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My Lord

I, Captain Pedro Fernández de Quirós, in order to do my duty by my conscience and to serve Y.M., respectfully ask Y.M. if he would be so kind as to read and consider this memorial as a whole, on the commencement of such a pious and important cause such as the one I am dealing with here.

It is an accepted fact that when the West Indies were discovered, there were 30 million natives in them. Therefore, I say that if such topic is of interest, and the inadvertence which such an amazing mission was started with led to finding the right strategy to attract and teach those people how to enjoy the good of both genders, and by way of convenience each one of them donates one ducat as fief, having contributed and still contributing today between four and eleven – without counting on what is taken by different methods – and many take advantage of the personal service, Y.M. could have an income of 30 million. Spending 10 [million] on accommodating the settlers and ministers, and to their spiritual and temporal benefit as it is understood, they used to give Y.M. 20 million every year which were lost long ago and will be lost in the future without remedy.

The above mentioned figure should not be considered excessive, for I saw the writing myself in a Franciscan convent located in Suchimilco¹, five leagues away from Mexico City, which said that only the friars from their order baptised 16 million in that region, and these – together with those who were baptised by all the other priests, plus those who were not baptised – added to the 14 million that were said to be on the islands, Hispaniola, Cuba, Xamayca [Jamaica], Puertorrico [Puerto Rico] and others, in addition to those in Perú. It is said that when Pizarro met up with the Inca King, he [the King] had brought so many people with him that they covered the fields of Caxamalca [Cajamarca], and that since they were so many, he made the men cart earth for his gardens and orchards for many leagues, as well as large stones for palaces and fortresses. He also had them build over 300 league-long roads, walls and footpaths, and he kept them busy in other enormous and unnecessary construction work, only to keep them entertained, and that only in the civil war of Pizarro and Almagro, 7 million succumbed, added to the Indians from Chile, Césares, Paraguay, Tucumán, all the tributaries of the River Plate, Santacruz [Santa Cruz] de la Sierra, Moxos, Chunchos, Chiriguanaís, Andes, Chachapoyas, Quito, Popayán, New Kingdom of Granada, Venezuela, plains and ridges between the Orinoco and the Marañón rivers, the whole of Brazil, Tierrafirme [Province of Tierra Firme], Nicaragua, Guatemala, Honduras, Campeche, Florida, and the three new provinces of Galicia, Vizcaya and México, as well as many others; adding the hidden Indians, there could be 60 and many more millions of them, because between those that were baptised by the Franciscans and the ones living in the above mentioned islands, they come to 30 million – a figure that should be considered true, for it is said that China has 60 million live inhabitants, even though it is a considerably smaller province.

The discovery of these Indies took place 117 years ago, and according to natural order (leaving care aside) there should be more than 100 million of those Indians nowadays since the land is

¹ TN: present day Xochimilco (Mexico).

large enough for them to spread out and it can sustain them all. Considering this, Y.M. could well receive one ducat a year from each inhabitant – one hundred million ducats without including the one-fifth payments from the mines where they work, as well as the contractual and transportation rights, and the alms from the Crusade papal bull at four, six, eight and more reales and pesos. I am not counting the substantial tithes coming from plantations, sown lands, stockbreeding and other visible and tangible profits; if a good method is looked for, it will be found. These millions should not seem too much, for it is said that the King of China has an annual income of 150 million in gold – others say it is 170 million – of which he spends 100 and accumulates the rest, and it is not known whether his land has more than 1,000 leagues of silver mines as the Indies, without the gold, pearls, emeralds and all the other riches that it has, added to those that may come from industry, considering that there is so much of the necessary gear for what is mentioned before.

America is a territory with a coastline of 8,000 or 9,000 leagues, with no neighbours of the kind that upset other nations or disturb good attempts. Given this, and if the natives were indoctrinated as best as possible, making them good Christians, they would be so disciplined and knowledgeable in all arts and sciences, that they would be able to defend themselves against any aggressor and persecution attempt against them, something that they did not know, nor were able to or would be able to do for lack of eyes, hands and committed heart, with the proviso that however the latter were guided, it would involve them and the common good on Y.M.'s account. I have said much and could say much more, since the lack of teaching, armoury and forms of preservation has been the cause that brought so many millions to an end as both they and we attested, as well as the deserts in their immense territories where nowadays there are only ruined towns to be seen; their houses are used by nesting birds, full of spider webs and covered in weeds. I will not say more because it is a pity, and on what I said before, by using simple logic we can

conclude that the offence against God, against Y.M. and against those people cannot be compared with anything else.

Those kingdoms could well be at their peak of abundance, as I have explained, and their natives could be much more political than I have described them. More clothing and goods than are produced in Europe would be necessary for their management and expense, thus involving a continuously increasing number of fleets and royal rights – leaving aside those that were stated before – better couriers and such a great power by land and sea that no nation, however fierce and courageous, would dare attack a Spanish ship, having secured several million in gold for several years by land and sea. Nor would there be anybody who would dare to attempt or to offend any Spanish property. It could well be that if Y.M. were to see such greatness, such goods and riches, both spiritual and temporal, that not only Y.M. would treasure the Indies, but also for reasons of state he would like to repair and secure his extended provinces. Y.M.'s great distance and long absence has been the cause for losing such infinite assets and the ruin of future ones. King Croesus's riches have been regarded as wonders, and to the world's surprise the 1,250,000 men under Xerxes in his army, that by comparison to what these chapters say, it can be compared to what a shadow is to the body that projects it.

Not only could those people have been good for themselves as stated, but also with a few leftovers from such great power and riches, and with the great gear they have on both seas they could build and arm a large number of ships to avenge Spain, its provinces, kingdoms and crown on so many enemies; it is under siege and under threat waiting for the occasion to deal a blow, and that would not be necessary because with all its many millions in gold, in excess of what the Indies could yield, it would not only be enough to take up arms against all its enemies – however

powerful they may be – but also to capture what the Turks and the Moors have and to liberate the Holy Land, bearing in mind that everything that men can do is achieved with money.

Those peoples could defend God's Church and make it possible that with your great glory you could defeat those who persecute it furiously, and not only that but also to make it grow in such a way that in the whole of the known and unknown Earth, God Our Lord will be known, believed in, adored and served by all His creatures, and all of this would be better done under our guidance and leadership and with our help, or to be more precise by God, who is so powerful that he can do much more than I say through those peoples, in the same way as He has done and does and is expected to do through the very few Spaniards who will be followed by such great glory, having been their masters, in the same way as St. James and his disciples, for they have been the Spaniards'. In the past, Spain was the Indies of the Phoenicians and the Romans, and the injury and use of force that its natives endured happened because they were not as wise or practical as they are now. This point and the following ones should be especially noted. The Chichimeco Indians from New Spain were so spirited and courageous that our troops could never conquer them, even using good weaponry and horses, and so they were appeased. The Guajiro Indians from the Orinoco savannah around the River of the Axe defended themselves so courageously from our troops that it was inevitable to grant them peace with the freedom they requested. In order to liberate themselves from mistreatment, the Araucanos² or Chilean Indians defend themselves with so much effort and damage to us as has been experienced. The same may be said about the Pixaos, Cumana, Gotos and Nirgua Indians, who cannot be pacified, even though they lack fire and iron weapons, as well as military discipline and other things that are convenient nowadays for defensive and offensive action. What I mean is that all of them are men who could benefit from good discipline, since they know how to be soldiers and sailors in their own way, as

² T.N.: I have respected the name used in the original. However, the word "Araucano" is considered pejorative and nowadays they are known by their real name of "Mapuche".

well as sculptors, painters, silversmiths, lawyers, musicians, lower ministers and all the other professions that were shown to them. I finally say, My Lord, that even if those peoples were only the thirty million referred to, it would be possible to do what was said very well, and the advantage of the benefits mentioned when there are only less than 2 million domesticated Indians alive today, and their number does not come anywhere near the 30 million that were there at the time of their discovery, who would have spent as politicians, and even if that were not the case that would be as great as it sounds.

It seems that the number of Indians that America and its islands used to have at the time of discovery is well represented, and the great growth and good condition that they could have had and did not have, and the bad one they have today, which has barely been remedied, and this damage – present, past and future, in their souls and bodies, as well as the monetary loss – is countless, and to emphasise this topic I say that if those territories were discovered nowadays and they received the proper love and care, there would have been more fruit for heaven and earth than in the past 118 years, and they would last with increasing advantage for as long as the world exists, and this would serve as punishment.

My Lord, what has been said could be worth so much, even if it is a half, a third or a quarter, and it is so patently clear to me that the loss of so much good and the acquisition of so many ills, as well as the living care in which I live; the fear I feel and I am aware of that the greatness, goodness and value of my cause will not come to such an end, that for this reason I would like to remind you that well-founded causes last very long and they are not easy to thwart, and that the badly founded ones are very difficult to reform and always run the risk of ending badly. It concerns me that if foundations do not occur in an organised manner, the current foundation will meet the same fate of all the others, where the population had no hope of anything good and that immense

harm was done to a large number of people, and that what in America has been lost must and can be recovered (by means of love and no force) in Australia of the Holy Spirit, where I very humbly beg you to defend those great and good lands and to guide the people in them, in such a way that nobody loses their way and that we all do the right thing for their honour and glory, as well Y.M.'s, and this is the target I am aiming at and firing, whether it is believed or not.

On careful consideration, it will be discovered that God kept the best lands to be discovered last – great, fertile, healthy, with many comforts for human life and populated by many and very good peoples, where gold, silver, pearls, spices and other riches were found, and I consider that if it is not these lands, I cannot see any other that can redeem Spain and last, considering the good methods expected from their government. I warn you, My Lord, that the more the smallest thing among several is worth, it is said in this and other documents, with all the advantages that make it compelling to preserve all the other territories that Y.M. rules upon, helped a man of good will who can notice what can be heard and wants to do more with God's help, all of it for free, and who deserves the prize of his services and does not ask for more than to do such a service to God and to give those souls what they lack, with 500,000 ducats that will be spent only once in Perú, where there is a surplus of many millions and men, the two species I request which can be used for that population whose return can later happen in such a way that Spain breathes and receives encouragement. Y.M. can earn so many thousand spiritual and temporal goods and gifts, with as little as 500,000 ducats from Perú. Sixty-two hundred thousand to be precise, for it is estimated that a ducat is worth the same as a real, and whenever there is a shortage of cash there, it must be sent from here, as Your Majesty said about Our Lord, who is in heaven, that whenever there was a cash shortage in México to continue with the Philippine conversion, you would send the money from Spain, and it must be said that there has always been enough. Y.M. should realise the seriousness of my work, for the jewellery must be sold and with what is left it is possible to do

such a great service to God and to Y.M. with the conversion of infinite numbers of people and goods.

My Lord, My Lord, if it comes to greatness, what could be greater than populate a new world? If it comes to riches, what is better than the promised ones to remove the scum both on land and sea? If it comes to fame and glory, what is more eternal? If it comes to public benefit, what is more universal or beneficial? If it comes to give jobs to the surplus population of Perú, what better preparation? If it comes to an occasion, none is more proper or better, for I went, saw, returned and I know where the lands I discovered are, and ask Y.M., who is such a powerful king and lord, to populate them? If it comes to the love of God, we must risk as much as He has given and will give us, what better or more magnificent service than to bring a considerable number of creatures to the knowledge of their Creator, with the just means mentioned and with those that will be looked for, all the more just when doing the work?

I remind Y.M. of how many navies and fleets have gone to the Indies and come back after I have been to this Court, and how much I have lost with this delay, and how much more can be lost if the delay is longer; the Tierra Firme fleet has departed, and how much do I have to prepare, walk and do, and no time is brief for whoever suffers and knows that if the mission that I love so much and that has cost me so much, and will cost so much more, is lost, even more so knowing the danger it runs by visible and invisible enemies.

For all of this, I beg Y.M. to give me dispatch, as required by the greatness of this cause, with the haste called by all its needs and my wishes, because it is time for me to receive it, even if only considering Y.M.'s interests.