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The R. C. Mission of Afghanistan Newsletter

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THE HOLY SPIRIT SPEAKS FARSI

The Acts of the Apostles reports that, on the day of Pentecost, “there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven staying in Jerusalem” (2:5). After receiving the Holy Spirit, the Apostles “began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim” (2:4). Those people “were confused because each one heard them speaking in his own language” (2:6). That is why, “astounded and bewildered” (2:12) as they were, they asked, “Are not all these people who are speaking Galileans? Then how does each of us hear them in his own native language? We are Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya near Cyrene, as well as travelers from Rome, both Jews and converts to Judaism, Cretans and Arabs, yet we hear them speaking in our own tongues of the mighty acts of God” (2:7-11). It is not so clear whether it was the Apostles that spoke in different tongues (v. 4) or it was people that heard them in their own language (vv. 8 & 11). Anyway, what matters is that each one understood what the apostles said.

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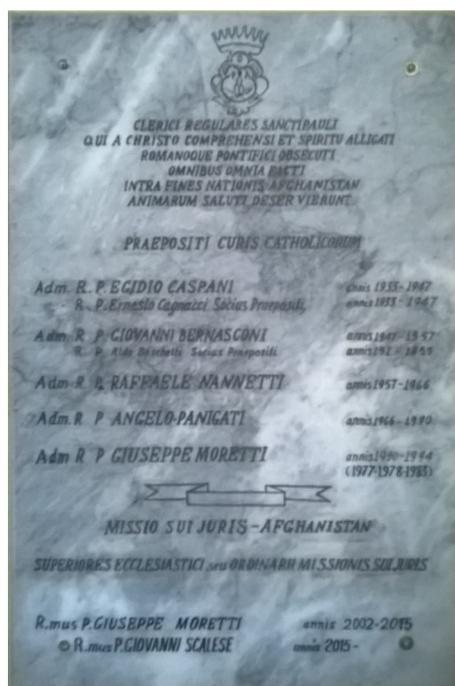
Pentecost Sunday

Spiritus Domini replevit orbem terrarum

Some History

The possibility to host a Catholic Chaplain within the Italian “legation” was provided by “The Agreement between Italy and Afghanistan to exchange permanent diplomatic missions” in 1921. King Amanullah, grateful to Italy for being the first western country to recognize formally the independence of Afghanistan, showed himself sensitive to the demand of the Catholics that were then present in the country and were asking for the spiritual assistance of a priest. Since the Arab conquest of Persia and Central Asia in the seventh century A.D., it was the first time that a Muslim government authorized the official establishment of a Catholic presence in Afghanistan, although prohibiting proselytism.

For this delicate task, Pope Pius XI chose the Barnabite Father EGIDIO CASPANI, a historian and a language scholar. After a month long adventurous journey, he arrived in Kabul on Christmas afternoon in 1932 to finally inaugurate the Chapel on the 1st of January 1933.



Since then, none of the various regimes or political-military upheavals that characterized the Afghan history (the monarchy in its diverse aspects, the republic established by Daoud, the communist regime, the soviet invasion, the Mujahideen’s reconquest, the civil war, the Islamic Emirate of the Taliban) has ever led to the expulsion of the Catholic Mission, which,

furthermore, was praised by the Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs for its constant and tenacious presence during those difficult years.

In 2002, Pope John Paul II established the Independent Mission of Afghanistan (*Missio sui iuris Afghanistansiensis*), naming the Chaplain of the Italian Embassy as Ecclesiastical Superior of the Mission with the function of Local Ordinary for Catholics temporarily residing in the country.

The missionaries of Kabul were Father CASPANI (1933-1947), Father GIOVANNI BERNASCONI (1947-1957), Father RAFFAELE NANNETTI (1957-1965), Father ANGELO PANIGATI (1965-1990) and Father GIUSEPPE MORETTI (1990-2015).

Currently, the Mission is led by Father GIOVANNI SCALESE.

—Federico Romoli

Source: Italian Embassy’s Website (http://www.ambkabul.esteri.it/ambasciata_kabul/en/ambasciata/la_sede/la-chiesa.html)

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Then the places of origin of those present are enumerated. Most of the nations known at that time are mentioned, starting from East to West, even though scholars point out the absence, in the list, of other important countries (e.g., Syria and Cilicia, Macedonia and Achaia). Both Jews and “proselytes” (= converts to Judaism) were present. This means that, because of diaspora, there were already Jews dispersed more or less everywhere.

Well, at the top of the list of nations, there are “Parthians, Medes, and Elamites.” When we think of Jesus’ days, we immediately think of the Roman Empire. And rightly so, as Judea, at that time, was a province of that Empire. But this does not mean that the world coincided with the Roman Empire. Outside it, there were other nations. Among them,

the power that from time immemorial was a rival of the West, Persia. At Jesus’ time in Persia there was the Parthian Empire (247 BC – 224 AD), which could be considered the successor of Cyrus the Great’s Empire. It is precisely from those regions that the magi came to worship the King of the Jews. Parthia, Media and Elam belonged to the Parthian Empire: Parthia (corresponding, more or less, to present-day Iranian Province of Khorasan) occupied the North-East of the Empire; Media (with its capital Ecbatana), the North-West; and Elam (with its capital Susa), the South-West.

The language of these peoples was Persian. So, we can conclude that, on the day of Pentecost, in Jerusalem there were Persian-speaking people, and that the Holy Spirit, on that day, through the apostles proclaiming the mighty acts of God, among other languages, spoke in Farsi, as well.



LATEST NEWS

SR. IRENE'S ARRIVAL



After the Little Sisters' departure, our Mission has been enriched with a new religious woman, Sr. IRENE CANDIDA DE ALBERTO SOLOMONE, of the Consolata Missionary Sisters, who has come to swell the ranks of the intercongregational Community of PBK (*Pro Bambini di Kabul*). Sr. Irene was born in 1969 in Mozambique; in 1990 joined the Consolata Institute; from 1998 to 2016 lived in the United States, where in 2000 she made her perpetual vows. *Welcome to Kabul, Sr. Irene!*

THANKSGIVING

Ms. JANE MOONEY, sister of Dan, from the United States, thanks God for being miraculously cured of cancer. She is also grateful to us for our prayers. *Blessed be the name of the Lord!*



We also have to thank God for safeguarding us on occasion of the deadly attack near the Ger-

man Embassy, on May 31, where scores of people were killed and hundreds injured. Thank God, no member of our Community was affected by the incident. Only some material damages are to be reported: the glasses of some windows and of the door of the church broke; the door now can hardly be closed; the statue of Saint Michael broke into a thousand pieces (evidently, he had to fight hard against the forces of evil, to defend us). In comparison with the carnage caused by the attack, it is nothing. We thank the Lord for his protection and pray for the innocent casualties.



CALL FOR HELP

ROSLINE BARAKAT, sister of our Sr. Razia, is critically ill. She entrusts herself to our prayers. Furthermore, since her family is very poor, she asks us for financial support. Can we contribute for her treatment? The Mass collection on Pentecost Sunday will be for this intention. Be generous!

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In our turn, we have to thank two benefactors for their wonderful gifts to our Mission.



Mr. JERRY A. FARKAS JR. presented us with the second and third volumes of the *Lectionary for Mass*. We already had the first volume (for Sundays and Solemnities), but we lacked the Lectionary for weekdays. Now we have the complete set. Many thanks to Jerry and his Family!

Lt. Col. MICHAEL MAGNIS donated to us a gorgeous Paschal Candle, expressly manufactured in Germany for our church. Absolutely remarkable the mention of the current year: the candle has been engraved, besides with AD 2017, also with the year according to the Jalali Calendar, HS 1396 (in Arabic script, ١٣٩٦). *Alleluia!*



SUMMER SCHEDULE

JUNE 2017

From June 5 to 30
Father John will be away.
During this period, on weekdays,
Holy Mass will not be celebrated
and the church will stay closed.
Holy Mass will be celebrated,
at the usual time (5:30 pm),
on the following days:

Sunday 11:
TRINITY SUNDAY

Thursday 15:
CORPUS CHRISTI
(it's a Holy Day of Obligation!)

Sunday 18:
11th SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME

Friday 23:
THE MOST SACRED HEART OF JESUS

Sunday 25:
12th SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME

*Weekday Mass will resume
on Saturday, July 1,
with the festive Mass
of the 13th Sunday of Ordinary Time*

JULY 2017

Wednesday 5:
ST. ANTHONY MARY ZACCARIA,
Founder of the Clerics Regular of
St. Paul—Barnabites

AUGUST 2017

Tuesday 15:
THE ASSUMPTION OF THE B.V.M.
(it's a Holy Day of Obligation!)

FATIMA CENTENNIAL

*This year is the Centenary
of the apparitions of the B.V.M. at Fatima.
We will pray the Rosary on the 13th of the month
(at 5 pm, from July to October).
On October 13, we will consecrate our Mission
to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.*

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The Roman Catholic
MISSION OF AFGHANISTAN
رسالت کاتولیک افغانستان
MISSIO SUI JURIS AFGHANISTANIENSIS

Mission Church & Office:

Embassy of Italy, Great Massoud Road, Kabul

Mailing Address:

P. O. Box 21438, Kabul, Afghanistan

Phone: +93 799 315 460

Email: afghan.catholic.mission@gmail.com

Ecclesiastical Superior & Newsletter's Editor:

Rt. Rev. GIOVANNI SCALESE, CRSP

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).