modo non etiam cum illo omnia nobis donavit?” Rom. 8:32.

164 “cum infirmor tunc potens sum!” 2 Cor. 12:10.

165 The Italian region of Liguria, where the city of Genoa is located.

166 “Quis solem suum oriri facit super bonos et malos, super iustos et iniustos.” Matt. 5:45.

even more should the religious, who to please His Majesty left everything, took up his cross and followed him; if God has such great and paternal providence for everyone, how caring and provident will he be for his friends and disciples, who, forgetting themselves, “Cast thy care upon the Lord”?¹⁶⁷ Without a doubt “he will nourish, support, and feed them, and lift them up, all of which is signified by the Hebrew word ‘enutriet’; He will nourish them, and will not ever allow this nourishment to fluctuate.”¹⁶⁸ Because how can those who “as if an anchor had been cast into God, and they loosed the sacred anchor, as the saying goes, while they put their hope in God, in whom those who trust will not be moved forever,”¹⁶⁹ be unsuccessful or face shipwrecks, and not only “will not be moved”¹⁷⁰ while the Lord enlightens them, as his beloved people with the support of his divine light so that they do not stumble, and teaching them what they must do according to Isaiah: “I am the Lord your God, who teaches you what is best for you, who directs you in the way you should go,”¹⁷¹ and defending them with the cloud of his protection, so that they are not defeated by enemies but even receive the water of divine grace taken from the stone of his most holy humanity, so that they overcome innumerable pains and reject very strong temptations, and receive the heavenly manna of divine consolations and spiritual joys, abundantly enjoyed by all who follow him in such enterprises and are taken to the heart of His Majesty, sitting on God’s knees, in the way a mother flatters a little, comforting him in this way, as the prophet Isaac says, “You will nurse and be carried on her arm and dandled on her knees . . . As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you?”¹⁷²

From this we can deduce how great must be the confidence that the religious must have on the trip to the Indies, believing that everything that happens is the best for them and for their own greatest good because everything comes from the hands of such a provident mother, whose love is more tender and effective than all the loves of the other mothers together; even if these all forget their children, this one will never forget nor neglect them. And it is not without mystery that we call this God Mother, and a mother who carries her children and those who

167 “Iactaverunt super cum curam suam!” Ps. 54:23.

168 “Eos enutriet sustentabit, elevabit, suffulciet, pascet, alet, que todo esto significa en el Hebreo la palabra enutriet, et fluctuationem eius non dabit in aeternum.” The source is not clear.

169 “Quasi anchorae iactum in Deum, sacramque, anchoram solverunt, como dize el adagio, mientras spem suam in Deo posuerunt, in quo qui confidunt, non commoventur in aeternum.” Pallas states that this quotation is from the Psalms, but it was not possible to locate it.

170 “Commoventur,” see immediately previous note.

171 “Ego Dominus Deus tuus docens te utilia, gubernans te in via qua ambulat.” Isa. 48:17.

172 “Ad ubera portabimini . . . et super genua blandientur vobis, quomodo si cui mater blandiatur, ita ego consolabor vos.” Isa. 66:12–13.

follow her to her breasts because she wants us to understand that everything she sends us will be the sweetest milk flowing from the breasts and entrails of divine love, and wants us to receive everything from her hands with the same pleasure and satisfaction as children when they suck with closed eyes milk from their wet nurses, and that just as milk gives sustenance and life to children as they grow up, so the things the Lord will send will be those that give us sustenance and spiritual life as we grow up, first in virtue and grace and later in glory.

To conclude this chapter, it is good to notice that everything said in it does not mean that, although we do not know what is better for us, we cannot ask God to give us what seems better to us, and when in storms ask for fair weather, and in adversities ask for prosperity; many times His Majesty tied the granting of them to us to the fact of requesting them in order to credit prayer and for that reason he said: “Ask, and it shall be given you.”¹⁷³ But this must always be understood with due resignation and indifference, remitting everything to what better serves His Majesty, according to the example the Savior gave us: “Yet not my will, but yours be done,”¹⁷⁴ and if, having asked for something in the aforementioned way, we do not achieve it, it is because it is better for us not to have it, according to what Saint Thomas says: “For this reason, too, Paul was not heard when he prayed for the removal of the sting in his flesh, because this was not expedient. . . . For the physician knows better than the sick man what is good for the disease.”¹⁷⁵

173 “Petite et accipietis.” Matt. 7:7.

174 “Verumtamen non mea, sed tua fiat voluntas.” Luke 22:42.

175 “Propter hoc Paulus non fuit exauditus petens amoveri stimulum carnis, quia non expediebat; porque como dize el mismo sancto: quid infirmo sit utile magis novit medicus quam aegrotus.” Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* II-II, question 83, articles 14 and 15.

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