

“of His sheep, by the Divine plan placed his Apostolic See, in which holy see after so many centuries have run their course, after a long and never-broken succession of Pontiffs We at this time, though lowly and unworthy, preside by the disposal of the Holy Spirit.

“Willingly, indeed, We shall send to You now presbyters and priests of Christ, to announce to You and to Your peoples the Gospel truth, and, if You should hear it with humble heart and embrace it and make up Your mind both to obey at last in perfection God, who is wondrously calling You, and to enlist under Jesus Christ the author of our salvation and giver of eternal life, then only will both You Yourself be truly happy and You will cause true happiness to Your realms, and You will add to the old fame of the Persian kings such a mass of Your own glory that posterity will never be silent concerning Your merits and praises.

“Now there are in the East priests and workmen of Christ, faithful and strenuous sons of Ours in Christ, beloved, of that Society whose title is from the most sweet name of Jesus and which fights for God under Our peculiar patronage and that of this holy Apostolic See, and which has planted the victorious Cross of Christ in even the farthest regions of the East and of the Indies and has sown the Gospel seed for the salvation of believers, and is zealous to do so by God’s help, sparing no labours that by the word of saving doctrine and the example of a most pure life and lastly by the Divine washing of baptism and the heavenly sacraments it may make souls a gain for Christ, as We think not to be unheard, nor altogether unknown to You.

“From this Society, therefore, and from those regions and places of the East belonging to the sway of the most puissant prince and Our well-beloved son in Christ, Philip the Catholic king, places too that are less far from Your dominions and provide a readier way for going to and fro, We shall take care to send to You priests and in that number which shall be necessary; in fact We have now already given commands on the point. In fine all that the salvation of Yourself and Your peoples demands We shall most zealously under God’s blessing furnish and We await naught else but to know more clearly Your whole will, and with much greater certitude and at much greater length from Yourself, i.e. from Your letters and messengers those same things, which, as We have said, We have heard by rumour and the narratives of many.

“Meanwhile, in order that Our affection for You and desire of bringing about a sincere friendship between us may stand forth with clearer evidence, it has pleased Us to give You this Our letter as a witness of Our goodwill for You and a sort of pledge of Our kindly feelings. It will be handed You by these Our two beloved sons, whom We expressly send You viz. Francisco Costa, a priest and Religious of the same Society of Jesus, distinguished in erudition and in zeal of God, and the diligent and careful Diego (Didacus) de Miranda, both of them Portuguese and both experienced and approved by Us and very much in favour, and who have also been at other times in Persia and are very devoted to Your royal person. Indeed too Diego conversed at Venice with Your familiar, Husain ’Ali Baig, and related to Us the things he had learnt from him about You, which were indeed delightful news to Us.

“From them, therefore, You will understand Our mind much more openly and at greater length once they have come safe to You, with the Angel of God leading them, and moreover that point in particular—how desirous We are of Your salvation, how We long for Your increase of glory. Wherefore We beg of You to trust them most fully, just as if Ourselves spoke in person with You, and We are confident too that You will receive these messengers of Ours and beloved of Us with honour and kindness, for We shall use a like kindness towards Yours whom You are sending Us, so that our mutual liking may put out stronger roots and daily grow firmer. For truly from our union of hearts and wills many and various kinds of benefits will be able to abound, which We doubt not You in Your prudence well perceive, but this one above all—the checking by You and Ourselves and the whole of the Christian world to be given to the unceasing and most hostile