



REV. FATHER

**G. Mario Bianchi, s.d.b.**









ARCHBISHOP'S HOUSE,  
SHILLONG—793003.  
MEGHALAYA, INDIA.

31-3-1979.

*Dear Confreres,*

Fr. G. Mario Bianchi is no more, our hearts are greatly sore. The chair which he had occupied for about 33 years as secretary to Bishop Stephen Ferrando and as Chancellor of the Diocese of Shillong remained vacant for nearly a year to bear witness to Fr. Bianchi's absence.

M. G. Mario Bianchi was born on the 23rd October 1912 at Maccio Villaguardia in the Diocese of Como, Italy, of good parents Fu Giuseppe and Corti Speranza. After some years of schooling, he entered the Salesian Formation House of Ivrea on the 14th October 1929 at the age of 17 years. There, fired by love for souls and a missionary spirit, he volunteered for the Assam Missions. Before he left for Shillong (India), he received his religious habit at the hands of Very Rev. Fr. Peter Ricaldone, then Rector Major of the Salesian Society, on the 19th September, 1933. Then he left for Shillong (India) to start his Novitiate on the 7th December, 1933 with Mons. Stephen Ferrando (then Fr. Ferrando) as Novice Master.

During his novitiate, Bro. Mario Bianchi (so he was known), was put in charge of the sacristy for the whole year, except the last ten days when he had to make his Spiritual Retreat for the first Religious Profession. He was also elected secretary of the Sodality of the most Sacred Heart of Jesus (the Sodality of the Novices). He also took upon himself, — perhaps with the permission of the Novice Master — to be the private monitor of Brother Sebastian Paul who is now at St. Paul's Minor Seminary, Upper—Shillong.



As sacristan he was very particular in decorating and preparing the Altar for Mass with fresh flowers, and was very fond of serving Holy Mass. He was always the first to offer his services for the Church, for the academies on feast days, especially on the feasts of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and of Our Blessed Virgin. As Monitor, Bro. Paul bears witness that Bro. Bianchi had helped him very much in correcting his mistakes and short-comings.

He was always neat and clean in whatever he was doing, starting from his own dress and person. He was well loved by all his companions and the Novice Master. His Novitiate companions were : Colussi Maria Romeo, Doro Maria Antonio, Moja Maria Giuseppe, Negri Maria Alberto, Paul Maria Sebastian and Restelli Maria Angelo. They started the novitiate with seven and ended it with seven, a good record.

His motto was taken from the Gospel : "My food is to do the will of Him who sent me that I may perfect his work." (Jo. 4, 34). Indeed that seems to have been his satisfaction : to do the will of God expressed in the will and dispositions of his superiors.

After a well-received formation and foundation in religious life, he made his first triennial vows in Shillong on the 8-12-1934 at the hands of V. Rev. Fr. Scuderi, the then Provincial and his second triennial vows at Bandel, Bengal, on 8-12-1937. He made his practical training in Krishnagar, Bengal, as secretary to Mons. S. Ferrando, who was now the Bishop of Krishnagar. After a good formation and experience he got in Practical Training, he made his perpetual profession on the 16-2-1941. With this he once for all gave his life to the service of God and for the salvation of souls.

In the same year he started his Theological studies at Krishnagar and got his tonsure on the 4-6-1941 at the hands of Mons. Louis Morrow, Bishop of Krishnagar. Bishop Ferrando, who had known Bro. Mario Bianchi intimately felt that his being at the Bishop's House at Shillong was a great boon to him, arranged for his transfer to Shillong. It was here that this good religious,



so dedicated to his duties, stuck in this house for about 33 years as secretary, Chancellor, Procurator, Master of Ceremonies and the right-hand man to Bishop Ferrando.

He received his gradual steps of Ostiarius and Lector from the hands of Bishop Ferrando in the year 25-5-1942. At this juncture the whole of the North East of India felt the shock of World War II. All the Italian and German confreres, overnight, were herded together at the Mawlai Sacred Heart Theologate which had been requisitioned by the then British Government for the sick and wounded American soldiers. A few months later, they were taken to the Concentration Camp of Dooli at Dehradun, U.P., Northern India. Brother Mario Bianchi was among those taken. The life at the Camp was very trying and monotonous, but the good Religious took it for a means of sanctifying and forming himself. He continued his theological studies and received the Order of Exorcism and Acolyte on the 30th January, 1943 at the hands of Bishop Cialeo, followed by the Subdiaconate and Diaconate on the 8th December, 1943. On the 16th April 1944 he was happy to be ordained Deacon, that being the last step before the priesthood. And after preparing himself spiritually and intellectually, he was ordained a priest of God on the 8th December 1944 by Mon. B. Cialeo.

From now on his mind and heart was set on his priestly ministry. As soon as he was freed from the Concentration Camp, at the end of World War II, he came back to Shillong to be the righthand man of Bishop Stephen Ferrando.

One of our priests who had known Fr. Bianchi for a long time, has the following to say about him : "Twenty years ago, to say Bishop's House and Father Bianchi was synonymous. Though the government of the Diocese was less complicated than it is now, yet it was surprising how Father Bianchi could shoulder alone so much work and be everything to everybody. He was at the same time Secretary, Procurator, Chancellor, and Adviser to the Bishop and besides spared time for helping on Sundays to hear confessions at the Cathedral."



To take trouble for the sake of others is not a very common quality. Fr. Bianchi had cultivated this quality. He would sacrifice his own time and convenience in order to lighten the burden of others. Fr. Nicholas Tuligi of Sardinia says : "Fr. Bianchi has often lightened my burden by preparing documents for my stay in India and for my journeys abroad when I had to go home for the holidays."

### **Love for the House of God and for the Ceremonies.**

For any solemn function in the Cathedral Fr. Bianchi was the inspiring and devout figure that directed the ceremonies and religious functions with meticulous care. It was his love for the Church and for God that gave him strength to take such pains to prepare the Ceremonies well even when he was already sick and was walking on crutches.

### **His Care for the Missions.**

As Chancellor and Procurator of the vast Diocese of Shillong which then included the six Dioceses of Shillong - Gauhati (Archdiocese now) Tezpur, Dibrugarh, Kohima - Imphal, Silchar and Tura, Fr. Bianchi was either seen at his office table or travelling to the different mission stations encouraging the missionaries, correcting any abuse, if there was one, informing the Missionaries of the latest developments in the Church at large and suggesting ways and means of how to go ahead in the spreading of God's Kingdom.

The difficulties that confronted the Diocese then was the worry and anxiety of Bishop Ferrando as well as of Fr. Bianchi. And he had to be present immediately on the spot in order to overcome that difficulty. The difficulties were : Shortage of personel and of fund, encroachments upon mission lands - hence the need of mutual settlement or of legal action, the mishap of religious or priestly vocations, the keeping of the papers and documents up to date - the chronicle of the Diocese included - the contact with and approach to civil authorities for smooth



administration of the Church, all these needed giant shoulders and a daring and generous soul, and Fr. Bianchi had such shoulders and soul.

### **His love for children and for the poor.**

Fr. Bianchi's love for the children was based on the love of Christ for them : "Let the little children come to me, for of such is the Kingdom of heaven." (Mt. 19 : 14-15) One could see Fr. Bianchi's face brightened and full of joy when he was among the children. He always had a good word for them and wherever he went he always had a few sweets in his pocket in order to give joy to the children.

His love for the poor was no less. Up to this date I meet people who speak of Fr. Bianchi with love and gratitude. He was a father to them. The workers at Bishop's House took him as their own father. They would do any work for him, be it near or far, and no sacrifice was too great for them. They did this because they loved Fr. Bianchi and felt at home with him.

### **His last years.**

It was the terrible disease, T.B. of the bones, which crippled this giant of a worker and a religious. He had felt it for quite sometime before, but he did not think it was so serious. It was only after his nephew had suggested that he should go to Europe to be examined and treated properly that they found out he had this disease. Yet he did not want to leave his post; he wanted to "leave his bones in the missions" as he said it. It was only repeated request and out of obedience to his superiors that he agreed to go for treatment to Europe. He went, was treated for sometime, got a little relief of his pain, yet was not cured... So he came back to Shillong walking on crutches. With all this he was still at his office table trying to do as much as he could for the Archdiocese. We of Archbshop's House felt very painful to see Fr. Bianchi in this condition. We advised him to go once more to Europe for another course of treatment. He reluctantly



agreed, feeling perhaps that if he went, he would never return to his dear Khasi people.

On the day of his departure he shed tears and said : "Please pray for me." But it was the will of God, so he took it with a good heart. In Europe he submitted to a painful operation... hoping against hope for his recovery... He even hinted at going to Lourdes to go and pray to the Blessed Virgin Mary in order to get a cure if that was God's will, but now he could hardly move from his bed of pain. He was resigned and prepared himself for the last call of the Lord.

When all human means were exhausted, he was removed to another Hospital at Valduce in Como, Italy, to be near his own people, who were at Villaguardia, some 20 km. away.

Being well prepared and purified by all the sufferings he bore for so many years and by the generous dedication to his work, Fr. Bianchi gave up his spirit to the Lord on the 21st October, 1978 at the above mentioned hospital.

One of Fr. Bianchi's collaborators at Bishop's House, Shillong, Rev. Fr. Ivan Giacomello, speaks of him thus : "I lived, I worked and shared the joys and sorrows of late lamented Fr. Bianchi for about 30 years. What impressed me most of his life was his dedication to his duties and his love for the House of God. He did not spare himself when it was a question of preparing for some liturgical functions. He personally saw to it that everything was in order. He personally looked after the Cathedral, its equipments and religious vestments and vessels. People who came to visit it were wont to exclaim : "Really God is here!"

His funeral took place in the Church of Villaguardia (Como), his native place. It was attended by all the parishioners, because they held him in high esteem, and by a big number of friends and confreres, several of them also from India or those who had worked in the Assam Missions. The Archbishop of Shillong-Gauhati, Dr. Hubert Rosario, S.D.B., D.D., conducted the service. The funeral oration was delivered by Rev. Fr. Busolin,



S.D.B., a missionary now working in Rongjeng, Garo Hills (Meghalaya) India.

Throughout all the illness, Fr. Bianchi repeated often : "I offer my sufferings, especially by not being able to return to India, for the missions, for the welfare of the Archdiocese of Shillong—Gauhati and for the perseverance of the Seminarians who are now studying in the Archdiocesan Seminaries of the North East of India.

While offering our prayers for the repose of his soul, please do pray also for his people at home and for the missions in this North Eastern Corner of India where Fr. Bianchi had toiled and suffered and prayed and offered his life.

Yours fraternally in Christ,  
*Fr. T. Resto, S.D.B.,*  
Rector.

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REV. FR. G. MARIO BIANCHI, S.D.B.

Born : 23-10-1912.

Died : 21-10-1978.

—41 : Years of Religious Profession.

—33 : Years of Priesthood.



S.D.B. a missionary now working in Rongjeng, Garo Hills  
(Mekhlaya) India

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suffered and prayed and offered his life.

Yours faithfully in Christ,  
Fr. T. Kavan, S.D.B.,  
Rector.

Rev. Fr. G. Maria Bazzani, S.D.B.  
Died: 21-10-1978.  
Aged: 53-10-1913.  
—41: Year of Religious Profession  
—57: Year of Priesthood







