

In order to provide the regulation higher pay, the Congregation took the course of giving promotion to the higher grade, and their decree was:

“That the Holy Father should be prayed to delegate the applicant as bishop with the usual provision of 200 scudi. On the 17th January” (1716) “His Holiness gave instructions for the matter to be put back for further examination as to whether the applicant was fit to be placed to govern the diocese of Isfahan, and for persons suitable for the see to be sought. . . .”

In the General Session of 14.1.1716

“the matter having been once more brought forward, it was decided His Holiness should be once again begged to promote Fr. Barnabas from Milan to be Bishop of Isfahan. “On the 15th His Holiness gave his consent, and the Bull was issued, 8.6.1716.”¹

Evidently Fr. Barnabas had endeavoured to decline and escape from the burden, for the Prior of S. Sabina in Rome referred in a communication² to:

“the latest decisions taken by the Sac. Congregation, by which the reasons brought forward by Fr. Barnabas Fedeli for declining the bishopric of Isfahan are rejected. . . . Your Eminences were pleased to express their intention to supply him with the sacred vestments although no decree was passed on the subject. . . .”³

This was precisely the year when the Carmelites had been reduced by death and non-dispatch of new recruits to two Fathers for the whole extent of their mission—one of them at Basra, the other was French. Such were the circumstances, in which the only Dominican became bishop of a see which otherwise was solely filled by Carmelites in a period of some 160 years.

The Bulls reached Isfahan, 29.1.1719,⁴ and on 16.4.1719 Fr. Barnabas wrote that he was setting out that day for Tabriz:⁵ he was consecrated at Abranar, 9.7.1719⁶ by his fellow Dominican, Peter Martyr from Parma.

In a unique position for watching and recording and reporting to Rome events in Persia during a period packed with incidents and change, Bishop Barnabas Fedeli is most disappointing to any annalist: it will be read in due course how for years he ceased to have any correspondence with Rome (not even to keep a diary to dispatch when safe opportunity offered): and with few exceptions the considerable number of communications of his in the archives deal with disputes and points of ecclesiastical discipline.

At the beginning of his work as a bishop he was directed to perform a painful duty in regard to a brother bishop, and a Frenchman at that. The diocese of Baghdad may be unique for the chequered sequence of appointments made to it of bishops and coadjutors in the first hundred years of its creation: as the author of *Hierarchia Latina Orientis*, the late Fr. L. Lemmens, O.F.M., remarked:

“Nowhere in the East does the series of Latin bishops show such intervals as in Persia and in Mesopotamia. In the latter, in two centuries there are only to be found three bishops who stayed in their diocese. . . .”

The first bishop nominated to Baghdad, Fr. Timothy Perez, by right of succession became Bishop of Isfahan before even he had time to sail for the East: the second, Fr. Bernard spent

¹ Quoted from *Hierarchia Latina Orientis*, No. 10.

² *S.N.R.*, III, p. 508.

³ The vestments had in fact been ordered since 16.5.1718, and were all ready made, but not handed over, as no agent to take them had appeared.

⁴ *S.N.R.*, III, p. 474.

⁵ *Idem*, p. 479.

⁶ *S.R.*, vol. 653, letter of 5.9.1725.