

“rudiments of philosophy and theology are taught. On ferial days also the poor are collected for catechism, together with some distribution of alms. In winter time chiefly, when the peasants have no cultivation to do, they gather from all parts in the town: publicly too the sacraments, whatever they may be, are administered, the dead buried, etc. All of these occupations and duties certainly cannot be performed without the aid of at least two missionary Fathers, nor without the service of a cook and another servant for the cultivation of the garden and for discharging duties both at home and out of doors, and the upkeep of at least one horse, without which it would be no less serious than unbecoming for the Bishop to run about to the churches and other places of the mission of Isfahan and Julfa, several miles from his residence. Then, large as may be the stipend assigned to the above-mentioned Armenian Catholic priests and clerics by the Sharimans, they are able to obtain it with difficulty, and rarely the whole in full and at its due time. Then it very often fell to the bishop to provide it; but now that they are so much in want of it, much more does he have to divide with them the modest portion falling to his lot, just as also with the other Armenian clerics and monks, partly Catholics, partly well disposed not daring to profess Catholicism openly by fear of a more severe persecution and for lack of the necessary means of livelihood. Among them are some bishops and schoolmasters, supporting themselves apart from the schismatics in a very miserable way, who might be easily led to the open profession and preaching of the Catholic faith by the granting of some temporary assistance. There occurred too frequent arrivals from a distance of Europeans, both secular and missionaries, and the passage of foreigners, who had recourse to the bishop and invoked his aid in every adversity and need, since there is not at Isfahan any consul or head of a trading company of any Catholic nation, from whom as elsewhere in this way protection can be sought. Thus, besides the customary supply of funds for charity, receiving guests, clothing the ragged, making up shortage of journey money required, very frequently there is need of it for settling very troublesome and costly suits with the judges and notables and the king himself. In all of which that he has acted not illiberally your humble petitioner does not doubt that it has become known to the Sacr. Congregation: and that it is not lacking at present can be testified by the mission at Tiflis in Georgia, particularly. So, from these details here represented without any hyperbole or exaggeration he leaves it to be carefully weighed by the supremely wise judgment of Your Holiness yourself, and of the Sacr. Congregation, whether he will be able to continue all these duties and activities, or whether he can return to take them up once more without an equivalent provision of funds, seeing that with the flight of the benefactors the contribution of about 500 scudi annually covenanted by them formerly had gradually been changed, and at length had become completely deficient. *Thirdly*, he also respectfully begs for the episcopal vestments of the various ecclesiastical colours, pastoral staff, pontificals and one complete set of ordinary clothing, suitable for his state and order with which he can appear respectably in the presence of the said princes and of the king of the Persians himself: and also for some other books, scriptural, controversial, of sermons, on mathematics, and also instruments appertaining to astronomical subjects, images, rosaries and other things which cannot be obtained in Persia. Finally, for the other missions of his Order in Persia—Isfahan, Shiraz, Basra, Gãmbrun, he humbly begs that provision be made for a larger number of missionaries, together with funds, for lack of which the port of Gãmbrun, to which ships of the Christians come, remains without its wonted mission of the Fathers: since in the other missions only two missionaries are posted to each, so that if one of them be away or be lacking, the other must remain alone and, if he be absent, the mission is abandoned, until after some years a reply comes from Rome and then the remedy can scarce make good the harm done. . . .”

Meanwhile the Sacr. Congregation considered that the Bishop of Isfahan had been sufficiently long in Europe and were pressing him to return to his diocese: in the session of 23. 11. 1703 Cardinal Sacripante—