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AMERICA/CHILE - Three hundred years of the "Fiesta de los Indios" in honor of St. Michael the Archangel

Puerto Montt (Agenzia Fides) - The Apostolic Nuncio in Chile, Archbishop Ivo Scapolo, along with the Archbishop of Puerto Montt, His Exc. Mgr. Cristián Caro, presided the celebration of 300 years of the "Fiesta de los Indios". They came to the Calbuco island on a boat of the Navy to celebrate the feast in honor of St. Michael the Archangel, patron saint of the island. There was a large crowd in Calbuco, led by the priest and the mayor, waiting for them. The solemn Eucharist was followed by the procession with the Blessed Sacrament, then a moment of celebration during which local authorities gave a "poncho" to the Nuncio, in gratitude for his presence. According to the note from the Chilean Episcopal Conference to Fides, the Apostolic Nuncio, in the homily of the Mass, said inter alia that "the sword of St. Michael the Archangel must remember the weapons with which the Christian must always struggle: prayer, unity and love."
The "Fiesta de los Indios Caciques", well known, was born in 1712, when the indigenous of the place besieged the Spaniards of Calbuco and stole the image of St. Michael the Archangel, hiding it for 3 months in a secure place on the island of Huapi Abtao. The Jesuits asked the indigenous to return the sacred image, and they demanded in exchange for better treatment and the right to organize the party in Calbuco each year, with the celebration of a novena and a big party. The indigenous in fact much admired San Michele for the beauty of the statue and the respect which figure commanded. (CE) (Agenzia Fides 12/5/2012)

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