

Under date, 1.4.1675, there is on record a protest by the Praepositus General of the Discalced Carmelites, Fr. John Chrysostom of S. Paul;¹ he had asked sanction for one Carmelite to be withdrawn from Malabar, and been instructed to send two Religious in his place. He begged the Sacr. Congregation

“to be so good as not to burden his Order with those new missions when, on account of the scarcity of persons suitable, some having been lost by death and there being no suitable candidates to be found, with difficulty he would be able to keep up the number for the other missions . . . notwithstanding all efforts made to send missionaries the Residences have not a sufficient staff and others have been abandoned.

“Now that he has returned from visitations he finds a letter from the Sacr. Congregation, in which it is notified him that the Sacr. Congregation has destined for the new missions on the Malabar coast four Religious of his Order, and he is instructed to be careful to remit in due course to those Fathers, when they have reached the Malabar coast, the stipend fixed, and in case any of the Fathers in question fail to arrive to supply others from the convent in Goa. . . . The truth is, and necessity compels him humbly to represent to the Sacr. Congregation that, without leaving destitute the missions supported by his Order in Syria and Persia and India, he is unable to look after the mission in Malabar . . . : in Syria . . . in Mt. Lebanon for many years past there has been but a single Religious, to the small edification of the Order . . . while it is necessary to send some individuals to Persia where at the Convent in Isfahan they are too few to keep up the Observance and to staff, as should be, the Residences dependent on it. . . . So he begs your Eminences to be so good as to consider that not only missionaries cannot be taken away from those missions to supply those on the Malabar coast, but that the latter are in actual need of provision being made for them: and he had been hoping to avail himself for that purpose of three of those whom the Sacr. Congregation has destined for the new mission in Malabar. . . . Therefore he trusts . . . your Eminences will be pleased not to burden his Order with a load it cannot carry, and not force it to accept the providing and care for the mission on the Malabar coast. . . .”

That protest is the more remarkable because, with the exception of that at Basra, the Malabar mission alone of all the posts in charge of the Carmelites in 1675 has existed to this twentieth century, and moreover like all missions in that part of India has worked in fertile soil, and rendered untold fold in conversions and the flourishing Catholic community created in the course of the centuries: so that the instructions recorded in that protest are an instance of real far-sightedness on the part of the Sacr. Congregation, for which the Order today can be grateful:

“Let the Father General be admonished regarding the missions abandoned without the permission and knowledge of the Sacr. Congregation, and let him state which they are. . . . Also let a communication be written to him pointing out that from the beginning and always the mission on the Malabar coast has belonged to his Order, and many of his brethren have been sent there.²

“Let him notify” (the Sacr. Cong.) “the names of all the Religious who have studied in the College of S. Pancrazio, and the convents where they are at present staying, together with notes on the qualifications of each. . . .”

This was, presumably, one of those phases when the mind of the Order was less inclined to missionary outlets, and vocations fewer; but, largely, the barrenness of this period in Persia and elsewhere was a question of financing the missions. Of the total sum remitted to Persia during the thirty years under review, or during any consecutive span of years, there was no record observed in the archives examined, but only in isolated years, e.g. in 1667 at Aleppo:

¹ S.R., vol. 464, p. 188.

² Fr. Joseph of S. Mary was again sent to Malabar in 1659.