

# **St. Justin de Jacobis and his dealing with the Coptic Christians of Ethiopia**

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The gravest sin for an historian is to try to understand a personage with categories foreign to his time and his culture.

Speaking of St. Justin de Jacobis (1800-1860), we do not wish to attribute to him a role in the ecumenical movement and dialogue. The ecumenical movement began after his death. It began in the womb of the Protestant Churches in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and only a little later did the Catholic Church take interest in it.

Having said this, we believe that St. Justin constitutes a precursor for an encounter, and for respect between Catholics and Copts.

To understand the saint, we have to pass again through the history of the relationship between Catholicism and Ethiopian Christianity and then consider his thinking and action toward these Christians who mark their existence well before the Council of Chalcedon.

## **Meetings and Misunderstandings**

Ethiopia was the only Christian kingdom, even if it was Monophysite, in Africa. The Portuguese came in contact with this mythic nation of the “priest Gianni” in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1</sup> The negus Lebna Dengel (or David: 1508-1540), after having inflicted some defeats on the Moslems, was overthrown by an able military chief, Ahmad ihn Ibrahim, called Gagn, “the Left Hand.” Helped by the Turks, he defeated the Ethiopians, and sacked their territory, causing incalculable damage to the artistic and cultural treasures.

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<sup>1</sup> J. Ludolf, *Historia Aethiopica*, Frankfurt 1681 and *Commentarius ad suam Historiam Aethiopicam*, Frankfurt 1691; J.-B. COULBEAUX, *Historie politique et religieuse de l'Abyssinie*, 2 vol., Paris 1929; L. Lozza, *La confessione di Claudio re l'Etiopia (1540-1559)*, Palermo 1958; J. Doresse, *Histoire de l'Éthiopie*, Paris 1970 and *La vie quotidienne des Éthiopiens chrétiens (aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècle)*, Paris 1972; Tewelde Beiene, *La politica cattolica di Seltan Sägäd I (1607-1632) e la missione della Compagnia di Gesù in Etiopia. Precedenti, evoluzione e problematiche, 1589-1632*, Roma 1983 (I use also the original of the thesis, with the abbreviation TB, and the page, since the publication is an extract of some chapters); P. Caraman, *The lost Empire. The Story of the Jesuits in Ethiopia, 1555-1634*, London 1985 (French trans., 1988).

The new emperor Claudius (1540-1559) then asked help from Goa. An expedition of 400 Portuguese was sent, commanded by Christopher da Gama, the son of Vasco. He was defeated and died; but his rival, “the Left Hand,” was mortally wounded by a flaming iron rod, and he, too, died.

Because the Christians of Ethiopia were Monophysites, the type of apostolate for them was different from that used in Moslem or Black Africa. There was no need to make a “first proclamation.” Because they were subjects of the Coptic Patriarchate of Alexandria, the only possible strategy that made sense was to bring in a Latin Patriarch. With a substitution of person and the support of Portugal and of the negus, the design to unite the Church of Ethiopia to Rome would be accomplished.

This is what St. Ignatius of Loyola thought when, in agreement with João III of Portugal, he sent an expedition of Jesuits, led by João Nunes Barreto, accompanied by Andrés da Oviedo and Melchior Carneiro. The first would have become the Patriarch, and the other two coadjutor bishops.

St. Ignatius wrote to these missionaries that they were to make the negus understand that “there is no hope of salvation outside of the Catholic Church.”<sup>2</sup>

Their appearance at court was to be ostentatious and solemn so as to make an impression on the Ethiopians. Among other things, “the bulls and the briefs from far away were to be in evidence whenever possible.”<sup>3</sup> As means of evangelization, St. Ignatius counseled schools and colleges; many were to be sent to Goa, Coimbra, and Rome, or Cyprus. Soon they were to found a university. But with the missionaries there were to go some “ingenious men” who would teach bridge building, land cultivation, fishing, the cure of the sick, so that the Ethiopians would learn “that every good thing, even the physical ones, come to them with the religion.”<sup>4</sup> A delicate point was that of penitential discipline, which in Ethiopia was very rigorous, even if it did not produce great results in the way people lived. For this reason, “the bitter herbs which they use in their fasts and in their other bodily [penitential] exercises can apparently be moderated with sweetness and reduced according to a measure of discretion.” But above all, they were to make understood that charity mattered more than mortifications, and for this reason they were to found hospitals, and were to be attentive to the works of mercy.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>C. Beccari, *Rerum Aethiopicarum Scriptores Occidentales inediti a saeculo XVI ad XIX*, 15 vol., Rome 1903-1917, I, 240.

<sup>3</sup>C. Beccari, *ibid.* I, 241.

<sup>4</sup>C. Beccari, *ibid.* I, 250.

<sup>5</sup>C. Beccari, *ibid.* I, 243, 249.

To prepare the path for the mission he sent two Jesuits as an advance team, Gonçalo Rodriguez and Brother Fulgencio Freire.<sup>6</sup> Fr. Rodriguez, aware of the sentiments of some of the personages present, instead of limiting himself to the exploring function, thought it would be right to begin a polemic confrontation. He composed a little tract with a rude, short-tempered tone that the negus did not appreciate, since it attacked some errors of the Ethiopians that they, for their part, had never defended. At a certain point the Jesuit suggested to the negus to submit to the Pope.<sup>7</sup> When he returned to Goa, he claimed that the invitations made by the negus were only for a purpose: he did not want union with Rome, but the military assistance of the Portuguese. He brought a tract with him, called the *Confession of Claudius*, in defense of the doctrine of the Ethiopian Church. In the first part it explained their Trinitarian doctrine, then went on to show that the Ethiopian Church had always been faithful to the apostolic tradition, and, finally, it explained certain rituals, such as the Saturday observance, the reasons for maintaining circumcision, and the reasons why Ethiopians did not eat the meat of pigs.<sup>8</sup>

The Mission with Oviedo left at the same time, and made its home base at Fremona, near Axum. Oviedo planned to convince the emperor by showing him the need for unity of faith and a return to unity with Rome and the shallowness of the arguments based on fidelity to the handed-down traditions.<sup>9</sup> Oviedo wrote a work entitled *The Primacy of the Roman Church*. The negus read it attentively, and reacted harshly, declaring that anyone who would dare to adhere to the Catholic Church would be subject to the death penalty. Oviedo was offended, and solemnly declared, on February 2, 1559, that the Ethiopians were “refractory and obstinate against the Church,” because they had no desire to return to union with Rome. He accused them of repeating Baptism, of observing Saturday as the Sabbath and of continuing to require circumcision, of not eating the meat of pigs, of declaring a man who entered the Church after having had relations with his lawful wife a sinner, of insisting on the unity of nature in Christ, and of celebrating the feast of Dioscurus.<sup>10</sup> It is a very bizarre document because it mixes doctrinal elements with others of a different kind, things already explained (among other places) in the *Confessions of Claudius*.

After the failure of this mission (in the interim the Jesuits worked only among the Portuguese), the sons of St. Ignatius tried again, sending in 1589 two Spaniards, Antonio de Monserrate and Pedro Paez, disguised as Armenian merchants. The first time they tried to enter the country they were captured and

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<sup>6</sup>Tewelde Beiene, *op. cit.*, 77-83.

<sup>7</sup>Tewelde Beiene, *ibid.*, 82.

<sup>8</sup>The negus made his explanations using reasons of custom and tradition.

<sup>9</sup>Tewelde Beiene, *op.cit.*, 93.

<sup>10</sup>Tewelde Beiene, *ibid*, 95s.

carried off into slavery to Yemen; once freed, they attempted the trip again, and were received by the negus Za-Dengel (1597-1607).

Paez in the first place started to study Gh'eez. He understood that the problem of the separation between Rome and the Ethiopian Church was not doctrinal, but disciplinary in nature. The Ethiopians were proud of their own traditions and did not wish to abandon them. Prison had taught him to respect the rhythm of life in the Orient; his serious study had led him to appreciate the theology of Abyssinia, distant from the complexity of Western theology and scholastic conceptualism. He also valued the piety of the Ethiopians, their Eucharistic and Marian devotion. At court he found refined people, the Liqs, and the Defteras.

The negus was aware that his power was not secure. Surrounding him were knotted hidden agendas, power and influence plays. For this reason he wished an alliance with Portugal, that he knew was possible only with religious submission. For this reason he wrote to the Pope and to the King of Portugal (but in reality the two crowns of Spain and Portugal were united in the person of the King of Spain) to ask their help against their common enemies, the Turks. He had come to see that he needed an alliance with the Catholic-Portuguese part of the world against his enemies. For this reason he favored discussions in every way, openly taking the side of the Jesuits. Paez, for his part, was seductive and convincing. He had an open personality, he could speak, and he had a grasp of Coptic literature. Before long his arguments were shown to be winning, but not convincing. He was clearly superior to his interlocutors at the level of dialectic, but not at the psychological. The negus wanted to be present for Catholic celebrations that were admired for their pomp, their serenity, and their beauty. In a secret meeting the negus admitted that he had been very struck by the demonstration of the primacy of the Roman Pontiff. He said he was ready to submit, and requested, as a concrete sign of reconciliation, the sending of a Catholic Patriarch and the hand of the daughter of Philip III for his son.

The question all this makes arise is: was he sincere, or were his affirmations interested? Certainly it is difficult to say that after three weeks of debate the arguments that were used were so persuasive that they brought about such a complete change of position.<sup>11</sup>

### **The Great Crisis**

The negus was overtaken by events. He was defeated and killed in battle by some of the ras, not for religious motives, as Portuguese sources believe, but

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<sup>11</sup>Tewelde Beiene, *ibid.*, 26-28

for political ones.<sup>12</sup> Yaqob was recalled to the throne (1605-1607), but he was overthrown by Susenyos (Setan Sägäd: 1607-1632). He was 33 years old, an excellent soldier, but he had to struggle strenuously to subdue the country.

At once he showed himself favorable to the Jesuits. Right after his coronation at Axum he gave the priests 30 ounces of gold. At court the first conversions took place, a sign of a change of climate. The brother of the King, Se'elä Krestos became, according to Almeida, a second St. Paul, in destroying the errors of Judaism and of the heresies of Eutyches and Dioscurus.<sup>13</sup> He organized religious colloquies, but instead of acting as a referee, he showed himself favorable to the Jesuits. At the end, the emperor imposed silence on the adversaries.

Little by little he began a turn toward intransigence. He began to act as if he were possessed by a mania for omnipotence. While he justified himself, declaring himself free to imitate his illustrious ancestor Solomon in maintaining a well-furnished harem, he sought to crush his foreign (Falasacia, Galla) and domestic enemies. Abuna Simeon reacted with an excommunication, but for the moment it had no success. Reluctant monks were whipped. In 1615 the negus published a Christological edict that did not set down the limit of the two natures, something very unpopular with the Monophysites. In this he affirmed that Christ was truly God and truly man; human nature in him was not dissolved, but was united with the divine nature in one sole person.<sup>14</sup> This was well put together, and thus acceptable. But the way in which it was imposed was open to criticism. The Monophysites feared that it might be the first step in a latinization and a more rigid Catholicizing. The dissident ras on their part found convenient the gathering of any occasion of discord to stir people up. Their working principle: the worse it is, the better for us.

A series of insurrections, wars, and palace intrigues followed, and these forced the negus into extended battles. At his side he had capable Catholic generals, of whom the first among all was his brother Se'elä Krestos.

The Jesuits in the meantime had given themselves to translations, to the running of colleges, which in 1620 were 3, with 80 students, to the evangelization of pagan areas like Agaw, which had gotten a promise of protection from the emperor in return for their accepting the Jesuits. In their correspondence two lines of thought began to face each other: the problem of the Catholic patriarchate and that of military support. The negus asked for 1500 Spanish soldiers, with whom he would be able to defeat his foes.

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<sup>12</sup>Tewelde Beiene, *ibid.*, 32.

<sup>13</sup>Tewelde Beiene, *ibid.*, 65.

<sup>14</sup>Tewelde Beiene, *ibid.*, 85.

The growing difficulties, instead of moderating the zeal of the ruler, made his love of self and his activism even more evident. He prohibited the observance of the Sabbath, and then, while the protest over the rebellion of the populations of the Damot grew, he proclaimed his adherence to Catholicism. This happened solemnly on November 2, 1621. In a background of great pomp the imperial treasurer Mälke'a Krestos recalled the Christological errors and the sad finish of the enemies of Orthodoxy, and he proclaimed valid for the Kingdom the condemnation of Dioscurus at Chalcedon. The only true doctrine was that of the two natures of Christ, not a doctrine brought in from outside, but one taught from the beginning in Ethiopia. The conclusion was: "this is the faith of the emperor, and this is our faith."<sup>15</sup>

Meanwhile, with the death of Paez in 1622, the mission remained short of missionaries, since there were four priests and a brother. The Jesuits made an effort, and sent a notable group of missionaries, and presented to Philip IV a list of candidates for the post of Patriarch. Alfonso Mendez (1597-1639) was chosen, a good theologian from Evora, who, however, knew nothing of Ethiopia. He was consecrated, with his coadjutor, Diego Seco, March 12, 1623. A second coadjutor had also been chosen, Juan da Rocha. Rarely had people less qualified been chosen for roles so delicate. Mendez was to arrive in Goa incognito, because the spies of the Turks were watching and could always smell good prey. Instead, he let himself take the hand of the mania of ostentation and he arrived with pontifical honors. Then he started questioning the priests about economic matters.

Finally he arrived in Ethiopia (1625), where, with the new personnel, an accentuated latinization was taking place. A Jesuit was nominated superior of all the monasteries and churches of the empire, something never heard of before. They thought that the Ethiopian Church did not validly administer the sacraments. They then started to purge the Ethiopian Missal and to mitigate the fast that the Ethiopians kept with such precision. Because they had communicated some doubts about the validity of the sacraments, they chose the "surer" solution: they rebaptized and they reordained.

Mendez, as opposed to Paez, who had acted prudently, instead of studying the situation and learning the language and the usages of the country, began to act immediately without tact, more like an autocrat than a pastor. Rather than seek, he imposed. He believed himself clothed with an almost absolute authority. Not even the Pope in Rome was so decisive and peremptory.

February 11, 1626, the solemn profession of faith of the negus was held. The date of Easter was imposed according to Roman calculation; a similar oath

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<sup>15</sup>Tewelde Beiene, *ibid.*, 147.

was imposed on all the provinces; the adversaries of the faith according to Chalcedon were liable to the law of lese majesty; all priests were suspended until they were approved by Mendez, anyone who did unite himself to the Roman Church and hid defaulters was liable to capital punishment; and the Wednesday fast was substituted by the Marian fast of Saturday. Barneto showed his true colors by an even more menacing gesture. He entered into the mother church of Ethiopia in which they believe the Ark of the Covenant is kept,<sup>16</sup> he destroyed the Tabernacle, after the monks had removed the Tablets, and had a new church built under a different title. In the place of the *Sancta Sanctorum*, a Roman altar was erected.<sup>17</sup>

Mendez continued on in his inflexibility. He did not wish to allow those who wished to return, even partially, to the Ethiopian rite. He had a famous abbot, an enemy to the catholic restoration, disentombed; he ordered a witch to be whipped; he permitted the missionaries to continue with their reforming assaults; and he did not act tactfully with a divorced princess.

The provinces were boiling. The emperor, exasperated, turned to the Patriarch for support. He asked that he might concede the restoration of the Coptic liturgy, of the Wednesday fast, the practice of circumcision, and the return of the date of Easter. Mendez granted some requests, but refused brusquely to permit the return to the rite of circumcision and the Easter celebration according to Coptic chronology.

On April 23, 1632, under the pressure of the hordes of rebellious country people, the emperor published a decree that seemed to Mendez an usurpation of his patriarchal prerogatives. The Patriarch ordered the negus to revoke the decree. He did, but by now events had overtaken his will. On June 24, 1632, he was forced to grant religious liberty. He did not abdicate, as many historians hold, but he was reduced to figurehead status. It was the first step in the suppression of Catholicism.

Once the negus died, declaring in full voice “I die in the holy faith of Rome,”<sup>18</sup> Mendez and the missionaries were expelled, and the more visible Catholics either forced into exile or condemned to death. Monophysitism was imposed again, and Ethiopia closed itself for two centuries to outside influx.

A Capuchin mission was founded in Cairo, thanks to Fr. Joseph de Tremblay. Frs. Agatangelo from Vendôme and Cassiano from Nantes got as far as Tebaide. Also, the Franciscans and, from 1698, the Jesuits, set foot in Egypt. From there they tried to arrive in Ethiopia. The problem for newcomers was,

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<sup>16</sup>From it the monks had removed and hidden the Tablets of the Law

<sup>17</sup>Tewelde Beiene, *op. cit.*, 283.

<sup>18</sup>Tewelde Beiene, *ibid.*, 377.

above all, in arriving. By now the doors of Ethiopia were closed, and the Copts felt a profound aversion to the “Franks.”

### **The Drama of Unity in St. Justin**

When St. Justin<sup>19</sup> arrived in Ethiopia (1839), he brought nothing new. If we examine his *Diario*<sup>20</sup> we clearly see that his thought process was not different from that of his contemporaries. He saw a Church that neglected the sacraments, needed of reform, and professed doctrinal positions that he judged heretical.

In a letter he wrote on June 4, 1841, he addressed himself to “the head of the heretical Copts.”<sup>21</sup> A little while later his *Diario* contains an imaginary conversation between a traveler, who is Justin himself, and the Abuna Salama:

*"Listen, Son" — he began to tell me while he squeezed my right hand between his two warm and trembling hands — "the Christians of this, my country, have now become like a bunch of grapes cut from the vine. For 40 years this has made me cry rivers of tears, day and night, in the sight of God, my Lord."*

*In fact, this word alone had been enough to open in his eyes what was like two fountains of tears. The expression which he used to describe the state of Christianity in Abyssinia, taking one of the most terrible images which Jesus Christ used as he spoke of sects and heresies, and pronounced by that man who was so moved by the evils in his country, conquered the great difficulty that I have to shed tears, for it made my cry like a baby.*

*It took a lot for both of us to return to the calm necessary to pick up the thread of our conversation. "Today is not a fast day" — the old man returned to his theme — "the time to dine has passed. Let us bless God all together for the providence, which he sends us, and then we will continue our conversation."*

*Salama: The holy David was certainly correct in the greater liveliness of his prayer, to cry out: 'Save me, O Lord'; because he was a saint, and yet he fell into sin. Old Eutyches, the hermit of*

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<sup>19</sup> The biographies dedicated to the saint are numerous: that of Arata (1939), Baetman (1939), Castagnola (1939), D'Agostin (1910), De Dominicis (1899), Demimuid (1905), Devin (1866), Guerra (1975), Herrera (1946), Larigaldie (1910), Lubeck (1922), Pane (1949), Salotti (1940), Spirito (1941) Troisi (1928-1935). Still valid is the biography of E. Lucatelli-L. Betta, *L'Abuna Yaqob Mariam (S. Giustino de Jacobis)*, Rome 1975.

<sup>20</sup> Giustino De Jacobis, *Scritti. I Diario*, Rome 2000.

<sup>21</sup> Giustino De Jacobis, *ibid.*, 162-164.



*Constantinople, who combated the blasphemies of Nestorius like an apostle, fell into the abyss of heresy.*

*Traveler: Ah! What human frailty. But, my father, it is said that in that condemnation of Eutyches' decided perfidy and vile jealousy went unchecked against the good Archimandrite. (...)*

*Salama: My son, call to mind Bishop Eusebius of Dorilea. It was the first time that Nestorius dared to proffer in the great Cathedral of Constantinople his blasphemies when this Eusebius, still a layman and a simple lawyer, stood up: "Patriarch" — he said intrepidly — "traitor of the deposit of faith, what a heresy you offer from such a seat of truth!" In an instant, the eyes of all those Catholics turned to him to see who he was, and to admire the newly made defender of the faith: all Constantinople knew of him from then on, and appreciated him. From that moment all the Catholics of Constantinople recognized him, who applauded his reproach as the most vigorous enemy of Nestorian impiety. The Archimandrite Eutyches, who, in that time and at his advanced age, shone forth as one of the first champions of truth against the errors of Nestorius, loved Eusebius, and became of one heart and one mind with him.*

*Traveler: Truly?*

*Salama: This is the truth attested to by all the truthful historians of that time. (...)*

*Traveler: My father. For what was Eutyches condemned? Was he aware of his error?*

*Salama: How blessed we would be if he were aware of his error. We Abyssinians would not be separated from the Common Father of the Faithful, from the Successor of St. Peter, from the Roman Pontiff. We would not be like sheep without a shepherd left to the wolves. Instead of confessing his error, he remained obstinate in his sin, and since he knew that the Roman Pontiff is the Head of the Church, he wrote him a letter.<sup>22</sup>*

*In another passage he wrote these clear words:*

*In Rome there is the true faith. In Rome there is the faith of St. Peter. The faith of St. Peter can never be lacking, as Jesus Christ says. The faith of Rome is the teacher of all. Tend my sheep, as*

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<sup>22</sup>Giustino De Jacobis, *ibid.*, 165-190.

*Jesus Christ says. He who holds to the faith of Rome holds the faith of Peter, of Jesus Christ. He who leaves the faith of Rome leaves the faith of Peter, and of Jesus Christ. I hold to the faith of Rome ... in Alexandria there are two Patriarchs, one separated from Rome, the other in union with Rome. If the Patriarch separated from Rome sends here the Abuna, what happened to Abuna Cirillo, who was chased out of Gondar, will happen to him. If an Abuna comes from the one who is in union with Rome, all the questions end. Jesus Christ has made the teacher of faith the Roman Pontiff. Is it true? Therefore, when we have a question we go to the Teacher made by Jesus Christ, and he lays down for us the true faith.*

*Do you wish to see if the Patriarch of Alexandria is a heretic? Read this book (The Dialogue on Abyssinian Faith in Amharic), and then think. The Patriarch of Alexandria says: "The faith of St. Peter has been lacking." Jesus Christ says: "Your faith, O Peter, will never be lacking!" Who speaks well? Jesus Christ! Therefore, the Patriarch speaks against Jesus Christ; therefore he is heretical. All the Abuni whom he has sent to you since he was separated from Rome were heretical; the faith that they have taught you is heretical. Do you wish to see it? Here there are three faiths, and all three cannot be true, because there is only one true faith. Therefore, in Abyssinia you do not know which one is the true faith. Therefore, your faith is lacking. If you wish to know it, go to the teacher made by Jesus Christ to teach the faith, and he will teach it to you. Where is the teacher of the faith, in Alexandria? No. In Alexandria is the successor of St. Mark. Now, Jesus Christ did not make St. Mark teacher of the whole Church. Where is this teacher, then? In Rome, in Rome is the successor of St. Peter, and the successor of St. Peter is the teacher of the Faith. So, if you like, then ask the Patriarch who is in Alexandria and who holds to the faith of St. Peter for an Abuna. He will come for nothing. In fact he will come to bring you money.<sup>23</sup>*

The ecclesiological thought of Justin did not change. Actually, it was this, his fidelity to the One Holy that permitted him to profess his faith, even if not to the point of shedding his blood.

From a practical point of view, he was full of attention and charity. He gave himself to guide the delegation of about 50 persons for the choice of an

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<sup>23</sup>Giustino De Jacobis, *ibid.*, 191-912.

Abuna,<sup>24</sup> which the Coptic Patriarch of Alexandria, Egypt had just made. The trip allowed Justin to take the delegation as far as Rome and Jerusalem, which for some, like the future Blessed Ghebre Michael, was a way to know better the Catholic Church. However, this positive result was cancelled out by the choice made of the new Abuna, in the person of the corrupt Fr. Andraos, better known as Abuna Salama (1821-1867).

Naturally, in this picture of the situation one must not forget that Justin did not find difficulties only outside the Church. His own Superior General did not think much of him. His confrere Giuseppe Sapeto left the priesthood. His confrere and successor Msgr. Lorenzo Biancheri was a “harsh and mean” man, who, moreover, showed himself opposed to the establishment of native clergy.

St. Justin was thus a man alone. But his was not the solitude of the wicked, but of the saints. He did not look for approval. Even in dialogue with the Ethiopian Church he spoke the truth. He spoke his faith.

If therefore it is difficult to consider him among those who prepared the way for the ecumenical movement, his true greatness was in his faith founded on the rock through which he lived and died. That faith prepared the way for a dialogue in the sense that he proclaimed with courage the truths in which he believed. This is also a way to open up the path to a meeting with our Coptic brothers.

His contribution to the reconciliation of the churches was different. Above all, he assumed fully local customs, he respected the mentality, and shared the life of the people he was evangelizing. Also, his lifestyle soaked in prayer, his austere but affable conduct and his respect for all assured for him much affection among the Coptic clergy. He did not commit the error of the Jesuits of the XVI-XVII century: he did not abolish ancient customs, he did not criticize rituals or tear down churches and altars. He was not a fierce latinizer. Those who came over to Catholicism were not forced to leave their own rite. From the beginning he worked to form a native clergy, a chore criticized, for example, by Biancheri. But in this way he worked for the future. As convinced as he was in his positions, he did not indulge in polemics. Convinced that he was right, he did not impose himself with intransigence, but with love. This was the winning weapon of Justin, and of all ecumenism.

(Robert Stone, C.M., translator)

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<sup>24</sup>As is known, at that time in Ethiopia there was no Patriarch. This was conceded only in recent times.