

QUEBRADA LIMON MISSION

RT. REV. MANUEL FERRANDO, DIRECTOR

PONCE, P. R. BOX 776

December 17, 1970.

My dear Bishop Ferrando,

Many times I have been on the point of writing to you and each time decided that all your energies should be concentrated on recovering your perfect health. Now however, I have the excuse of sending Christmas greetings and at the same time will give a very brief account of my stewardship.

In spite of the desolating drought which has prevailed with varying intensity for a year and a half the estate shows real progress. If you should return now you might not be struck with any spectacular improvement, but you would be genuinely gratified to see increased areas in coffee and bananas and good looking cattle feeding on a thousand hills that indicate real improvement. You would also find, by a more detailed inspection that the trees have received a good deal of care and have responded to it most encouragingly. We have picked the largest crop of coffee in some years and I have it cleaned and sacked awaiting better prices. I think, and this is most gratifying of all, that you would notice subtle signs of perfect understanding between our people of the hills and the manager and his family. On the whole I feel cheerful and encouraged so far as the development of the property is concerned.

Perhaps I expected too much from the advent of the new minister, and it may be my own fault that I feel somewhat disappointed over the results, so far, of Mr. Villafane's incumbency. When my good friend and brother Hermenegildo left us I felt that almost anyone could make good here if they would come and live among the people, and when Modesto

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stated positively that if he came he would not move his family here, I felt it would be a mistake for him to come merely as a Sunday priest. Then Ramon filled the inter-regnum, and rose nobly to the occasion, and things went ahead quite satisfactorily. A little over a month ago the new incumbent took charge and I expected great things - I brought him out and established them at our house while they were getting comfortable and was ready to co-operate in every way to make his work a success; I suppose its because of his youth, but he seems insanely jealous of the influence that we have over the people. He began by demanding from Ruth all the clothing to be distributed. She yielded at once, then he demanded all the packages of presents as they arrived, and resented it because we insisted upon first receiving and acknowledging anything addressed to Rt. Rev. Manuel Ferrando, we still insist upon this, but are scrupulously particular to turn everything over to Mr. Villafra as soon as Ruth has checked and acknowledged it. We also insist that it is his right as priest to have entire charge of the Mission building and to avoid conflict we have agreed to this except that we absolutely refuse to surrender the keys of your office or your bedroom. I am most conscientious in a entire avoidance of anything that might even have the appearance of making suggestions or criticisms of his management of the purely spiritual side of the Mission. This in spite of innovations that I never expected to see in the Church of the Atonement, for instance poor Dionado // in scarlet robes swinging a censer. I always thought, in my ignorance, that burning incense went out of fashion when they stopped slaughtering sacrificial animals in the precincts of the temple. But all this is out of my province and Heaven forbid that I should ever criticize either by suggestion that

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appeal to the people and I merely mention this to show my attitude of amiability towards the young man in spite of not always following him.

Ruth feels that there is no further scope for her activities and I think it is her intention to take a position in Venezuela in about one month. In that case she will turn over the office and bed room keys to me and I will forward direct to you by mail that season with the exception of mission packages which I will first acknowledge in your name to the donors and then turn over to Mr. Villafane for distribution.

Do not get the impression that there is any real controversy or anything that seriously impedes the peaceful administration of my job. I shall continue in my blundering way to run things as I think you would like them run.

I have not become a fluent linguist by any means; I love the Spanish language but am too old to learn it. I have quite an assortment of nouns, but do not seem able to connect them with the proper verbs. However my men generally understand me and are too polite to laugh at my blunders.

We would love to see you down here and could take good care of you. Last summer we added a room to our house and had you in mind at the time. The room has a separate opening on the back porch and also connects with a bath room. Think it over. Nothing would give us more pleasure than to have you with us.

With best Christmas greetings to Mrs. Ferrando, also to your daughter and the grand-daughter, and with most earnest hopes that you are now on the road to perfect health,

Ever yours faithfully,

J. C. M. Valentine
(Excuse this awful pen)