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Most Excellent Lord

Señor

Although I have informed Your Excellency on January 27 last regarding the condition and plan of this re-established Mission of María Santísima del Rosario, still the work begun can never be effective nor pleasing to God or man unless it be completed and perfected, especially since the project is so great. God has given me the task of bringing to His holy Mother the Church the apostates of the Copanes, Cojanes, Guapites, and Carancahuazes tribes, who are living on the southern coast and who for so //1v long a time have lived outside the Church. Not only great but very great is the enterprize because of the many claims and considerations which could be the subject matter of a large volume. This occasion demands so much because of the present condition of the Mission, that to give Your Excellency the most exact and complete report, I would like to bilocate myself; without abandoning these neophytes, who are under my care, I would like to go in person with them and, prostrate before your esteemed presence, weep, lament, and proclaim what the Canaanite woman said: "Have pity on me, Son of David, for my daughter is sorely beset by a devil." Have mercy on me, mighty Prince, because the demon and men would have them return to their former degraded state. If Your Lordship would grant me your attention, I would say with good reason that to be called upon to found a Mission, or rather to re-establish one, is like sailing over a rough and tempestuous sea, and as he struggles against the high waves, he looks anxiously for help so that he might reach //2 port and find safety and rest; so I search and these eight sons of mine go searching for help, relief, and refuge at the port, which is most secure and strong, namely, Your Excellency. Together with the Indians I would say that it is most proper for men to love intensely and to bring others to the light of Faith, such as this great work of founding a Mission is. The Colonel and *Commandante General*, Don Juan de Ugalde, did not accomplish such a task, nor the Captain and interim Governor of this province of Texas, Don Rafael Martínez Pacheco, nor any other of these great captains and leaders who preceded them, but a poor, humble person, who is not even a captain but an interim Commander. This one God took as His little instrument to confound the proud; He gave him those talents which He bestows at times on men for those ends for which He destines them. This man with his meekness and affability and love for the Indians opened the door and brought them to the light of Faith. God left to my care the difficult task of educating the Indians. //2v The other members of my profession, who administer the other Missions, did not bring about this spiritual rebirth, nor the other apostolic men who preceded us, but one most lowly and ignorant of them all, such as I am. To help and further the growth of this Mission has been greatly neglected up to now, for the Commander is tired of writing letters to the Governor and getting only empty promises in return. The Colonel, Don Juan de Ugalde, cannot cooperate and send reports to

Your Excellency to give regulations which befit so holy a purpose, because this gentleman is away on his campaign with no other objective but war. Many matters are communicated to him but he does not want to read them until his campaign is over. On my part I am also tired of writing letters repeatedly since October 27 to the President of the Missions so that he can inform Fr. Superior of my College. Up to now I have not received the least reply. It is hardly believable, Your Excellency, that a Prelate so //3 zealous and exemplary as my Superior is should not give a decision for so long a time on this matter, which is so important to the service of both Majesties. I know from information given me by reliable persons that said Prelate has given orders to the President of the Missions but he [Father President] and the other missionaries have maintained a great silence. From this and other events one can deduce that Fr. President gave a report to Fr. Superior very late, or that he wanted to test these Indians as Novices are tested, who profess the evangelical life, or that they are intent on exasperating the Indians so that they grow weary of waiting and return to their wild life and thus bring about the final extermination of this Province; or that they delay matters and make me suffer and abandon the work begun, as happened to me in Orcoquizac when I went to there to catechize those Indians and the Cocos also, all of whom were neglected and abandoned. On my part before sending a report to Your Excellency I had already at various times reported to the Governor and my Superiors, //3v and though I told Your Excellency that I did not know how to get the report into your hands, still it was only prudent on my part, because I know that such recourse should first be made to inferior authority. But since nothing was done for the Indians, perhaps they doubted the good faith of these Indians, or being preoccupied, they thought that these were only pious wishes of mine, I sent the principal Indians to present themselves to the Governor and President of the Missions. And what help or assistance did they give me? They only held out hope, as adults do to children when they show them sweets or trinkets to keep them quiet and content. All this, Your Excellency, makes me sad and I feel like weeping over the fact that no one has the zeal to take charge of these Indians. Even those who come in search for salvation are neglected and discourages, not positively indeed, but indirectly by word and action. All this is so because in such a conquest and re-establishment (histories can be written about God's operations) //4 they did not act; men seek glory by their deeds for themselves and not for Jesus Christ, and there is very little true charity in the world.

If in so long a time no one has come to rebuild this Mission nor has any helpful measure been taken, does Your Excellency think that the few good belonging to these Indians, which were deposited in the other Missions, have been given to me? Certainly not. And that is regrettable and most intolerable, since what Law ordains that these Indians are not to possess even what is theirs, when others act unjustly and take the goods even when their owners are present; what is worse, they force the Indians to go and ask for their goods because someone says that the Indians can return to the coast. (Here, Your Excellency, it is necessary to make a digression). Your Excellency should get to know the truth but unfortunately it reaches the ears of rulers too late; //4v if perchance the truth reaches your court, there are those who always block it and the truth remains unknown.

When all the sons of this Mission apostatized and fled to the coast in 1779 because of the unreasonable and cruel punishments of the deceased Captain Cazorla and his Lieutenant Don José Santoja, and also because the Father Ministers, now deceased, wanted to constrain and deprive the Indians of their liberty, desiring with indiscreet zeal that they live as religious do in their friaries, this Mission was the richest in this Province, both in the produce of the field as well as in the furniture of the house and in the many precious and costly furnishings of the church. When the owners fled, it seems others transferred the titles of the goods without any regard for the time required by all the Laws. The Mission had more than 500 cattle and sheep, many tame horses, burros, and mules. Then it was decreed //5 that all the unbranded cattle, which they had on their lands, belonged to the King. They were not branded because of the continual raids of the Comanche Indians. What should be done with the cattle of the Indians when they were absent? In 1783 when the *Comandante General*, Don Theodoro de Croix, ordered an inventory of goods and property to be made, more than 30,000 cattle were counted, since he was free and able to round up all the unbranded cattle. Don Domingo Cavello, who was then Governor, gave away the lands of the Indians as unoccupied, as also did the deceased Captain of this Presidio. Many settlers wanted to take the many roving cattle and to kill as many as they wanted, even those which were branded. At the time the Apaches or Lipanes came and wrought further havoc among the cattle; they took what they needed and the rest they killed and left there. No one resisted such wanton destruction, neither the Governor nor the Captain, for //5v they considered it a lost cause. All the settlers used the land for planting crops and gathered in the harvest. The Presidio was enclosed within walls and the wood the soldiers needed for fire they took from the rafters and doors and destroyed the living quarters of the friary and also the houses. The settlers did the same and as the Apaches became friendly, they settled there and like barbarians wrought more destruction. By order of the President, Fr. Pedro Ramires, now deceased, the movable goods, the furnishings, the cattle with more than 500 dairy cows, and the supplies had in the storeroom for clothing the Indians, all were deposited in the Mission of Espíritu Santo; some of the tame horses, for the Comanches already had taken the rest, and the sheep, which were still living, were also brought to said Mission. Later, by orders from succeeding Presidents //6 some of the movable goods and furnishings were taken to the other Missions, and these were to be kept at the expense of the King and preserved in that Mission until the owners returned, as was done in the Mission of Palmillas of the Colony, where the Indians apostatized. The deceased Colonel Escandón did not have the right to dispose of the goods, but in this Mission, Your Excellency, all the goods were had in common. Of the little that remained, Your Excellency can judge what will be left, since all will be used up in time or transferred. I say that the goods have deteriorated greatly and the little that remains has not been given to me. Even if it had, I would not have to sell the sacred vestments nor the images of the Saints in order to clothe the Indians, to build a church, or the living quarters for the Indians and for me; nor would I sell the few cows that were given to me, for they are to be kept for breeding. Meanwhile, the settlers go on increasing their goods by the work of the Indians.

In this Province, Your Excellency, //6v Missions cannot be founded nor the ones destroyed rebuilt in the way that Mexican and other pueblos have been established. They are kept up only by the Indians because prior to their conquest they lived in society and had some form of government and carried on commerce between kingdoms. But with these nations of the north it is impossible to do this, since the Indians are scattered about with no submission to a monarch since they have none; the tribes have no fixed abode but rove about. When they gather at a Mission to live a civilized and Christian life, the Minister has to support them by their own labor. . In this Province there are only the Presidios of San Antonio de Béxar and of Bahía, with their six Missions and with this one under my care; there is also a small settlement at Nacogdoches. There is no trade or commerce to maintain the Indians.

This year it is not good to force them to work; those who wish may do so. Prudence dictates that one manage them //7 softly, aware of the vicious habits of haughtiness they have acquired over the years. Even when these evil habits have been overcome, one can never force them to work as one can do with the Spaniards, because experience teaches me that this is the reason why the other Missions have been abandoned and the Indians have apostatized. Some inexperienced Ministers wanted to be complete masters over the Indians, forgetful of the fact that these heathens are born and live in continuous freedom and evil habits are a second nature. A long time is needed to educate them and refine their character. This being so, I ask Your Excellency how have fifty-two persons been supported since last October till now? How have I been able to clothe the women and children and feed them? In reply I can tell Your Excellency that the Governor, Don Rafael Martínez Pacheco, among his many orders, gave one to the Commander of this Presidio that from the fund for the salary of the troops something should be taken out for the needs of these //7v Indians as a loan to be repaid later. The Commander doubted that the money could be repaid and feared that the Inspector may not approve of taking such money, especially since the Governor wrote another letter, advising great circumspection, since the Commander will have to reimburse them from his own pocket. The adjutant Inspector, Don José María de Echeagaray, however, had another view, whereby the full amount given to establish these Indians need not be paid in full but an account of the deal should be handed in. This Christian arrangement, however, had no chance, since the Colonel, Don Juan de Ugalde, took this year's 300 pesos from that fund to help build his palace in Santa Rosa. From the little that remained, gifts were made to the many nations of the north, who are becoming peaceful and friendly. The Governor also ordered under my urging that the former regulation was no longer in effect, but that the Indians should be assisted from the Mesta Fund. But this help at the most is slight, since it is a small settlement //8 and little business is transacted. During the year little or nothing is collected for the royal taxes. He also ordered that a corporal with six soldiers should bring the meat of the branded cattle. But neither could the Commander realize this, since the soldiers were always engaged against the warring Apaches, and this made it necessary for the few settlers to work day and night. And so, Your Excellency, the poor Commander is not able to help the Indians, since he gets a small salary, which hardly suffices to maintain himself, but he has done what he could. What has been done to clothe the Indians

partially, to build a small chapel, poorly made of grass and poles, the celebration of Mass, a small hut for myself, which would be good for a pig sty or a grave, has been accomplished with the help of Don Domingo de Outon, a merchant who lives at the Presidio. He gave as alms over 100 pesos and some clothing and has not ceased to help; he has had a great share in establishing //8v the Mission and doing what he could. Is this not being a good neighbor? Likewise, Don Antonio Rosales, the paymaster, has been of assistance, though his salary has been lowered. The tithe collector, Don Juan Barrera, has also given alms, and with this help the little that has been done till now has been accomplished. But they are not able to give every day nor do they have the means, especially since the Christian Indians, who have been away, are coming soon with their wives and pagan children, as the accompanying list shows, from which Your Excellency can note the number and character of the Indians. I am not listing the many pagan Carancahuazes, who all want to be instructed in religion, since the Captain and his family already live here. They are eager to learn the catechism in order to be baptized. Eight days ago the Captain set out for the mouth of the Colorado River //9 to bring his son here. He is also a Captain of many more Indians and that is the reason why he could not visit Your Excellency.

Your Excellency will ask how I have kept up during all this time. I must reply that it has been with the bread of tribulation and with the help that came from the goodness of these poor neighbors; I have eaten only a little boiled meat with *conchita* or some herbs from the forest, since no one, not even the soldiers eat corn, because it is not to be had. The small amount of corn had in Béxar is not to be taken out, lest the soldiers, the inhabitants, and Missions starve, because of lack of rain. I do not know if I will get the allowance for my sustenance.

I reckon that the goodness of Your Excellency and your charitable zeal, because of the information given to Colonel Don Juan de Ugalde by the Governor, Don Rafael Martínez Pacheco, and because of this and past presentations made by me to Your Excellency, have made provisions for so holy a cause by ordering that these Indians be helped from the Mesta Fund //9v or from the 6,000 pesos which our Sovereign has set aside for the Comanche Indians and the friendly tribes, or from the goods from other Missions. But I must say that if Your Excellency has given such regulations, I have not heard about it as yet, nor have I received anything from the Mesta Fund, much less any cattle, which cannot be corralled because of the raids of the Lipanes, who kill the cattle every day. The drought and lack of pasture have killed the tame horses and all the cattle have been lost and many thousands stolen. Who will remain, since there is no meat to eat and within a year no grain will be left. Neither can the Missions come to its assistance because they are so poor on account of the raids of the hostile Lipanes, and the Comanches before them, and also because no rain has fallen for three years, and //10 there is no manager. The Fathers strive to support the few Indians they have. The 6,000 pesos assigned for the tribes can not be of any help because so many Indians would come that an Indian would get hardly anything. This is what the Governor will tell Your Excellency and he will speak the truth amid so many hardships. Meanwhile, as the information reaches Your Excellency, those absent will be coming, because they never have come later than the month of July. Who will feed and clothe them? In regard to this and other

needs of mine I will suffer willingly because my profession is the way of the cross in imitation of Jesus Christ. But these neophytes have no hope and little patience. Will the King and Your Excellency allow all that has been gained to be lost because of lack of assistance and thus permit the Province to be totally ruined? I know that the answer is no. The King will not spare his treasury but will give generously not only for the salvation of so many souls but //10v for one soul. I know also the charity and generosity of Your Excellency in helping these poor, for you spare nothing if it benefits the needy. So much the more will your goodness spread when it is a question of protecting, assisting, and defending the very poor, whose souls have been redeemed by Jesus Christ and who may be deprived of eternal life if the demon remains victorious. This can not be, Sir, this can not be, I say again and again.

Four nations are concerned here: the Copanes, Cojanes, Carancahuazes, and Guapites. My heart goes out for them to the port most safe, namely, Your Excellency; there to ask as their Father and in the name of all their people, that you help defend and protect them. And I with them humbly ask that you give orders to the Commander, Don Manuel de Espadas, to deal with them as has been done up to now, and that you do not permit this man to be taken from here, because if another comes, who is like those generally come, he may destroy by his insolence what has been built up. //11 May Your Excellency bring before the King the merit of this Commander so that he may be rewarded. I ask also that you order said Commander to make a copy of the title of possession and of the boundaries of the property of this Mission, which are in the archives of your office, because the old papers were lost. If necessary, I shall go in person to submit again the title of possession in order to avoid formalities. At the same time may Your Excellency give orders that the cattle out on the pastures, which are not nor can they be branded, belong to the Indians, and that within those pastures no settler or soldier ride the Mesta horses so that the few cattle may not be destroyed but that they may increase.

Finally, Your Excellency, since in matters temporal there is nothing available to rebuild with indescribable effort the badly ruined Mission, still in the spiritual realm progress continues //11v as the number of children, who have been baptized, testifies; those who were not married have been married by the Church; every morning and evening the Christians and pagans attend religious instruction; during this Lent they have gone to confession, and on days not of obligation most of them freely attend Mass and assist at other pious exercises with great pleasure. These four nations are better able to learn Spanish than the many I have dealt with in the interior; they learn easily what is taught them, for which we praise God. They have clear and sharp minds, are alert, docile, and tractable and are highly regarded by the Spaniards. This is in short, Your Excellency, the system followed in this Mission, which I place under the //12 favor and protection of your authority, confident that God will bless your good intentions. I shall never cease to pray that in this life you may be blessed with the fullness of grace and with eternal happiness in the next.

May our Lord preserve the life of Your Excellency for the many years I wish for you and for which you are needed. Mission of Nuestra Señora del Rosario, May 1, 1790.

[Most Excellent Señor]

Kissing the hand of Your Excellency, your most devoted and loyal servant and Chaplain.

Fr[ay] J[ose]ph Mariano Reyes
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