"25.9.1682. . . . we have been for almost three years without a Vicar Provincial, or "Substitute. . . ."

"10.6.1684. . . . still no Vicar Provincial, or Visitor General for many years."

There were Augustinians, Capuchins, Jesuits also in Isfahan: on results of efforts of all combined Carmelites did not hesitate to speak plainly:

"Having been ordered by my superiors to make a report to the Sacr. Congregation de "Propaganda Fide on the state of our mission in Persia and the harvest gathered there," wrote Fr. Felix of S. Antony, 1.7.1673,[1] "I suppose your Eminences there wish to hear "the truth, and do not desire to be deceived with the false and exaggerated accounts, which "greatly transcend the limits of the truth. I shall say then that our Religious . . . keep "the few Catholic Christians there are here well instructed in the Catholic Faith; but as "to the conversion of Muhammadans, save for one now and then and a marvel, there are "no conversions at all, not from any failure on the part of the missionaries, who do their "best, but by the suitable designs of God, who has not yet raised the veil from the eyes "of these poor people. For the space of 26 years approximately that I have been in the "East I have neither heard of any conversion of a Muhammadan, except of one or two "and that very rarely, nor among the Armenians, more than a very few, for they are "obstinate and deceitful.

"The result, which can be said to be effected, is that our Religious live decorously and "edifyingly, which causes the infidels themselves to wonder. . . . But, as there are some "here[2] who have had some reports printed of the great progress made, the harvest and "conversions, which certain Religious have effected—which are all fables and fictions— "I beg to inform your Most Illustrious Lordship that such false accounts have caused much "scandal and distinct harm to the Faith, and to the authority of ecclesiastical reports; "because, when heretics and schismatics see with their own eyes that here there are such "printed reports full of falsehoods, they say that even ecclesiastical reports are false, and "mock at the Roman Catholic Church. A stop ought to be put to this, and permission to "print not given, nor any credit to any report which be not signed by persons deserving "confidence and authority. . . ."[3]

Answering the same questionnaire from Basra, another Carmelite, Fr. Jerome, was equally downright:[4]

"With the Muhammadans there is absolutely nothing to be done . . . so long as for "them to embrace the Faith is tantamount to being determined at the same time on being "a martyr (a grace permitted to few at this time), or else means having to quit the homeland "and to trust oneself to chance in worldly matters—a thing all the more difficult, as the "people here are engulfed in worldly pleasures, and accustomed to seek nothing else than "the profits of the world. . . ."

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[1] *S.R.*, vol. 449, p. 86.

[2] i.e. Members of other Orders working in Persia—possibly the accounts by Père Machault and Alexandre de Rhodes, S.J., in view of the glowing tributes to results.

[3] On this the instructions were issued in the secretariat of the Sacr. Cong.: "Let written orders be given sent out that "printing is prohibited, and asking for (the production of) reports issued without the permission of the Sacr. Congregation."

[4] *S.R.*, vol. 449, pp. 211–4, 10.8.1673.