

Nasara

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The R. C. Mission of Afghanistan Newsletter

29 September 2017 AD

No. 3 (Autumn Issue)

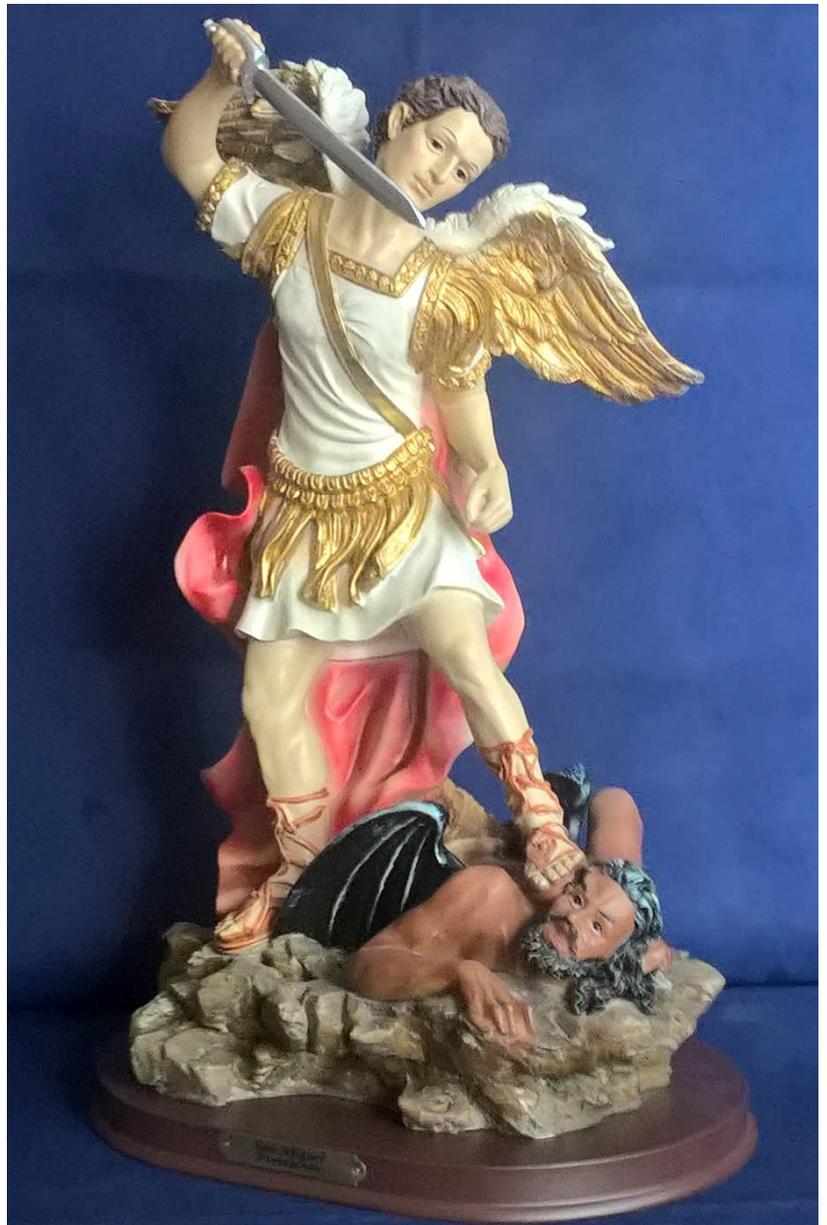
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MICHAELMAS

As we said in the first issue of *Nasara*, the Persian calendar, followed in Afghanistan, is closely connected with the rhythm of seasons. New Year's Day (*Nowruz*) coincides with the spring equinox, and the months, in our country, are named after the signs of the zodiac.

Even the liturgical calendar is closely connected with the rhythm of seasons. Apart from the Ember Days (*Quattuor Tempora*), whose arrangement is now rightly referred to the national Conferences of Bishops, in the General Roman Calendar the cycle of seasons is marked by some important liturgical celebrations. Coinciding with the beginning of winter (solstice: 21/22 December) we observe *Christmas*. The ancient Romans on December 25 celebrated the festival of *Sol Invictus* ("Unconquered Sun"); Christians transformed that pagan festivity into the solemnity of the birth of Christ "Sun of justice." At the beginning of spring (equinox: 20/21 March), the Church celebrates, on March 25, the *Annunciation of the Lord*, that is, his conception in the womb of the Virgin Mary (exactly nine months before his birth). The beginning of summer (solstice: 20/21 June) is marked by the *Nativity of St. John the Baptist*, on June 24. Even

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Sub tuum praesidium

A hundred years have passed since Our Lady appeared to three little shepherds at Fatima, Portugal. Church history is full of apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Many of the sanctuaries dedicated to her throughout the world have been built as a memorial to some apparition. Even nowadays there are countless places where it is alleged that the Virgin is appearing, and in some of these places crowds flock even before the Church pronounces on the authenticity of the event.

But Fatima is different from other analogous phenomena. Not only has the Church soon recognized the genuineness of these apparitions, but also the last Popes went all on pilgrimage there; John Paul II attributed to the Virgin his survival in the 13 May 1981 attempt to his life, and instituted the liturgical feast of Our Lady of Fatima; two of the seers (Jacinta and Francisco Marto) have been canonized, the other one (Lucia Santos) will be soon—she died in 2005; the message of Fatima is about important events of con-

temporary history; a part of this message (the “third secret”) remained hidden until few years ago, and some people maintain that not the whole secret has yet been revealed. At Fatima a new devotion was born, the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and the Virgin asked for the consecration of Russia to her.

That is why, on October 13, which is the 100th anniversary of the last apparition, we are going to consecrate our Mission to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. We want to put ourselves under her patronage (sub tuum praesidium), because, without her help we feel lost. But we want also entrust to her the country we live in. It is around forty years that it is torn by war; up to now all human efforts to restore peace have failed; there is nothing left but a last chance—to consecrate Afghanistan to Mary. But it is not a Catholic country! So what? It belongs to her anyway, and she alone can give it the long-awaited peace.

— Giovanni Scalese, CRSP

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at the beginning of autumn (equinox: 22/23 September) we find an important feast: *Michaelmas*, on September 29 (the non-perfect correspondence between solstices/equinoxes and liturgical celebrations becomes clear if we consider that these celebrations were fixed when the Julian calendar was still in use).

In the old liturgical calendar, on September 29 the festival of the *Dedication of the basilica of St. Michael Archangel* on Via Salaria (Rome) was celebrated. Currently, we observe on this day the feast of *Sts. Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael Archangels* (previously, St. Gabriel was celebrated on March 24 and St. Raphael on October 24).

Michael, Gabriel and Raphael are the only angels with a name we encounter in the Scripture (even though in several passages of the Bible there is a reference to “seven angels who stand before God”). Michael (“*Who like God?*”) is the archangel who fights against the devil (Jude 9; Reve-

lation 12:7), helps the friends of God (Daniel 10:13.21) and protects his people (Daniel 12:1).

In the past, many sanctuaries were dedicated to St. Michael. Someone has pointed out that seven of them, although very far from each other, are perfectly and surprisingly aligned. They are: *Skelling Michael* (Ireland); *St. Michael’s Mount* (Cornwall, Great Britain); *Mont Saint-Michel* (Normandy, France); *Sacra di San Michele* (Val di Susa, Italy); *Monte Sant’Angelo* (Gargano, Italy); *Symi’s*

Monastery (Greece); *Mount Carmel Monastery* (Haifa, Holy Land).

In the mother-church of our Mission, there was a statue of St. Michael, which broke into a thousand pieces on the occasion of the last May 31 attack near the German Embassy. Now Ms Analia Ramos has presented us with a new statue—a little smaller, but very nice—which will be blessed on September 29 and will replace the old one to protect us against the Devil’s attacks.



LATEST NEWS

JULY 5

July 5 is the liturgical feast of St. ANTHONY MARY ZACCARIA, the founder of the Clerics Regular of St. Paul—Barnabites, to whom the Afghan Catholic Mission has been entrusted since its beginning (1933). Every year it is an occasion for the religious of the Mission for gathering together. It was so even this year: on Wednesday July 5, all the religious currently present in Afghanistan met for a solemn celebration of the Mass and for a fraternal dinner. There were present, with Father John, Father Sebastian SJ, the Missionaries of Charity (Sr. Fortunata, Sr. Marie Beth, Sr. Merina) and PBK Sisters (Sr. Razia OP, Sr. Mariammal FSMP, Sr. Seena SSGC, Sr. Irene MC) with their Legal Representative Bro. Carlo SdC.



FATIMA CENTENNIAL

As announced in the last issue of *Nasara*, this year is the centenary of the apparitions of the B. V. M. at Fatima. On May 13 we began the “13th of the Month” devotion, by praying the Rosary before the Mass, in preparation for the consecration of our Mission to the Immaculate Heart of Mary on October 13. On July 13, a new statue of Our Lady of Fatima was blessed. It comes from Fatima, was bought in Rome by Father John, during his annual leave, and carried to Afghanistan inside his backpack (with some trouble at the customs...).

SR. SEENA'S DEPARTURE

On August 6, we bade farewell to Sr. SEENA ANTONY CHALAVEETIL, of the Sisters of St. Joseph B. Cottolengo (SSGC), who after three and a half years of service at PBK Center, went back to India. Now she is at the Provincial House of her Congregation in



Bangalore, Karnataka. We cannot but thank her for her precious service. *Tashakkor, Sr. Seena!*

SR. JOSE AIMEE'S ARRIVAL

On September 1, a new Sister came to reinforce the Community of the Missionaries of Charity (MC): Sr. JOSE AIMEE (in the world, Razanamady Soafara). She was born in 1983 in Madagascar and in 2004 joined the Congregation founded by Mother Teresa. Before coming to Afghanistan, she lived in the Seychelles, Mozambique, Italy and Tajikistan. *Welcome, Sr. Jose Aimee!*



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Lieutenant-Colonel MARCO ALUNNO CAMELIA, Chief of the Italian National Support Element (NSE) at HQ-RS (NATO Military Base in Kabul), kindly donated to the Mission a set of linen (altar cloths, corporals, purificators, palls, *manutergia*) handmade by his mother, Ms. ANNA MANGIA. *Grazie infinite! God bless you!*

Muchas gracias to Ms. ANALIA RAMOS for the beautiful statue of St. Michael, which will be blessed and enthroned on September 29.

AUTUMN SCHEDULE

SEPTEMBER 2017

Friday 29:

STS. MICHAEL, GABRIEL & RAPHAEL
Blessing & Enthronement of St.
Michael's new statue

OCTOBER 2017

Friday 13:

**Centennial of the last apparition of
the B.V.M. at Fatima**
ACT OF CONSECRATION of the Mission to
the Immaculate Heart of Mary

Sunday 22:

SAINT JOHN PAUL II,
founder of the Mission *sui iuris*

NOVEMBER 2017

Wednesday 1:

ALL SAINTS
(it's a Holy Day of Obligation!)

Thursday 2:

ALL SOULS' DAY

Thursday 16 – Saturday 18:

Triduum to O. L. of Divine Providence

Sunday 19:

OUR LADY OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE,
Patroness of the Mission

Sunday 26:

CHRIST THE KING

Monday 27:

**Beginning of the CROWN OF TWELVE
STARS devotion, in preparation for the
feast of the Immaculate Conception**

DECEMBER 2017

Sunday 3:

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Friday 8:

**THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF
THE B.V.M.**
(it's a Holy Day of Obligation!)

Saturday 16:

Beginning of CHRISTMAS NOVENA

Nasara



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The Roman Catholic
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رسالت کاتولیک افغانستان
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ORIETUR STELLA



ستاره‌ای طلوع خواهد کرد

The INDEPENDENT MISSION OF AFGHANISTAN (*Missio sui juris Afghanistaniensis*) is a jurisdiction of the Roman Catholic Church, immediately subject to the Holy See, covering the whole territory of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. It is a "particular church"—that is to say, a portion of the people of God—likened to a Diocese (Can. 368). By the law itself, it possesses juridical personality (Can. 373). It was established by the Holy See on the 16th of May, 2002 and entrusted to the care of the ORDER OF CLERICS REGULAR OF SAINT PAUL—BARNABITES (CRSP). It is presided by an Ecclesiastical Superior (*Superior ecclesiasticus*), who acts as the Local Ordinary (Can. 134 §2).