

Thomas Anchukandam

**Theological Formation  
of Salesians in India  
with Special Reference  
to Kristu Jyoti College  
Bangalore  
(1967-1976)**







ISTITUTO STORICO SALESIANO – ROMA

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STUDI – 31



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Tipografia Salesiana Roma - 00181 Roma - Via Umbertide, 11  
Tel. 06.78.27.819 - 06.78.48.123 - E-mail: [tipolito@donbosco.it](mailto:tipolito@donbosco.it)  
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## Acronyms

AAB	Archives of the Archdiocese of Bangalore
AAS	Archiepiscopal Archives, Shillong
ACS	Atti del Capitolo Superiore – Acts of the Superior Chapter; from January 1966 Atti del Consiglio Superiore – Acts of the Superior Council
ACT	Archives, Sacred Heart College, Tirupattur
AKJCB	Archives, Kristu Jyoti College, Bangalore
AME	Archives of Missions Étrangères
AOLLPL	Archives of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Lourdunagara
APGH	Archives, Provincial House, Gauhati
ARY	Archives, The Retreat, Yercaud
ASC	Archivio Salesiano Centrale, Roma
CHK	Chronicle of the House of Kotagiri
SAS	Scheda Anagrafica Segreteria (Sede Centrale Salesiana, Roma)
SPAC	Salesian Provincial Archives, Calcutta
SPAM	Salesian Provincial Archives, Madras



## AUTHOR'S NOTE

The laying of the foundation-stone of Kristu Jyoti College, Bangalore, on 25th March 1965 and its subsequent inauguration about three years later, on 24th February 1968, were the realization of the long-cherished desire of the Salesians to have a presence in Bangalore, that city in South India which for decades they had judged to be ideally suited for a Salesian presence. That it was a studentate of theology which would eventually be built, resulted from the fact of Our Lady's House, the first Salesian formation house in India started at Laitumkhrah, Shillong, in 1928, and shifted ten years later to its present site at Mawlai, having had to shift base from time to time owing either to wars or natural disasters. When the Indo-Chinese War broke out in 1962, the students of theology were yet again shifted out from Mawlai to Kotagiri, Tamilnadu. However, given the lack of the facilities considered necessary for imparting an adequate priestly formation, the Southern Salesian Province of St. Thomas the Apostle, Madras, decided to construct a studentate of its own in Bangalore. The newly built studentate, dedicated to *Christ the Light of the World*, at Sannathammanahalli, Krishnarajapauram, Bangalore, was appropriately named *Kristu Jyoti College*. In the meantime, given the lack of competent personnel and the inadequate facilities at Mawlai, the studentate of theology there had to be closed down temporarily in 1967 and the students were sent down to Kristu Jyoti College. The studentate of theology at Mawlai will eventually be reopened in 1976.

This study titled *Theological Formation of the Salesians of Don Bosco in India, with Special Reference to Kristu Jyoti College, Bangalore (1967-1976)*, respecting the norms of historical research, limits itself to the above-indicated ten-year period when the theologate in Mawlai remained closed and Kristu Jyoti College functioned as the Salesian Studentate of Theology for the whole of India.

After pointing out the distinct advantages which Bangalore offered towards the formation of clerics, including the climate, cosmopolitan setting, presence of several ecclesiastical, educational and religious institutions etc., this study focuses on a detailed presentation of the formation imparted by the College in keeping with the directives of both the Second Vatican Council and the Special General Chapter of the Salesian Congregation.

What prompted the writing of this work was the personal awareness of the author, that Kristu Jyoti, thanks to a combination of factors, including its setting, competent and committed group of professors and formators with an

open-minded and truly Salesian approach to formation during the past more than 50 years of its existence, has succeeded to a great extent, in providing a sound theological formation to generations of students besides proving itself to be a pioneer in several essential aspects of seminary formation like innovative pastoral involvements and collaboration with the local clergy.

The study makes abundant use of the relevant primary archival sources and seeks to situate them all in their general historical context and that with ample explanatory notes, wherever such references are called for in order to facilitate the reader's understanding of even the lesser known persons, locations and events. It is to the credit of Kristu Jyoti College, that it has turned out several generations of "pastors capable of living with the smell of the sheep" and who, having acquired the required level of spiritual and intellectual competence, have proved themselves to be capable of being with, accompanying and nurturing the flock entrusted to them in different parts of India and abroad.

This work, is basically a reworked version of the four articles, published in the *Ricerche Storiche Salesiane* (Nos.71-74), with the title *Kristu Jyoti College, Bangalore. The History and Significance of the Opening of the First Salesian Institution in the Archdiocese of Bangalore*. It is presented with grateful memories to all those who envisioned and realized the structures and created that special ambience suited to Salesian priestly formation in Bangalore, which must, in retrospect, be deemed quite unique in the annals of both Catholic and Salesian theological formation.

It is thought absolutely necessary to acknowledge and place on record my gratitude to Fr. Stanisław Zimniak, the coordinating secretary of *Istituto Storico Salesiano* (ISS) for his constant encouragement and support; Mrs. Cinzia Angelucci, the technical secretary of ISS, for getting the work ready for the press, Frs. Pius Palathingal, Jose Kuttianimattathil, Mathew Kappalikunnel, Joseph (Jiji) Kalavanal, Jose Varickasseril, Anthony Christy and the late Bro. Joseph Dass for their interest in the work and having aided it, be it through making available matter relevant to the work, or by going through the text and making valuable suggestions and valid comments. A special word of thanks is due to those responsible for the various archives consulted, especially, Fr. Petr Zelinka and staff of the *Archivio Salesiano Centrale* (ASC), Bro. Joseph Dass of the Salesian Provincial Archives, Madras (SPAM), Fr. James Kadankavil, the Rector and the one responsible for the Archives of Kristu Jyoti College, Bangalore (AKJCB), Fr. Chinnappan Antonyraj, the Rector of Salesian House, Tirupattur, Fr. Martin Kumar, for facilitating the research in the Bangalore Archdiocesan Archives (AAB) and several others who have contributed in varying degrees and different ways to the realization of this book.

The primary goal of writing this book is to pass on to posterity, and that



to the extent possible, the memory of the glorious vision, the sustained efforts and the accompanying sacrifices of the pioneer Salesians who laid the foundation for the theological formation of the Salesians in India and whose dreams, for an adequately staffed and endowed institution to realize those dreams, found expression in the imposing concrete structures of Kristu Jyoti College. If the Salesians in India today can legitimately take pride in having 2739 professed members and novices, which is by far the highest number for a single country in the world, then, much of the credit must go to the promotion of indigenous vocations in the post- Second World War era and the priestly and theological formation imparted by Kristu Jyoti College, Bangalore and that at a critical period in the history of the Church and of the Salesian Congregation.

Thomas Anchukandam sdb



## CHAPTER ONE

### **SALESIAN STUDENTATE OF THEOLOGY FROM MAWLAI TO BANGALORE**

The theological formation of the Salesians in India, owing to a number of factors – natural calamities and wars included – could in some ways be compared to the early years of Don Bosco's own experience of moving from place to place in search of a stable and secure site for his oratory. In fact, it may not be an exaggeration to state that for a not so insignificant part of 30 years before the inauguration of Kristu Jyoti College (1936-1967), the Salesians in India learnt theology as they literally moved from place to place – from Shillong to Toong (Kurseong), from Toong to Bandel, from Bandel to Mawlai, from Mawlai to Tirupattur and to the Internment Camps at Deoli and Dehra Dun, from Tirupattur and Dehra Dun to Mawlai and Yercaud, from Yercaud to Mawlai, from Mawlai to Poonamallee and Kotagiri, from Kotagiri to Mawlai (reopened for the first year students of theology), and finally from Kotagiri and Mawlai to Bangalore! Though, as will be seen in the course of this work, there was a ten-year period of relative stability between the time the students from Yercaud were asked to join those of Mawlai and the outbreak of the Indo-Chinese War, when the studentate of Mawlai served as the common theologate of the Salesians in India (1952-1962), it had its own struggles and uncertainties to deal with. Perhaps the more important of these was the increasing reluctance of the Government of India to grant visas to foreign missionaries which naturally impinged on the ability of those responsible to provide adequately trained staff for as important an institution as the studentate of theology.

Indeed, the construction and inauguration of Kristu Jyoti College in Bangalore, was a point of arrival for the Salesians in India from a double perspective – the fulfillment of a desire to have a studentate of theology in a stable and secure set-up and to have a Salesian presence in the Archdiocese of Bangalore<sup>1</sup> which for more than one reason was considered a very attractive and a much sought after destination for the religious congregations of the time.

<sup>1</sup> The Roman Catholic Diocese of Bangalore was erected on 13<sup>th</sup> February 1940 by Pope Pius XII and elevated to the rank of Metropolitan Archdiocese on 19<sup>th</sup> September 1953, with the suffragan sees of Belgaum, Bellary, Chikmagalur, Gulbarga, Karwar, Mangalore, Udupi, Mysore

Kristu Jyoti College, Bangalore, was officially inaugurated and blessed at 5 p.m. on 24<sup>th</sup> February 1968 by His Grace, Msgr. Duraisamy Simon (D.S.) Lourdaswamy<sup>2</sup>, Archbishop of Bangalore, in the presence of Rev. Fr. Luigi Ricceri, Rector Major of the Salesians of Don Bosco<sup>3</sup>, some of the members of the Superior Chapter of the Salesians<sup>4</sup>, all the Salesian Bishops and Provincials of Asia, who had come to Kristu Jyoti as participants in the Asia-level conference of the Salesian Congregation in preparation for its 20<sup>th</sup> (Special) General Chapter, representatives of several of the religious congregations in Bangalore, as well as a number of benefactors, friends and well-wishers. From a historical perspective, this event was in effect, not only a point of arrival – the final coming to port of a theologate which was forced to move from place to place in search of stability and security – but also a point of departure. It was a point of arrival since Kristu Jyoti College was the realization of the dream of the Salesians in India to have a well-staffed and adequately-equipped studentate of theology to serve the formation of their clerics drawn from a pluri-lingual, multi-cultural and international background. It was a point of departure as Kristu Jyoti incarnated in itself, and that in no small measure, the spirit of the times and especially of the Second Vatican Council

and Shimoga. The first Bishop of the newly erected Diocese was Msgr. Maurice-Bernard-Benoit-Joseph Despatures, MEP (1940-1942). He was succeeded by Msgr. Thomas Pothacamury (1942-1968). The two other Archbishops whose administrative period will be referred to in this work are Msgr. Duraisamy Simon Lourdaswamy (1968-1971) and Msgr. Packiam Arokiaswamy (1971-1986). [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman\\_Catholic\\_Archdiocese\\_of\\_Bangalore](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholic_Archdiocese_of_Bangalore). (4. 9. 2018). On 1<sup>st</sup> November 2006, the city was renamed Bengaluru, in keeping with the general trend in India to return to the pre-colonial names of cities and states. However, this paper given its historical nature and the fact of the documents used referring to the old colonial names, will use the names in the documents in an attempt to help avoid confusion especially among readers unfamiliar with the change of names.

<sup>2</sup> Msgr. D. S. Lourdaswamy was born at Kallery, Gingee Taluk, Tamil Nadu, on 5<sup>th</sup> February 1924. He had his priestly formation at St. Peter's Pontifical Seminary, Bangalore, and was ordained on 21<sup>st</sup> December 1951. He was the Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Bangalore (1962-1964), its Coadjutor Archbishop (1964-1968) and then Archbishop (1968-1971). Later, he was called to Rome where he held the post of Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda Fide (1973-1985). He died in Rome on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2014 at the age of 90. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duraisamy\\_Simon\\_Lourdaswamy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duraisamy_Simon_Lourdaswamy) (26.10.2018).

<sup>3</sup> Fr. Aloysius (Luigi) Ricceri was born at Mineo, Italy, on 8<sup>th</sup> May 1901. He was the Rector Major of the Salesians of Don Bosco for two six-year terms (1965-1977) and died on 15<sup>th</sup> June 1989 – Scheda Anagrafica Segreteria [SAS].

<sup>4</sup> The present General Council of the Salesians was referred to as the Superior Chapter and the ACTS known as *Acts of the Superior Chapter* (ACS) up to the year 1966 with the last of this series being ACS 243 (1966). From 1966 the name was changed to Superior Council and the ACTS referred to as *Acts of the Superior Council* (ASC) up to 1984 [No. 310]. From then on it is referred to as the General Council and the Acts titled *Acts of the General Council* (AGC).

and was to prove itself a studentate of theology with a difference – both structurally and in its approach to theological formation.

It was a point of arrival also from another perspective since it was a dream come true for the Salesians who, since 1927, had made several attempts to have a presence in Bangalore.

The pages that follow, after dwelling briefly on what made the City of Bangalore so attractive to the Salesians as also to other religious congregations, will examine the course of their initial unsuccessful efforts to have a presence in the city, before narrating the course of events which led to their establishing themselves most impactfully in the city with the construction and inauguration of Kristu Jyoti College. The concluding pages will also indicate how, after a period of about ten years as a studentate of theology serving the whole of India (1967-1976), following some lengthy discussions and in the interest of a more effective ministry in the region, the theologate of Mawlai would be reopened.

## 1. Bangalore – An Attractive Destination for Religious Congregations

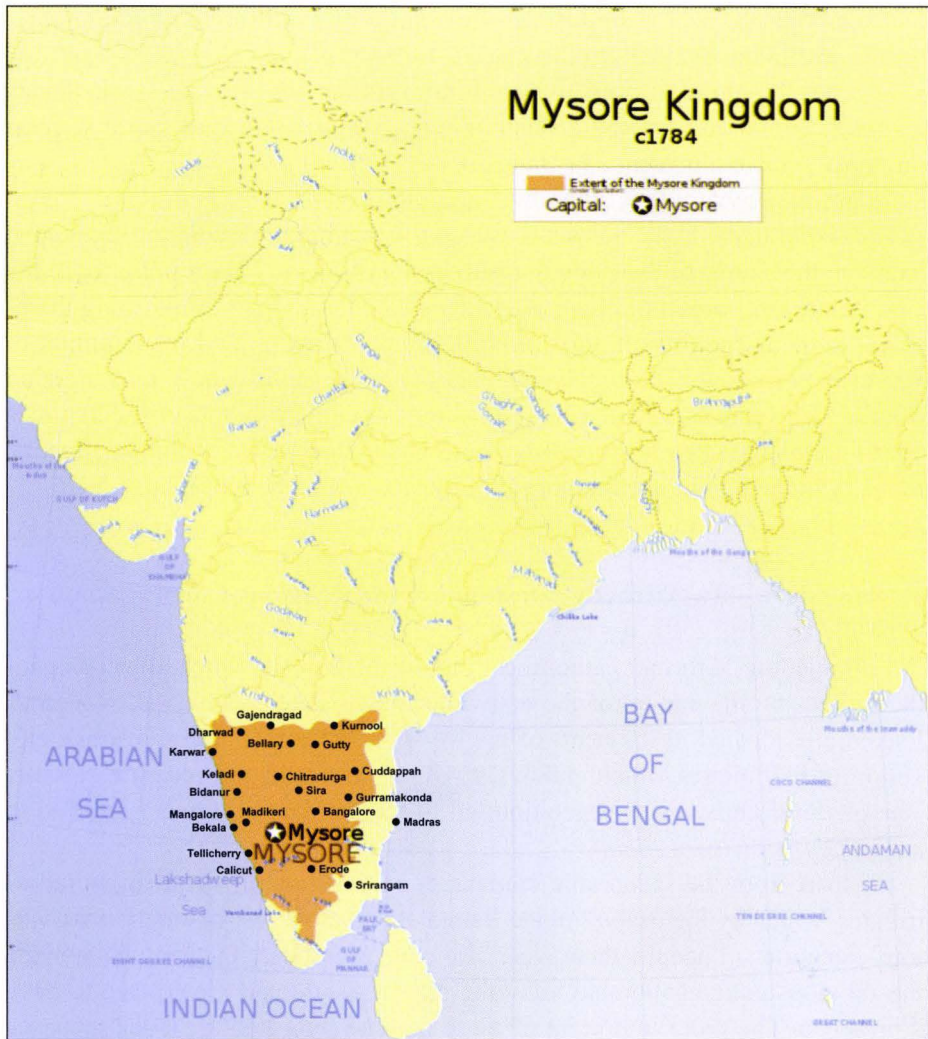
Bangalore, a former cantonment city of the British, which after independence became the capital of the erstwhile Indian state of Mysore<sup>5</sup>, is a landlocked city located in the heart of the Mysore Plateau. It has an average elevation of 920 metres which endows it with a very mild and pleasant climate. The plentiful and variant vegetation led to this verdant city being referred to as the *Garden City of India*<sup>6</sup>.

Apart from the favourable climatic conditions and associated natural attributes, which by themselves made Bangalore an attractive destination for various categories of people, there were also other significant factors, which made the religious congregations to view the city as a safe and ideal place to have a presence. The more important of these may be indicated as: i) the presence of a sizeable Christian population and the many institutions run by them and ii) the eclectic and favourable approach of the civil administration.

<sup>5</sup> Renamed Karnataka in 1973.

<sup>6</sup> Today, Bangalore, the capital of the federal Indian state of Karnataka, has become one of Asia's fastest growing cities. It is home to some of India's most advanced high-tech industries and premier scientific establishments and its thriving information technology industry has earned it the sobriquet of "Asia's Silicon Valley". Understandably in the context, the high tech boom was realized at the cost of its greenery and with it, its pleasant, temperate climate and the sobriquet of "Garden City". The foundation for the technological growth of the city was laid in the first half of the twentieth century during the very enlightened rule of the Mysore Maharajahs to which reference will be made in the course of this work.





### 1.1. *Christian Presence in Bangalore*

The British, after they had captured Mysore at the end of the Fourth Anglo-Mysore War<sup>7</sup>, finding Bangalore a pleasant and fitting place to station a military garrison, built there a cantonment within a radius of 34 sq. kms. and brought to the city the garrison which was up to then stationed at Srirang-

<sup>7</sup> In the Fourth Anglo-Mysore War (1798-1799) Tipu Sultan fell in battle at the gates of Srirangapatna on 4<sup>th</sup> May 1799. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tipu\\_Sultan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tipu_Sultan) (4.11.2018).

gapatna. Subsequently, seeing the growth of the city and the obvious administrative advantages, in 1831, the Maharajah of Mysore shifted his capital from Mysore to Bangalore<sup>8</sup>. Soon to the considerable number of Irish soldiers and other Christians who settled in the cantonment area, were added Christian migrants both from the other parts of the Mysore Kingdom and from the North and South Arcot districts of Tamilnadu<sup>9</sup>.

Consequently, by the turn of the century, Bangalore came to be considered a city with a significant Christian population and Institutions – churches<sup>10</sup> seminaries, educational institutions, hospitals and dispensaries – making an undeniable contribution also to the shaping of its inclusive metropolitan culture. Among the seminaries already present in the city before the arrival of the Salesians, mention must be made of St. Peter's Seminary, which was transferred from Pondicherry to Bangalore in 1934 and declared a Regional Seminary by the Holy See in 1942<sup>11</sup> and Dharmaram College, formally inaugurated on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1958 by the Papal Nuncio, Msgr. J. R. Knox<sup>12</sup>. Besides these very prominent seminaries, there were others, albeit smaller, like Mount St. Alphonsus – Major Seminary of the Redemptorists – started in 1951, St. Antony's Franciscan College established in 1952, Holy Cross Students' Home established in 1963 and Vidyadeep College – CRI Brothers' Institute, established in 1966<sup>13</sup>.

The Protestant Christian denominations too had their much esteemed

<sup>8</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bangalore\\_Cantonment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bangalore_Cantonment) (4.11.2018).

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> St. Mary's Basilica which was known as *Kaanikke Mathe Devalaya* (= Church of Our Lady of the Presentation). [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St.\\_Mary%27s\\_Basilica,\\_Bangalore](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Mary%27s_Basilica,_Bangalore) (4.11.2018); St. Francis Xavier's Cathedral [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St.\\_Francis\\_Xavier%27s\\_Cathedral,\\_Bangalore](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Francis_Xavier%27s_Cathedral,_Bangalore) (4.11.2018); St. Patrick's Church, <https://www.facebook.com/pages/St-Patricks-Church-Brigade-Road-Bangalore/690444567822096> (4.11.2018); and St. Mark's Cathedral, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St.\\_Mark%27s\\_Cathedral,\\_Bangalore](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Mark%27s_Cathedral,_Bangalore) (4.11.2018). St. Patrick's Church was dedicated to the patron of Ireland since it were the Irish soldiers who made generous contributions towards its construction and desired that it be named after St. Patrick: Adrien LAUNAY, *Histoire des Missions de l'Inde, Pondichéry, Maïssour, Coïmbatour*. Paris, Ancienne Maison Charles Douniol 1898, II, p. 108.

<sup>11</sup> It was not a new seminary but was the successor of the *Grand Séminaire* established at Ulgarpet, on the outskirts of Pondicherry, by the Members of the *Missions Étrangères de Paris* (MEP) in 1778. In 1790, the seminary was transferred to Pondicherry and renamed *St. Joseph's Seminary*. In 1934 when it was shifted to Bangalore, in a gesture of appreciation to the Society of St. Peter the Apostle, which bore a considerable part of the expenses for the construction of the new building, it was named after St. Peter. It was officially declared a *regional seminary* by the Holy See in 1942. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St.\\_Peter%27s\\_Pontifical\\_Seminary](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter%27s_Pontifical_Seminary) (4.9.2018).

<sup>12</sup> <https://nelsonmcb.com/2012/07/11/dharmaram-college-bangalore-a-major-seminary-of-the-cmi-congregation> (5.9.2018).

<sup>13</sup> [www.bangalorearchdiocese.com/?page\\_id=643](http://www.bangalorearchdiocese.com/?page_id=643) (5.9.2018).

institutions like the United Theological College (UTC) of South India and Ceylon (Sri Lanka) established in 1910, which was realized thanks to the co-operation of The London Missionary Society, The Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, The United Free Church of Scotland, The Arcot Mission of the Reformed Church in America and the Trustees of the Jaffna College Funds, and The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (S.P.C.K.)<sup>14</sup>. Another prominent non-Catholic Christian institution in the city was the Ecumenical Christian Centre (E.C.C.) founded by M. A. Thomas, the visionary priest of the Mar Thoma Church, and which as the name itself suggests, had the specific goal of promoting unity among the Christians<sup>15</sup>.

Among the Catholic-run health centres and hospitals mention must be made of St. Martha's Hospital established way back in 1886 by the Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, thanks to the initiatives of the then Vicar Apostolic of Bangalore, Msgr. Étienne Louis Charbonnaux M.E.P.<sup>16</sup>, and St. John's National Academy of Health Sciences (SJNAHS) established in 1963 through the initiative of Msgr. Louis Mathias SDB<sup>17</sup>. The latter institution was named after St. John the Baptist, the patron of Pope John XXIII, as a mark of appreciation for the Pope's personal interest in the project and for his approval of its aims and ideals<sup>18</sup>.

The more important Christian educational institutions in the city were St. Joseph's College, founded in 1882 by the members of the Paris Foreign Missions Society (MEP)<sup>19</sup> and subsequently transferred to the Jesuits in 1937<sup>20</sup> and the Mount Carmel College, which was first founded at Trichur, Kerala, by the Carmelite Sisters of St. Theresa (CSST) and later transferred to Bangalore in 1948<sup>21</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/utc.bangalore> (5.9.2018).

<sup>15</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecumenical\\_Christian\\_Centre](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecumenical_Christian_Centre) (5.9.2018).

<sup>16</sup> <http://hospitalsdata.com/india/st-marthas-hospital-bangalore.html> (5.9.2018).

<sup>17</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St.\\_John%27s\\_Medical\\_College](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._John%27s_Medical_College) (5.9.2018). Msgr. Louis Mathias was born in Paris, France, in 1887. He made his first profession in 1905 and was ordained priest in 1913. He came to India in January 1922 as the leader of the first group of Salesian missionaries to Assam. He was nominated Prefect Apostolic of Assam in 1922; Provincial of India in 1926 and Bishop of Shillong in 1934. In 1935, he was transferred to Madras as its archbishop. He died in Italy on 3.8.1965 at the age of 78. Louis KUMPILUVELIL - Charles PANACKEL (eds.), *A Journey with the Young-A Saga of Education, Evangelization and Empowerment. Don Bosco India Centenary (1906-2006)*. New Delhi, Salesian Provincial Conference of South Asia (SPCSA) 2006, p. 297.

<sup>18</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St.\\_John%27s\\_Medical\\_College](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._John%27s_Medical_College) (5.9.2018).

<sup>19</sup> The original French name of the Society to which this group of missionaries belonged is *Les Missions Étrangères de Paris* and hence the abbreviation *M.E.P.*

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.sjc.ac.in/> (5.9.2018).

<sup>21</sup> <http://admissionq.com/college/mount-carmel-college-bangalore> (5.9.2018).

Bangalore could also lay claim to have been the historic venue for the proclamation of the establishment of the Catholic Hierarchy of India (1886) by Msgr. Ladislaus Michael Zaleski on behalf of Pope Leo XIII<sup>22</sup>.

## 1.2. Favourable Attitude of the Civil Administration

The fact of Bangalore becoming a city with so many educational institutions established and run by different groups is owed to the particularly eclectic political and religious climate verified in the Mysore Kingdom throughout the reign of the Wadayars<sup>23</sup>. Understanding this aspect in its proper historical context is considered particularly significant not only for the students of the missionary history of the Catholic Church in India in general but also for those interested in the history of the Salesian Congregation in particular.

### 1.2.1. Eclectic Religious Outlook

In keeping with the Indian eclectic ethos, the Wadayars were known for their fair treatment of all their subjects without considerations of religious or caste affiliations. Their great generosity towards the Catholic missionaries was referred to by several of the missionaries – both Jesuits and members of the Paris Foreign Missions Society (MEP). These Hindu rulers were willing even to extend their protection to the missionaries and challenge the Catholic colonial powers who were, mainly on account of political reasons, inimical towards certain groups of missionaries.

A particularly significant example of the generosity of the Wadayars of Mysore is mentioned by Domenico Ferroli, S.J. in his *Jesuits in Mysore*. The author situates the event in the context of the suppression of the Society of Jesus by Pope Clement XIV on 12th July 1773 through the Brief *Dominus ac Redemptor*<sup>24</sup>. Once the suppression became a *fait accompli*, the Portuguese

<sup>22</sup> Cf A. LAUNAY, *Histoire des Missions...*, III, pp. 542-543. The Catholic Hierarchy of India was established by Pope Leo XIII on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1886 through the Bull *Humanae Salutis*.

<sup>23</sup> The Wadayars (also spelt Wodeyer or Odeyer or even Wadiyar) ruled the Kingdom of Mysore from 1399 to 1950. From 1760 to 1799 the actual power was in the hands of the Dalwais or commanders-in-Chief (Hyder Ali and at his death, Tipu Sultan, his son). After the defeat and death of Tipu Sultan at the Battle of Seringapatam (1799), the Wadayars who were restored to the throne by the British, became the latter's subsidiaries, compelled to pay an annual subsidy.[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wadiyar\\_dynasty](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wadiyar_dynasty) (8.9.2018).

<sup>24</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suppression\\_of\\_the\\_Society\\_of\\_Jesus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suppression_of_the_Society_of_Jesus) (22.10.2018). The Pope suppressed the Society of Jesus due to the political pressure exerted on him by the

authorities in Goa demanded that the King of Mysore hand over to them all the Jesuits working in his territories. The magnanimity, the broad-mindedness and the courage of the King in defending what he thought was right is evident in his response to the Portuguese. He, in fact, appeared quite perplexed at the request and replied that *the Jesuits had worked in his kingdom for over 100 years, had kept his laws, had done good to the people and hence he would not hand them over or exile them*<sup>25</sup>!

Another gesture of benevolence towards Catholic missionaries on the part of the rulers of Mysore was when in 1843 Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar III (1799-1868), himself a scholar, writer and promoter of culture and science<sup>26</sup>, laid the foundation of a Catholic church in Mysore. An inscription to commemorate the event was worded as follows:

“In the name of that only God – the universal Lord who creates, protects, and reigns over the universe of Light, the mundane world and the assemblage of all created lives – this church is built 1843 years after the incarnation of Jesus Christ, the Enlightenment of the World, as man”<sup>27</sup>.

The Maharaja went a step further and in an impressive gesture, donated a thousand rupees for the construction of the church and made a monthly allocation of thirty rupees for the maintenance of the priest in-charge of the Catholic community and made provisions for a grant of 200 rupees to the missionaries to build a school and a hostel for the students and an additional sum of 30 rupees for the teacher and the night-watchman<sup>28</sup>!

Ninety years later in 1933, on the same site, Maharajah Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV laid the foundation-stone for a new church in honour of St. Philomena where the relic of the saint was to be installed. This relic was, in fact, given to Sir T. Thambuchetty<sup>29</sup>, a Catholic, who was the Huzur Secre-

Catholic powers Portugal, France, Spain, Austria-Hungary, and the Two Sicilies, which had already suppressed the Society in their territories.

<sup>25</sup> Domenico FERROLI, *Jesuits in Mysore*. Kozhikode, Xavier Press 1955, p. 192. The ruler of Mysore at the time was Bettada Chamaraja Wodeyar VIII (1770-1776).

<sup>26</sup> [www.ksu.ac.in/en/mummadi-krishnaraja-wodeyar/](http://www.ksu.ac.in/en/mummadi-krishnaraja-wodeyar/) (22.10.2018).

<sup>27</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St.\\_Philomena%27s\\_Cathedral,\\_Mysore](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Philomena%27s_Cathedral,_Mysore) (22.10.2018).

<sup>28</sup> Archives des Missions Étrangères (A.M.E.), vol. 1000, pp. 47 & 48. Charbonnaux to Dubois. Bangalore, February 12, 1842; *ibid.*, pp. 861-863. Charbonnaux to Tesson. Mysore, September 19, 1844. Cf also A. LAUNAY, *Histoire des Missions...*, II, pp. 118-119.

<sup>29</sup> After the Rendition of Mysore which took place in 1881, T.R.A. Thumboo Chetty/Thambuchetty (1837-1907) was nominated ex-officio Senior Member of the Maharaja Chamarajendra Wodeyar's Council and later appointed one of the three judges of the Chief Court of Mysore. Eventually he went on to become its Chief Judge in July 1890 – the first Indian to hold the title. When Sir K. Seshadri Iyer was the Diwan of Maharaja Chamaraja Wodeyar and during the minority of his successor Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV with his mother Kempa Nanjam-



tary to the Maharaja, in 1926 by Msgr. Pietro Pisani, Apostolic Delegate of the East Indies<sup>30</sup>. Sir Thambuchetty handed over the relic to Fr. Jules Louis Cochet, MEP, who worked in the Mysore missions and who in turn approached the Maharajah for help to build a new church<sup>31</sup>. The Maharaja laid the foundation-stone of the church on 28<sup>th</sup> October 1933. In his speech on the occasion, he said: “*The new church will be strongly and securely built upon a double foundation – Divine compassion and the eager gratitude of men*”. This church is also a good example of the blending of local culture as some of the statues of women are draped in sarees as per the local custom<sup>32</sup>.

### 1.2.2. Efficient and Forward-looking Administration

The reign of Krishnaraja Wadayar IV is considered the Golden Age of the Kingdom of Mysore. He was referred to by some as the philosopher-king, living the ideals expressed in Plato’s *Republic* while others made bold to say that his kingdom was a reflection of the *Rama Rajya*, the Hindu equivalent of the Kingdom of God. Lord John Sankey<sup>33</sup>, the Lord Chancellor of England, went as far as to declare at the Second Round Table Conference in London held in 1930, that “*Mysore is the best administered state in the world*”<sup>34</sup>.

During his reign, Krishnaraja Wadayar worked towards alleviating poverty and improving rural reconstruction and public health, and towards promoting industry and economic regeneration, education and the fine arts<sup>35</sup>. He was a patron of science and technology and established in the city several institutions among which special mention could be made of *The Indian Institute of Science* in 1911 on a 371-acre plot and *The Hindusthan Aircraft* which was later renamed as *The Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)* in 1940<sup>36</sup>.

mani Vani Vilasa Sannidhana as the Regent, Thambo Chetty officiated as the Diwan on five occasions (1890, 1892, 1893, 1890 and 1897). [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/T.\\_R.\\_A.\\_Thumboo\\_Chetty](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/T._R._A._Thumboo_Chetty) (15.9.2018).

<sup>30</sup> Msgr. Pietro Pisani was the Apostolic Delegate of the East Indies with his residence in Bangalore from 1919 to 1924. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apostolic\\_Nunciature\\_to\\_India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apostolic_Nunciature_to_India) (6.10.2018).

<sup>31</sup> <https://sites.google.com/site/thumboochetty/mep>. (22.10.2018).

<sup>32</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St.\\_Philomena%27s\\_Cathedral,\\_Mysore](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Philomena%27s_Cathedral,_Mysore) (22.10.2018).

<sup>33</sup> Lord John Sankey (1866-1948) was the Lord Chancellor of England from 1929 to 1935 and was made the Viscount of Morton in the County of Gloucester in 1932. He was one of the architects of the Declaration of the Rights of Man (1940). [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_Sankey,\\_1st\\_Viscount\\_Sankey](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Sankey,_1st_Viscount_Sankey) (22.10.2018).

<sup>34</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Krishna\\_Raja\\_Wadiyar\\_IV](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Krishna_Raja_Wadiyar_IV). (22.10.2018).

<sup>35</sup> K. (Kondajji) PUTTASWAMIAH, *Economic Development of Karnataka: A Treatise in Continuity and Change*. New Delhi, Oxford & IBH, 1980, p. 3.

<sup>36</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Krishna\\_Raja\\_Wadiyar\\_IV](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Krishna_Raja_Wadiyar_IV). (8.9.2018).

His modernisation efforts were taken forward by his two capable Diwans<sup>37</sup>: Mokshagundam Vishweshwaraya<sup>38</sup> (1912-1919), who was referred to as the “Father of Modern Mysore State” and is noted for his famous statement “Industrialise or Perish”<sup>39</sup> and Sir Ismail Mirza (1926-1941)<sup>40</sup>, whose mentor Vishweswaraya himself, recommended him to the Maharaja for the post of Diwan<sup>41</sup>.

Sir Ismail Mirza appears to have had a good personal rapport with at least two of the Apostolic Delegates who were resident in the city viz., Msgr. Pietro Pisani, who was in Bangalore from 1919 to 1924 and Msgr. Pietro Fumasoni Biondi (1916-1919)<sup>42</sup>, as may be inferred from a letter written by Msgr. Leo Kierkels O.P.<sup>43</sup>, on 1<sup>st</sup> December 1944 to Bishop Thomas Pothacamury of Bangalore<sup>44</sup>. This letter, as will be seen shortly, was also indicative of the fact that the Diwan was eager to involve the religious congregations too in contributing to the educational and technical development of the city.

On account of these prevalent favourable circumstances, from the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there was what could be termed a “congregational rush” to Bangalore primarily to set up their houses of formation not only on account of the salubrious weather but more to avail themselves of the cosmopolitan set-up as well as the religious, educational, medical and other facilities on offer in the city. In fact, the *Chronicle of Kristu Jyoti College*, makes a direct reference to these and other advantages which the city enjoyed when it states:

“The city of Bangalore, which enjoys a congenial climate, the cultural atmosphere of several well-known institutions, ecclesiastical and civil, a central location and easy accessibility, attracted the attention of the pioneer Salesians ever

<sup>37</sup> Referred to also as Dewan, the title used for the head of the administration in the princely State of Mysore.

<sup>38</sup> Also referred to as Sir Mokshagondam Vishweshwarayya.

<sup>39</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M.\\_Visvesvaraya](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M._Visvesvaraya) (8.9.2018).

<sup>40</sup> A Muslim whose full name was Sir Mirza Muhammad Ismail-Amin-ul-Mulq.

<sup>41</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mirza\\_Ismail](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mirza_Ismail) (8.9.2018).

<sup>42</sup> Pietro Fumasoni Biondi (4 September 1872 - 12 July 1960) served as Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda Fide in the Roman Curia from 1933 to 1960 when he was elevated to the cardinalate: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pietro\\_Fumasoni\\_Biondi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pietro_Fumasoni_Biondi) (6.10.2018).

<sup>43</sup> Msgr. Leo Peter Kierkels, OP was the Apostolic Delegate of the East Indies from 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1931 to 12<sup>th</sup> June 1967. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apostolic\\_Nunciature\\_to\\_India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apostolic_Nunciature_to_India) (6.10.2018).

<sup>44</sup> Msgr. Thomas Pothacamury (1889-1968) was ordained priest in 1916, was appointed Bishop of Guntur in 1940 and in 1942 made the Bishop of Bangalore. In 1953, when the diocese was raised to the status of an archdiocese, he became its first archbishop. He remained in office till his retirement in 1968. <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/bishop/bpath.html> (23.10.2018). The letter in question will be quoted later during the course of this narration in fn. no. 116.

since they realized their work was being blessed by God, in the words of His Grace, Mgr. Mathias, the pioneer and the patriarch of the Salesian works in India, «in a scandalous manner»<sup>45</sup>.

However, as will be evidenced in the course of this narration, the early attempts of the Salesians to gain access to the city did not prove all that successful.

## 2. Early Attempts of the Salesians to Come to Bangalore

As early as 1927, Fr. Pietro Ricaldone, the Canonical Visitor<sup>46</sup>, while pointing out Yercaud as being fit for a novitiate, had said “*We must go to Bangalore*”<sup>47</sup>. Ever since then the Salesians in India had been trying to realize that wish. But for more reasons than one, and among them a clear lack of enthusiasm on the part of the local ecclesiastical authorities to have the Salesians in the Archdiocese, prevented this wish being realized. However, they persisted with different projects like an industrial school in 1940, a novitiate and a studentate of philosophy at the time of the releasing of the Salesians from the internment camp during the Second World War in 1944 and finally a studentate of theology to serve the whole of Salesian India in 1963. In fact, in 1950, when the Southern Province of St. Thomas, the Apostle, Madras<sup>48</sup> was planning to have its own formation houses, Fr. Joseph Carreño, the then Provincial<sup>49</sup>, had himself spoken of the choice of Yercaud

<sup>45</sup> AKJCB – Chronicle, vol. 1, *From the Beginning up to June 1975*, p. 1.

<sup>46</sup> The year of the Extraordinary Visitation (Canonical Visit) by Fr. Peter Ricaldone given as 1929 in the Chronicles of Kristu Jyoti College must be considered erroneous since the said visitation took place in 1927 and lasted three months (10<sup>th</sup> January to 10<sup>th</sup> April). Cf Joseph THEKKEDATH, *A History of the Salesians of Don Bosco in India from the Beginning up to 1951-52*. 2 vols. Bangalore, Kristu Jyoti Publications 2005, I, pp. 144-145. According to Thekkedath, this visit by Fr. Ricaldone, the then Prefect General of the Congregation and the one in-charge also of the missions and who eventually became the Rector Major (1932-1951), had a singular impact on the expansion of the Salesian works in India.

<sup>47</sup> AKJCB - Chronicle, vol. I, p. 1.

<sup>48</sup> Renamed “Chennai” in 1996 and the Province of Madras too subsequently came to be known under this new name although the Province continues to keep the earlier abbreviation – (INM).

<sup>49</sup> Joseph Carreño was born in Spain in 1905. He made his first profession in 1922 and was ordained in 1932. He came to India in June 1933, and was appointed novice master at Tirupatur in 1934. He was made the Acting Provincial of the Province of Madras for two years (1943-1945) during the Second World War since the then Provincial, Fr. Eligio Cinato, an Italian, was sent to the Internment Camp at Dehra Dun. After the War, Fr. Carreño was nominated Provincial (1945-1951). He spent ten years in Portuguese Goa (1952-1962) before going

for the theologate as being provisional and had left open the possibility of it remaining on at Yercaud or of being eventually shifted to Kotagiri or Bangalore<sup>50</sup>. It will finally be only in 1967 that the Salesians would have their wish fulfilled when the studentate of theology, *Kristu Jyoti College*, was built and inaugurated at Thambuchettiur/Thambuchettipalaya, Krishnarajapuram, Bangalore.

## 2.1. *Industrial School and Formation House for Coadjutors*

Chronologically speaking the first documented attempt of the Salesians to have a presence in the city of Bangalore was when Fr. Eligio Cinato<sup>51</sup>, the Provincial of the Southern Province of Madras, made a request to the Bishop of Bangalore as well as the civil authorities, seeking permission to set up an industrial school in the city<sup>52</sup>.

## 2.2. *The Context*

The Salesians, in imitation of Don Bosco, had always placed great importance on the setting up of technical institutions to provide the required skills especially to those youngsters who could not afford or were not given to a formal education. In fact, this must be considered one of the greatest contributions of the Salesians to the building of the Italian Republic especially in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when Italy was going industrial<sup>53</sup>.

to the Philippines as the novice-master (1962-1967) and his eventual return to Spain. He died in Alzuza, Spain on 29<sup>th</sup> May 1986 at the age of 81. L. KUMPILUVELIL - C. PANACKEL (eds.), *A Journey with the Young...*, p. 303.

<sup>50</sup> ASC F185, Carreño to Fedrigotti dtd. 30.7.1950; 21.7.1950. Here Fr. Carreño gives a very studied presentation of the advantages in having the formation houses in the South and the inadvisability of sending the bigger number of students from the South to the North.

<sup>51</sup> Eligio Cinato was born in Italy in 1898 and came to India as a novice in 1923. He made his first profession in 1925 and was ordained in 1930 in Shillong by Archbishop Mederlet. In 1934 he was made the first Provincial of the newly erected Province of St. Thomas, the Apostle, Madras. He died at Cherrapunjee on 15<sup>th</sup> January 1964 at the age of 66: L. KUMPILUVELIL - C. PANACKEL, *A Journey with the Young...*, p. 297.

<sup>52</sup> There had apparently been several attempts already on the part of the Salesians to come to the city as may be gathered from the letter of Msgr. Thomas Pothacamury, Bishop of Bangalore which he wrote to the Apostolic Delegate, Msgr. Leo Kierkels O.P. on 14<sup>th</sup> November 1944. Cf fn. no. 115.

<sup>53</sup> Cf José Manuel PRELLEZO, *Scuole Professionali Salesiane. Momenti della loro storia (1853-1953)*. Roma, CNOS-FAP 2010; ID. (a cura di), *Giuseppe Bertello. Scritti e documenti sull'educazione e sulle scuole professionali*. Introduzione, premesse, testi critici e note. (= ISS – Fonti, Serie seconda, 13). Roma, LAS 2010; ID., *Il laborioso cammino verso l'organizzazione*

In line with this approach, the Salesians who had first come to Tanjore in 1906 had themselves established an industrial school there which with time had garnered much appreciation from various quarters. However, the Salesians having to move out of Tanjore in 1928 on account of the difficulties they encountered with the *padroado* diocese of Mylapore, whose Bishop had earlier invited them to Tanjore, proved a great setback to their efforts in this regard<sup>54</sup>. However, they persisted with their efforts to provide a technical education to the orphans in their care as well as the poorer sections of the society by setting up houses for artisans like the one at Vellore<sup>55</sup> and being on the look out for favourable opportunities wherever else it was considered beneficial. Thus in 1940 Fr. Cinato, the Provincial, decided to try out the possibility of setting up an industrial school in Bangalore. The well-known intent of the civil authorities to promote skill-training and technical education must also be considered a factor in this his decision. Though the attempt did not have the intended results, the Salesians made another attempt again in 1965 with a more elaborate project, which too was not destined to be successful. Though neither of these attempts proved successful, it is thought that from the historical perspective of this narration, they should also be mentioned albeit briefly.

### 2.2.1. The First Attempt

Decided on trying to establish a technical school in the very favourable context of Bangalore, Fr. Cinato sent his letter of request to both the ecclesiastical and civil authorities indicating his desire to set up a technical school in the city. But the diocesan authorities appeared to have been not in favour of his proposed project. At this the Diwan Sir Ismail Mirza, who had also received an identical request, wrote directly to Msgr. Pietro Pisani, former Apostolic Delegate to India (1919-1924) asking him to get in touch with Cardinal Fumasoni, the Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of the *Propaganda Fide*, so that the project could be realised. The following extract from the letter of Msgr. Leo Kierkels O.P., Apostolic Delegate of the East Indies (1931-1948), to Mgr. Thomas Pothacamury, Bishop of Bangalore, dated 1<sup>st</sup> December 1944, gives a clear indication of the personal interest of the Diwan

*di "vere e proprie scuole professionali" salesiane (1888-1910).* Roma, LAS 2009 for an understanding of the importance that the Salesians placed on technical education and skill-training from the time of Don Bosco and which made a significant contribution to the cause of nation-building at a time when Italy was in the process of industrializing itself.

<sup>54</sup> Cf J. THEKKEDATH, *A History of the Salesians...*, I, pp. 70-84 for an understanding of the reasons why the Salesians left Tanjore.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 509; vol. II, p. 983.

in this project for the Salesians to be realized in Bangalore which the Maharajah of Mysore was trying to turn into a technological and industrial hub.

“Father Cinato approached the authorities (civil and ecclesiastical) for the establishment of an industrial school, and as the project was not favoured by the then administration, the Dewan, Sir Mirza, wrote to the S. Congregation of Propaganda through Mgr. Pisani, former Apostolic Delegate. In consequence Cardinal Fumasoni by letter No. 1726/40 of 19<sup>th</sup> June 1940 expressed his desire that the proposed institution should be allowed if and when, after the war, the Salesians were desirous of undertaking the work. If ever the question comes up again it will be well to refer to the Apostolic Delegation for the full text of the above quoted letter”<sup>56</sup>.

Unfortunately, the project could not be realized on account of the ongoing War. The Salesians could not also proceed in the matter immediately after the War since they had to deal with its after-effects and come to terms with the impact that the Post-Independence India would have on foreign missionary activities in India with a more stringent governmental control on visas and with a clear insistence on indianisation. Nevertheless, a second attempt to set up an industrial school in Bangalore will be made in 1965.

#### 2.2.2. The Second Attempt

The second attempt had to do with the desire of the Salesians to start an inter-provincial<sup>57</sup> industrial school and a formation house for the coadjutor brothers at Coimbatore with the collaboration of *Misereor*, Germany. This was, in effect, the continuation of a similar project which Fr. Carreño had tried to realise at Tirupattur immediately after the War.

Fr. Joseph Carreño, was a well-known enthusiast for technical training. Thus, during his visit to Europe in 1946-1947 he made a special drive to get some technically qualified coadjutors to come to India in order to train boys and coadjutor aspirants. This paved the way for the beginning of the school of coadjutor aspirants at Tirupattur in 1948 with five sections viz., weaving and tailoring, carpentry, mechanics, art section and the printing press<sup>58</sup>.

The workshops of the mechanics and the carpenters made progress with new machines and tools and a new building to house the technical school

<sup>56</sup> AAB – SDB – RF 37, Vol. I.

<sup>57</sup> The three provinces in India at the time were that of St. John Bosco, Calcutta, erected on 28<sup>th</sup> May 1926; that of St. Thomas the Apostle, Madras, erected on 24<sup>th</sup> January 1934; and that of Mary Help of Christians, Gauhati, erected on 17<sup>th</sup> October 1959.

<sup>58</sup> Cf J. THEKKEDATH, *A History of the Salesians...*, II, pp. 919-921.

being planned. But even as the project was nearing completion, it ran into difficulties on account of the municipality of Tirupattur showing itself unwilling to grant the necessary permissions for the installation of the new machinery in the workshops<sup>59</sup>. In the meantime, thanks to the initiative of Msgr. Mathias, a plot of land was bought from the Corporation of Madras at Basin Bridge and from 1950-1951, the coadjutor aspirants along with the workshops with the new machinery were shifted to this new facility<sup>60</sup>. However, for want of a formative atmosphere in the city, the number of aspirants declined drastically<sup>61</sup>.

Despite these setbacks, Fr. John Med<sup>62</sup> tried to set up a new facility for an industrial school and the formation of the coadjutor aspirants at Coimbatore. This was to be an inter-provincial venture and was to be realised with the financial support of *Misereor*, the German funding agency. However, even as the project was being realised, the Salesians in general pronounced themselves not in favour of the intended facility at Coimbatore, mainly on account of the climate and the actual distance from the town. This forced Fr. Luigi Di Fiore<sup>63</sup>, the successor of Fr. Med, to search for a more suitable place for the purpose. Thus, a quarter of a century after Fr. Cinato's letter to Msgr. Pothacamury in 1940 requesting permission to set up an industrial school in Bangalore, Fr. Di Fiore wrote to the newly appointed Coadjutor Archbishop of Bangalore, Duraisamy Simon (D. S.) Lourdasamy<sup>64</sup> exploring the possibility of shifting the project from Coimbatore to Bangalore. The urgency of the matter is evident from the fact that the letter was written to His Grace when he was still in Rome taking part in the Second Vatican Council<sup>65</sup>.

Though Msgr. D.S. Lourdasamy showed himself very welcoming and

<sup>59</sup> Cf SPAM, file Tirupattur 1949. Med to Provincial dtd. 16.7.1949; 24.8.1949.

<sup>60</sup> SPAM, file Tirupattur 1950. Med to Provincial dtd. 2.10.1950; 4.10.1950; 9.11.1950; 24.11.1950; file Tirupattur 1951-1952 (May), 17.4.1951; 17.12.1951.

<sup>61</sup> Sebastian Jose AELAVANTHARA (A. J.) (ed.), *In His Name, Fr. John Med Recounts His History*. Dimapur, Don Bosco Publications 2005, p. 94.

<sup>62</sup> John Med, a Czechoslovakian by birth, came to India in 1935, was ordained at Tirupattur in 1943 and three years later, was made Rector of Salesian House, Tirupattur. He was Provincial of the Province of St. Thomas the Apostle, Madras, from 1958 to 1964. L. KUMPILUVELIL - C. PANACKEL (eds.), *A Journey with the Young...*, p. 305.

<sup>63</sup> Luigi Di Fiore, an Italian, came to India in 1939, made his religious profession in 1940, and was ordained in 1949. He was the Provincial of the Province of Madras from 1964 to 1970, was the Rector of Kristu Jyoti College for a three-year term from 1972 and later went to Australia where he died on 12.2.1989 at the age of 75. L. KUMPILUVELIL - C. PANACKEL, *A Journey with the Young...*, p. 308.

<sup>64</sup> Letter dtd. Provincial House, Broadway, 17<sup>th</sup> September 1965.

<sup>65</sup> AAB – SDB – RF 37, Vol. II (1963-....). The letter is dated Provincial House, Broadway, 17<sup>th</sup> September 1965. There does not appear to be any file in the Bangalore Archdiocesan Archives covering the period between 1957 and 1963.



interested in the proposal, with *Misereor* showing itself not in favour of having the project shifted from Coimbatore to Bangalore, nothing came of this new attempt either<sup>66</sup>.

### 2.3. *Novitiate and Studentate of Philosophy*

While the first documented attempt of the Salesians to set up an industrial school in Bangalore, initiated by Fr. Cinato in 1940 and a similar attempt in later years failed to materialise, the Salesians had the mortification of seeing their attempt to start a novitiate and a studentate of philosophy too meet with a similar fate. This second attempt to start a presence in Bangalore was made in the context of the release by the Government of British India of the Italian and German confreres, who were termed “enemy aliens” by the colonial government, from the internment camp at Dehra Dun during the concluding phase of the Second World War<sup>67</sup>.

#### 2.3.1. Challenge Posed by World War II

The outbreak of the Second World War had serious repercussions on the Salesian works in India and that both on those working in the North and those involved in apostolic works in the South. Two days after German armies invaded Poland on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1939, Britain declared war on Germany. Six hours later, France turned up on the side of Britain to signal the beginning of the Second World War. Given the war situation, Britain was obliged to intern the “enemy aliens” – first the Germans and later also the Italians; with the entry of the latter into the War. However, there were two phases in this development. The first, which was the more lenient phase lasting for about 2 years from the beginning of the hostilities up to the entry of Japan into the conflict (1939-1941), and the more strict second phase, which lasted for about 4 years from the entry of Japan until the end of the War (1942-1945). The brief presentation which follows will, it is hoped, place in better perspective also the history of the Salesian theological formation in India with special reference to the theologate of Mawlai which will also be referred to every so often in the course of this narration.

<sup>66</sup> S. AELAVANTHARA, *In His Name, Fr. John Med...*, pp. 40ff.

<sup>67</sup> Cf J. THEKKEDATH, *A History of the Salesians...*, I, pp. 652-698, for a detailed write-up on the Salesians in internment camps during World War II (1939-1945).



### 2.3.1.1. First Phase (1939-1942)

As soon as hostilities began in Europe, on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1939, the British authorities took away the four German Salesians staying in different parts of Shillong and put them in an internment camp erected in the cantonment area of the town<sup>68</sup>. A similar fate befell Fr. Lindner Francis<sup>69</sup>, who worked in Tezpur, Assam<sup>70</sup>. Two other foreign missionaries working in Bengal were interned in Fort William, Calcutta<sup>71</sup>.

Towards the end of September, all the interned Salesians were shifted to the central internment camp at Ahmadnagar and eventually released after interrogation by the "Interned Prisoners' Investigation Committee"<sup>72</sup>. They were left undisturbed until Italy declared war on Britain on 10<sup>th</sup> June 1940. After the entry of Italy into the War, the manner in which the Italian confreres were treated differed from area to area. The more significant areas are indicated below to give a better understanding of a very difficult period in the history of the Salesians in India.

Immediately after Italy entered the War, all the Salesians in and around Calcutta, which was considered a protected area, were interned in Fort William<sup>73</sup>. However, on June 15<sup>th</sup> night, all the fourteen thus interned, were sent to Ahmadnagar. Later two others joined them there<sup>74</sup>. On 25<sup>th</sup> February 1941, they were shifted from Ahmednagar to Deolali, near Nashik in Maharashtra, and from there to Dehra Dun towards the middle of October<sup>75</sup>.

The Italian Salesians at Sonada, which at the time served as the novitiate and studentate of philosophy, were first allowed to stay on in the house itself with some restrictions placed on their freedom of movement and permitted to carry on their normal activities till the end of November 1942 when they were taken to the internment camp at Deolali<sup>76</sup>. Later, they too were moved

<sup>68</sup> AAS - *Shillong Diocesan Chronicle (1937-1941)*, entry of 1939.

<sup>69</sup> Lindner Francis was born in Austria in 1910. He made his first profession in 1930 and came to India in 1938 as a priest. He was repatriated in 1946 from the internment camp. Eventually he left the congregation. L. KUMPILUVELIL - C. PANACKEL (eds.), *A Journey with the Young...*, p. 308.

<sup>70</sup> SPAC, B.67.1. Ferrando to Dennehy dtd. 11.9.1939, in J. THEKKEDATH, *A History of the Salesians...*, I, p. 655. Today the city is referred to as *Kolkata*.

<sup>71</sup> SPAC, B.67.1. Trzebiatowski to Provincial. Undated, in J. THEKKEDATH, *A History of the Salesians...*, I, p. 655.

<sup>72</sup> SPAC, B.67.1. Roberts-Scuderi 18.11.1939; Trzebiatowski to Provincial 30.11. 1939; Darling to Scuderi 16.12.1939, in J. THEKKEDATH, *A History of the Salesians...*, I, p. 656.

<sup>73</sup> F186. Mathias to Candela dtd. 25.11.1940.

<sup>74</sup> J. THEKKEDATH, *A History of the Salesians...*, I, pp. 658-659.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 658 & 664-665.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 658-659.

to the camp at Deoli, Rajputana, where they reached on 7<sup>th</sup> December<sup>77</sup>.

Though in the beginning the Italian Salesians in Bombay<sup>78</sup> were not placed under any restrictions, when however, by February 1942, the War came closer to India with the Japanese appearing on the borders of Assam, they, with the sole exception of Fr. Maschio<sup>79</sup>, the Rector of the house, were sent to a parole camp at Kodaikanal in the Madras Presidency<sup>80</sup>.

Similarly, at Tirupattur, in the Madras Presidency, the first indication of the things to come was, when on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1939, the very day the German armies invaded Poland, Fr. Aloysius Deutsch<sup>81</sup>, an Austrian, was taken first to the temporary camp at St. Thomas Mount, Madras and then sent to the internment camp at Ahmednagar. Later he too was sent to Deolali and from there shifted to Dehra Dun along with the other German and Austrian internees and reached his destination on 8<sup>th</sup> October 1941<sup>82</sup>.

When Italy entered the War on the side of Germany on 10<sup>th</sup> June 1940, several restrictions were placed also on the Italians who at the time formed the largest national group of apostolic workers. However, in May 1941, all the 56 Salesians of the Madras Presidency were shifted to Tirupattur, which was itself turned into a parole camp for all but four of the Salesians in the Presidency<sup>83</sup>. Hence, from 10<sup>th</sup> February 1942, the Italian fathers, brothers and clerics from Madras and North Arcot, including the Provincial, were confined to Salesian House, Tirupattur<sup>84</sup>. Nevertheless, it is opportune to point out that the Italian Salesians in the Madras Presidency were more leniently treated with but some minor restrictions, thanks to the efforts of Msgr. Mathias who used his personal influence with the Governor of Madras<sup>85</sup>.

<sup>77</sup> APHG, Sacred Heart Theologate Chronicle 1942 Deoli, in J. THEKKEDATH, *A History of the Salesians...*, I, p. 674. Rajasthan at the time was referred to as Rajputana.

<sup>78</sup> Bombay is now referred to as Mumbai.

<sup>79</sup> Aurelio Maschio was born in Italy in 1909 and came to India at the young age of 15 to start his novitiate. He made his first profession at Shillong in 1925 and was ordained in 1933 also at Shillong. From 1937 he was in Bombay where he died on 9.9.1996 at the age of 87. Cf L. KUMPILUVELIL - C. PANACKEL (eds.), *A Journey with the Young...*, p. 298.

<sup>80</sup> SPAM, file Bombay 1942 (January - June). Maschio to Provincial dtd. 11.02.1942.

<sup>81</sup> Aloysius Deutsch who was born in Austria in 1911 made his first profession in 1933 and was ordained in 1938. He came to India in 1939 and went back to Austria in 1947 and died on 28.2.1968 at the age of 57. L. KUMPILUVELIL - C. PANACKEL, *A Journey with the Young...*, p. 308.

<sup>82</sup> SPAC, B.67.3. Scuderi to Uguet dtd. 13.10.1941; Zannini to Uguet dtd. 20.10.1941, in J. THEKKEDATH, *A History of the Salesians...*, I, p. 666.

<sup>83</sup> SPAM, file Mathias to Cinato (1939-1941). Mathias to Cinato dtd. 23.5.1941; file Mathias to Cinato & Carreño (1941-1943), two letters of Mathias to Cinato dtd. 22.5.1941.

<sup>84</sup> J. THEKKEDATH, *A History of the Salesians in India...*, II, p. 670.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 659-660.

Similar leniency was shown by the authorities also in Shillong where although some restrictions were placed on the Bishop and the Salesians, they were spared internment on account of their “excellent behaviour”, as the Governor himself, put it<sup>86</sup>.

The four Salesian internees from Burma who had left Rangoon on 31<sup>st</sup> December 1941, reached the parole camp at Katapahar, near Darjeeling, on 6<sup>th</sup> January 1942. They too were treated kindly by the authorities who went to the extent of providing them with a special allowance for warm clothes and wood for their fire-places in winter<sup>87</sup>. They were then sent on to Dehra Dun where they reached on 21<sup>st</sup> April 1942<sup>88</sup>.

Nevertheless, the attitude of the government authorities towards the Salesians hardened with the entry of Japan into the War in December 1941 and the rapid Japanese advance towards Singapore which raised fears of eventual threats to British India’s North-Eastern borders. This made the authorities to decide that all “enemy aliens” who had not spent 16 uninterrupted years in India be interned. However, some lengthy discussions with a sympathetic Mr. Dennehy, Chief Secretary to the Government of Assam, led to a compromise which while interning 57 missionaries (51 Italians and 6 Germans), 19 Italians including Msgr. Ferrando, the Bishop<sup>89</sup>, were left in the mission, albeit subject to some restrictions, to help keep the institutions running<sup>90</sup>.

### 2.3.1.2. Second Phase - Stricter Detention (1942-1945)

When the Japanese forces reached the borders of Assam, realizing that the Government would introduce stricter measures towards those whom they considered “enemy aliens”, Bishop Ferrando tried to negotiate favourable terms for the missionaries with the Government of Assam. But he was informed that the issue was out of the hands of the local authorities since the orders had come straight from Delhi and had to be complied with sans

<sup>86</sup> AAS, Shillong Diocesan Chronicle (1937-1941), entries of 11.6.1940 and 12.6.1940.

<sup>87</sup> SPAC, B.67.4. Ravalico to Provincial 15.2.1942, in J. THEKKEDATH, *A History of the Salesians...*, I, p. 668.

<sup>88</sup> SPAM, file: Interned Salesians to Mathias (1940-1943). Scuderi to Mathias 27.4.1942; Ravalico to Mathias dtd. 27.04.1942.

<sup>89</sup> Stephen Ferrando was born in Italy in 1895 and did his elementary schooling in the Oratory of Valdocco. He came to India in 1923 as a young priest, was appointed Bishop of Krishnagar in 1934 and was transferred to the See of Shillong in 1935. In 1935 he founded the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of Christians (MSMHC). In 1969 he returned to Italy and died in his native country on 20.06.1978 at the age of 83. L. KUMPILUVELIL - C. PANACKEL (eds.), *A Journey with the Young...*, p. 297.

<sup>90</sup> J. THEKKEDATH, *A History of the Salesians...*, I, p. 667.

delay. Hence, all the Italians and Germans were to reside in the studentate of theology at Mawlai, Shillong, which itself was turned into an internment camp with a fence around it and with a detachment of the Assam Rifles guarding it. The entry into and exit from the camp were strictly controlled and an occasional roll-call of the 26 priests, 24 clerics and 7 brothers, was also imposed<sup>91</sup>. The turning of the studentate of theology into *The Mawlai Parole Settlement* led to all the “non-enemy aliens” and those enemy aliens who had come to India before 1926 and stayed there uninterruptedly for 16 years as well as all British citizens to leave Mawlai on 10<sup>th</sup> February 1942. With their departure, the Salesian theologate of Mawlai officially ceased to be a theologate for a time and became a parole camp (“The Mawlai Parole Settlement”) for the enemy aliens of Assam who had come to India after 1925<sup>92</sup>.

A few months later, on 10<sup>th</sup> August 1942, the Salesian internees at Mawlai left for the internment camp at Deoli and reached there on 27<sup>th</sup> after a much delayed and harrowing journey. This was on account of the disturbances caused by the *Quit India*<sup>93</sup> call of the Congress which delayed trains and made essential commodities scarce<sup>94</sup>.

At the internment camp, the Salesians were housed with the religious belonging to other congregations and members of the clergy in Wing I, although on 19<sup>th</sup> September six German and Austrian Salesians were separated from the Italians and sent to a different wing<sup>95</sup>. This situation continued to be so until the Italians were shifted to Dehra Dun in the first week of March 1943<sup>96</sup>.

On 11<sup>th</sup> December, Archbishop Mathias informed the community of Salesian House, Tirupattur, that the order for the internment of the Italian Salesians of Tirupattur at Deoli had been issued by Delhi and that this would necessitate their departure from Tirupattur. The order for the transfer of the Salesian internees from Tirupattur to Deoli was issued by the government on 8<sup>th</sup> December 1942<sup>97</sup>.

<sup>91</sup> ASC F178. Vendrame to Ricaldone dtd. 16.5.42; AAS, Chronicle of the Shillong Diocese (1941-47), entries of 5.2.1942 and 10.2.1942 and the letter of Ferrando to Mathias dtd. 18.2.1942.

<sup>92</sup> J. THEKKEDATH, *A History of the Salesians...*, II, p. 1216.

<sup>93</sup> The Quit India Movement was a civil disobedience movement in India launched in August 1942. It was in response to the call for the immediate independence of India given by Mahatma Gandhi occasioned by the unilateral decision of Great Britain to bring India into the Second World War. <http://historypak.com/quit-india-movement-1942/> (5. 10 2018).

<sup>94</sup> J. THEKKEDATH, *A History of the Salesians...*, I, pp. 672-673.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 673.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 676.

The 36 Italian internees of Tirupattur began their journey to Deoli on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1943. Passing through Madras and Bezwada (Vijayawada), they reached Deoli on 8<sup>th</sup> and were cordially received by the Salesians of Shillong and Sonada who had preceded them there. At the Deoli Camp there were 111 Italian Salesians in Wing I and 6 German Salesians in Wing III<sup>98</sup>.

However, towards the end of February 1943, it was intimated to them that the inmates of Wing I, would have to leave for the internment camp at Dehra Dun. Accordingly, the Salesians left Deoli for Dehra Dun in two batches with the first leaving on 5<sup>th</sup> evening and reaching their destination on 7<sup>th</sup> and the second reaching there two days later on 9<sup>th</sup>.

### 2.3.2. Release of the Interned Salesians

The fact that by the middle of 1943 the political and military tide was turning against the Axis – Germany, Italy and Japan – had its consequences also on the Italian Salesians in India. The defeat of the German-Italian army in May in Africa and the subsequent landing of the Allies in Sicily in July, led to the defeat of the Fascist Government in Italy and with it the downfall of Mussolini. After due negotiations, Italy signed an armistice with the Allies at the Fairfield Camp in Sicily<sup>99</sup>.

These dramatic developments in Europe made several prominent persons in India to consider more favourably the situation of the Italian missionaries and to stop designating them any more as “enemy aliens”. Msgr. Mathias in fact, wired the Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten himself<sup>100</sup>, urging him to take into consideration the changed circumstances and to have the Italian Salesians freed and permitted to return to their places of apostolic activities. Msgr. Louis La Ravoire Morrow, the Salesian Bishop of Krishnagar<sup>101</sup> for his part,

<sup>98</sup> SPAM, file no. 53 *Interned Confreres Correspondence*. William to Carreño dtd. 3.1.1943, Meliga to Carreño dtd. 4.1.1943; Stella to Carreño dtd. 9.1.1943; Cusini to Carreño dtd. 11.1.1943; Cozzi to Carreño dtd. 16.1.1943.

<sup>99</sup> The Military Armistice signed at Fairfield Camp, Sicily, on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1943, came into force that very day. It was supplemented by the memorandum of agreement of 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1943, as amended, and by the instrument of surrender of 29<sup>th</sup> September 1943, as amended. It was terminated on 15<sup>th</sup> September 1947, when the Treaty of Peace of 10<sup>th</sup> February 1947, 61 Stat. 2740 came into force. Cf [avalon.law.yale.edu/wwii/italy01.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/wwii/italy01.asp). (6.9.2018).

<sup>100</sup> Louis Francis Albert Victor Nicholas Mountbatten, was the last Viceroy of India (1947) and the First Governor-General of Independent India (1947-1948). [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis\\_Mountbatten,\\_1st\\_Earl\\_Mountbatten\\_of\\_Burma](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis_Mountbatten,_1st_Earl_Mountbatten_of_Burma). (6.9.2018).

<sup>101</sup> Louis La Ravoire Morrow S.D.B., was born at Weatherford, Texas, U.S.A. on 24<sup>th</sup> December 1892 and ordained priest on 21<sup>st</sup> December 1921. He was appointed Bishop of Krishnagar on 25<sup>th</sup> May 1939 and ordained Bishop on 29<sup>th</sup> October 1939. He retired on 31<sup>st</sup> October 1969 as the Bishop of Krishnagar and died 18 years later, on 31<sup>st</sup> August 1987 at Krishnagar. [www.catholic-hierarchy.org/bishop/bmorrow.html](http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/bishop/bmorrow.html) (6.9.2018).

with due permissions, paid three visits (on 7<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> November) to the internment camp at Dehra Dun for interactions both with the Salesians and with the authorities<sup>102</sup>.

Later, basing himself on his interactions with the internee Salesians as well as the officers in charge, he submitted the report he had drawn up in New Delhi on 22<sup>nd</sup> November, to Mr. Eric Conran-Smith, Home Secretary to the Government of India. The authorities eventually agreed to divide the internees in the camp into three categories, viz., i) those who were well-behaved and hence could be released at once, ii) those with minor complaints against them, and could be released eventually and iii) those with unsatisfactory behaviour and hence needed to be detained longer. Msgr. Morrow suggested that the first category be released as soon as possible and the second on the eve of Christmas or on Rome being occupied by the Allies.

The order for the release of the first batch of 62 interned missionaries, of whom 26 were Salesians – 14 from the North and 12 from the South – was issued in February 1944. However, since only one from the North – Cleric Albert Negri<sup>103</sup> – was allowed to go to Assam or Bengal, the others had to be sent to communities like that of Saharanpur and Roorkee and three had to be sent down to Tirupattur in the South. Eventually, the first group of confreres from the North was released on 31<sup>st</sup> March while the 11 confreres from the South and the three from the North destined for Tirupattur, could walk free only on 22<sup>nd</sup> April. The delay between the order of release and the actual release was because Fr. Carreño, the Provincial of the South, had unsuccessfully insisted on some changes in the “guarantee formula” sent him by the Government.

The next batch consisting mostly of clerics – 12 from the North and 19 from the South – was released on 31<sup>st</sup> August and 1<sup>st</sup> September. On 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1945, another group of 24 – 15 from the North and 9 from the South – were also released. However, since the government was against those released returning to the militarily more sensitive administrative provinces of Assam and Bengal and the major port cities, most of the released confreres had to be accommodated in the District of North Arcot, Tamilnadu. There they quite understandably found the climatic conditions unfavourable and

<sup>102</sup> SPAC, B.67.6. Rivolta to Uguet dtd. 14.11.1943; Paviotti to Uguet dtd. 28.11.1943; Valloggia to Uguet dtd. 15.11.1943 and Giacomini to Provincial dtd. 21.11.1943, in J. THEKKEDATH, *A History of the Salesians...*, I, p. 690.

<sup>103</sup> Albert Negri was born in Italy and made his first profession in 1934. He came to India in 1934 and was ordained in Shillong in 1945. He died in the USA on 2.12.1989 at the age of 71. L. KUMPILUVELIL - C. PANACKEL (eds.), *A Journey with the Young...*, p. 304.

felt themselves incapable of engaging in meaningful apostolic activities on account of their lack of proficiency in Tamil, the local language<sup>104</sup>.

On 8<sup>th</sup> May 1945, with the unconditional surrender of Germany, the War ended in Europe. A little more than three months later, on 14<sup>th</sup> August, following the effective American bombing blitz of Pearl Harbour, the Japanese Emperor announced Japan's surrender. Accordingly, seeing that there were no more security reasons to justify the restrictions on the so-called "enemy-aliens", the authorities formally announced the withdrawal of all such restrictions in the case of all those who had already come out of the internment camps. Henceforward they were to be considered simply as ordinary *foreign citizens*. This turn of events permitted the Salesians from the North, who were staying on in the houses of North Arcot after their internment, to return to Assam or Bengal or to any of the port cities which were up to then out of bounds for them. At the same time, the government announced that any foreign national who had remained on in the internment or parole camps up to the end of the War would now be compulsorily repatriated, though there could be exceptions made in select cases if individual applications were made in this regard<sup>105</sup>.

It was in the above-described context, when the Salesians were facing an unprecedented situation that Fr. Carreño, the Provincial of the Southern Province, wrote to Msgr. Thomas Pothacamury, requesting permission to establish a Salesian presence in Bangalore which would be situated outside the city limits.

### 2.3.3. Correspondence between Provincial and Archbishop

The first letter written by Fr. Carreño, to Msgr. Thomas Pothacamury, seeking permission to buy one of the estates outside the city of Bangalore which were advertised for sale, is dated 5<sup>th</sup> November 1944<sup>106</sup>. The disruption of the life of the Salesians on account of the War and the desire to pick up the pieces and move on, is evident in it. In fact, at the time of writing this letter, the Salesians freed from the internment camps had already begun to arrive in North Arcot and especially Tirupattur. The first batch of 14 reached Tirupattur towards the end of April, while a second batch, of nearly double that number, reached there in the beginning of September and yet another batch of 23 on 26<sup>th</sup> January

<sup>104</sup> Cf J. THEKKEDATH, *A History of the Salesians...*, I, pp. 690ff. for a more detailed account of the release of the internees.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 695. Several of these Salesians who did not have any hope of remaining on in British India, applied to Delhi for permission to go to Goa which at the time was under the Portuguese. However, several others were repatriated. Cf *ibid.*, pp. 696-698.

<sup>106</sup> AAB – SDB – RF 37, Vol. I (1944-1957). The address on the letter-head is: Salesian Province, 2, Armenian ST., Madras (G.T.).



1945. Fr. Carreño, as the Provincial, had the difficult responsibility of providing them residence and work with the situation being made more complicated by the fact that those from the Northern Province were not well-versed in the local language and customs<sup>107</sup>. Given the fact of there being several confreres who were under-employed and given also the fact of realising the long-standing desire of the Salesians to have a presence in Bangalore, Fr. Carreño decided to make a new bid to start a Salesian presence there<sup>108</sup>.

It is also evident from the letter that Fr. Carreño was aware that the Bishop, on account of the rush to Bangalore of the various religious congregations, was not keen to have them all in the city itself and preferred that they locate themselves outside the city limits. Carreño's letter appears quite informal with him beginning straight away by addressing the bishop, *My Lord*, and coming directly to the question at issue.

"My Lord,

We are expecting back the third batch of confreres on their return from the internment camp. The whole of the Northern Province is practically dumped into ours as our Salesians are not allowed to re-enter either Bengal or Assam. Meanwhile our House of Tirupattur is full to capacity as Divine Providence is sending us a good number of Indian vocations. In my endeavour to find accommodation for all, I have been searching Yercaud and Nilgiris, but with negative results up to now. On the other side I am constantly seeing in the papers a series of advertisements of properties for sale in the neighbourhood of Bangalore (11 or 15 miles outside the city). As I know we are unwanted in the town itself, I wonder if Y.E. would tolerate an emergency novitiate and scholasticate for philosophers in one of those estates for sale at a respectable distance from Bangalore = our Italian confreres even after release are banned from Bengal, Assam and the important Harbours (including Calcutta, Bombay and Madras), that is to say, just from those places where we have most work.

May I thank

Y.E. for your benevolence in this difficult situation.

Imploring your blessing,

devotedly in C.J.

Joseph Carreño SC."<sup>109</sup>.

On receipt of the above letter, the Bishop held a meeting of his diocesan councillors on 9<sup>th</sup> November and after having discussed "*all aspects freely*"

<sup>107</sup> ACT, Chronicle II, entries of 5.9.1944 and 26.1.1945, in J. THEKKEDATH, *A History of the Salesians...*, II, p. 789.

<sup>108</sup> Though it was not possible to find any document/letter in the Archdiocesan Archives, Bangalore, to prove that the Salesians had made any attempt to have a presence in that city, there are indirect indications to this effect as may be evident from the letter of the Bishop of Bangalore to the Apostolic Delegate dtd. 15<sup>th</sup> November 1944 and the response of the Apostolic Delegate dtd. December 1, 1944. Both will be quoted in due course.

<sup>109</sup> AAB – SDB – RF, Vol. I. Letter dtd. 5<sup>th</sup> November 1944.



came to the conclusion that for the requirements of the Catholics in the diocese, there were already two religious congregations (the Jesuits and the Redemptorists) and indicated that they would be quite sufficient to cater to the needs of the faithful.

He communicated the decision to Fr. Carreño in a formal letter dated 11<sup>th</sup> November 1944 and addressed it to *The Very Rev. E. Carreño, S.C., Salesian Provincial, 2 Armenian ST. Madras.*

“My dear Fr. Carreño,

I read your letter of 5<sup>th</sup> November 1944 to the Diocesan Consultors at a meeting held on the 9<sup>th</sup> instant. While sympathising with you in your difficulties, the consultors felt that in a diocese with only two large centres of Catholic life, namely, Bangalore and K.G.F.<sup>110</sup>, it was not in our interests to have a third Congregation of men<sup>111</sup>.

The following resolution was passed: «The Council is unanimously of opinion [sic] that, having already two religious congregations of men, Jesuits and Redemptorists, it is not in the interest of the Diocese of Bangalore to have yet another Congregation of men within its territorial limits».

I know this decision will come as a disappointment to you. The Consultors discussed freely all aspects of the question and asked me to communicate to you their considered view.

Yours devotedly in Christ

Bishop of Bangalore”<sup>112</sup>.

The reply appears just a polite denial of entry to the Salesians into the city on the part of the bishop basing himself on the actual pastoral needs of the diocese which apparently was well taken care of by the Jesuits and the Redemptorists. However, there is already a hint in the letter which says that this very polite reply did not reflect fully the mind of the councillors as may be seen from the very general statement found in the last part of the letter: “The Consultors discussed freely *all aspects of the question*”. That there was more to this statement than meets the eye is evident from the letter which Msgr. Pothacamury wrote to Msgr. Leo Kierkels O.P., the Apostolic Delegate for the East Indies, on 15<sup>th</sup> November 1944.

<sup>110</sup> Kolar Gold Fields (K.G.F.), situated about 100 kilometres from Bangalore, is an area where gold was mined since the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> c. A.D. However, large-scale gold mining started only in the 1850s with Tamil-speaking workers being brought in from the North and South Arcot, Salem and Dharmapuri districts of Tamilnadu, which were part of the Madras Presidency. These being settled around the mine-shafts led to the growth of the town. Migrant labour had to be resorted to since the local Kannada and Telugu-speaking people refused to work for the British mine-owners. A significant percentage of these workers were Christians. [kolargoldfield-sindia.blogspot.com/](http://kolargoldfield-sindia.blogspot.com/) (12.10.2018).

<sup>111</sup> In the original the text reads: “it was not in *the our* interests”.

<sup>112</sup> AAB – SDB – RF 37, Vol. 1.

“Your Excellency,

I am enclosing a copy of the letter, which I received from the Salesian Provincial, Madras. The subject was discussed in the diocesan council under secrecy on the 9<sup>th</sup> instant and I am enclosing a copy of the reply I was asked to send.

The feeling in the council was that the purchase of property meant permanent stay of the Salesians in the Diocese of Bangalore. I was told that several attempts were made previously to come to Bangalore.

The main reasons behind the resolution are: The Salesian Congregation in India has an unfortunate reputation for extensive and tactless begging. That is the common opinion of Catholics. The faithful in Bangalore have been flooded with appeals by the Salesians. Once a footing is given, there is a danger lest their method should adversely affect the diocese.

We are struggling to develop local vocations. From many decades, the diocese had to depend on candidates from outside for vocations to the priesthood. Our efforts in this direction may be handicapped by the presence of a third religious congregation. The council has asked me to communicate to Your Excellency the substance of the proceedings at the meeting held on November 9.

Yours obediently,

Bishop of Bangalore”<sup>113</sup>.

As is evident from the above, the bishop in his earlier letter to the Salesian Provincial tactfully had not revealed the “real reasons” behind his councillors’ opposition to allowing the Salesians into Bangalore. However, in his letter to the apostolic delegate, he mentions two fundamental reasons for their objections to the Salesians coming to Bangalore – the extensive propaganda engaged in by the Salesians and their eagerness to promote local vocations which Fr. Carreño had explicitly mentioned in his letter as one of the reasons why they were seeking to have a presence in Bangalore.

In response to this above letter of the bishop, the apostolic delegate wrote a letter dated Apostolic Delegation of the East Indies, Palace Road, Bangalore, December 1, 1944.

“Your Excellency,

In gratefully acknowledging your letter of last 15<sup>th</sup> about the diocesan council’s decision in respect of an application for a foundation of the Salesian Fathers, I wish to assure you that I have taken due note of the explanations given. However, for the record and for future reference, it seems expedient to mention in writing what I told you orally about a former effort of the Salesians to secure a foundation in Bangalore.

Father Cinato approached the authorities (civil and ecclesiastical) for the establishment of an industrial school, and as the project was not favoured by the then administration, the Dewan<sup>114</sup>, Sir Mirza, wrote to the S. Congregation

<sup>113</sup> AAB – SDB – RF 37, Vol. I.

<sup>114</sup> Diwan or Dewan was the term used to designate the head of the civil administration in the princely state of Mysore.

of Propaganda through Mgr. Pisani, former Apostolic Delegate<sup>115</sup>.

In consequence, Cardinal Fumasoni by letter No. 1726/40 of the 19<sup>th</sup> June 1940 expressed his desire that the proposed institution should be allowed if and when, after the War, the Salesians were desirous of undertaking the work. If ever the question comes up again it will be well to refer to the Apostolic Delegation for the full text of the above quoted letter.

With kind regards, I remain

Yours devotedly

Leo Kierkels O.P.

Apostolic Delegate<sup>116</sup>.

This letter corroborates the earlier indications that the Salesians had sought entry into Bangalore before the present attempt of Fr. Carreño and of the favourable manner in which the same was viewed by Card. Pietro Biondi Fumasoni, Secretary of the Propaganda Fide<sup>117</sup> after he had been contacted by the then Diwan, Sir Mirza, through the good offices of Msgr. Pisani.

#### 2.3.4. Interpreting the Stand of the Bishop

The fears of the bishop and his councillors must be considered justifiable as the approach of the Salesians in these aspects had led to some apprehensions on the part of the diocesan authorities. The Salesians, under the dynamic leadership of Msgr. Mathias, had made tremendous progress not only in the Assam Missions in the North but also in the South especially after his transfer from Shillong to Madras in 1935 as the archbishop<sup>118</sup>.

The newly appointed archbishop reached Madras by the Grand Trunk Express at 16.20 on 19<sup>th</sup> July. By the year 1943, the Salesians had well-established houses with a variety of activities in Tamilnadu at Vellore, Tirupattur, Madras (Sacred Heart Seminary at Poonamallee, St. Gabriel's High School,

<sup>115</sup> Msgr. Pietro Pisani was the Apostolic Delegate of the East Indies and was stationed in Bangalore from 1919 to 1924. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apostolic\\_Nunciature\\_to\\_India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apostolic_Nunciature_to_India) (6.10.2018).

<sup>116</sup> AAB – SDB – RF 37, Vol. I. The letter has the Prot. No. 20289/44.

<sup>117</sup> It is significant that Pietro Pisani, Apostolic Delegate in Bangalore from 1919 to 1924, was asked by the Diwan to write to Card. Fumasoni, the Secretary of the Propaganda Fide, who was himself an Apostolic Delegate of the East Indies based in Bangalore for a little more than three years (15<sup>th</sup> November 1916- 6<sup>th</sup> Dec. 1919). [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apostolic\\_Nunciature\\_to\\_India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apostolic_Nunciature_to_India) (7.9.2018). In fact, the Diwan, as has already been pointed out, was engaged in taking Bangalore forward on the path of development with initiatives on the educational, technical and industrial fronts.

<sup>118</sup> The Bull of his appointment was dtd. 25<sup>th</sup> March 1935 and it was sent to him on 16<sup>th</sup> April. But interestingly, the news had already been made public in Shillong on 4<sup>th</sup> April and the *Madras Mail* carried it on 8<sup>th</sup> April. Cf J. THEKKEDATH, *A History of the Salesians...*, I, p. 454.

St. Mary's Cathedral and the Bishop's House as well as 7 parishes spread throughout the city) and 7 mission stations in the North Arcot District<sup>119</sup>.

But the two problems that Msgr. Mathias faced both in the North as well as in the South were those of finance and personnel.

#### 2.3.4.1. Question of Finance

To deal with the problem of the financial crunch which was impeding the growth of the mission, Msgr. Mathias had set up a Propaganda Office in Shillong. He further asked the confreres to start an intensive drive, writing to magazines and individuals both in the country and abroad to make known the needs of the Assam Mission. Appeals were also made through the "Salesian Bulletin" and with very positive results<sup>120</sup>. Like Msgr. Mathias, Fr. Aurelio Maschio in Bombay too proved himself to be a "competent and effective propagandist"<sup>121</sup> capable of garnering funds for the building up of the structures which had to keep pace with the expansion of the Congregation in India. The fact that Msgr. Mathias had "decentralized the propaganda" and actively encouraged each of his missionaries to make known the pressing needs of their mission-station or institution to prospective donors, naturally led to other Salesians too requesting financial support for their works also from the not so negligible number of financially better off Catholics in Bangalore including some Europeans. However, not all in the know of this typical Salesian approach appear to have been impressed by the zeal of the Salesians to seek funds and the Bishop of Bangalore and his council considered it no more than a form of begging which could "adversely affect the diocese itself".

It is pertinent in this context to note that it was not only the Bishop of Bangalore who took exception to this propaganda blitz of the Salesian missionaries in India on behalf of the poor and the abandoned that they served. In fact, in the first half of the year 1934, the secretary-treasurer of *Ufficio Missionario del Clero di Milano* complained to Fr. Ricaldone, the Rector Major, that Fr. Fossati<sup>122</sup>, a missionary at Arni, at the time, was making too frequent appeals for help<sup>123</sup>.

That the Salesians in India in the early years were considered "beggars"

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 505-586 for more detailed information on these presences.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, II, p. 1391.

<sup>122</sup> Francis Fossati was born in Italy in 1897 and came to India in 1924. He made his first profession in 1925 and was ordained at Shillong in 1931. He died in Bombay on 24.8.1972 at the age of 75. L. KUMPILUVELIL - C. PANACKEL (eds.), *A Journey with the Young...*, p. 298.

<sup>123</sup> J. THEKKEDATH, *A History of the Salesians...*, p. 483.

on account of their rather prolific propaganda initiatives was driven home to this writer when on more than one occasion, beginning with 12<sup>th</sup> June 2018, he discussed the above letter of the archbishop with Bro. Chacko Poovakot, residing at Don Bosco Provincial House, Bangalore. The 86-year old Bro. Poovakot, who has spent practically the whole of his professed Salesian life between Madras and Bangalore and could count among his friends and acquaintances both clergy and laity who were in the know of the happenings in both these important cities, reiterated categorically that this was the general view regarding the Salesians especially among the clergy both in Madras and Bangalore. To corroborate his stand, he spoke about the public function in Bangalore in 1953 to celebrate the raising of the Diocese of Bangalore to the status of an archdiocese and to felicitate the archbishop on that occasion. While addressing the huge gathering, Msgr. Pothacamury, the Archbishop of Bangalore, in a lighter vein and to the amusement of those present, introduced Msgr. Mathias, the Archbishop of Madras, as “the most effective ecclesiastical beggar in India”. Later, when it was the turn of the Msgr. Mathias to speak, he thanked Msgr. Pothacamury for his earlier introduction and stated that he would like to check out on his effectiveness as a beggar then and there. So saying he took his skull-cap in hand and accompanied by the delighted peals of laughter and applause from the assembled crowd, went with it to each of the august guests on the dais asking for a contribution. Then, with the collection in hand he went smilingly to Msgr. Pothacamury and offered it to him before beginning his speech. With this gesture Msgr. Mathias proved himself once again, if indeed there ever was such a need, as a true son of Don Bosco who himself was known to be an unabashed propagandist intent on furthering the cause of the poor and abandoned youth<sup>124</sup>.

#### 2.3.4.2. Issue of Native Vocations

The other problem which the Salesians had to deal with was that of ensuring a steady increase in the number of confreres in keeping with the growth in works and structures. For this, already from the time of Msgr. Mathias, a two-pronged strategy was adopted. The first part of this strategy was that of young clerics and novices being brought from Europe to be formed in India, so that by the time they were ordained priests they would

<sup>124</sup> The source on which Bro. Poovakot based himself was Fr. Joseph Paarel, a priest of the Diocese of Salem and a close friend of his, who was present on the occasion. Though the details of the incident may have been obscured to some extent through oral transmission, it is nevertheless thought that the “core” of it can be trusted given also the other evidence from the pen of Pothacamury himself.

know the people, their language, history, customs and manners which would make their ministry that much more easy and effective<sup>125</sup>. The second was that of making an all-out effort to promote local vocations.

With regard to this second aspect, it must be kept in mind that right from the time of their coming to Tanjore<sup>126</sup> in 1906, the Salesians proved to be solicitous about seeking out and nurturing local vocations. Thus, already in August 1907, they had their first prospective future Salesian in the person of Ignatius Muthu, who at the age of 28 joined them as an aspirant. He was soon followed by some others who were sent to Europe (Portugal and Italy) for their novitiate and philosophical studies, and on returning to India, had some practical experience of Salesian life before joining the San Thome Seminary, Madras, for their theological studies at the completion of which they were ordained priests<sup>127</sup>.

The Salesians continued this practice also at Tirupattur, though they were in the beginning restricting themselves to the Post-S.S.L.C. boys<sup>128</sup>. But feeling that there was need for a more strategic approach for their miraculously expanding works, Fr. Carreño decided on recruiting young boys for the high school. Eventually, this initiative led to the beginning of the junior aspirantate and the Don Bosco Matriculation School at Tirupattur<sup>129</sup> with the students brought in from the various parts of South India to form a fine ethnic mixture. Fr. John Med, the first Rector of the aspirantate, speaks of the largest ethnic group being from Kerala with smaller groups from Bombay, Maharashtra, Goa, and Tamilnadu and that especially from the Telugu-speaking areas of Vellore and Madras<sup>130</sup>.

Obviously, given the declared intention of the Salesians to promote local vocations wherever they were present, it was but natural that the diocesan authorities be a bit wary about having them in Bangalore with their intended purpose of starting an emergency novitiate and studentate of philosophy.

<sup>125</sup> J. THEKKEDATH, *A History of the Salesians...*, II, p. 1368.

<sup>126</sup> Changed later to Thanjavur.

<sup>127</sup> ACT, no. 128 Tanjore Missions 1906, in J. THEKKEDATH, *A History of the Salesians...*, I, p. 23; ASC F186. Tomatis to Gusmano 2.5.1912; Tomatis to Albera 14.2.1917; 25.2.1917. Cf also SPAM, file "About the Orphanage", where it is said that there was an entertainment in honour of the sacerdotal ordination of Fr. Arulsamy Maria on 4.5.1919 at the San Thome Orphanage.

<sup>128</sup> J. THEKKEDATH, *A History of the Salesians...*, I, p. 912.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 912-913.

<sup>130</sup> S. AELAVANTHARA, *In His name, Fr. John Med...*, p. 58. Cf also Fr. Carreño's detailed letter to Berruti dtd. 9<sup>th</sup> April 1945 which speaks of "a decent group of aspirants especially from Kerala" ASC F186.

Further, Fr. Carreño's own words "our House of Tirupattur is full to capacity as Divine Providence is sending us a good number of Indian vocations", could have been nothing short of the alarming for the Bishop of Bangalore, who was himself, intent on promoting a local clergy. When the councillors of the bishop discussed the various aspects of the request of the Salesians to buy one of the many properties on offer in the city, they, as the bishop himself pointed out in his letter to the apostolic delegate, were convinced that the Salesians were intent on a "permanent stay" and were not coming there as a temporary "emergency measure". There was also a certain wariness on the part of the diocesan authorities as is evident from the bishop's statement in his letter: "I was told that several attempts were made previously to come to Bangalore".

The authorities felt that the attempts by the Salesians to be in Bangalore on a permanent basis with their formation houses, would impact negatively on the efforts of the diocese itself to promote local vocations.

In fact, the general impression among the diocesan clergy that the Salesians were intent on attracting vocations to their own congregation, continued to prevail even after the latter were well established in the archdiocese. On the website of the Holy Family Church, Ramamurthinagar, which was developed by the Salesians and where a Salesian, Fr. John Nedumpuram<sup>131</sup>, was the first parish priest, one reads the following:

"The Salesian priests and brothers of Kristu Jyothi College under Fr. Di Fiore extended their help to the Catholics in meeting their spiritual needs. Consistent with the vocation of the Salesians of Don Bosco<sup>132</sup>, they concentrated their activities on the youth. They taught catechism to the children and involved themselves in social activities, sports etc. By this the Salesians earned themselves a couple of vocations to the priesthood and religious life"<sup>133</sup>.

From what has been elaborated above, it appears but natural that the diocesan authorities in Bangalore should have their own apprehensions about having the Salesians in the city. However, other than these reasons there was also another which need also to be made reference to in order to have a clearer and more comprehensive understanding of the evident reluctance of the archbishop to have the Salesians in the city.

<sup>131</sup> John Nedumpuram was born at Kothamangalam, Kerala, India, on 7.12.1922 and belonged to the Province of Madras. After the bifurcation of that Province in 1999 he rendered his services in the new Province of Tiruchy, while still being a member of the Province of Madras. He died at Vellakinar on 7.7.2007 at the age of 84. SAS.

<sup>132</sup> In the original text it is given "*with their vocation*".

<sup>133</sup> [holyfamlychurchbangalore.com/aboutchurch.html](http://holyfamlychurchbangalore.com/aboutchurch.html) (7.9.2018).



## 2.3.4.3. The Unstated Factor

There was also an unexpressed and unwritten factor which proved an obstacle to the Salesian attempts to come to Bangalore. The origins of this goes back to the year 1935 when Msgr. Mathias was made the Archbishop of Madras.

Given the circumstances, the fact of Msgr. Mathias, a salesian, being translated from Shillong to Madras could have sat ill with the diocesan clergy. Already from the time of Msgr. Mederlet<sup>134</sup>, the predecessor of Mgr. Mathias, there was a feeling among the majority of the native clergy that the archbishop favoured, what they perceived to be, a Salesian monopoly in the archdiocese. In fact, a letter dated 5<sup>th</sup> June 1936 from Cardinal Biondi Fumasoni, Prefect of the Propaganda Fide, to Msgr. Mathias informed him of this delicate situation and asked him to explore the possibility of giving a larger representation to the diocesan clergy in the Diocesan Council and in the Council of Administration. Accordingly, Msgr. Mathias reshuffled his administration, dropping two Salesians from the Council and appointing two diocesans in their place. One of the two diocesans who was appointed was none other than Fr. Thomas Pothacamury, one of the more prominent members of the local diocesan clergy and generally considered a possible candidate to the bishopric at the time of the nomination of Msgr. Mathias<sup>135</sup>.

However, already months before he received the above letter of Card. Biondi, Msgr. Mathias, ever the very perceptive leader that he was, had shown signs of deference to Fr. Pothacamury. In fact, also as a gesture meant to placate Fr. Pothacamury, who could in all probability and quite naturally have felt aggrieved at Msgr. Mathias being preferred to him by Rome, obtained for him the title of "Monsignor" from the Holy See. He also paid for and made arrangements for the ceremonial dress of a monsignor to be made in Italy and forwarded to Madras<sup>136</sup>. That Fr. Pothacamury was on all counts a competent and worthy candidate to the bishopric would be evident from the

<sup>134</sup> Eugene Mederlet was born in France in 1867. He made his first profession in 1891 and was ordained in 1894. He came to Tanjore in November 1907 and was made rector after Fr. Tomatis moved to Mylapore. In 1928, when the Salesians left Tanjore, he moved to Vellore to take up the new mission of North Arcot. Later in the year, he was appointed Archbishop of Madras and died at Pallikonda, Tamilnadu, on 12.12.1934 at the age of 67. L. KUMPILUVELIL - C. PANACKEL (eds.), *A Journey with the Young...*, p. 295.

<sup>135</sup> SPAM, file Msgr. Mathias' correspondence with Cinato (1933-1936). Mathias to Cinato dtd. 20.11.1935; 26.11.1935; ASC A913, Fumasoni Biondi to Mathias dtd. 5.6.1936 (copy); ASC B729, Mathias to Berruti dtd. 25.2.1938.

<sup>136</sup> Cf J. THEKKEDATH, *A History of the Salesians...*, I, p. 457.



fact of his being appointed Bishop of Guntur on 9<sup>th</sup> April 1940 and later made the pastor of as important a Diocese as Bangalore on 15<sup>th</sup> October 1942<sup>137</sup>.

That there was disaffection among the diocesan clergy and a section of the laity in Madras on account of the Salesians and that it was not easily overcome, may be seen also from a rather nastily-toned letter sent to the archbishop himself with copies forwarded to other designated addressees. The resentment was basically against the attempts by an “Italian Congregation” to “Salesianize” the Church and its institutions in Madras. The letter signed: *The diocesan priests and the people of Madras/Mylapore*, is indicative of the not so positive manner in which they viewed the rapid growth of the Salesian Congregation in the region and the clout that Msgr. Mathias appeared to wield. Despite the strong expressions employed by the writer, the letter dated Madras, 12-5-1954 and addressed to the Archbishop of Madras, is quoted in its entirety as an indication that there were also rabid opponents of the Salesians who were willing to go to any length to discredit them.

“Your Grace,

From reliable sources we learn that you are intending to put your Salesians in charge of institutions like St. Bede’s, San Thome Orphanage, San Thome High School etc.

We warn you. If ever you dare do that, we will at once approach the Government of India. Dr. Katju<sup>138</sup> is waiting: The Hindu Mahasabha, the Jan Sangh and Communists will pounce on you. We will set up a terrible commotion all-over India. We have the power, we have the will.

The diocesan priests have managed these institutions for centuries<sup>139</sup>; and where comes the necessity now to hand over these institutions to the Salesian Congregation? Others sweat and labour to lay the foundation and build up, and your Salesians coolly walk in and enjoy the fruits.

The Madhya Pradesh Commission on activities of Missionaries has collected

<sup>137</sup> [www.catholic-hierarchy.org/diocese/dgunt.html](http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/diocese/dgunt.html). (7.9. 2018).

<sup>138</sup> Dr. Kailash Nath Katju who was elected to the Lok Sabha from the Mandsaur constituency, joined the second cabinet of Jawaharlal Nehru as Law Minister in 1951. In November 1951 he succeeded C. Rajagopalachari as the country’s third Home Minister. In 1955 he was made the Defense Minister, a post he relinquished when he became Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh on 31<sup>st</sup> January 1957. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kailash\\_Nath\\_Katju](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kailash_Nath_Katju) (6.10.2018).

<sup>139</sup> This reference to the *centuries*, has to be understood in the context of the *padroado* diocese of Mylapore which was established in 1606 and which was instrumental in propagating the Catholic Faith in a very extensive region stretching as far as Bengal. In fact, the Indian Church will witness a bitter contest between the *padroado* and *propaganda* missionaries especially in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Cf Thomas ANCHUKANDAM, *Catholic Revival in India in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Role of Mgr. Clément Bonnard (1796-1861)*. Bangalore, Kristu Jyoti Publications 1996, I, pp. 261ff. Understandably enough, the fact of the *Propaganda* “imposing” someone belonging to a “foreign congregation”, which was trying to set up institutions of its own, was not taken well at least by a section of those who supported “the diocesan priests who had managed these institutions for centuries”.

information on Missionaries even from outside that State (see the *Mail* of May 2, p. 7). We will send the Commission piles and piles of information about your doings and the doings of your foreign Italian Congregation. We will try to make Dr. Katju set up a commission to probe into your activities and those of your Italian Congregation.

We are all aware that you have only one idea, that of developing and stabilizing the Italian Salesian Congregation. The moment you were made Bishop, you no more belonged to the Congregation, but you were wedded symbolically and really to the Diocese. You should mind more the development of the Church and the improvement of the Diocese, *rather than the Congregation to which you no more belong*. In conscience the diocesan priests should come foremost in your thoughts and solicitudes, rather than the priests of the Congregation over which you do not have any power, and *of which congregation you are no more a member*. This last point alone, if considered seriously before God, will be sufficient to open your eyes and make you change your ways.

We repeat again our warning. The moment you entrust any of the Diocesan Institutions to the Salesians, we will immediately approach the Government of India. You can be sure that a big catastrophe will befall you and the Salesian Congregation throughout India.

Do not think that this is only a letter to threaten you: WE ARE DETERMINED AT ALL COSTS TO TAKE ACTION.

If, in spite of this our warning, you still pursue your plan of partiality towards the Salesian Congregation, after making the Government of India to take action, we will send our reports to Rome together with a copy of this letter.

COPIES SENT TO:

H.E. The Apostolic Inter-Nunzio

H.Grace Archbishop Thomas, C.B.C.I Secretary"<sup>140</sup>.

History bears testimony to the tremendous energy, vision and commitment of Msgr. Mathias. However, his overriding desire to make Don Bosco known and loved throughout India appears to have pushed him to the point of temerity. About a year after taking over as the Archbishop of Madras, he wrote to Fr. Peter Ricaldone of his desire to "flood India with Don Bosco":

"The thought that God is everywhere and that working for Him we should be happy and contented everywhere strengthens me [...] My ambition is to make Don Bosco known and loved. I would like to flood India with Don Bosco. This filial and ardent desire which almost devours me, makes me daring, strong and courageous, even though I am no longer so strong as I was once"<sup>141</sup>.

Naturally enough, given his over-riding concern and zeal "to flood India with Don Bosco," his assertiveness and his "go-get" approach could

<sup>140</sup> AAB – SDB – RF 37, Vol. I.

<sup>141</sup> SPAM, File Correspondence of Superiors with Msgr. Mathias (1935-1939). Letter of Mathias to Ricaldone dtd. 3.4.1936.

have unnerved some priests and lay people who easily tended to believe that he was on a mission of “salesianisation” in India. Such an approach had its own repercussions like some dioceses and that of Bangalore is a case in point, wanting to keep the Salesians out of their jurisdictions.

Thus taking all aspects related to the issue under consideration, it must be said that “the Bangalore Experience” of the Salesians with the archbishop and his council wanting to keep them out of the city, was on account of a number of related issues, though all of them were not always given explicit expression in the various contemporary and later correspondences.

That Msgr. Pothacamury of Bangalore was personally not in favour of the Salesians coming to the city was a well-known fact as may be seen also from a later conversation which Fr. John Med had with him at Kotagiri when the studentate of theology was forced to be shifted there at the time of the Indo-Chinese War of 1962<sup>142</sup>. Fr. Med himself records the relevant incident, which indicated also a change which had come about with the passing of years in the earlier rigid and manifest anti-Salesian stance of the archbishop.

“Once while at Kotagiri, I met the Archbishop of Bangalore Mons. Pothacamury, when he came over to have some rest. In the course of our conversation, he casually mentioned, «Why don’t you come to help us in Bangalore?» I replied jokingly, «But you do not want us. We hear that you keep the pictures of Don Bosco and Mary Help of Christians in the Archbishop’s House to keep the Salesians away». He took it well and said, «I will be happy if you come to Bangalore»”<sup>143</sup>.

This was proof of a change of mentality on the part of the archbishop vis-à-vis the Salesians and it was this casual conversation which prompted Fr. Med, then Provincial of Madras, to begin a correspondence with the archdiocesan authorities which would finally lead to the Salesians starting their studentate of theology in Bangalore, which possibility till then had appeared to be quite out of their reach<sup>144</sup>.

### 3. Salesians in Bangalore – A Dream Come True

Although the two earlier attempts on the part of the Salesians to have a presence in Bangalore viz., the industrial school in the first instance and the novitiate and the studentate of philosophy in the second, could not be

<sup>142</sup> Reference to the circumstances which led to this event will be made in the course of this narration. Cf sections 3.1.6 and 3.1.7.

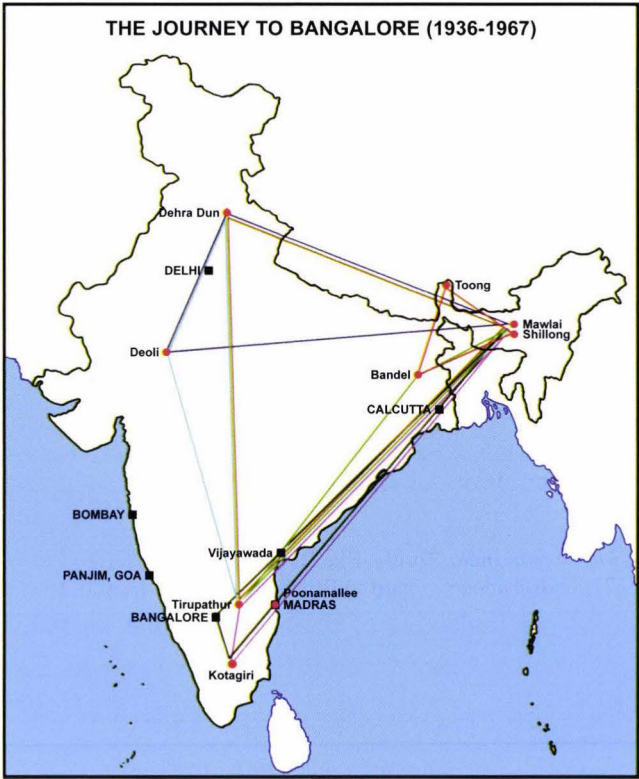
<sup>143</sup> S. AELAVANTHARA, *In His name, Fr. John Med...*, p. 90.

<sup>144</sup> Cf section 3.1.7.4.

realized due to various reasons, it eventually proved to be a case of being “third time lucky” with their proposal to have a studentate of theology in the city. For the Salesian studentate of theology itself, it was the end of a long and eventful journey of more than thirty years before it finally found a stable base for itself in Bangalore.

3.1. *Kristu Jyoti College – A Point of Arrival*

Reference has already been made in the author’s note of the studentate at Mawlai being constrained to move out on account of various factors for a significant period during the first thirty years (1936-1967) of its existence. Indeed the construction of Kristu Jyoti College in Bangalore “as the theologate for the whole of India” was in the given circumstances, a significant point of arrival. Hence, it is thought that a rather detailed narration of the history of theological formation in India is relevant at this point in order to help understand better the history, significance and the later impact of Kristu Jyoti College.



The Phased journey from Mawlai to Bangalore

### 3.1.1. Shillong - Toong - Bandel

The first house of formation for the Salesians in India was Our Lady's House, Shillong, the novitiate house which was canonically erected on 14<sup>th</sup> September 1923 and which with the passing of years functioned also as the studentate of philosophy and theology<sup>145</sup>. Thus already a little more than a year and a half after their arrival in the Assam Missions, the Salesians were on to laying the foundations of their future mission by dedicating themselves to the most important aspect of the formation of personnel<sup>146</sup>.

Owing to financial constraints, the building which was to house the novices and students of philosophy, could be completed only in stages. The first wing was ready and was blessed on 1<sup>st</sup> May 1925 while the second wing was completed and blessed on 24<sup>th</sup> May 1927<sup>147</sup>. In the first half of 1927, when Fr. Peter Ricaldone made the Extraordinary Visitation, there were 13 novices and 16 students of philosophy in the house<sup>148</sup>. The theology section, in fact, was opened on the occasion of the said Extraordinary Visitation<sup>149</sup>. Tragically however, about 9 years later, on 10<sup>th</sup> April 1936, a Good Friday, fire devastated it along with the Cathedral, the Bishop's House and the presbytery<sup>150</sup>. This turn of events forced the community, consisting of eight members of the staff including the Rector, Fr. Edward Gutiérrez<sup>151</sup>, twenty-five students of theology belonging to the four courses, eighteen students of philosophy and eight novices, to move out of Shillong in search of a temporary residence<sup>152</sup>. They were generously hosted at a villa, "Woodcot", Toong, which belonged to the Jesuit community of St. Mary's Theologate, Kurseong<sup>153</sup>.

<sup>145</sup> *Elenco Generale della Società di San Francesco di Sales al 1° Gennaio 1924, Antico Continente*. The elenco speaks of there being five priests, one cleric and six coadjutors, of whom four were perpetually professed, pp. 127-128.

<sup>146</sup> The group of 6 priests and 5 coadjutors under Louis Mathias reached Shillong at 2 p.m. on 13th January 1922. Cf Mathew KAPPLIKUNNEL, *Their Life for Youth. History and Relevance of the Early Salesian Presence in India (Tanjore and Mylapore, 1906-1928)*. Bangalore, Kristu Jyoti Publications 1989, p. 16; J. THEKKEDATH, *A History of the Salesians...*, I, pp. 95-97.

<sup>147</sup> AAS, Cronaca Missione... Assam, vol. I, pp. 136, 138, 144; vol. 2, pp. 196-7, 208, 249, 282, in J. THEKKEDATH, *A History of the Salesians...*, I, p. 114. Cf also Louis MATHIAS, *Quarant'anni di Missione in India*. Torino, Elle Di Ci 1965, pp. 167-70.

<sup>148</sup> ASC F177, Fr. Ricaldone's report to Fr. Rinaldi in April-May 1927.

<sup>149</sup> J. THEKKEDATH, *A History of the Salesians...*, I, p. 164.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 1092-1093.

<sup>151</sup> Edward Gutierrez was born in Spain in 1886. He made his first profession in 1906 and was ordained in 1913. He came to India in 1929. He was professor of theology and novice-master at Tirupattur, Dibrugarh and Mawlai. He died in Shillong on 8<sup>th</sup> October 1976. L. KUMPIULVELIL - C. PANACKEL (eds.), *A Journey with the Young...*, p. 300.

<sup>152</sup> *Elenco Generale* - 1936, pp. 254-255.

<sup>153</sup> ASC F186, Mathias to Ricaldone dtd. 3.6.1936. St. Mary's Theologate, which was built

Reluctant to take undue advantage of the generosity of the Jesuits of Kurseong and wanting to find a more convenient set-up to continue with their studies and formation, towards the end of January 1937, the students of theology and philosophy, as well as the novices, were shifted to Bandel, Calcutta.

### 3.1.2. Bandel - Mawlai - Tirupattur

The Salesians at Bandel had to face several difficulties – lack of accommodation for so large a number<sup>154</sup>, crowded classrooms, heat and humidity which left many ill, causing the infirmary to be always full and the more serious cases having to be shifted to hospitals<sup>155</sup>.

Realizing that Bandel, under the given circumstances, could not be considered a permanent base for the formation houses, various options were considered. One of the most discussed was to have a “studentate of theology for India”, and for some years also for China and Thailand at Poonamallee since Msgr. Mathias had bought and repaired the buildings there making it possible to accommodate the students of the archdiocese, its suffragan dioceses and the Salesians. Though this idea found support with the Salesians in the Province of Madras with even Fr. Candela<sup>156</sup>, the Extraordinary Visitor, showing himself inclined towards it, the Salesians in the North, especially Msgr. Ferrando, were decidedly against such a move. As a matter of fact, the differences of opinion with regard to the theologate would lead to a certain degree of ill-feeling between the Salesians in the North and those in the South which gave rise to a certain competitive spirit<sup>157</sup>.

in 1889 was shifted to New Delhi in 1971 with the new name of *Vidyajyoti College of Theology*. The old theologate building now hosts the Eastern Forest Rangers College, which provides training courses to the would-be Forest Rangers of India. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurseong>. (3.10.2018).

<sup>154</sup> There were in all 8 novices, 23 students of philosophy, and 30 students of theology besides the staff members – 6 priests, one cleric and 2 brothers. Cf ASC F177, Report of Fr. Candela, the Extraordinary Visitor on the formation house dtd. 28.3.1937.

<sup>155</sup> Cf ASC F176, copy of Cronaca... Assam, p. 308; also SPAC, file B.10.1 entry dtd. 20.6.1936. The *Elenco Generale* of the year shows that all the students except one – Diengdoh Francesco, a third-year student of theology –, were European and the heat and the humidity of Bandel could have had serious consequences for them as well as the staff. Cf *Elenco Generale*, pp. 254-255.

<sup>156</sup> Anthony Candela was born at Oran, Algeria, on 20.12.1878. He made his first profession on 29.9.1895 at Oran-Eckmühl and was ordained in Seville on 28.5.1905. He was Provincial of Seville for a term (1911-1917) and a General Councillor for 33 years (1925-1958). In 1932 he was elected General Councillor for Professional Schools, and during his tenure, the number of Coadjutors increased from 2336 to 4180 and the number of students who passed out of the professional schools almost doubled – from 21.700 to 41.860. He died in Turin on 12.8.1961. Cf ASC B5990709, *Mortuary letter of Don Antonio Candela* written by Fr. Renato Ziggotti.

<sup>157</sup> Cf J. THEKKEDATH, *A History of the Salesians...*, II, pp. 1208-1210.



Eventually it was decided to move the students of theology back to Mawlai, Shillong, provisionally to a new building built by Msgr. Ferrando for the Salesian sisters and which the sisters generously put at the disposal of the Salesians while they themselves moved into a rented house. Thus the theologians were able to leave behind the heat and dust of Bandel and return to the more welcome salubrious climate of Shillong on 28<sup>th</sup> April 1938<sup>158</sup>.

The foundation-stone of the new theologate building was laid on 26<sup>th</sup> June 1938 by Msgr. Bars, the Apostolic Administrator of Krishnagar<sup>159</sup>. However, as the Provincial Council meeting of 29<sup>th</sup> November 1940, felt that construction works were not proceeding satisfactorily due to financial constraints, it was decided to request Msgr. Morrow of Krishnagar for help<sup>160</sup>. The outbreak of the Second World War, further complicated matters as the theologate building was used from 10<sup>th</sup> February 1942 as a parole internment camp designated officially as “The Mawlai Parole Settlement” for all the “enemy aliens” in Assam and for those who had reached the country after 1925. The theologate of Mawlai thus ceased to be a “Salesian studentate of theology for all India”<sup>161</sup>.

The “non-enemy alien” students and professors left for Tirupattur where on 1<sup>st</sup> March 1941, given the fact of there being no novices on account of the War and also considering the then situation in Mawlai, a studentate of theology was solemnly inaugurated<sup>162</sup>. On 14<sup>th</sup> February several students of theology from Mawlai reached Tirupattur where they continued with their theological studies<sup>163</sup>. Another batch of 3 students of theology from the North reached Tirupattur on 11<sup>th</sup> August 1942<sup>164</sup>.

<sup>158</sup> ASC F178, Uguet to Ricaldone dtd. 27.4.1938. Cf also J. THEKKEDATH, *A History of the Salesians...*, II, pp. 1210-1211.

<sup>159</sup> Emmanuel Bars was born in Spain in 1889, made his first profession in 1908 and was ordained in 1917. He came to India in 1922 and was made the Apostolic Administrator of Krishnagar in 1928. He authored an *Anglo-Khasi Dictionary* to his credit. He died in Shillong on 4.4.1974 at the age of 84. L. KUMPILUVELIL - C. PANACKEL (eds.), *A Journey with the Young...*, p. 296.

<sup>160</sup> Cf SPAC, file B.8.2, in J. THEKKEDATH, *A History of the Salesians...*, II, p. 1215, for the minutes of that council meeting. Cf also ASC A905, Morrow to Ricaldone 26.1.1941; A907 Ferrando to Ricaldone dtd. 16.4.1941; 17.7.1941.

<sup>161</sup> J. THEKKEDATH, *A History of the Salesians...*, II, pp. 1214-1216. That there were no novices was on account also of the fact that at this point in the history of the Salesians in India, most of the novices were from Europe and the Second World War had a strong negative impact on religious vocations and missionary works.

<sup>162</sup> SPAM, file Tirupattur 1941 (January to August). Letters of Carreño to Cinato dtd. 8.2.41; Martin (Bout) to Cinato 12.2.41; ACT, Chronicle, entry of 1<sup>st</sup> March 1941, in J. THEKKEDATH, *A History of the Salesians...*, I, p. 544.

<sup>163</sup> J. THEKKEDATH, *A History of the Salesians...*, I, p. 546.

<sup>164</sup> ACT, Chronicle I, entries of 11<sup>th</sup> August 1942, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 547.

### 3.1.3. Mawlai - Deoli - Dehra Dun

When the Japanese forces captured Singapore on 15<sup>th</sup> February 1942, and Rangoon fell soon after, the British were forced out of Burma (Myanmar) and into the mountainous regions of N. E. India. At this the British authorities in India decided not to keep any more “enemy aliens” in Assam or Bengal and on 10<sup>th</sup> August sent those who were interned at Mawlai to Deoli in Rajputana<sup>165</sup>. From Deoli they were shifted to Dehra Dun where they reached in two batches on 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> March 1943<sup>166</sup>.

### 3.1.4. Tirupattur - Deoli - Dehra Dun

The Salesians interned in the South at Tirupattur too were ordered out to Deoli and they moved out of Tirupattur on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1943. After a six day journey, which saw them passing through Madras and Vijayawada, they reached Deoli on the eighth of that month<sup>167</sup>. From there they, like the Salesians from the North, were shifted to Dehra Dun in two batches in March.

### 3.1.5. Dehra Dun - Tirupattur - Mawlai - Yercaud

With the fall of the fascist government in Italy in the middle of 1943, the process of the release of the Italian internees was initiated. Thus, as has already been pointed out in the earlier part of this paper, the detainees who were divided into three categories began to be released according to a plan that had been drawn up for the purpose. However, since they were not allowed to go back to Assam and Bengal – which were considered militarily sensitive – they were sent South to Tirupattur and the other houses in the North Arcot district of Tamilnadu<sup>168</sup>. But when finally the War in Europe ended on 8<sup>th</sup> May 1945 with the surrender of Germany and in the East with the surrender of Japan about four months later on 2<sup>nd</sup> September, they were finally allowed to go back to Assam and Bengal<sup>169</sup>. Nevertheless, the students of theology had to stay on at Tirupattur since the theologate in Mawlai was

<sup>165</sup> AAS, Shillong Diocesan Chronicle (1941-47), entries of 2<sup>nd</sup> June and 10<sup>th</sup> August 1942; SPAC, B.67.4. Vendrame to Provincial 4.8.1942, in *ibid.*, p. 672.

<sup>166</sup> APHG, Sacred Heart Theologate Chronicle, entries of late February and early March. Cf also SPAC, B.67.5. Bongiorno to Uguet 8.3.1943, in *ibid.*, p. 679.

<sup>167</sup> SPAM, file no. 53 Interned Confreres Correspondence. William to Carreño dtd. 3.1.1943; Meliga to Carreño dtd. 4.1.1943; Stella to Carreño dtd. 9.1.1943; Cusini to Carreño 11.1.1943; Cozzi to Carreño dtd. 16.1.1943.

<sup>168</sup> Cf J. THEKKEDATH, *History of the Salesians...*, I, pp. 690-692.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 694-695.



occupied by the army till the year 1946. In July 1945 there were 26 students of theology at Tirupattur (16 from the South and 10 from the North)<sup>170</sup>.

Interestingly enough, despite all the uncertainty and the travelling, the “enemy alien” students of theology continued to have regular classes, to the extent possible, even in the camps at Deoli and Dehara Dun. Thus at Deoli, where there were 47 students of theology, as regular a form of theological formation was carried on with the help of the confreres who were competent in the various subjects<sup>171</sup>.

The studentate of theology in Mawlai was opened in March 1946 with more than twenty students, with three of them being from the Southern Province<sup>172</sup>. The other students of theology from the South continued to be in the two houses of Tirupattur and Kotagiri, having at least the “indispensable classes of theology”, while helping out with the classes in the formation houses<sup>173</sup>.

During the Extraordinary Visitation of Fr. Albino Fedrigotti<sup>174</sup> it was indicated that the scholastic situation needed to be improved as there was the lack of an adequate number of qualified professors. The visitor also pointed out that there were some divisions among the confreres with the Indians and the English feeling that they were not sufficiently understood<sup>175</sup>.

In the meantime, the Southern Province was planning a theologate of its own at Yercaud as may be evidenced from the minutes of the Provincial Council dated 6<sup>th</sup> February 1951<sup>176</sup>.

In fact, already in the month of June 1949, Msgr. Mathias had informed Fr. Ricaldone, that he had bought a forty-acre property, “The Retreat”, at Yercaud<sup>177</sup>. At the meeting of the Provincial Council presided over by the Extraordinary Visitor, Fr. Albino Fedrigotti, one of the things that was dis-

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 909.

<sup>171</sup> SPAC, B.67.5, Pro Memoria per il Rev. Sig. Don Uguet 4.3.1943; B.67.4, letter of Dal Zovo to Uguet dtd. 9.2.1943. Cf also APHG, S. Heart Theologate Chronicle 1943 Deoli, early February... The formation of the students was taken care of also at Dehra Dun where they formed a separate community with Meliga as the superior. Cf SPAC, B.67.8. Cinato to Uguet 21.6.1943, in J. THEKKEDATH, *A History of the Salesians...*, I, p. 685; cf also SPAM, file no. 81 Interned Confreres, Meliga to Carreño dtd. 20.6.1943.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1217.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 810.

<sup>174</sup> Albino Fedrigotti, was born at Tiarno di Sotto, Italy, on 21.10.1902 and belonged to the Province of Italia-Centrale. He died on 25.8.1986 in Turin. He was a member of the General Council (1948-52) and the Vicar of the Rector Major from 1952 to 1971 – SAS.

<sup>175</sup> ASC F177, Report of the Visitation by Fr. Albino Fedrigotti in 1949.

<sup>176</sup> SPAM, pp. 91-92 of the *Verbali delle riunioni...*

<sup>177</sup> ASC B729, Mathias to Ricaldone dtd. 5.6.1949.

cussed was that of keeping the students of theology in the South<sup>178</sup>. Fr. Carreño, the Provincial of the South, at the request of the Visitor, had presented his own views on the formation houses in India and had insisted on having the theologate at Kotagiri and the novitiate and the philosophate at Yercaud. As a temporary arrangement, he asked that the theologians of the South be allowed to stay at Yercaud, leaving open the possibility of it being eventually shifted to Kotagiri, where there was the advantage of a fine library<sup>179</sup>. Then, even as the correspondence between Fr. Fedrigotti and Fr. Carreño, was going on and before a final decision could be made, around the middle of June 1950, the course of theology was started in Yercaud. In fact, Fr. Carreño, in his letter dated 21<sup>st</sup> July 1950, informed Fr. Fedrigotti that the classes had started at Yercaud and that things were going on most normally. Further, at the Provincial Council which was held on 26<sup>th</sup> of that same month, the councillors expressed their view that the theologate be in the South and that for the moment it be at Yercaud, though later, it could be *where the superiors would want it to be, whether Kotagiri, Bangalore or Yercaud*<sup>180</sup>.

Finally, after further correspondence and consultations, the Superiors in Turin decided to continue with the *status quo* viz., having the two theologates – one at Mawlai in the North and the other at Yercaud in the South<sup>181</sup>. At the Provincial Council of the South, held on 26<sup>th</sup> June 1950, it was informed that the Superiors had given the required permission to continue with the theologate in the South and that *for the time-being it would be at Yercaud*<sup>182</sup>.

However, this was not to the liking of the Salesians of the Northern Province as may be gathered from a letter of Fr. Pianazzi, the Rector of the theologate of Mawlai. Writing to Fr. Fedrigotti he stated that *he could not understand the arguments of the South in pulling out its theologians from Mawlai and starting a theologate of its own*<sup>183</sup>. In fact, the theologate at Yercaud had but a short duration of two years (1950-1952) as in March 1952, Fr. Pianazzi who had become the Provincial of the South about six months earlier, had it closed and decreed that the students of theology be sent back to Mawlai<sup>184</sup>.

<sup>178</sup> Cf SPAM, p. 83 *Verballi delle riunioni*... This was the 4<sup>th</sup> point to be discussed by the Council.

<sup>179</sup> ASC F185, Carreño to Fedrigotti dtd. 19.4.1950.

<sup>180</sup> Cf SPAM, *Verballi delle riunioni*... p. 88; file Superior Chapter, Fedrigotti to Carreño dtd. 12.6.1950; 26.6.1950. Cf also ASC F185, Carreño to Fedrigotti dtd. 30.7.1950; 21.7.1950.

<sup>181</sup> SPAM, file Superior Chapter, letter of Ziggotti to Carreño dtd. 26.8.1950; Fedrigotti to Carreño dtd. 1.8.1950.

<sup>182</sup> Cf SPAM, *Verballi delle riunioni*..., p. 88.

<sup>183</sup> ASC F175, Pianazzi to Fedrigotti dtd. 19.7.1950.

<sup>184</sup> J. THEKKEDATH, *A History of the Salesians*..., II, p. 1222.

Accordingly, the thirteen theologians at Yercaud left the house *en route* to Mawlai at 6.45 p.m. on 16<sup>th</sup> March 1952<sup>185</sup>. However, within a period of ten years, circumstances would force the theologate back to the South.

### 3.1.6. Mawlai - Poonamallee - Kotagiri

The month-long Indo-Chinese War<sup>186</sup>, which began with simultaneous offensives by China in Ladakh and across the McMohan Line<sup>187</sup> on 20<sup>th</sup> October 1962, made the Salesians to move out of Mawlai once again. Accordingly, it was decided that the students of theology were to go to Kotagiri and Poonamallee<sup>188</sup>. The decision to leave was communicated to the community in the middle of November and they were to leave in two batches and were to head for two different destinations: the first course to the Seminary of Poonamallee and the triennium to Kotagiri. The professors from Mawlai had already preceded them to Kotagiri and classes started duly in December<sup>189</sup>. Later, on 27<sup>th</sup> December 1962, the first course from Poonamallee would also reach Kotagiri<sup>190</sup>.

However, once the war ended and since it appeared safe to return to Mawlai, on 15<sup>th</sup> July 1963, the superiors took the decision to reopen the theologate there with 20 first course students of theology from the three Provinces of Calcutta, Madras and Gauhati<sup>191</sup>. The students of the triennium of all the three provinces were to continue on at Kotagiri for the time-being<sup>192</sup>.

<sup>185</sup> ARY, Chronicle of the Theologate, Yercaud 1951-1953, in J. THEKKEDATH, *A History of the Salesians...*, I, p. 1020. Cf also SPAM, file Yercaud, July 1950-1952. Letters February to March 1952.

<sup>186</sup> The war which caught India by surprise started on 20<sup>th</sup> October 1962 and ended on 20<sup>th</sup> November 1962. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sino-Indian\\_War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sino-Indian_War) (11.10.2018).

<sup>187</sup> McMohan Line, demarcated the frontier between Tibet and Assam in British India negotiated between Tibet and Great Britain at the end of the Shimla Conference (Oct. 1913 - July 1914) and was named after the chief British negotiator, Sir Henry McMahon. <https://www.britannica.com/event/McMahon-Line> (11.9.2018).

<sup>188</sup> Sebastian AELEVANTHARA (ed.), *In His Name, Recalling Past Memories*. Kohima, Don Bosco College Publications 2015, p. 208. The book is the autobiography of Fr. Mathew Pulingathil sdb.

<sup>189</sup> Cf *Ibid.*, p. 209. This page contains also the list of the professors.

<sup>190</sup> Cf CHK: 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1962 to 21<sup>st</sup> June 1966. It is found in AKJCB. Entry of 27.12.1962. The entry reads: "The first course brothers come up from Poonamallee".

<sup>191</sup> S. AELEVANTHARA, *In His Name, Recalling...*, p. 221.

<sup>192</sup> The *Elenco generale della Società di S. Francesco di Sales for the year 1963*. Vol. I, pp. 486-487 shows that there were 87 students in the theologate belonging to the various provinces of India and that of Thailand (5). This has, however, to be understood in the particular

### 3.1.7. At Kotagiri

Ever since it was purchased, the property at Kotagiri had seen several projects being planned for its better use and one of the proposed projects was that of a studentate of theology.

#### 3.1.7.1. Kotagiri – the Early Years

The piece of property called “Glen Carse” was purchased by the Salesians already on 20<sup>th</sup> November 1945. It was within the jurisdiction of the Diocese of Ootacamund and was bought for 60,000 rupees and registered in the name of the recently constituted “South India Salesian Society”. The purchase of this property was made possible through the personal intervention of Msgr. Mathias and the province took possession of it without incurring any expense. Subsequently, it was renamed *Mount Don Bosco* and was to house the novices and philosophers from the new year onwards since they had to be shifted from Tirupattur as the space available there was insufficient to house them alongside the increasing number of aspirants and orphans<sup>193</sup>.

In 1947, there was a plan on the part of Fr. Carreño and Msgr. Mathias to put up at Kotagiri *one of the most beautiful studentates in the Congregation* at an estimated cost of 350,000 rupees though the actual cost, when completed, could go well beyond that initial estimate. However, Fr. Aurelio Maschio, who, thanks to his healthy propaganda work, was the one who provided the required funds, taking into account the financial resources available to him at the time, protested directly to Fr. Ricaldone asking him to stop this work which would, if tried to be realized, *jeopardise other more necessary works in the Province*<sup>194</sup>.

Given the above consideration, the province shifted the novitiate and the studentate of philosophy from Tirupattur to Kotagiri and the extra facilities available there were used to conduct retreats, provide a place of rest for the confreres etc<sup>195</sup>.

Later, in the context of the Southern Province wanting to start its own formation houses, there were often references to Kotagiri being one of the more suitable places

given context. From 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1962 to 15<sup>th</sup> July 1963, the studentate of theology was at Kotagiri. The number of students at Mawlai till they will all be shifted out to Bangalore as given in the elenco of the respective years was as follows: 20 (1964), 35 (1965), 25 (1966) and 24 of the two Northern Provinces for all the courses (1967). During the same period there were 54 (1964), 25 (1965), 42 (1966) and 39 (1967) at Kotagiri and 64 for all the four courses belonging to the three provinces of India for the year 1968 at Bangalore.

<sup>193</sup> J. THEKKEDATH, *A History of the Salesians...*, II, p. 945.

<sup>194</sup> Cf *ibid.*, p. 806.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 946-949.

for a theologate on account of the climate and also the very fine library that it already had. This would thus necessitate the shifting of the novitiate and philosophate to Yercaud<sup>196</sup>. Hence, when the theologians from Mawlai were forced to evacuate the house on account of the Indo-Chinese War, the provincials decided that in the given circumstances the natural choice for a theologate was Kotagiri.

### 3.1.7.2. Studentate of Theology at Kotagiri

The students of the triennium reached Kotagiri in batches with the last of them reaching there on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1962<sup>197</sup>. They soon got into a regular rhythm of life including the conferring of orders and the ministries to 52 clerics already on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1963<sup>198</sup>.

For the new academic year, there were some changes in the staff: Fr. Joseph Thekkedath<sup>199</sup> was nominated the new Rector and he had a staff of four – Fr. Sylvanus Lyngdoh<sup>200</sup>, Fr. John Lens<sup>201</sup>, Fr. Varghese Pulickalalayil<sup>202</sup>, and Bro. Gabriel Fernandez<sup>203</sup>. There were two others on the staff who were expected to join the community viz., Fr. John Zampetti<sup>204</sup>

<sup>196</sup> ASC F185, Carreño to Fedrigotti 19.4.1950.

<sup>197</sup> CHK, entry of 2.1.1962.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.* entry of 3rd February 1963.

<sup>199</sup> Joseph Thekkedath, was born at Kumarakom, Kerala, India, on 27.1.1928 and belonged to the Province of Bangalore (INK). He was Rector of the theologate at Kotagiri (1963-1966), of the Archdiocesan Seminary, Poonamallee, Madras (1971-1974) and of Kristu Jyoti College, Bangalore (1981-1984). He was the Provincial of the Sacred Heart Province of Bangalore for a term (1985-1991). From 1991, he was at Kristu Jyoti College, Bangalore, where he passed away on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2019. Cf Thomas ANCHUKANDAM, *An Eminent Church Historian. Fr. Joseph Thekkedathu SDB*. Bangalore, Kristu Jyoti College 2021, Obituary Letter.

<sup>200</sup> Sylvanus Lyngdoh Sngi was born at Shnong, Assam, India, on 3.1.1921 and belonged to the Province of Gauhati. When the Province of Gauhati was bifurcated to form the Province of Shillong in 2013, he remained on at the theologate of Shillong, while continuing to be a member of the Province of Gauhati. He died in Shillong on 28.5.2016 at the age of 95 – SAS.

<sup>201</sup> John Lens was born in Belgium in 1921. He made his first religious profession in 1947. He came to India in 1949 and was ordained in 1953. He passed away at Karunapuram, Andhra Pradesh, on 28.11.2014 at the age of 94. ANS 18.12.2014. Cf also L. KUMPILUVELIL - C. PANACKEL (eds.), *A Journey with the Young...*, p. 311.

<sup>202</sup> Varghese Pulickalayil was born at Vazhakulam, Kerala, India, on 7.9.1927 and died at Kochi, Kerala, on 6.9.2012 at the age of 83. He belonged originally to the Province of Madras/Chennai till it was bifurcated in 1979 when he became a member of the new Province of Bangalore – SAS.

<sup>203</sup> Gabriel Fernandez was born at Saktikulangara, Kerala, India, on 5.9.1932 and died at Karunapuram, Andhra Pradesh, on 22.7.2008 at the age of 75. He belonged to the Province of Hyderabad – SAS.

<sup>204</sup> John Zampetti, was born in Italy in 1908. He made his first profession in 1929. He came to India from China in 1953. He was a professor at Mawlai and Kotagiri. He returned to Italy in 1967 and died there on 27<sup>th</sup> July 1983 at the age of 75. L. KUMPILUVELIL - C. PANACKEL, *A Journey with the Young...*, p. 312.

who was still in Calcutta and Fr. Anthony Mampra<sup>205</sup> who was yet to return to India after completing his studies in Rome<sup>206</sup>.

### 3.1.7.3. Partial Return to Mawlai

Once the Chinese threat appeared to have blown over, the northern provinces decided to reopen the theologate of Mawlai and hence, the four confreres who had come down from Mawlai earlier, viz., Fr. Joseph Marchesi<sup>207</sup>, former Rector, Fr. Albino Comba<sup>208</sup> and Fr. Edward Gutierrez, both former confessors and Fr. Mathew Pulingathil, the former assistant, left for Mawlai on 17<sup>th</sup> June 1963. The provincials decided that all the first year students move on to Mawlai while the students of the triennium (54) belonging to the three provinces would remain on at Kotagiri<sup>209</sup>.

One of the reasons that led to this rather hasty return to Mawlai was the desire on the part of the confreres to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of the studentate of theology at Mawlai (1938-1963). The Jubilee was duly celebrated and the Silver Jubilee Souvenir brought out on the occasion contains a list of the ex-alumni, presented according to the year of their ordination<sup>210</sup>.

The theologate of Mawlai was reopened on 15<sup>th</sup> July 1963 with 20 first year students and with Fr. Joseph Marchesi as the Rector, and a staff of 6 to assist him<sup>211</sup>. However, in the course of a couple of years the Salesians at

<sup>205</sup> Anthony Mampra was born at Kainakary, Kerala, India, on 13.11.1926 and belonged to the Province of Bangalore. He was the Rector of Kristu Jyoti College for six years (1967-1973), and from 1974 to 2000 he was in the novitiate and formation houses: Yercaud (1974-1985), Kotagiri (1985-1991), Aluva (1991-1994), Kotagiri (1994-1997), Padivayal (1997-1999) and Mysore (1999-2000). From 1.9.2000 he was in the community of Don Bosco, Padivayal, where he passed away on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2021 at the age of 94. Cf *Directory 2021-2022. Salesian Province of Bangalore*. Kochi, Don Bosco Igact 1921, p. 103. Cf also SAS.

<sup>206</sup> CHK entry of 17<sup>th</sup> June 1963.

<sup>207</sup> Joseph Marchesi was born in Monza, Italy, on 1<sup>st</sup> June 1916. He came to India as a novice in 1934 and professed at Shillong in 1935. He was ordained on 8<sup>th</sup> December 1944 in the internment camp of Dehra Dun. He was Rector of the studentate of theology at Mawlai for six years from 1959 to 1965. He returned to Italy and died at Areze on 20<sup>th</sup> August 2012 at the age of 96 – SAS.

<sup>208</sup> Albino Comba, was born in Italy in 1881. He made his first profession in 1912 and was ordained in 1920. He came to India in 1929 and died in Shillong on 1<sup>st</sup> February 1970 at the age of 89. L. KUMPILUVELIL - C. PANACKEL (eds.), *A Journey with the Young...*, p. 300.

<sup>209</sup> CHK entry of 17<sup>th</sup> June 1963.

<sup>210</sup> ASC F563. On page 33 of the Souvenir there is a photo of the first group of the students of theology and staff at Mawlai in 1938. What strikes one immediately is the *internationality* of the students. There are also three Indians in the group viz., A. Swamy, L. Kerketta and J. Arokiaswamy.

<sup>211</sup> *Elenco Generale - 1964*, Cf also S. AELEVANTHARA, *In His Name, Recalling...*, p. 221.

Mawlai as well as the Provincial of Gauhati realized that they could not continue as things stood and that a serious decision had to be made with regard to the studentate of theology.

The Provincial Council of the Province of Gauhati, which was held at the Novitiate (Sunnyside) on 15<sup>th</sup> May 1967, in the presence of Fr. Bernard Tohill, the General Councillor for the Missions<sup>212</sup>, came to the unanimous decision that the theologate at Mawlai be closed on account of its not so encouraging general condition. The decision of the Provincial Council was duly forwarded to Fr. Luigi Ricceri, the Rector Major, on 15<sup>th</sup> May 1967, requesting also for the required permission to put into effect the decision of the council<sup>213</sup>. In fact, this letter is interestingly prefaced with the need to hand over responsibilities to the Indians before going into the question of the actual condition of the theologate<sup>214</sup>. The relevant points discussed vis-à-vis the theologate at this meeting were the following:

- “1) We see that we have neither an adequate administrative or teaching staff.
  - 2) We are aware of the bad spirit that reigns among the present group of theologians which does not allow for any or makes possible only a meagre work of formation.
  - 3) In June with the new academic year we will have a maximum of only 18 theologians and most likely, because of the health situation of some of them, only 14.
  - 4) Consider also the financial situation and the poor condition of the building which is not suitable enough for a theologate. Hence, today we propose asking the esteemed Rector Major to suspend the activity of the theologate for a few years. Meanwhile, the few theologians here can be sent to study with those of the Southern Province, which has already promised the two Northern Provincials and that of Bangkok, to accommodate them. In the meantime, we will try to prepare the staff.
- Meanwhile, we will also have to look for a beautiful piece of land around Shil-long where to build the new theologate that will serve not only the Salesians, who we hope will be more numerous in the future, but also the three or better, four Assam dioceses whose Bishops as well as the internuncio have pronounced themselves to be of this opinion”.

The above proposal was passed unanimously by the council<sup>215</sup>.

<sup>212</sup> Bernard Tohill was born in Belfast, Antrim, Ireland, on 12.8.1919. and died at Hong Kong, on 21.12.2010 at the age of 91. He was the General Councillor for the Missions for a term (1965-1971). He belonged to the Province of China (CIN) – SAS.

<sup>213</sup> ASC F183, Gauhati – Correspondence with D. Fedrigotti (1957-1967).

<sup>214</sup> Already due to various factors, the number of Europeans coming to India was almost nil. On the other hand the number of Indian Salesians had grown substantially. There was also great insistence on the part of the Government of India that positions of authority be vested with the Indians. This will be presented more elaborately in the next chapter.

<sup>215</sup> ASC F183, minutes of the Provincial Council Meeting of 15<sup>th</sup> May 1967.



The Rector Major, Fr. Luigi Ricceri, and his council, after studying the request, decided to permit the closing down of the studentate of theology at Mawlai as a temporary measure. In his letter dated Turin, 7<sup>th</sup> June 1967, the Rector Major wrote:

“I have received both your letters [...] You will have received the cable message communicating that the Superior Council approves the temporary closure of your theologate with all its consequences.

This comes to you to express the approval of the Superior Council for the decision taken by your council on 15-5-’67.

Naturally, while you provincials seek to do things for the better for the setting up of a single studentate of theology, you will also engage in studying at the earliest the ways and means of setting up the new studentate of theology in such a way as to make it capable of responding to the needs of the times. I am sure that you will do it diligently and without any detrimental delays”<sup>216</sup>.

The reference made by the Rector Major to the “needs of the times” is quite significant given the context of the starting of Kristu Jyoti College. The Second Vatican Council which had concluded hardly two years earlier, had debated at length on ushering in a Church which was adapted to the changed times and through *Perfectae Caritatis*, the Decree on the Up-to-date Renewal of Religious Life, had insisted on each religious congregation, in its turn, updating itself in keeping with the times. The post-Vatican period was, in fact, as will be seen in the later part of this work, a time of great optimism as well as of a high degree of uncertainty for the Church and for religious congregations.

#### 3.1.7.4. The “Triennium” at Kotagiri

While things were going not so well at Mawlai, the facilities at Kotagiri were also deemed inadequate since the building was not big enough and the facilities insufficient to suitably accommodate the number of Salesians resident there. That the facilities at Kotagiri for so big a number of conferes was insufficient and that adjustments needed to be made to provide suitable accommodation for all, is seen from the fact that at 5 p.m. on 25<sup>th</sup> December there was a meeting of the staff to decide on how to accomodate the students. Accordingly sleeping accommodations were provided in three different locations<sup>217</sup>.

Despite the inadequate building and the insufficient space, life in the

<sup>216</sup> ASC F183, Gauhati, Correspondence with D. Fedrigotti (1957-1967). Letter dtd. Turin, 7<sup>th</sup> June 1967.

<sup>217</sup> CHK entry of 25.12.1962.



theologate proved quite regular with classes, meetings, celebrations, organizing of the oratories, which they began already on 9<sup>th</sup> December, hardly a week after their arrival<sup>218</sup>, ordinations and conferring of ministries with the first being held on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1963, with Msgr. Francis M. Savarimuthu of Coimbatore, as the presiding prelate<sup>219</sup>.

There were also indications to the changing times as may be seen from the fact that there was a seminar by a certain Bro. George, a catechumen at the nearby Franciscan Friary, who was earlier the head of an Anglican Ashram, with the theme “How to approach the Hindus” and another talk given by the B.D.O. of Kotagiri, Mr. Sevanna Gowder, on the theme of Community Development<sup>220</sup>. All these were evident indications of the openness to the world around and the changing patterns of thought which had of a necessity to come into seminary thinking and training at a time when the Church, with the Second Vatican Council in session was showing a greater awareness of the changing world and seeking to come to grips with it. A clear sign of this was the fact that the students were already involved in social development activities with some of them organizing themselves into a Social Service Guild and engaging in creating social awareness, building houses for the poor etc.<sup>221</sup>.

### 3.1.7.5. To Bangalore

In the meantime, seeing that the situation at Kotagiri was far from the ideal for a theologate with an increasing number of students, the Province of Madras, as has already been pointed out, was decided on having its own studentate of theology in Bangalore. The two Provincials of the North too, after making a realistic assessment of the actual state of the theologate at Mawlai, decided to send their own students down to the new theologate being constructed in Bangalore as it promised ample facilities and an adequately qualified personnel.

The expressed hope was to have a single theologate for the whole of Salesian India with a suitable building, an adequately qualified staff drawn from all the provinces, a well-equipped library and above all, that of culti-

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, entry of 9.12.1962: “*Today the brothers went to the oratories*”.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, entries of 2 & 3.1.1963. Francis Xavier (Savarimuthu) Muthappa was the Bishop of Coimbatore from 25 Dec. 1949 to 23rd November 1971. [www.catholic-hierarchy.org/diocese/dcmbr.html](http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/diocese/dcmbr.html) (11.10.2018).

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, entries of 26.1.1964 & 27.8.1964.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*, entry of 23 & 24.12.1963 for photoes of three brothers standing in front of a house in construction.

vating a spirit of oneness among the Salesians in India through close personal contact between the students and the staff during the four years of their stay in that burgeoning and very promising metropolis<sup>222</sup>.

It appeared that the Salesian studentate of theology in India had finally come to port and that it could look forward to a period of stability, security, excellence and growth.

<sup>222</sup> S. AELEVANTHARA, *In His Name, Recalling...*, p. 229.

## CHAPTER TWO

### **KRISTU JYOTI COLLEGE - A POINT OF ARRIVAL AND A POINT OF DEPARTURE**

The establishment of Kristu Jyoti College at Sannathammanahalli near Krishnarajapuram, Bangalore, in 1967 may be considered a point of arrival for the Salesians from more than one perspective. Firstly, it was a point of arrival from the perspective of the theological formation of the clerics, which, as has already been narrated in the preceding chapter, due to a number of factors, had a very chequered evolution until it reached Bangalore. Secondly, it was a point of arrival as it heralded a clear shift in the constitution of the Salesians in India from being a predominantly European missionary group, to a majority Indian body, something which was clearly reflected both in the composition of the teaching staff as well as in that of the students. At the time of the inauguration of the College, the teaching staff was entirely made up of Indian Salesians who were all qualified abroad and the student body consisted of those drawn from the different parts of the country with the sole exception of cleric Joseph Forte, a Maltese missionary<sup>1</sup>. Further, it was also a pointer to the changed attitude of the archdiocesan authorities, which had thwarted all earlier efforts of the Salesians to come to the city, insisting all along, on the inconvenience of having them in Bangalore.

Kristu Jyoti College, built and launched on its mission of the theological formation of the Salesians in the whole of India, was envisioned and realized in a fast-changing post-colonial world which was posing daunting challenges for the Church and consecrated life in general and for the Salesian Congregation, with its professed goal of catering to the young and the needy, in particular and that at a time when newly independent India, for her part, was seeking to find its place in the comity of nations. The challenge before the nascent institution was nothing short of the arduous and it set about realizing its goal of forming Salesian priests suited for the times, drawing on the evi-

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Forte was born at Paola, Malta, on 4<sup>th</sup> April 1938. He came to India as a cleric in 1960 and made his first profession that same year. He was ordained in 1969. He returned to Malta in 1996 and is presently in the community of St. Alphonsus, Sliema, Malta. Cf L. KUMPILOVELIL - C. PANACKEL (eds.), *A Journey with the Young...*, p. 313; SAS.

dent vibrancy in the Church and in the Congregation in the context of the Second Vatican Council and that of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapters of the Society of St. Francis de Sales. Thus, seen in perspective, Kristu Jyoti College, which would evolve a typical form of priestly formation adapted to the times and the context of India, will also become, in effect, a point of departure.

## **1. A World in Transition**

The post-World War II years witnessed an unprecedented period of peace in Europe marked by hitherto unknown economic growth which in turn gave rise to social and ideological tensions having an unavoidable impact also on the Church and consequently on religious life.

### *1.1. New Political Equations*

The Second World War and the years that followed, dramatically altered the social, political, economic, cultural and religious equations in the world. The western domination of the world came to an end with decolonization and there arose a new tussle for world domination by the two post-War groupings viz., the Western Capitalist Bloc inspired and controlled by the United States of America (U.S.A.) and the Socialist Bloc led by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.). While these two power-blocs engaged in a subtle form of one-upmanship around the world and ushered in the Cold War Era, there arose a third group of nations viz., those of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)<sup>2</sup> consisting mostly of the newly independent nations of Asia and Africa. NAM advocated a middle course without any formal alignment with either of the two blocs which were engaged in an attritional struggle for world dominance lasting for more than half a century (1947-1990)<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> The architect of this movement was Vengalil Krishnan (V.K.) Krishna Menon, the Indian Ambassador to the United Nations (1952-1962) [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/V.\\_K.\\_Krishna\\_Menon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/V._K._Krishna_Menon). (12.9.2018).

<sup>3</sup> The reference is to the end of the Second World War and the fall of the Berlin Wall. The attacks on the wall began on 13<sup>th</sup> June 1990 and led to its complete demolition in 1992; [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Berlin\\_Wall](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Berlin_Wall). (1.4.2019).

### 1.2. *Economic and Technological Progress*

In the 1960s, the United States and a resurgent Europe, which had overcome its post-war woes, thanks also to the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan<sup>4</sup>, witnessed profound social transformations and the emergence of a new culture. This emerging culture, thanks to the new means of social communication, had its impact also on the rest of the world. Further, the conquest of space, the new technologies and the development of the human sciences, opened up new vistas and imparted an increased sense of power and competence to man.

### 1.3. *Social Upsurges Involving Youth*

There was witnessed also an increase in ideological fissures in the face of the social problems and the issues related to the situation prevailing in the so-called developing countries. The more vulnerable in this emerging scenario were, as always, the young, whom Don Bosco had referred to as "that portion of human society, which is so exposed and yet so rich in promise"<sup>5</sup>. The simmering discontent of the young with a society, which they felt was unwilling to change and eager to cling on too assiduously to "traditional values", broke out in the West in the 1960s with student protests and rallies calling for a change in attitude and approach on various fronts. The Civil Rights protests in the U.S., the hippie movement, the Anti-Vietnam War Movement etc. were but expressions of the profound dissatisfaction and the disillusionment of the young. In fact, there was witnessed the emergence of a new youth phenomenon characterized by a typical mentality and much diffused attitude: rejection of the past, criticism of the existing institutions, desire for freedom – including from what was considered "parental control" –, and new forms of dressing influenced by the pop-culture ushered in by the

<sup>4</sup> Truman Doctrine refers to the plan envisaged by President Harry Truman of the United States to strengthen and provide aid to Europe which was threatened by the U.S.S.R. This plan formulated in March 1947, was backed up in economic terms by the Marshall Plan of June of the same year when the U.S. Secretary of State, General George C. Marshall, announced a plan of providing massive financial aid to Europe and prevent it from falling an eventual prey to possible overtures from the U.S.S.R. The financial aid was to be distributed through the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC); <https://carleton.ca/ces/eulearning/history/europe-after-wwii/the-reconstruction-of-europe/>. (27.3.2019).

<sup>5</sup> *Biographical Memoirs* (BM) II, p. 35 quoted in the first article of the Constitutions of the Society of St. Francis de Sales.

likes of Elvis Presley, the Beatles and others. Evident were also several disquieting aspects in this new youth culture viz., voluntary marginalization (hippies), drug addiction and delinquency. Since 1968 was the year most defined by these tendencies and movements, it is referred to as *The Year that Changed History* and the youth involved and affected by these tendencies came to be known as *The Children of 1968*<sup>6</sup>.

## 2. The Catholic Church

The Catholic Church was challenged to come to terms with the changes that affected the world in the post-colonial period. In fact, the Catholic Church which had spread to different parts of the world thanks to the active promotion of it by some of the colonial powers, was now, with the changed circumstances, challenged to redefine herself. Her response to this challenge was the Second Vatican Council (11<sup>th</sup> October 1962 - 8<sup>th</sup> December 1965), which was in effect, a comprehensive effort on her part to renew and update herself in the various spheres of her life and activities. The two more important of the conciliar documents which defined her life and mission and which appeared exceptionally in keeping with the aspirations of the faithful of the time were *Gaudium et Spes, The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, (7<sup>th</sup> December 1965) and *Lumen Gentium, The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* (21<sup>st</sup> November 1964).

However, the post-Conciliar period which was characterized by an extraordinary surge of ideas and initiatives, brought challenges of its own. Openness to the world, involvement in establishing social justice, dialogue with cultures and peoples, etc., raised great hopes for the Church's future along with understandable fears among those who were challenged to live a new way of being Christian in the post-colonial and post-conciliar world. Understandably, the "contestations" or protests taking place in the world found their echo also in the Catholic Church and manifested itself in different ways in various parts of the world leading to tensions and often, rigid posturings between the "traditionalists" and the "progressives!". The post-Vatican II period proved to be crucial also for consecrated life, as in the wake of the Council and its new vision of the world, there was a visible and steady decline in the number of religious vocations especially in the Western World.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/observer/gallery/2008/jan/17/1>. (12.9.2018.).

Post-colonial India, given its great plurality of races, languages and religions, its composite culture and its evident economic disparity and poverty<sup>7</sup>, would prove to be the ideal testing ground for initiating the wide vision of adapting to cultures and openness to the plurality of beliefs and thoughts initiated by the Second Vatican Council. However, this was not also without typical challenges thrown up by its history and its immediate context of independence.

### 3. The Indian Context

Perhaps, the lofty ideals of the Second Vatican Council, especially with regard to *accommodata renovatio* or adaptation and renewal as well as cultural and religious dialogue were not as relevant in any other part of the world as it was in India. Twenty years before the inauguration of Kristu Jyoti College in 1967, the country had become independent through a non-violent struggle under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. This had put an end, with some exceptions<sup>8</sup>, to foreign domination and led to the birth of India as a Sovereign, Socialist, Secular and Democratic Republic. In this newly

<sup>7</sup> The poverty which had become quite endemic in different parts of the country must be attributed to the long period of colonisation with the colonial powers channelling the country's resources – including human resources – to their industrial and military requirements. Cf [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Famine\\_in\\_India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Famine_in_India). (30.3.2019). Before the effective colonisation of India by the British, India under the Mughals, was the largest economy in the world at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, producing about a quarter of the global GDP. It was the desire to be associated with a vibrant economy which would bring with it definite economic benefits, that made the European powers, in the first place, to establish various companies like the British East India Company, the Dutch East India Company etc. which in turn became true colonisers. Cf Angus MADDISON, *The World Economy*. Vol. 2. *Historical Statistics*. Paris, OECD Publishing by Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development 2006, p. 643. The Table 8b. Share of World GDP, 20 countries and Regional Totals, 1- 2001, shows that India had the highest GDP in the world at 24.4% while Great Britain had but 4.2% and the Netherlands 1.1%. The continent-wise break-up shows that the three Asian Countries – China (22.3), the rest of Asia (10.9) excluding, Japan (4.1) together with India had a whopping 57.7% of the world trade while that of Western Europe was 21.9%. At the end of the colonial period 1950 the situation for India and the other Asian countries was quite pathetic: China- 4.5% and India- 4.2%; [https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/the-world-economy\\_9789264022621-en#page643](https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/the-world-economy_9789264022621-en#page643). (13.9.2018).

<sup>8</sup> The French territories in India were ceded in phases – October 1947, May 1950, and November 1954. However, the *de jure* union of these territories with the Indian Union will take place only in 1962 when the French Parliament ratified the treaty; [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French\\_India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_India). (30.3.2019). Similarly, the Portuguese possessions which were taken over by India in a military action in December 1961 will, however, be recognized by Portugal only in 1975. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portuguese\\_India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portuguese_India). (30.3.2019).

emerging context of India, foreign missionary activities in general came under the scanner of the government and that despite the fact of the country having a “secular” Constitution.

### 3.1. *Perception of the Catholic Church in Independent India*

Although Christianity existed, merged into the socio-cultural and religious context of the Tamil Country in the Southern-tip of the Indian sub-continent from about the middle of the first century<sup>9</sup>, missionary activities started only with the landing of the Western Latin Portuguese sailors under Vasco da Gama at Kappad, near Kozhikode, Kerala, on 20<sup>th</sup> May 1498<sup>10</sup>. The Portuguese who were motivated primarily by commercial interests and had but vague ideas of a country with its multi-cultural and pluri-religious context, began to impose the Catholic religion in coastal enclaves they created for themselves. Understandably enough, the missionary groups which followed in the wake of the colonization process began to engage in evangelization on the one hand and to combat the ancient group of St. Thomas Christians whom they considered to be heretics, on the other<sup>11</sup>. Hence, in the minds of the Indians in general, with the exception of that minuscule percentage which had the advantage of informed study and reading, Christianity came to be identified with the West and viewed as a remnant of colonialism. This perception of Christianity prevailed despite the fact that Great Britain which emerged victorious in the colonial race and gained control of the country for about 190

<sup>9</sup> Cf A. Mathias MUNDADAN, *History of Christianity in India*. Vol. I. *From the Beginning up to the Middle of the Sixteenth Century*. Bangalore, Church History Association of India 1989, pp. 21 to 36 for an understanding of the Origin of Indian Christians and the apostolate of St. Thomas.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 244.

<sup>11</sup> It is also important to note in this context that the only contact which Western Christianity had with a culture or religion outside Europe was the one with the Muslims and this was in the context of the conflict in its effort to reconquer the Iberian Peninsula from the latter and then during the nearly 200-year old crusades (1095-1292). The emergence of Portugal as an independent kingdom must itself be viewed in this context. Cf A. M. MUNDADAN, *History of Christianity in India...*, I, p. 234. Naturally enough, the Portuguese continued with their vicious antagonism to Muslims even in India, especially along its coast where the Muslims had a high profile commercial presence, without being in any way competent enough to understand the nuances of a land with a pluri-religious and multi-cultural background and where although the majority of the population was Hindu, the rulers were mostly Muslim. Cf Joseph THEKKEDATH, *History of Christianity in India*. Vol. II. *From the Middle of the Sixteenth Century to the End of the Seventeenth Century*. Bangalore, Church History Association of India 1982, pp. 64 ff., 308, for an understanding of the circumstances leading to the imposition of the Latin Regime on the St. Thomas Christians of India.



years, considered tampering with the religious sentiments of the Indians to be detrimental to their primarily commercial interests<sup>12</sup>. It is also to be conceded that all through India's struggle for independence, and in some cases several years after that, the archbishops of the three Presidency Cities of India viz., Calcutta<sup>13</sup>, Bombay<sup>14</sup> and Madras<sup>15</sup> were foreigners as was the Bishop of Shillong, the single diocese in the very sensitive region of the Northeast<sup>16</sup>. Besides these, Goa, which in 1947 was still a Portuguese colony and which only in 1961 would be absorbed into the Indian Union, also had a non-Indian as its archbishop<sup>17</sup>.

The fact of the archbishops of the more important and influential dioceses in the country being foreigners and that there was a sizeable number of foreign bishops and missionaries elsewhere in the country, caused the Government of India to place curbs on the entry of new Western missionaries into the country. Restrictions were placed also on the activities of those who were already engaged in missionary activities, especially in the more sensitive areas of the country like its Northeastern region. This must have been motivated by the fact of the Christian hierarchy, which on account of its many educational and other institutions, had a considerable influence on a significantly broad segment of the population across the country.

<sup>12</sup> The 190 years are calculated from the Battle of Plassey (1757) which saw the defeat of Siraj-ud-Doula of Bengal, something which proved decisive for the subsequent British dominance in the North, to 1947, the year of Indian independence. This period had also two distinct phases with the first being that of the East India Company governing the territories under its control through a Governor-General from Plassey to the First War of Indian Independence which the British refer to as the Sepoy Mutiny (1757-1857) and that of the British Crown directly administering its Indian possessions through a Viceroy (1857-1947).

<sup>13</sup> Ferdinand Perier S.J. appointed Coadjutor Archbishop to Brice Meuleman on 11<sup>th</sup> August 1921, succeeded the latter on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1924 and remained in office till 12<sup>th</sup> August 1960; [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ferdinand\\_Perier](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ferdinand_Perier). (27.3.2019).

<sup>14</sup> Thomas Roberts S.J. was appointed Archbishop of Bombay on 12<sup>th</sup> August 1937 and remained in office till 4<sup>th</sup> December 1950; [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas\\_Roberts\\_\(bishop\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Roberts_(bishop)). (27.3.2019).

<sup>15</sup> Louis Mathias S.D.B. was appointed on 25<sup>th</sup> March 1935 and remained in office till 1965; [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis\\_Mathias](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis_Mathias). (27.3.2019).

<sup>16</sup> Stephen Ferrando, Bishop of Krishnagar (1934-1935) and of Shillong (1935-1969). Cf footnote no. 89 of chapter one of this work.

<sup>17</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman\\_Catholic\\_Archdiocese\\_of\\_Goa\\_and\\_Daman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholic_Archdiocese_of_Goa_and_Daman). (27.3.2019).

### 3.2. *Curbs on the Entry and Activities of Foreign Missionaries*

The Government of India, already a couple of years after Independence, became quite strict in its approach to foreign missionaries. This was evident from the words of Dr. Katju, India's Minister for Home Affairs and Law, when he told Parliament, that while everyone in India was free to propagate his religion in its secular space, the Government of India did not want people from outside to come and propagate their religion. In fact, in response to a question of foreign missionaries coming to India he stated: "If they come here to evangelise, then the sooner they stop doing it, the better"<sup>18</sup>.

However, this must not be considered an arbitrary move on the part of the newly constituted Indian Government, but as an approach already in evidence during the government of the British East India Company and during that of the British Crown<sup>19</sup>. In the context of the Second World War, the missionaries, including the Salesians, belonging to those countries which were at war with Great Britain and its allies, were considered "enemy aliens" hence, sent to internment camps with some of them being even expelled from the country<sup>20</sup>.

In fact, a look through the list of foreign Salesian missionaries to come to India from the mid-1950s, shows that their number had come down to a trickle with just 2 each from 1956 to 1958, 5 in 1959, 2 in 1960, 0 in the years 1961-1963, 4 in 1964, 2 in 1965 and 2 in 1966. However, even this trickle practically dried up all together from the year 1967, which, incidentally is the year of the inauguration of Kristu Jyoti College. As a matter of fact, between 1967 and 2001, though five European missionaries did come to work in the Province of Madras, they actually were engaged in apostolic activities in Ceylon (Sri Lanka), while several of those who had come in earlier, left the country owing to various factors<sup>21</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> From the Guardian Archive India: From the Archive, 17 April 1953: India warns missionaries "no evangelising, no politics"; <https://www.theguardian.com/theguardian/2013/apr/17/india-religion-christian-missionaries-1953> (14.9.2018).

<sup>19</sup> Until the renewal of the Charter Act of 1813, the British East India Company had blocked the entry of missionaries into India and it will be discouraged also by the British Crown after what it called The Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 as the uprising was considered by them to be the result of a perceived threat to Hindu and Muslim culture on account of the missionary activities in the country; [https://www.indianetzone.com/37/religion\\_missionary\\_activities\\_british\\_india\\_british\\_india.htm](https://www.indianetzone.com/37/religion_missionary_activities_british_india_british_india.htm). (3.4.2019).

<sup>20</sup> Cf J. THEKKEDATH, *A History of the Salesians...*, pp. 694 ff. This speaks of the situation after the Second World War when several of the "enemy aliens" were not granted permission to stay on in India and were repatriated or permitted to move into Portugal-ruled Goa.

<sup>21</sup> Cf L. KUMPILUVELIL - C. PANACKEL (eds.), *A Journey with the Young...*, pp. 313-314.

This, situation in the Indian missions, together with the already scarce vocations in the West, would prove an issue to be dealt with especially in the Northeast – a region considered by India to be a highly sensitive area on account of its very long, and often porous, international borders and where a significant number of European missionaries were rendering their services<sup>22</sup>.

### 3.3. A Significant Meeting

The diffidence of the Indian Government with regard to the missionaries was well brought home to the Salesians, as well as the Church in India in general, when there took place an interview between Shri Yeshwantrao Chavan<sup>23</sup>, the Home Minister of India, and a delegation of bishops headed by Msgr. Hubert D. Rosario SDB<sup>24</sup> and consisting of Archbishop Angelo Fernandes<sup>25</sup> and Fr. Partrick D'Souza<sup>26</sup>, at the Ministry of Home Affairs at 2 p.m. on 21<sup>st</sup> August 1967. The meeting was held in the context of the restrictions placed on the presence and activities of foreign missionaries. The more relevant excerpts of this frank conversation between the two parties given below are by themselves quite indicative of the mood that prevailed in New Delhi at the time.

“Mr. Chavan: «Yes. I am unduly frank with you. The decision has been taken. We do not want to be unsympathetic. But you must get reconciled to this that sooner or later all missionaries will go. Take it from me, we want all missionaries out. This should be a help to you to indianise faster. You must take a realistic appraisal of the situation. Why don't you hurry up with indianisation? If they were Indian priests there, whatever they do we would have to accept it!».  
Archbishop Angelo: «Whatever sort they be!»”.

The missionaries were Bro. Garniga Gabriel (1972), Fr. Giaime Joseph (1993), Fr. De Barros Robson (2000), Fr. Huy G. John B. and Fr. Klosowski Adam (2001). *Ibid.*, p. 314.

<sup>22</sup> India has a 15,200 Km international border which it shares with 7 countries and it is the third largest international border in the world (after China with 22, 147 kms and Russia with 20,017 kms.). Further, India shares 7515 kms. of its international border with seven countries (if Pakistan Occupied Kashmir – POK – is also taken into account) which number is one of the highest in the world; <https://knowledgeofindia.com/international-border-of-india/>. (13.9.2018).

<sup>23</sup> Shri Yeshwantrao Chavan was the Minister of Home Affairs in the First Indira Gandhi Government (1966-1970). Cf [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First\\_Indira\\_Gandhi\\_ministry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Indira_Gandhi_ministry). (30.3.2019).

<sup>24</sup> Hubert D’Rosario (1919-1994) was the Bishop of Dibrugarh from 1964 to 1969. He was made Archbishop of Gauhati-Shillong in 1969 and died as Archbishop of Shillong on 30<sup>th</sup> August 1994; [www.catholic-hierarchy.org/bishop/bdrosario.html](http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/bishop/bdrosario.html). (13.9.2019).

<sup>25</sup> Angelo Fernandes was the Archbishop of Delhi from 16<sup>th</sup> September 1967 to 27<sup>th</sup> January 1991; [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angelo\\_Innocent\\_Fernandes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angelo_Innocent_Fernandes). (30.3.2019).

<sup>26</sup> Patrick D’Souza was the Secretary General of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of India (CBCI) at the time; [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patrick\\_Paul\\_D%27Souza](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patrick_Paul_D%27Souza) (30.3.2019).

Mr. Chavan: “Even if they are rotten we have to put up with them. You must hurry up with indianisation”<sup>27</sup>.

The minister was obviously insisting on an Indian Church in an Independent India.

### 3.4. *Salesian Reading of the Indian Situation – Challenges and Possibilities*

The fact that the Salesians were also aware of the changing dynamics in the country is evident from a letter of Fr. Fr. Mauro Casarotti<sup>28</sup>, Provincial of Gauhati, to Fr. Fedrigotti dated 15<sup>th</sup> May 1967<sup>29</sup> in which he spoke of the need of administrative changes among the Salesians in India taking into account the altered political situation. Fr. Casarotti said that there was a need to pass on the responsibilities to Indians. The two reasons he advanced were the following: i) the Indians numbered about half the number of the confreres and ii) it was difficult to find “Europeans of quality”. He went on to say that the choices had to be of the best quality and that it was going to be difficult to realise this ideal situation. Besides, the political situation called for the presence of an Indian in order to be able to move around in Assam. This letter is also indicative of the fact, that in the minds of some of the Europeans in the North, there was still a lingering prejudice against those from the South:

“The Europeans, and that especially of the older generation, will be happy if it is not someone from the South but from Assam and has grown up with them”<sup>30</sup>.

The Salesians in India had, therefore, to take into account a number of factors in carrying on with their mission in the country and that too in the typical post-Vatican context. They were challenged to have a synthetic approach, which inevitably called for a fine balance between their Christian and Salesian heritage on the one hand and on the other, the Indian context, which called for inculturation and indianisation, inter-religious and inter-denominational dialogue, as well as catechesis and human promotion. As sons of Don Bosco, they were challenged to see it all from the constitutive Salesian perspective, the total well being of the young.

<sup>27</sup> ASC F183, *Guwahati* – Correspondence with D. Fedrigotti dated 1957-1967.

<sup>28</sup> Mauro Casarotti was born at Casalbuttano, Italy, on 17.5.1917. He came to India in 1939, did his novitiate at Tirupattur and made his first profession in 1940. He was ordained in 1949. He was the Provincial of Calcutta (1964-1974) and of Bombay (1975-1978). He died at Matunga, Bombay on 20.7.2007 at the age of 90. SAS.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, correspondence with D. Fedrigotti dated 1957-1967.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, letter to *stimato padre* of Casarotti dated 15.5.67. Provincial Office – Don Bosco School, Guwahati (Assam), India, Festa di Maria Regina.

The typical Indian context, in fact, could arguably be considered one, which, in its core, was open to the workings of the Spirit as embodied in the Rg. Vedic injunction: *Let noble thoughts come to me from every direction*<sup>31</sup> and the Maha Upanishadic view of the “whole world being a family”<sup>32</sup>. However, the traditional values of acceptance, coexistence and hospitality which the missionaries had always experienced in the country, had to be balanced with the rightful stirrings for an Indian identity which was becoming increasingly evident during the last stages of the struggle for national independence and which continued into the post-independence era. In such a context, the Salesians in India were challenged to articulate conversion without alienation, assumption without repudiation and synthesis without syncretism<sup>33</sup>. Understood in this way, Kristu Jyoti College was not only a point of arrival, but was eminently, also a point of departure, as it strove to usher in a new form of priestly formation in keeping with the expectations of the post-conciliar Church and in line with the expectations of independent India.

Further, though there was a crisis of vocations in Western Europe and America, with the Rector Major being constrained to make an appeal for priests to work as missionaries in South America<sup>34</sup>, the situation was quite different in India. The Salesians, especially given a steady rise in the number of vocations particularly in the traditional Christian pockets in the South, were slowly yet steadily, moving into what could be considered, the golden period of their history with an adequately prepared formation personnel quite capable of providing a training in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council and in the light of GC 19.

#### 4. The Salesian Congregation

The present study, which deals with the period of the inauguration (1967) and consolidation of the studentate of theology of the Salesians in India at Bangalore until the restarting of the theologate of Mawlai in the academic year 1976-1977, has to be situated in the above-narrated context of the World, the Catholic Church and Independent India. The convocation and progress of the 19<sup>th</sup> General Chapter at a time when the Second Vatican Council was still in progress, and the 20<sup>th</sup> Special General Chapter, which was convoked in line

<sup>31</sup> *Aano bhadra krtavo yantu vishwatah* (Rg. Veda 1.89.1.).

<sup>32</sup> *Vasudhaiva kudumbakam* (Maha Upanishad 6.71.75).

<sup>33</sup> Dominic VELIATH, *Salesian Theological Formation in India*, in L. KUMPILUVELIL - C. PANACKEL (eds.), *A Journey with the Young...*, p. 261.

<sup>34</sup> Morand WIRTH, *Da Don Bosco ai nostri giorni, tra storia e nuove sfide (1815-2000)*. (= Studi di spiritualità, 11). Roma, LAS 2000, p. 455.

with the provisions of the *motu proprio Ecclesiae sanctae*<sup>35</sup>, naturally had an impact both on the envisioning of the College and its own “period of formation”. A particularly significant aspect to be noted during this period, is that of the Congregation having sensed the impact which a world in transition was having on its mission as well as that of it being blessed with three Rectors Major – Renato Ziggiotti, Luigi Ricceri and Egidio Viganò – who, in varying degrees, had a first-hand experience of the Vatican Council and had experienced the breath of fresh air which had entered the Church with the Council.

Further, it is pertinent to point out that, as if on cue, the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapters were held in totally new settings – the former at the newly constructed *Pontificio Ateneo Salesiano* (PAS) and the latter at the newly inaugurated *Casa Generalizia* at Via della Pisana, 1111, Rome. The choice of these new venues could itself be considered symbolic of the desire of the Congregation to emphasise the need for a new beginning to engage a world posing new challenges to its mission.

#### 4.1. Nineteenth General Chapter

Even as the Congregation had moved into the second centenary of its existence, it presented a very healthy picture with a truly global presence and with a steady growth in numbers. However, the more perceptive among the members were not at the same time blind to the emerging new situations in the world and in the Church in general, especially as evidenced from the Second Vatican Council, which would not in anyway leave the Congregation unscathed. Undoubtedly, the 19<sup>th</sup> GC was the beginning of a new approach spurred on by the evident change in approach demanded by the Second Vatican Council. However, the 19<sup>th</sup> General Chapter was itself but a Chapter in transition, as just an year after its conclusion, the *motu proprio, Ecclesiae sanctae*, called for General Chapters to be held by all the religious institutes in order to adopt suitable ways and means of implementing the decrees of Vatican II especially *Perfectae Caritatis*, which dealt with the up-to-date renewal of religious life. This naturally shifted the focus from the implementation of the directives of the 19<sup>th</sup> General Chapter in the present to planning the Special

<sup>35</sup> *Ecclesiae Sanctae*, meaning (*Governing*) of the Holy Church was issued by Pope Paul VI on 6<sup>th</sup> August, 1966 and contained clear directives on the manner of implementing the Vatican Council especially as regards the conciliar documents *Christus Dominus* (*On the Pastoral Office of Bishops*), *Presbyterorum Ordinis* (*On the Life and Ministry of Priests*), *Perfectae Caritatis* (*On the Adaptation and Renewal of Religious Life*), and *Ad Gentes* (*On the Missionary Activity of the Church*).

General Chapter in the future<sup>36</sup>. Nevertheless, the planning for the theologate in Bangalore will take place in the context of GC19 and those responsible for the theological formation of future Salesians could not but take seriously into consideration the proposals of the Chapter.

#### 4.1.1. The Convocation

Already at the beginning of the year 1964, Fr. Ziggiotti had written to the members of the Congregation expressing his desire and hope to have the Chapter in the newly constructed *Pontificio Ateneo Salesiano*, Rome. He also informed them that he had, after consulting the Superior Chapter, requested the Holy See for the required authorization to anticipate GC 19 from August to April<sup>37</sup>. This was to avoid possible inconveniences which could arise due to the ongoing schedules of Vatican II. The proposed change of dates would, in fact, help to hold it between the third and fourth sessions of the Council<sup>38</sup>. The Holy See approved of the proposed change and the 19<sup>th</sup> General Chapter of the Salesians was inaugurated in the *Pontificio Ateneo Salesiano* on 8<sup>th</sup> April 1965.

#### 4.1.2. A Chapter in the Context of the Second Vatican Council

The Chapter will be held literally in the invigorating and transforming context of the Second Vatican Council and significantly three Salesians who were to head the Congregation during the period covered by this study viz., Fr. Ziggiotti, Fr. Ricceri and Fr. Viganò, were able to participate in it for varying periods and that in different roles<sup>39</sup>.

<sup>36</sup> ACS 305 (1982) 10. Viganò with the benefit of hindsight stated that the Chapter members “certainly felt the first flush of the great conciliar event [...] and although in general people had only a fairly limited perception of the demands of the Council [...] still the Chapter members breathed something of its freshness [...] and set in motion a general process of updating by treating of such topics as religious life, spiritual direction, Salesian brother, and the beginnings of new structures of government” (the Superior Council, Regionals, vicars, and better participation in Chapters). *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> ACS 234 (1964) 13-14. The *Atti del Capitolo Superiore* will from January 1966 be known as *Atti del Consiglio Superiore*.

<sup>38</sup> The third session of Vatican II was from 14<sup>th</sup> September to 21<sup>st</sup> November 1964 and the 4<sup>th</sup> session from 14<sup>th</sup> September 1965 to 8<sup>th</sup> December 1965.

<sup>39</sup> Ziggiotti participated in the first session (11<sup>th</sup> October to 8<sup>th</sup> December 1962) and in the second session (29<sup>th</sup> September to 4<sup>th</sup> December 1963). Ricceri participated in the final session of the Council and had also taken part, along with some members of his council, in the Inter-Provincial Meetings of Europe (Como, April 1968), Asia (Kristu Jyoti College, Bangalore, July 1968) and Latin America (Caracas, May 1969). Cf M. WIRTH, *Da Don Bosco ai nostri giorni...*, p. 449. Likewise, Viganò, chosen as the expert of the Episcopate of Chile and as a member of



Fr. Ziggiotti, the Rector Major, who was inducted as a member of the Commission for the Religious, was impressed by his experience of the Council as is evident from his statement that it was a call to the “priests, religious and the laity called to the apostolate, to correspond more and better to their vocation”<sup>40</sup>. Further, through the letters published in the Acts of the Superior Chapter, he kept the Congregation informed of the proceedings of the Council<sup>41</sup> and the great expectations of the Church with regard to the same<sup>42</sup>.

In fact, the Second Vatican Council in progress, had a determining impact on the way the Chapter was conducted as Fr. Ricceri, who was elected Rector Major on 27<sup>th</sup> April 1965 during the course of the Chapter, himself would later state:

“During the work of the Chapter one had the clear feeling that all those who were present were looking anxiously towards the Ecumenical Council Vatican II. The ambience of Rome has evidently nurtured this climate of the spring-time tension, full of promise”<sup>43</sup>.

Fr. Ricceri, who had participated in the last session of the Council, was fully aware of the need for the Congregation to carry forward the Salesian charism in faithfulness to Don Bosco and in keeping with the signs of the times. In his first interview as Rector Major he stated that what he intended to do was

“to go forward with Don Bosco alive today, in order to respond to the needs of our times and the expectations of the Church”<sup>44</sup>.

the Council, had participated in the reflections which eventually led to the formulation of the Dogmatic Constitution, *Lumen Gentium* and the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* dedicated to the contemporary world. He was also one of the prominent figures at the Special General Chapter (1971-1972) and was elected Councillor for Formation. Cf *ibid*.

<sup>40</sup> ACS 229 (1963) 6.

<sup>41</sup> ACS 223 (1962) 7-9. “Il Concilio Ecumenico e lo studio dei problemi moderni”; ACS 228 (1962) 3-11 where he spoke of his experiences at the first session of the Council.

<sup>42</sup> “Nel 1962 speriamo che la Divina Provvidenza conceda di portare a compimento il desiderio vivissimo di tutta la cristianità, con una folgorante assise, mai veduto nei secoli, alla presenza dell’intero Collegio Cardinalizio, di migliaia di Vescovi, Prelati, Dottori e Padri, sotto la guida del Pontefice, riuniti allo studio dei massimi problemi dottrinali e disciplinari per il bene universale della Chiesa di Dio. Quale spettacolo per il mondo dei cattolici e dei non cattolici: «di unità, di universalità e di fraternità» come disse il Sommo Pontefice!” ACS 223 (1962) 7-8.

<sup>43</sup> ACS 244 (1966) 5-6, trans. from the Italian original.

<sup>44</sup> “Con don Bosco vivo, oggi, di fronte alle esigenze del nostro tempo e alle attese della Chiesa” as quoted in Egidius VIGANÒ, *Don Luigi Ricceri, sesto successore di don Bosco*. Roma, Direzione Generale Opere Don Bosco 1989, p. 13 (Mortuary Letter).



This approach was eventually paraphrased to read: “With Don Bosco and with the Times!”.

However, he would later admit that although GC 19 was not yet able to understand fully and to implement effectively the new thinking in the Church, it still was a step forward for all those who participated in the Chapter, and through them for the whole Congregation, to breathe the atmosphere (of the Council)<sup>45</sup>.

#### 4.2. *A New Approach in a New World*

The first hundred years of the Congregation may be considered a period when the overwhelming tendency was to remain faithful to the charism of the founder and to guard against any deviation which could eventually subvert its originality. Such an approach meant also that there was not the desired level of openness to the ideas and developments outside the immediate Salesian ambience and this was evident up to and inclusive of GC 18. This was particularly so in that area of the specific apostolate of the Salesians viz., service to the poor and abandoned youth, as may be seen from the words of Fr. Pietro Braido with reference to the 18<sup>th</sup> GC (1958):

“It did not seem to be one which feels the deep transformations that occurred in the previous six years. With regard to the oratories, the use of social media and entertainment, and even more, the boarding schools, the speeches were almost identical to those of the previous chapters, reflecting echoes of the regulatory provisions made in the 1920s and later”<sup>46</sup>.

The 19<sup>th</sup> General Chapter, forced by the prevailing circumstances, was to change tack and prove itself more open to the world and willing enough to seek information even in areas beyond the traditional boundaries.

#### 4.3. *Endorsing Modern Trends*

The general world situation indicated also that there was an increasing need for specialisation and higher levels of competence in order to be effective in the apostolate among the young. Fr. Ricceri made an appeal in this regard when he said

<sup>45</sup> ACS 305 (1982) 10.

<sup>46</sup> Pietro BRAIDO, *Le metamorfosi dell'Oratorio Salesiano tra il secondo dopoguerra e il Post-Concilio Vaticano II (1944-1984)*, in RSS 49 (2006) 319.

“By now every manifestation of our activity claims qualified people in the field of theology, liturgy, philosophy, education, science, technology, instruction, art, recreation and management”<sup>47</sup>.

It was this awareness which had come into the Congregation that made it to invite 19 “experts” including two coadjutors to the Chapter<sup>48</sup>.

#### 4.4. *Significant Developments at the 19<sup>th</sup> General Chapter*

Some of the decisions of the Chapter were indicative of the realization of the members that there needed to be a certain change in approach at various levels at what was evidently a critical period in the history of the Congregation. Accordingly, the more important areas which were addressed may be enumerated as an evaluation of the functioning of the structures in the Congregation at the various levels<sup>49</sup>; updating of the formation programme as well as the insistence on having qualified personnel to impart the required level of competent formation at all levels and in various subjects<sup>50</sup>; the need for the redimensioning of works with the call for their external and internal reinforcement, which in concrete, called for the simplification of the larger houses and the reduction in the number of the smaller presences<sup>51</sup>; setting up of the Centre for Youth Pastoral indicating the need for all the Salesian educational initiatives having to be motivated by a pastoral impulse and the need for a General Councillor for this

<sup>47</sup> ACS 244 (1966) 5, trans. from the Italian original.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 357-366 for the list of the participants and the commissions with the name of the experts.

<sup>49</sup> At the level of the Superior Council, which till then was called the Superior Chapter and which will further evolve into the General Council of today, the number of members was increased from five to nine with the introduction of the Councillors for Formation, for Youth Pastoral, for Apostolate for the Adults (Cooperators, Past Pupils, Propaganda, Information on the Salesian Works and Means of Social Communication) and the six Regional Councillors each entrusted with a group of Provinces in a particular geographical region. Each of these Regions were to have a “Regional Conference” presided over by the Regional Councillor. Similarly, at the Provincial level, directives were given to have a Vicar of the Provincial, an increase in the number of councillors, and the setting up of various Provincial delegations and commissions comprising of experts. At the local level the communities were exhorted to collaborate with the Rectors for the realization of the common mission and the Rectors were reminded of their duty of being, more than anything else, the spiritual and educative animators of those entrusted to them. Membership in the house council was opened up also to the coadjutors and the need for the formation of the Rectors was also highlighted. Cf M. WIRTH, *Da Don Bosco ai nostri giorni...*, pp. 439-440.

<sup>50</sup> Cf ACS 244 (1966) 4-5 for the exhortation of Ricceri on the need for qualification in various areas.

<sup>51</sup> Cf M. WIRTH, *Da Don Bosco ai nostri giorni...*, p. 443.

important sector<sup>52</sup>; and finally, in keeping with the spirit of the times and as expressed in the official documents of the Church, like *Mater et magistra* dealing with the social question, *Pacem in Terra* directed towards the world of work and *Inter Mirifica* dealing with social communication, the Salesians were exhorted to a more meaningful involvement in the world. Further, they felt themselves challenged to diversify their involvement in the adult world by having a more visible and constructive social involvement and that especially in the world of work and that of social communications. However, they were to realize all these without moving away from their traditional involvement with the Cooperators, the Past Pupils and others of the Salesian Family<sup>53</sup>.

#### 4.5. Some Areas of Special Concern

Given the specific nature of the Salesian apostolate directed primarily towards the young, it is thought that a special reference be made to two of the earliest and still prevalent forms of Salesian apostolate viz., boarding schools and oratories which were undergoing very perceptible changes due to the evolving socio-cultural, economic and demographic situation.

##### 4.5.1. Boarding-Schools<sup>54</sup>

The traditional boarding schools which served the interests of the “poor and abandoned boys” who, in the context of the unprecedented migration of the young from the villages to the cities fueled by the Industrial Revolution, had no other place to go to and who would fall willingly into the regimented system, albeit based on Salesian loving kindness, was found to be increasingly irrelevant or incompatible with the desire for freedom of the youth of the 1960s<sup>55</sup>. Indeed, boarding-schools appeared to be quite anachronistic in the changed welfare landscape of the West.

<sup>52</sup> The changing focus on the Salesian apostolate in keeping with the times was the insertion under the term “apostolate” of six new areas: parish ministry, adult catechesis, family apostolate, lay teachers’ formation, working class ministry, and social communications. A new term, “Youth Ministry” was also introduced and Gaetano Scrivo was elected the General Councillor for Youth Ministry. However, the pre-conciliar “youth apostolate” mentality linked to the boarding schools was still shared by a majority of the participants at the Chapter. Cf Sabino FRIGATO, *Educazione ed evangelizzazione. La riflessione della Congregazione Salesiana nel Postconcilio*, in Andrea BOZZOLO - Roberto CARELLI (eds.), *Evangelizzazione e educazione*. (= Nuova biblioteca scienze religiose, 32). Roma, LAS 2011, pp. 70-72.

<sup>53</sup> M. WIRTH, *Da Don Bosco ai nostri giorni...*, p. 445.

<sup>54</sup> ACS 244 (1966) 107-112.

<sup>55</sup> Studies made at the time showed that 72% of the Past Pupils in Italy would have

That the Congregation was quite aware of the diminishing relevance of the boarding-schools was evident from the fact that in his presentation of GC 19, Fr. Ricceri omitted the term “boarding-schools” and insisted more on the oratories and on education, especially professional education<sup>56</sup>. This was indeed a significant departure from tradition, given the fact, that the GCs from IX to XIX had all described boarding schools or schools with an attached boarding, as one of the primary settings for youth apostolate<sup>57</sup>.

#### 4.5.2. Oratories and Youth Centres<sup>58</sup>

With the prevalence of the increased use of the Mass Media and the change in recreational facilities with the emergence of well-organized clubs of a social, cultural and recreational nature, the older form of oratories, run along a well tried and tested track, were found to be increasingly irrelevant. This challenged the Salesians with having to search out new ways of running oratories and youth centres. They were also called upon to deal with the increasing number of non-Christian believers and non-believers attending the oratories and youth centres in a genuine spirit of dialogue<sup>59</sup>.

#### 4.6. *Climate of the Chapter*

In general, the climate in which the Chapter was held, may be characterised as one of “contestation” which in effect was a reflection of the general situation which was prevailing both in the world and in the Church of the time. Thus, GC 19 witnessed creative polarised tensions between those advocating adaptation to the new challenges facing the Congregation and its mission of service to the young and those who were ardent advocates of fidelity to the original charism of Don Bosco – something, which had been a constant throughout the history of the Congregation. This situation caused the Rector

preferred an education in a family context with an average level of parenting instead of a well-organized boarding set-up with competent educators. The negative aspects highlighted with regard to the education imparted in the boardings were an unrealistic preparation for life, suppression of personality, compulsory religious practices, excessive discipline and a lack of preparation to engage in meaningful relations with the complementary sex. Cf Pier Giovanni GRASSO, *La Società Salesiana tra il passato e l'avvenire. Risultati di un'inchiesta tra ex allievi Salesiani*. Roma 1964, pp. 45-152. [Edizione extra-commerciale riservata].

<sup>56</sup> ACS 244 (1966) 11-12.

<sup>57</sup> Michal VOJTÁŠ, *Reviving Don Bosco's Oratory, Salesian Youth Ministry, Leadership and Innovative Project Management*. Jerusalem, STS Publications 2017, p. 18.

<sup>58</sup> ACS 244 (1966) 134-140.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137.

Major to make impassioned pleas for “unity in diversity”<sup>60</sup>, and to indicate “dialogue” at various levels being the better way of solving issues<sup>61</sup>. This general climate of polarised contestation will continue to prevail also during and after the Special General Chapter and will be evident also in the early years of Kristu Jyoti College.

## 5. Salesian Congregation between GC 19 and GC 20

In 1991, looking back at GC 19, and with the benefit of hindsight, Fr. Juan Vecchi, the then Rector Major, stated:

“GC 19 did not have a satisfactory operational translation [...]; the mentality and the operational practice did not experience major changes at the grass-root level of the Congregation”<sup>62</sup>.

This was on account of the fact, that soon after the Chapter was concluded, Rome, through the Decree *Eclesiae Sanctae* (6<sup>th</sup> August 1966) asked all the religious congregations to prepare for a Special General Chapter in order to realize the required level of adaptation and renewal along the lines of *Perfectae Caritatis*, the Decree on the Up-to-Date Renewal of Religious Life (28<sup>th</sup> Oct. 1965).

### 5.1. A Period of Crisis

The crisis in vocations in the West with increasingly nuclear families accompanied by a consumerist attitude and other allied factors which impacted so negatively on religious life, had its inescapable impact on the Salesians and their works. Thus the Congregation which had reached an all-time high of 21,614 members in 1967, which incidently was the year Kristu Jyoti began functioning, saw a fall of about one-fifth in 1977 as in real terms the number tumbled down to 16,599<sup>63</sup>. This was owed to the fact that for the first time in

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 315-316. Here in his exhortation to the members of the General Chapter on 7<sup>th</sup> May 1965, the Rector Major insisted on tolerance and respect for the views of others in order to maintain “unity in diversity”.

<sup>61</sup> Cf ACS 248 (1967) 3-33. In his letter, dated Turin, 31<sup>st</sup> January 1967, he spoke at length of the need to dialogue at various levels in the Congregation.

<sup>62</sup> Juan Edmundo VECCHI, “*Pastorale, educazione, pedagogia nella prassi Salesiana*”, in Luc VAN LOOY (a cura di), *Il cammino e la prospettiva 2000*. (= Documenti P.G., 13). Roma, Editrice SDB 1991, p. 10.

<sup>63</sup> Cf *Elenco Generale della Società di S. Francesco di Sales 1967*, pp. 35-327 and *ibid.*,

the history of the Congregation, there was a noticeable fall in the number of new entrants and simultaneously a noticeable increase in the number of those leaving it.

### 5.2. Initiatives of the Rector Major

In an effort to have a better understanding of the Congregation in view of the Special General Chapter, as GC 20 was referred to, the Rector Major undertook several journeys to different parts of the world and held Inter-Provincial meetings in Como for Europe (April 1968), in Bangalore for Asia (February 1968)<sup>64</sup> and in Caracas for Latin America (May 1969). He also paid attention to the animation of the Congregation through his writings which were fully in line with the mind of Vatican II and of Pope Paul VI, dealing as they would, with a variety of topics like proclamation of the faith, dialogue, renewal, vocation crisis etc.<sup>65</sup>. In a very volatile situation when there were also a certain “confusion of ideas”, which could easily give rise to extreme and even dangerous tendencies, Fr. Ricceri insisted on “courage in making decisions and consistency in our lives”<sup>66</sup>. Further, inspired by the event of the beatification of don Rua on 29<sup>th</sup> October 1972, he invited the Salesians to a total, integral and fecund faithfulness in imitation of the first successor of Don Bosco, who was so noted for his legendary fidelity to the founder<sup>67</sup>.

Faced with a situation pregnant with the “confusion of ideas” and with some of them of an extremist and dangerous kind, Fr. Ricceri insisted on a “courageous and balanced openness in tune with the teachings of the Vatican Council and of Pope Paul VI”<sup>68</sup>.

Thankfully for the Congregation, in Ricceri and Viganò it was blessed with an enlightened leadership during the period leading to the Special General Chapter, during the course of the Chapter and in the years that followed<sup>69</sup>. While the former, as has already been pointed out, insisted with

1977, pp. 39-256. Cf also the comparative table presented by Viganò in his: *La Società di San Francesco di Sales nel sessennio 1978-1983*. Roma 1983, p. 215 for an idea of the losses of the other orders and congregations during the same period.

<sup>64</sup> The meeting in India was held to coincide with the official inauguration of Kristu Jyoti College to which reference will be made in the course of this paper.

<sup>65</sup> Cf *La parola del Rettor Maggiore*. 9 vols. Torino, Ispettorica centrale salesiana 1967-1977 quoted in M. WIRTH, *Da Don Bosco ai nostri giorni...*, p. 449.

<sup>66</sup> ACS 250 (1967) 13, 18.

<sup>67</sup> Cf ACS 268 (1972) 24-25.

<sup>68</sup> M. WIRTH, *Da Don Bosco ai nostri giorni...*, p. 449.

<sup>69</sup> Aloysius Ricceri was elected Rector Major by GC 19 and his successor, Egidio Viganò

the Salesians that they engage themselves in a “courageous and balanced opening to the world”, the latter pointed to fidelity, courage and enthusiasm as the required responses to the challenges facing the Congregation<sup>70</sup>.

## 6. The Special General Chapter

The 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter of the Salesian Congregation, meant to realize the “*accomodata renovatio*” called for by the decree *Perfectae Caritatis* of the Second Vatican Council, was held at the newly opened generalate in Via della Pisana 1111, Rome, on 10<sup>th</sup> June 1971 and lasted an unprecedented 7 months with 202 participants representing 73 provinces and included 12 *observers* and 4 *experts*<sup>71</sup>.

It was at this Chapter that for the first time in its history, the Rector Major, who, thanks to his visits and especially thanks to the Inter-Provincial Congresses he had presided over at Como, Bangalore and Caracas, presented the *Report on the State of the Congregation*<sup>72</sup>, a practice which continues to this day.

As was only to be expected in the prevailing circumstances, this Chapter too, like GC 19, lived through very “lively” and at times tense moments on account of the involved debates between the “traditionalists” and the “progressives” with the former insisting on fidelity to the hallowed traditions and the latter calling for changes in keeping with the times. There were also calls for unity on the one hand and of decentralization on the other, or even that of a centralised authority on the one hand and that of co-responsibility on the other<sup>73</sup>.

### 6.1. The More Significant Developments

If one were to study the results of the *accomodata renovatio*, realized by the SGC, the great changes which followed within the Salesian communities

(1977-1995) who had participated in the Second Vatican Council and was elected General Councillor for Formation by GC 20.

<sup>70</sup> M. WIRTH, *Da don Bosco ai nostri giorni...*, p. 466.

<sup>71</sup> Cf *Capitolo Generale Speciale XX della Società Salesiana, Roma 1971*. Torino, Lit. E. Gili (s.d.), Allegato 8, pp. 605-611 for the list of participants, observers and experts.

<sup>72</sup> Cf *Capitolo Generale Speciale, Allegato 3*, pp. 565-583 for the *Relazione generale sullo stato della Congregazione. Capitolo generale speciale – Roma 1971*. Torino, Lit. E. Gili (s.d.).

<sup>73</sup> M. WIRTH, *Da Don Bosco ai nostri giorni...*, p. 451.

between 1965 and 1977, will become evident<sup>74</sup>. The more salient aspects of these may be enumerated as the governance of the Congregation more along the lines of animation with the relations between the superiors and the confreres becoming increasingly simple and informal, an increased level of the sense of the community and better communication as well as dialogue at various levels – congregational, provincial and local. These, in turn, were facilitated by such factors as the presence of the Regional Councillors in the General Council; the *consultation*, especially at the time of the appointment of the superiors and that of others to responsible positions; and the decentralization effected by the setting up of the regions which facilitated a better adaptation of the Salesian charism to the cultural and social context of a given region.

## 6.2. *Some Salient Contextualized Aspects*

The aspects considered significant in the context of this study, fall mainly in the areas of formation, evangelization and dialogue as well as schools and oratories.

### 6.2.1. Area of Formation

In the area of formation it must be noted that some novitiates and studentates had to be closed on account of the lack of vocations or on account of the difficulty in overcoming the various internal tensions. Among other things, Fr. Ricceri deplored the tendency to forget the Salesian charism in some of the formation houses, the presence of worrying doctrinal deviations, “protests or contestations”, and the lack of responsibility on the part of some of the formators<sup>75</sup>.

Though there was a crisis of vocations in Western Europe and in the Americas<sup>76</sup>, the situation proved to be quite different in the Asian countries, especially India. There were evident signs of an increase in vocations, thanks to the policy of recruiting local vocations and the setting up of the required infrastructures in different parts of the country already from the 1940s. Sufficient attention was paid also to the formation of those who would later be

<sup>74</sup> A clear idea of this impact may be had from Francis DESRAMAUT - Mario MIDALI (eds.), *La comunità salesiana*. (Leggiuno, 28-31 agosto 1972). (= Colloqui sulla vita salesiana, 4). Torino-Leumann, LDC 1973.

<sup>75</sup> M. WIRTH, *Da Don Bosco ai nostri giorni...*, p. 453.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 455.



tasked with the animation of the formation communities. This will be evident in the case of Kristu Jyoti College itself, where Indian Salesians trained in Europe and that during the post-Vatican II period, will be entrusted with the task of the theological formation of the Salesians in the region.

### 6.2.2. Evangelization and Dialogue

There were also challenges with regard to evangelization affecting the Church as a whole as also the Salesian Congregation, in the wake of the call to respect other cultures and religions and the need for dialogue insisted on by the Second Vatican Council<sup>77</sup>. The fundamental question was on how evangelization was to be carried forward in the post-colonial period. The relevance of this question came to the fore as during the colonial period, the proclamation of the Gospel went hand in hand with an assertion of racial and cultural superiority and the claim on the part of the missionaries to possessing the “fullness of Truth”. There was also a significant fall in the number of missionary vocations in Europe and a corresponding lack of missionary enthusiasm. Questions were also openly raised on the validity of the missions of the classical type of an earlier era and on whether or not it were more urgent to deal with issues of underdevelopment and hunger before thinking of “converting people to Christianity!”.

The Special General Chapter insisted that in the face of these very real and fundamental problems, what was called for were new attitudes, new competencies and new orientations. What was required was to establish a better link between evangelization, development and human progress; to promote the local cultures and languages; stimulate people’s participation and to make the Gospel message relevant to the local context<sup>78</sup>.

### 6.2.3. Schools and Oratories

There were also serious efforts at redimensioning schools and oratories especially in the West with the introduction also of co-education<sup>79</sup> and encouraging the greater involvement of the laity. In keeping with the social context, there were very meaningful attempts at inserting the Salesian charism in the more difficult areas, greater social involvement on behalf of

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 454-455.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 454.

<sup>79</sup> Cf Cosimo SEMERARO, *Coeducazione e presenza salesiana. Problemi e prospettive*. (Toulon, 30 ottobre - 2 novembre 1992). (= Colloqui internazionali sulla vita salesiana, 16 – Nuova serie, 5). Leumann (Torino), LDC 1993.

the marginalized and drug addicts, and different forms of collaboration with associated government and civil institutions<sup>80</sup>.

The Salesian studentate of theology in Bangalore, meant for the whole of Salesian India, which was started in the context of the Second Vatican Council, will prove itself to have been influenced in no small measure by the general historical context of its birth and the spirit of the *accomodata renovatio*, which had its unmistakeable impact on its formative years. The College will, already in its formative years, pay attention to realizing a formation in the spirit of dialogue with cultures and religions, meaningful involvement of the laity, collaboration with the government – all not without the tensions associated with the understandable change in concepts and approach, ushered in by Vatican II and the SGC.

## 7. KJC – A Point of Arrival and a Point of Departure

If the Salesian studentate of theology at Bangalore was a point of arrival as far as the theological formation of the Salesians in India was concerned, as has already been indicated in the course of this narration, it was also equally a point of departure in keeping with the changing world as well as the new ecclesiastical, Indian and congregational climate. However, the more important factor which facilitated the coming, of the Salesians to Bangalore, was the change in the attitude of the archbishop which led to a renewed correspondence between the Salesians and the archdiocese and the realization of a long desired objective of the former.

### 7.1. *Change in Attitude of the Archbishop*

Archbishop Thomas Pothacamury of Bangalore, who was not in favour of having too many religious congregations in the city and who for various reasons was not in favour of the Salesians coming into the archdiocese, eventually changed his rigid stance. The change in his attitude and the increasing friendliness he manifested towards the Salesians was evident from the fact of his having visited *The Retreat*, Yercaud, and having celebrated the community Mass on 24<sup>th</sup> May 1952, the feast of Mary Help of Christians<sup>81</sup>.

<sup>80</sup> M. WIRTH, *Da Don Bosco ai nostri giorni...*, p. 454.

<sup>81</sup> J. THEKKEDATH, *A History of the Salesians...*, II, p. 1020.

In his autobiography, Fr. John Med, the then Provincial of the Province of Madras, narrates an interesting incident about how the archbishop himself, and that to the former's great surprise, invited the Salesians to Bangalore.

“Once while at Kotagiri, I met the Archbishop of Bangalore, Mons. Pothacamury, when he came over to have some rest. In the course of our conversation, he casually mentioned, «Why don't you come to help us in Bangalore?» I replied jokingly, «But you do not want us. We hear that you keep the pictures of Don Bosco and Mary Help of Christians in the Archbishop's House to keep the Salesians away”». He took it well and said, «I will be happy if you come to Bangalore». He promised also to ask the parish priest at Krishnarajapuram village, just adjacent to Bangalore, about acquiring a plot for us. Taking him at his word we also contacted the parish priest, who eventually helped us in acquiring the land beside the Bangalore-Madras Highway. The land belonged to seven different owners. Six of them agreed, but the one right in the middle of it all was very reluctant. Fr. Dabove<sup>82</sup> managed to settle the matter amicably”<sup>83</sup>.

It was, in fact, a casual exchange between the provincial and the archbishop, which finally led to the Salesians coming to Bangalore after a long wait of 40 years, since the time when Fr. Ricaldone during the Extraordinary Visitation to the fledgling Salesian presence in India in 1927, expressed his desire for a Salesian presence in that fast growing metropolis.

## 7.2. *Renewed Correspondence*

Naturally enough, the very welcome attitude of the archbishop towards the Salesians led to a flurry of correspondence between them and the archdiocesan authorities.

### 7.2.1. Letter of Fr. Med to Archbishop Pothacamury

After his return to Madras from Kotagiri, Fr. Med, seeing the favourable stance of the archbishop, wrote him a letter, which in a way, picked up the thread of the correspondences from where his predecessors had left off.

“Your Grace,

With great pleasure, I still remember the two occasions when I saw Your Grace lately: in Kotagiri where Your Grace was for holidays and in Vellore where I saw you in the hospital. I hope that Your Grace is completely well now and we shall certainly pray for you so that God should preserve you well and healthy.

<sup>82</sup> Emilio Dabove was born in Italy in 1903 and made his first profession in 1927. He came to India in 1932 and was ordained in 1939. He died on 31.12.1981 at the age of 78. L. KUMPILUVELIL - C. PANACKEL (eds.), *A Journey with the Young...*, p. 302.

<sup>83</sup> S. AELEVANTHARA (ed.), *In His Name. Fr. John Med...*, p. 90.

In both of those occasions, Your Grace spoke to me about finding some land in Bangalore. Before it was not possible as our superiors were contrary to such undertaking but of late, they encouraged me to buy some plot of land for our future theologate.

It is with this end in view that I write this letter asking Your Grace to be so kind as to give us your permission to take this step and give us already in advance the permission to establish in your Archdiocese our *Domus Religiosa* intended especially to be a House of Studies. I shall be very grateful to Your Grace for this permission. We have inquired about possible places and they can be obtained but before giving a definite word I would beg Your Grace to give us your consent.

I can assure Your Grace that we shall pray for you now and also in the future and shall try to repay the kindness which Your Grace was always so ready to show to us all, and to me in particular. Kindly bless us also and our intentions,

Your Grace's obedient Son in O.L.

(Sd.) J. Med

Salesian Provincial"<sup>84</sup>.

This letter, apart from indicating the fact of the by now cordial relations that existed between the archbishop and the Salesians and that in a special way with the provincial superior, Fr. Med, indicates also some other pertinent aspects: i) that the Superiors were not in favour of starting a studentate of theology in the South till the Indo-Chinese War forced the students of theology out of Mawlai and to Kotagiri; ii) that Archbishop Thomas Pothacarmury had health issues at the time of writing this letter, something which made it necessary for his Auxiliary, Msgr. D.S. Lourdasamy, soon to be made Coadjutor Archbishop of Bangalore owed also to the continued ill-health of the archbishop, to take up the correspondence with the Salesians in the question at issue and iii) that the Salesians were quite solicitous about being faithful to the normal procedures associated with establishing new presences in a diocese.

#### 7.2.2. Letter of the Auxiliary Bishop to the Provincial

Since the archbishop was in retreat, it would, in fact, be Msgr. Lourdasamy, the auxiliary bishop, who replied two days later. The letter was very cordial and was dated Archbishop's House, 20, Miller's Road, Bangalore – 6, 11<sup>th</sup> January 1963.

"Dear Fr. Provincial,

His Grace the Archbishop is in due receipt of your letter, dated 9<sup>th</sup> January 1963. As he is in retreat at present, I am penning these lines on his behalf.

<sup>84</sup> AAB – SDB, RF -37. Vol. II (1963-1967). Letter dated 80-C Broadway, Madras-1 (S. India), 9<sup>th</sup> January 1963.

His Grace says that you are quite welcome here and gives you hereby, with great pleasure, the required permission to establish in this Archdiocese of Bangalore a «domus religiosa» of your congregation, intended especially to be a house of studies. A formal permission to this effect in a well-drawn-up document will be issued later. His Grace strongly advises you to locate this house outside the present city limits.

Along with His Grace I too extend to your congregation a hearty welcome to this Archdiocese.

Whenever you come over to Bangalore to make arrangements for the purchase of the plot of land and other such things, you will be our honoured guest here at the Archbishop's House. You may stay here with us as long as you like [and] we shall make you feel quite at home with us and shall try to help you in all possible ways.

With best wishes and special blessings both from His Grace, the Archbishop, and myself,

Yours devotedly in O.L.,

(D.S. Lourdasamy),

Bishop Auxiliary & Vicar General”<sup>85</sup>.

The above letter is quite revealing inasmuch as it underlines yet again the concern of the archdiocese not to have too many religious houses within the then city limits and insists that the Salesians locate themselves in the periphery. The letter is particularly cordial and Msgr. Lourdasamy, as will be seen also in the later part of this work, would always remain a good friend and benefactor of the Salesians. It was in fact, he, who would eventually lay the foundation-stone for the future studentate of theology of the Salesians in Bangalore.

### 7.2.3. Letter of Fr. Dabove to the Auxiliary Bishop

The next correspondence with the archdiocesan authorities in this connection was that of Fr. Emilio Dabove, the economer of the Salesian Province of Madras. He had come to Bangalore to scout for a suitable place and with the help of the parish priest, located and bought one at Sannathammanahalli.

The letter is written from 80-C Broadway, Madras-1 and is dated 30<sup>th</sup> June 1963.

“My Lord,

I reached here last night and this afternoon I shall go back to my country place. Before leaving I feel I need writing these lines to express my gratitude to Your Excellency for all the understanding, condescension and kindness shown to me when I was up [there] in connection with our foundation at Sannathammanahalli.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.* The letter was dated Archbishop's House, 20, Miller's Road, Bangalore – 6, 11<sup>th</sup> January 1963.

After saying this, I have not as yet spoken of the help Your Excellency has given [...] I cannot express it here. I feel confident that the Salesians will at all times and in all circumstances cooperate with the Pastors of the Diocese. We shall also pray for you, my Lord, that God may grant you all the graces your Lordship needs in discharging your duty. That the duty is heavy, I know. The more therefore, I am pledged to pray for you.

I am also writing to V. Rev. Fr. Gratian<sup>86</sup>. He has been very helpful out of purely genuine good will and I naturally go out in sympathy to him because of the difficulties he had in rendering us the help he did.

Our Provincial is shortly going to Bangalore to meet His Grace and thank him. I have acquainted him with the position and the permission and blessing given by His Grace to our foundation. Needless to say, he was happy about it. I trust it will be possible for him to meet your Lordship.

Craving blessing, I remain,

Yours devotedly in C. J.

(Sd.) Dabove”<sup>87</sup>.

Fr. Dabove is full of praise for the assistance which Fr. Gratian, the parish priest, had rendered him during his visit and says that he was writing to express his gratitude before he moves out to his *country place*, which is a reference to the very extensive farm which the Salesians had at Sagayathottam of which Fr. Dabove was then the rector in addition to being the provincial economer. The letter is indicative of the good relations which would prevail between the Salesians and the local parish priests and the archdiocesan authorities in the years to come.

#### 7.2.4. Letter of the Provincial to the Auxiliary Bishop

The next letter of the provincial to the auxiliary bishop is dated 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1964. This is obviously because, in the meantime, the required steps of identifying and buying the land were completed. This letter is, in fact, a request for the promised formal permission to start a *domus religiosa* in Bangalore and said that he had been faithful to the indications given by Msgr. Lourdasamy in his earlier letter.

“Your lordship,

Some time ago I requested His Grace, the Archbishop of Bangalore, for a letter permitting us to open a DOMUS RELIGIOSA in the Archdiocese of Bangalore which should be a House of Studies. Your Lordship replied on behalf of His

<sup>86</sup> R. P. J. Gratian was the parish priest of St. Anthony’s Parish, T.C. Palaya, ww.bangalorearchdiocese.com/?pageid=761. (14.9.2018).

<sup>87</sup> Dabove, the then Provincial Economer, was also at the same time Rector of Don Bosco, Sagayathottam. Cf *Elenco Generale della Società di S. Francesco di Sales, 1964...*, II, pp. 502 e 510.

Grace giving a temporary permission and promising regular permission in (the) future.

Your Lordship is aware that we have now purchased a large plot of land at Sannathammanahalli which is away from the city limits in that newly developing area. As we would like to start the work, I ask now Your Lordship to be so kind as to send us a regular letter permitting us to erect a Salesian DOMUS RELIGIOSA in that locality. I shall then be able to send a regular request to Rome for the canonical erection of the house.

Assuring Your Lordship of all our esteem and requesting your paternal blessing I remain,

Your Lordship's obedient Son in O.L.

(Sd.) J. Med

John Med SDB

Salesian Provincial<sup>88</sup>.

Sannathammanahalli was about 16 kms. from the city centre and was only about 2 kms. from the town of Krishnarajapuram which was on the Old Madras Road and hence well connected by both train and bus services<sup>89</sup>. The extent of the land purchased in the beginning was 35 acres and to these were added 5 more acres, thanks to the considerable help rendered by Fr. Gratian<sup>90</sup>.

#### 7.2.5. Auxiliary Bishop to Provincial

The auxiliary bishop responded with a formal letter which confirmed the permission given the previous year.

“Very Rev. and dear Fr. Med,

Sub: Permission to open a «DOMUS RELIGIOSA» at Sannathammanahalli, Bangalore.

I am in receipt of your letter dated 23<sup>rd</sup> June '64, asking for a formal, regular permission to erect a Salesian «Domus Religiosa» at Sannathammanahalli.

It is true that in answer to your previous letter of 9<sup>th</sup> January 1963, I wrote to you on 11<sup>th</sup> January 1963, on behalf of His Grace, the Archbishop, welcoming you to Bangalore and permitting you to have a house of studies here. You were then advised to locate this House outside the city limits. Accordingly, I am glad, you have purchased a plot of land at Sannathammanahalli which is far enough from the present City limits.

<sup>88</sup> AAB – SDB, RF -37. Vol. II (1963-1967).

<sup>89</sup> The area had begun to develop with the setting up of some industrial companies like *The Chemical, Industrial, Pharmaceutical Laboratories* (CIPLA - 1935), *The Hindustan Aircraft Company Limited* (HAL - 1940), *The Indian Telephone Industries* (ITI - 1948), and a host of other smaller companies. Today it is well within the city limits and is part of the Bangalore City Corporation.

<sup>90</sup> AKJCB – Chronicle, vol. I, *From the beginning up to june 1975*, p. 1. In the years that followed, the Salesians bought more land from different owners till the total extent of the land in their possession reached about 52 acres and 50 cents.



Hence, I confirm hereby the permission given last year which you may now consider as definite and formal, and make necessary arrangements with Rome for the Canonical erection of the House.

With all good wishes and special blessings for the success of the project,

Yours devotedly in Our Lord,

Bishop Auxiliary”<sup>91</sup>.

This was incidentally the last letter on the subject written by Fr. John Med as he had by then completed his term as Provincial. However, after a break of about eight months, Fr. Aloysius Di Fiore, the new provincial, contacted Msgr. D. S. Lourdasamy, who in the meantime, on 7<sup>th</sup> March 1965, had become the Coadjutor Archbishop of Bangalore.

#### 7.2.6. Correspondence between Di Fiore and the Coadjutor Archbishop

In his first letter to the new Coadjutor Archbishop of Bangalore, Fr. Di Fiore introduced himself as the successor of Fr. Med, and went on to invite him to lay the foundation-stone of the new building to be constructed.

“Your Grace,

May I introduce myself as the new provincial of the Salesian Province of South India. My predecessor, Fr. J. Med, whom you know, has been sent to Assam as the Novice Master.

My first duty is to thank Your Grace for all the goodness you have shown us and your invaluable help to secure a site in Bangalore for our Theologate. May Almighty God reward you for this act of charity. Rest assured of our daily prayers.

We are planning to lay the Foundation-Stone of our theologate on the 25<sup>th</sup> of March at 4.00 p.m. Since Archbishop Thomas is not well, I invite Your Grace to perform the ceremony of the blessing and laying of the Foundation-Stone of this institution. As a great Benefactor of ours and the Coadjutor Archbishop of Bangalore, You have the first claim to this function. May I hope Your Grace will be able to comply with my request? We shall be immensely happy and grateful if You will accept.

I am sorry I have not yet had the opportunity of meeting Your Grace personally; but I hope to do so in the near future and pay my homage in person.

Thanking you most cordially and asking a big Blessing on myself and my work,  
Devotedly Yours in C.J.

Fr. L. Di Fiore

P.S. I shall be grateful if You will send me an answer to «Salesian House», Tirupattur, N.A. Dt., where I shall be till 13<sup>th</sup> inst”<sup>92</sup>.

<sup>91</sup> AAB – SDB, RF -37. Vol. II (1963-1967). The letter is dated 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1964. Cf also ASC F392, Rev. D.S. Lourdasamy, Bishop Auxiliary to Very Rev. Fr. John Med S.D.B. (copy).

<sup>92</sup> AAB – SDB, RF -37. Vol. II (1963-1967).

The archbishop responded on 8<sup>th</sup> March 1965 promising to be present despite his heavy schedule and expressing his hope of meeting Fr. Di Fiore soon.

“I am also very happy to know that the blessing and laying of the foundation-stone for your new Theologate here in Bangalore has been fixed up for the 25<sup>th</sup> of this month at 4.00 p.m.

Though I have a crowded programme on that day, I shall make myself available to perform the ceremony.

Once again I welcome your congregation to this Archdiocese with open arms and assure you of my prayers and other assistance that is in my power.

Looking forward to the pleasure of meeting you here before long,

I remain,

With all good wishes and a special blessing,

Coadjutor Archbishop of Bangalore<sup>93</sup>.

As indicated in the post-script of Fr. Di Fiore’s letter, the archbishop wrote to Salesian House, Tirupattur and when the former reached there, he was pleasantly surprised to find the archbishop’s letter on his table. Fr. Di Fiore replied immediately expressing his great happiness at getting the latter’s very prompt reply and also giving a hint of the long wait the Salesians had to endure before they could finally come to Bangalore.

“Your Grace,

I was so exceedingly happy when last night I reached Tirupattur and found on my table your kind letter of 8<sup>th</sup> March.

I have no words to express my gratitude to Your Grace for having accepted to bless the foundation-stone on the 25<sup>th</sup> of this month at 4.00 p.m. By the way, if Your Grace thinks that 4.30 p.m. would be more convenient, we are still in time to change it. In this case please let me have just a line in reply to Don Bosco Orphanage, Katpadi Extension, N. Arcot Dt., where I shall be till the 15<sup>th</sup> instant. My heartfelt thanks for your words of encouragement and affection. It is so nice to see that we are so welcome to Bangalore, a thing which we could not get for many years<sup>94</sup>.

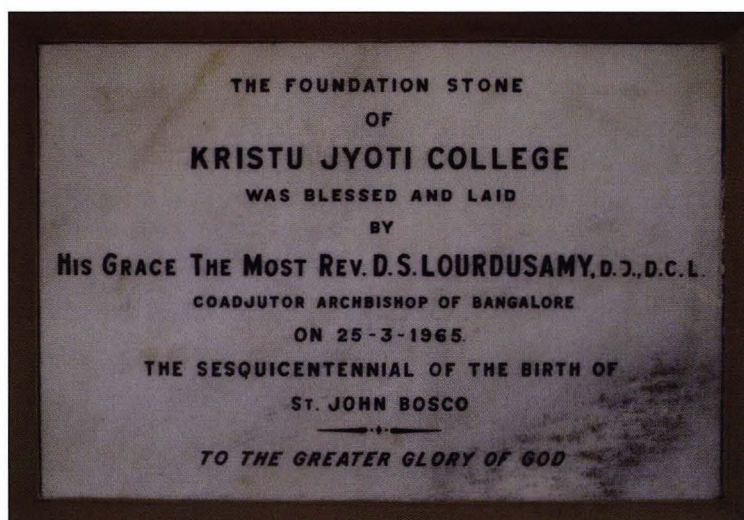
<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.* The letter is written with the letter-head of Broadway but with the addition, Camp: Salesian House, Tirupattur, N.A. Dt. The letters of Di Fiore from different places and his requests to the Coadjutor Archbishop to forward his replies to the addresses indicated by him point to the heavy schedule of the Provincial of Madras who had communities in the then states of Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Kerala, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Tamilnadu, besides a community at Negombo, Sri Lanka. The Province will give rise in due course to the Provinces of Bombay (31<sup>st</sup> January 1972), Bangalore (19<sup>th</sup> March 1979), Hyderabad (24<sup>th</sup> April 1992), Tiruchy (25<sup>th</sup> March 1999), Panjim (15<sup>th</sup> June 2007) and the Vice-Province of Sri Lanka (15<sup>th</sup> August 2004).

The letter gives evident indications to the fact that the Salesians were indeed happy to have the opportunity to begin their studentate of theology in Bangalore after the decades-long efforts expended to have a presence there.

## 8. Laying the Foundation-Stone

The foundation-stone of the future studentate of theology was blessed and laid on 25<sup>th</sup> March 1965 at a function presided over by Msgr. D. S. Lourdusamy, the Coadjutor Archbishop of Bangalore. On that occasion he expressed his joy at having the Salesians in the archdiocese saying: "I welcome you with open arms!"<sup>95</sup>.



Inscription to the left of the main entrance

After the ceremony, Fr. James Oreglia<sup>96</sup>, the secretary of the province, wrote a letter to the coadjutor archbishop thanking him for his kindness and appreciating the generosity shown to the Salesians. The fact that he refers to the new institution as *Sacred Heart College* is significant and indicative of the fact that the name of the institution had not yet been decided upon. The name *Kristu Jyoti College* will be finalised only at a later stage as will be indicated in the course of this study.

<sup>95</sup> AKJCB – Chronicle, vol. I, p. 2.

<sup>96</sup> James Oreglia was born in Argentina in 1916 and made his first profession in 1933. He was ordained in 1941 and came to India in 1947. He returned to Argentina in 1988 and died there on 15.09.1996 at the age of 80. Cf L. KUMPILUVELIL - C. PANACKEL (eds.), *A Journey with the Young...*, p. 310.

“Your Grace,

Fr. Provincial, Very Rev. Fr. L. Di Fiore, is flying this afternoon to Bombay on his way to Rome.

He wishes to thank Your Grace sincerely for your great kindness to us all and for all the appreciation Your Grace so generously showed of our little work in India. Your Grace will find the Salesians always at your disposal, ready to follow your lead in the work for the salvation of souls.

Fr. Provincial has also directed me to send to Your Grace the enclosed estimate of the Sacred Heart College with request to send it to the Sacred Congregation along with the plans of the new College.

With the deepest sentiments of my personal devotion and gratitude and asking Your Grace’s blessing, I am,

Yours respectfully in C. J.

Fr. James, SDB

Secretary”<sup>97</sup>.

The coadjutor archbishop responded on 2nd April ’65.

“Dear Fr. James,

Your letter of 29<sup>th</sup> April to hand together with the enclosed estimate of costs.

When Father di Fiore handed over to me the appeal to Rome for help, I had no time to open the envelope and scrutinise at leisure if all the required papers were there. I had the impression that only the estimate of costs was wanting; but just now I note that a covering letter to H.E. the Internuncio has not been included. Now that Fr. Provincial is not there, you will do well to prepare and sign this letter on his behalf and send it on to me. Therein you should mention the purpose of the appeal for help and request His Excellency to kindly forward it to Rome with his strong recommendation. On receipt of this covering letter from you, I shall forward all the papers to him with my own recommendation”<sup>98</sup>.

On receiving this letter, Fr. James forwarded the relevant documents on to His Grace on 5<sup>th</sup> April 1965 with a note of thanks for “all the paternal kindness used with us”<sup>99</sup>.

Thus, the stage was now set for starting the construction and move on with the rest of the work to realise the cherished desire of the Salesians for an adequately furnished and staffed house of theological formation in India and to have a presence in Bangalore.

<sup>97</sup> AAB – SDB, RF -37. Vol. II (1963-1967). The letter is dated Provincial House, 80-C Broadway, Madras-1, 29<sup>th</sup> March 1965.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

## 9. Construction

The plan for the building was prepared by Fr. Peter Maggioni SDB<sup>100</sup> and the construction entrusted to the contractor, Mr. T.J. Thomas, a past pupil, who had earlier been involved in the construction of Dharmaram College, the studentate of the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate (C.M.I.). The work began almost immediately after the laying of the foundation-stone although there were some hitches which called for a change in the original plan of the building.

### 9.1. *Change of Plan and Phased-out Construction*

The original plan for the building, which appears to have been based on the dormitory model, was altered when it came to be known that GC 19 had taken the decision to provide the students of theology with single rooms<sup>101</sup>. Hence, in September 1965, an alternate plan was prepared and the entire construction planned to be completed within a five-year period. However, given the urgency of having to move out of Kotagiri, which had but inadequate facilities for a studentate of theology, it was decided to have the rooms for the students got ready by June 1967, for the start of the academic year. But seeing that even this plan might not materialise, it was decided to have the opening only for the second semester in November although some of the important structures like the College Chapel, the library and the auditorium would not still be ready<sup>102</sup>.

### 9.2. *Ecclesial Environment of KJC*<sup>103</sup>

At the time of the coming of the Salesians to Sannathammanahalli, there were but two ecclesiastical institutions in the locality viz., the Parish of

<sup>100</sup> Peter Maggioni was born in Milan, Italy on 27.03.1909. He came to India in 1933 as a novice and made his first profession that same year. He was ordained in 1940 and died in Madras on 22.10.1983 at the age of 74. L. KUMPILUVELIL - C. PANACKEL (eds.), *A Journey with the Young...*, p. 303; SAS.

<sup>101</sup> Cf ACS 244 (1966) 61-62. This number of the Acts of the Superior Chapter published the Acts of the 19<sup>th</sup> General Chapter, held in Rome from 8<sup>th</sup> April to 10<sup>th</sup> June 1965. Chapter IV of the First Part of the capitular documents deals with the Studentates of Theology. No. 6 of the seven proposals made by the commission (pp. 61-62) reads as follows: "Students of theology should be given individual rooms in view of the quiet indispensable to whoever has the duty of a life of intense study and interior recollection".

<sup>102</sup> AKJCB – Chronicle, vol. I, p. 1.

<sup>103</sup> It is felt that a rather detailed description of the location of the theologate within the parish limits of St. Anthony's Church, Thambuchettypalaya is necessary in order the better to understand the general narration.

St. Anthony and the convent of the Sisters of St. Anne, Bangalore, founded by Msgr. Étienne-Louis Charbonnaux in 1859<sup>104</sup>. The parish also had a piece of land in the Kowdanahally Village and another at Basvanapura.

### 9.2.1. St. Anthony's Parish and St. Anne's Convent

Sannathammanahalli, which was mentioned by Fr. Med as the place where the Salesians had bought the land to build their studentate of theology, will, in later years, be referred to as Thambuchettyur and still later as Thambuchettyalaya (T.C. Palaya), a name which it still holds. The name was changed from Sannathammanahalli to Thambuchettyur to honour Sir Trichinopoly Rayalu Arokiasamy Thambuchetty<sup>105</sup>, a Christian, who made a grant of the village to the Christians of the locality about the year 1890. In addition, in 1900, Sir Thambuchetty gave to the Mission the *Seminary Villa*<sup>106</sup> and donated a substantial portion of the total of more than 38 acres to the Sisters of St. Anne, Bangalore, for building a convent, a school and a dispensary<sup>107</sup> although the ownership remained with Msgr. Baslé of the Diocese of Mysore<sup>108</sup>. However, since at the time of the registration of the land, the Sisters of St. Anne, Bangalore, were under the direction of the Good

<sup>104</sup> Cf [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Étienne-Louis\\_Charbonnaux](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Étienne-Louis_Charbonnaux). (29.3.2019) for information on Charbonnaux and on his founding the Congregation of St. Anne, Bangalore.

<sup>105</sup> After the Rendition of Mysore which took place in 1881, T.R.A. Thumbbo Chetty (1837-1907) was nominated ex-officio Senior Member of Maharaja Chamarajendra Wadiyar's Council and then was appointed one of the three judges of the Chief Court of Mysore and went on eventually to become its Chief Judge in July 1890 thus becoming the first Indian to hold the title. When Sir K. Seshadri Iyer was the Diwan of Maharaja Chamaraja Wadiyar III and during the minority of his successor Krishnaraja Wadayar IV, when his mother Kempa Nanjammani Vani Vilasa Sannidhana acted as the Regent, Thumbbo Chetty officiated as the Diwan on five occasions (1890, 1892, 1893, 1897 and 1900); <https://sites.google.com/site/thumbboochetty/>. (31.3.2019).

<sup>106</sup> The present site of the school – a field of 375 ft. by 189 ft. AAB Section: City Parishes (CP) file no. 46: St. Anthony's Church, Thambuchettyur.

<sup>107</sup> The land is in Survey No. 48/5, 49/5, 51.

<sup>108</sup> Augustin-François Baslé MEP was the Bishop of Mysore from 1910-1915. The said lands being in the name of the Bishop of Mysore and not under that of the Archbishop of Bangalore, has to be understood from the fact that the Diocese of Mysore was the "Mother Diocese" from which was born the Diocese of Bangalore which, eventually with its growth and pre-eminence at different levels, became the Archdiocesan See. In fact, Mysore was made a Vicariate Apostolic on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1850 with Étienne-Louis Charbonnaux as the first Vicar Apostolic (1850-1876). With the establishment of the Indian Hierarchy in 1886 it was made a Diocese. Cf Thomas ANCHUKANDAM, *Catholic Revival in India in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Role of Mgr. Clement Bonnard (1796-1861)*. Bangalore, Kristu Jyoti Publications 2006, p. 542. The Diocese of Bangalore was formed by the bifurcation of Mysore in 1940 and eventually became the Metropolitan See on 19<sup>th</sup> September 1953, with the decree *Mutant Res (Things are changing)*; [www.bangalorearchdiocese.com/?page\\_id=792](http://www.bangalorearchdiocese.com/?page_id=792). (15.9.2018).



Shepherd Sisters, the said property was registered in the name of Sr. Paula of the Good Shepherd Convent<sup>109</sup>.

In 1902, a small mud church was built in this piece of land and in 1906, the care of the Christians in the locality was entrusted to the Mysore Mission of the *Missions Étrangères de Paris* (MEP) or the Paris Foreign Missionary Society. In 1911, a new church was built by the MEP missionaries<sup>110</sup> and a presbytery added in 1925.

### 9.2.2. Land at Basvanapura and Kowdanahally

At Basvanapura, situated about 2 Kms. from T.C. Palaya, the parish had a burial ground for the use of the Catholics of the Basvanapura and Seegahalli villages<sup>111</sup>.

On 1<sup>st</sup> Oct. 1965, two acres of land for the future church in the Kowdanahally village, Krishnarajapuram Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk, was purchased by the archdiocese for building a church, schools, dispensary etc. to benefit the people of Kowdanahally as well as the surrounding villages. The archdiocese placed this newly acquired property under the jurisdiction of St. Anthony's Parish, T.C. Palaya and in due course the Holy Family Church, Ramamurthynagar, will be erected there with the collaboration of the Salesians as will be seen in the later pages of this narration<sup>112</sup>.

The Salesians, the second religious congregation to come to the area, will not only be a witness to the process of development which will be realized there in the years that followed but will also contribute significantly and in different ways to that development.

<sup>109</sup> AAB – CP- File no. 46 St. Anthony's Church, Thambuchettyur. Declaration signed by P. Arokiaswamy, Archbishop of Bangalore, and by John D'Souza, Notary Public. Cf also letter of Anne Josepha, Mother Superior of St. Anne's Convent, Thambuchettyur dated 13.7.1967.

<sup>110</sup> The official site of St. Anthony's Church, T.C. Palaya, refers to Gabier MEP as the one who constructed the church in 1911. However, since such a name does not appear in the Index of the MEP missionaries who worked in the Mysore Mission, the reference could be surmised to be to Théodore GERBIER MEP who died in Bangalore on 5.7.1911. Cf [www.oocities.org/athens/2960/mep2.htm](http://www.oocities.org/athens/2960/mep2.htm). (28.3.2019).

<sup>111</sup> The cemetery measured 4 guntas (10 cents) and was situated in S. No. 16/13 of Basavanapura Village which at the time was an assessed wasteland measuring 8 acres, 22 guntas, karab 6 acres 20 guntas, nett 2 acres 2 guntas with an assessment of Rs. 1-8-0. Seegahalli, was a gomal (free pasturing) land. Cf *Extract of the notes prepared by Mr. I Anthony Swamy, the then District Survey Officer, Bangalore District, Bangalore and submitted to His Grace Dr. Thomas Potecamury, Archbishop of Bangalore on 20<sup>th</sup> June 1955*. AAB Section: City parishes (CP) File no. 46, St. Anthony's Church Thambuchettyur. It is also to be noted that when searching through AAB file Our Lady of Lourdes Church – CP- 43 for the purpose of writing this book, no documents other than the sales deeds were found.

<sup>112</sup> AAB Holy Family Church Ramamoorthynagar (Ramamurthynagar) File CP- 43 which has the Property Document, Trust Deed and also the estimates for the church which was then put at Rs. 1, 35, 899.46.



## 10. Immediate Preparations

In July 1967, in order to speed up the work of construction, Fr. Di Fiore, the Provincial, asked Fr. Raymondo Chanoux<sup>113</sup> and Bro Giovanni Toffoli<sup>114</sup>, to go to Bangalore. It was also decided to hold the annual retreat of the year and the meeting of the rectors in the new building. On 14<sup>th</sup> September, Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, Fr. Di Fiore blessed the temporary chapel and celebrated the Holy Eucharist for the first time in the campus. It was in effect a thanksgiving Eucharist and Fr. Di Fiore thanked the Lord for all His many graces and for the work that had been realized and invoked His blessings on all those who had helped to realize the project<sup>115</sup>.

On the last day of the Rectors' Meeting held from 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> September, the book to write the chronicle of the house was solemnly handed over to Rev. Fr. Anthony Mampra, the first Rector of Kristu Jyoti College<sup>116</sup>.

The name of the institution was also discussed at this meeting and from among the many names that were proposed, the final choice was between "Viswajyoti" and "Kristu Jyoti". Eventually, it was "Kristu Jyoti" (Christ the Light of the World) which was preferred by the majority<sup>117</sup>.

## 11. Canonical Erection and Critical Views

After the required correspondence between the provincial and the major superiors in Rome, Kristu Jyoti College was canonically erected and that in an atmosphere of contestation regarding the grandiose structure and conveniences which quite some thought to be not consistent and far too extravagant with what was up to then considered the accepted standard for forming future priests.

<sup>113</sup> Raimondo Chanoux was born at Pon-Bozet, Valle d'Aosta on 23.1.1915. He came to India in 1936 as a novice and made his first profession in 1937. He was ordained on 12.12.1947. He returned to Italy in 1985 and died at Ivrea on 19.10.2003 at the age of 88. L. KUMPILUVELIL - C. PANACKEL, *A Journey with the Young...*, p. 306; SAS.

<sup>114</sup> Giovanni Toffoli was born at Sernaglia della Battaglia, Italy, on 26.2.1915. He came to India as a novice in 1937 and made his profession in 1938. He died at Tirupattur on 26.11.2002 at the age of 87. L. KUMPILUVELIL - C. PANACKEL (eds.), *A Journey with the Young...*, p. 307; SAS.

<sup>115</sup> AKJCB – Chronicle, vol. I, p. 2.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

11.1. *Towards the Canonical Erection of KJC*

Seeing that things were proceeding according to plan, Fr. Di Fiore wrote to Fr. Luigi Ricceri, the Rector Major, saying that he desired to have the inauguration of the new theologate in Bangalore on 21<sup>st</sup> June 1967. He also said that he was enclosing the permission for the same of the “Auxiliary Bishop of Bangalore” since on account of his illness the archbishop was not in a position to govern the archdiocese. He further added that he hoped to have the decree of erection in time so that he could proceed without any problems<sup>118</sup>.

Subsequently, the Rector Major wrote to the Holy Father requesting permission for the canonical erection of a salesian house at Sannathammanahalli, Bangalore, India, belonging to the Salesian Province of Saint Thomas the Apostle of Madras, dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. He also clarified the scope of the to-be-erected institution when he said:

“The above-mentioned house will be meant primarily as a studentate of theology for those aspiring to be Salesian priests in India, and for other works in conformity with the Salesian Constitutions”.

He added further that the Provincial of Madras had already got the permission of the local ordinary<sup>119</sup>.

The Sacred Congregation of the *Propaganda Fide* gave its *nulla osta* on 8<sup>th</sup> May 1967<sup>120</sup> as did also the Sacred Congregation for the Religious two days later<sup>121</sup>. After having got the necessary permissions, the Rector Major effected the canonical erection of the new studentate of theology on 24<sup>th</sup> May 1967<sup>122</sup>.

The stage was thus set for a well-planned studentate of theology for India after the very arduous experiences of the previous thirty years of what could be considered its rather tenuous existence in different places and under varying satisfactory conditions.

<sup>118</sup> ASC F392, Luigi Di Fiore, Provincial, to the Rector Major, 80-C. Broadway, Madras-1, 27 April 1967. Di Fiore states his desire to have the inauguration of the new theologate in Bangalore on 21<sup>st</sup> June 1967.

<sup>119</sup> ASC F392, Luigi Ricceri to the Holy Father dated Torino, 2 maggio 1967.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, Note of the Under Secretary of the Propaganda Fide to the Holy Father, Prot. No. 2259/67. Dated 8<sup>th</sup> May 1967 (copy).

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, copy of the letter of the *Sacra Congregatio de Religiosis*, prot. N. 12893/67.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, Prot. N. 124/67, dated 24 May 1967, the decree of the canonical erection of the house by the Rector Major.

### 11.2. *Differences of Views*

Already during the meeting of the rectors of the province held in the building still under construction (15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> September 1967), when most of them were having their first glimpse of the structure, there were differences of views vis-à-vis the structure and its intended goal.

Some felt that training future priests in “too convenient” a setting might make it difficult for them to adapt to the demands of the challenging life of a missionary priest. However, there were others who commented on the need to provide all the necessary facilities “in keeping with the times”. The latter group also felt that the easier access to professors, libraries and varied forms of organized apostolic and cultural activities available in Bangalore, together with the tranquility of the single rooms would give the students a better priestly and religious formation in keeping with the needs of a post-Conciliar Church<sup>123</sup>.

Besides the Salesian circles, the majestic stone structure out there in that then quite underdeveloped area of Bangalore, soon became a much talked about topic of discussion also in the ecclesiastical circles of the time with many considering it a “counter-witness”, while at least an equal number believed it to be “futuristic”! The fact remains, however, that fifty years ago, with Bangalore being far from what it has become today, the spacious and beautiful building with individual rooms meant to serve as a “seminary” could not stand unnoticed or escape comments.

Whatever the comments and whoever the persons making them, the Salesian studentate of theology did what it was most accustomed to do for the past 30 years: it moved on – from its five-year huddled up existence at Kotagiri to the more inviting structures of Kristu Jyoti College, Bangalore.

## 12. **A New Beginning in Bangalore**

On 23<sup>rd</sup> October, after the first-term exams of the academic year 1967-1968, the shift from Kotagiri to Bangalore was initiated. The community left in two batches. The first batch of 16 brothers from the northern provinces, with Fr. Paul Puthanangady leading them, left at 2.30 p.m. and after visiting the houses of Yercaud, Tirupattur and Katpadi along the way, reached Kristu Jyoti College at 8.30 p.m. on 26<sup>th</sup><sup>124</sup>.

<sup>123</sup> AKJCB – Chronicle, vol. I, pp. 3-4.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4, entry of 23.10.1967.

The second batch, consisting of all the rest, started the trip at 7.30 a.m. on 24<sup>th</sup> and before heading out of Kotagiri, went to bid a final farewell to all the close acquaintances and friends in Kotagiri. Then it passed through Wellington to meet the provincial, who had just concluded his spiritual retreat. They also made it a point to pay a friendly visit to the Salesian sisters, and to the Bishop of Ooty, under whose jurisdiction Kotagiri lay, to bid adieu to His Lordship before proceeding to Mysore where they reached at about 8.30 p.m. and lodged for the night. The next day, 25<sup>th</sup> October, after Mass in the Cathedral and after having visited the places of interest in Mysore, like the zoo, the museum, the palaces etc., the group reached Kristu Jyoti College late in the evening. Before retiring to bed they went to the chapel, to say a hearty “Thank you” to the Lord and to sing the “Salve Regina”<sup>125</sup>.

The next day, after the arrival of the first batch, once the compline was prayed, the first official goodnight to the community was given by the rector. The rector, Fr. Anthony Mampra’s words were significant and very apt for the occasion:

“Our beautiful door at the entrance serves two purposes – to let people come in and enable them to go out. During the years of theology we ought to remember (that) we will be going out, our entrance has the only purpose of going out to our future fields of mission and preparing ourselves for it!”<sup>126</sup>.

The first community of Kristu Jyoti College consisted of 10 staff members (8 priests and two coadjutor brothers) and 64 students (4 in the fourth year, 21 in the third, 24 in the second and 15 in the first) belonging to the three provinces of India (11 from Guwahati, 9 from Calcutta and 44 from Madras). The fact that all the professors and all the students with the sole exception of Cl. Joseph Forte, a Maltese, were Indians, was clearly indicative of the dynamics of change that the Salesian Congregation in India was living through<sup>127</sup>.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5, entry of 24 & 25.10.1967.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5, entry of 26.10.1967.

<sup>127</sup> The staff, both teaching and non-teaching, consisted of the following: Anthony Mampra, Rector and Professor of Moral Theology and Pastoral Theology; Thomas Thayil, Prefect, Professor of Church History & Patrology; Paul Puthanangady, Catechist, Professor of Liturgy, Dogma; Mathew Maruvathrail, Prefect of Studies, Professor of Dogma; Longinus Nazareth, Councillor, Librarian, Professor of Sacred Scripture; Sylvanus Lyngdoh, Confessor, Professor of Scripture; Thomas Pazhayampallil, Confessor, Professor of Moral Theology, Canon Law; John Toffoli, in-charge of the farm and Mathew Mulangananickal, (M.O.) *factotum*. AKJCB-Chronicle, vol. I, pp. 5 & 6, entry of 26.10.1967. The first and only non-Indian teaching member on the staff of Kristu Jyoti would be Orestes Paviotti, an Italian, belonging to the Gauhati Province, who joined the staff as Confessor and Professor of Sacred Scripture in the academic

Together they set about the task of creating an ambience which would help prepare all those who would enter the theologate to go out to their future fields of mission fully equipped to face the challenges associated with a world, a Church, a Congregation and an India in transition.

### 13. Blessings and Inaugurations

Due to unavoidable circumstances, the College was blessed and inaugurated twice – once “unofficially” by the provincial in November 1967 and yet again “officially” in February 1968 by the Archbishop of Bangalore in the presence of Fr. Ricceri. The unofficial blessing was necessitated by the fact of the Rector Major not being able to be present in November 1967 when the second semester would commence and there was the need to inaugurate the building before the classes could begin. Moreover, the confreres were quite certain that since the date of the Asian Congress of the Salesians within a couple of months had already been announced, a more elaborate “official” inauguration could be organized in a couple of months.

#### 13.1. “Unofficial Inauguration”

On 3<sup>rd</sup> November at 4.30 p.m., there took place the formal reception for the provincial who was coming on his first official visit to the community and for the “unofficial inauguration” of the newly built “domus religiosa”. Present on the occasion were the Parish Priest of St. Anthony’s Parish T. C. Palaya, the Rector of St. Peter’s Seminary, the Vicar General of the Archdiocese, the Vice-Rector of Dharmaram College and representatives of the Redemptorists, the Holy Cross Fathers and the Carmelites (Carmelaram). The inauguration was followed by a tea party, a solemn benediction service and a variety entertainment. The significance of the presence of these eminent persons is to be taken note of, as Kristu Jyoti, especially in the years immediately following its inauguration, will have a very collaborative relationship with the other religious congregations in the city as well as with the local Church.

year 1969-1970. He went back to Mawlai when the theologate there was reopened in 1976. Cf College Calendar 1969-1970 in ASC F392.

### 13.2. Visit by the General Councillor for Formation

Fr. Archimede Pianazzi<sup>128</sup>, the then General Councillor for Formation, came for a visit on 12<sup>th</sup> February, 1968, about a week before the Rector Major himself was to arrive for the official inauguration. During his stay, he gave two goodnights and a conference to the staff and students which stressed the importance of intellectual formation for a priest and made reference to the actual situation of the Church and the Congregation.

During the conference for the staff and students at 9.30 a.m. on 13<sup>th</sup> February, Fr. Pianazzi spoke of the spirit of “triumphalism” and of “anti-triumphalism” which were rampant everywhere, including in religious institutes. He exhorted his listeners to avoid both these extremes. Then he passed on to the “crisis” affecting the world, the Church and the Congregation and said:

“(the crisis) should not frighten us because in every crisis there is an opportunity and because crisis is a sign of life. We should welcome changes that are necessary but not make changes on our own initiative. The old-timers see a heresy in every change but the «moderns» deny the very idea of heresy all together! In our attempt to seize hold of the new we should not throw overboard everything that is «old» or everything that has been accepted so far. The church is still the church of God. The congregation is still the one founded by Don Bosco and Don Bosco still remains our precious treasure”<sup>129</sup>.

This was obviously a reference to the situation prevailing in the society, the Church and the Congregation to which reference has been made in the earlier part of this chapter. Then he went on to speak of the *Biographical Memoirs* and asserted:

“It is a historic[al] work, though not written according to the laws of critical history”<sup>130</sup>.

Later in the evening, during his goodnight talk, Fr. Pianazzi spoke of the prevalence of “groups” in every sphere of human interaction and said:

“But every group must have laws in order to ensure success and development.

<sup>128</sup> Archimede Pianazzi was born at Zocca, Italy, on 30.11.1906. He made his first profession in 1923 and came to India in 1925. He was ordained in 1930 and eventually became the Provincial of Calcutta in 1950. In 1951, he was transferred to Madras as its provincial. In 1958 he was elected Prefect General of Studies and Member of the Superior Council and in 1965 as the Councillor for Formation. He died in Rome on 10.12.2000 at the age of 94. L. KUMPILUVELIL - C. PANACKEL (eds.), *A Journey with the Young...*, p. 298; SAS.

<sup>129</sup> AKJCB – Chronicle, vol. I, pp. 25-26.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

This is true also of the Salesian Congregation. It too has its laws and rules. These rules no individual may disobey or attempt to change on his own authority. A change can be brought about only through the legal channels; otherwise he will only be attempting the life of the group<sup>131</sup>. But if the individual insists in having his own way, [if] he wants to make changes as he likes, then he must get out of the group, otherwise he will destroy the group”<sup>132</sup>.

This was yet again a reflection of the difficult situation in which the Congregation found itself as it was preparing itself for the Special General Chapter and the differences of views on various issues also within the Congregation, which were becoming increasingly evident. In fact, he exhorted the community to prepare for the Chapter through prayer and by making relevant suggestions<sup>133</sup>. The next day, 14<sup>th</sup> February, at 7.30 a.m. Fr. Pianazzi left for Yercaud to visit the novices and the students of philosophy<sup>134</sup>.

### 13.3. *Official Inauguration – Setting Priorities*

The “official inauguration”, despite some lack of clarity in the beginning<sup>135</sup>, took place on 24<sup>th</sup> February 1968 on the occasion of the Asian Congress of the Salesian Bishops, Provincials and Vice-Provincials at which the Rector Major, Rev. Fr. Luigi Ricceri and some members of the Superior Council were also present<sup>136</sup>.

#### 13.3.1. Visit of the Rector Major

Fr. Ricceri, had scheduled his trip to India in connection with the Inter-Provincial Congress for Asia, which was decided to be held at the newly built

<sup>131</sup> The text is quoted as it is entered in the chronicle. What is intended must be that he will be destroying the group.

<sup>132</sup> AKJCB – Chronicle, vol. I, p. 26.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>135</sup> AAB – SDB, RF 37, vol. II (1963-1967). Letter of Mampra, Rector, Kristu Jyoti College to Very Rev. and dear Aloysius (it is to Di Fiore) dated 2.11.1967: “One of our fathers who met His Grace, the Archbishop in Rome, wrote to me that His Grace was under the impression that we will be having the official inauguration of the studentate on 21<sup>st</sup> December. Fr. Provincial had agreed with His Grace on that date, I believe. But since the Rector Major and 3 major superiors from Turin were due to visit us in the month of February, they had decided to postpone the inauguration for that occasion. I was sure Fr. Provincial had informed His Grace about that. In case there was any oversight, when you write to His Grace, please mention it so that His Grace may not cancel any appointment on 21<sup>st</sup>”.

<sup>136</sup> ASC F392, has a photograph of the bishops and the provincials of the Orient around the Rector Major during the Congress held at Kristu Jyoti College in 1968.



and convenient Kristu Jyoti College, immediately after its inauguration. This was also an opportunity for the Rector Major to evaluate the ground realities for himself and to exhort both the staff and the student community to live up to the expectations of the Church and the Congregation and that in line with the vision laid out in the documents of Vatican II.

### 13.3.2. Welcoming the Rector Major

The chronicle of the house describes the arrival of the Rector Major at 2.30 pm on 19<sup>th</sup> February in the following words:

“2.30 p.m. Very Rev. Fr. Rector Major drives into the campus accompanied by his own secretary, the Provincials of Madras and Japan and the Rector of Don Bosco Matunga. The Rector Major is garlanded and greeted by the college band and welcomed by Fr. Rector in the name of the institution. Replying to the speech, Fr. Rector Major expressed his immense joy in being able to visit the institutions of India. But then he says: «It is not the external buildings that I am [sic] come to admire, but you, my dear confreres and sons»”<sup>137</sup>.

After the introductions and the refreshments that followed, in order not to tire out the visitors, no other event was scheduled for the day till evening, when the Rector Major gave the goodnight.

### 13.3.3. Initial Exhortations of the Rector Major

During his stay at the College, the Rector Major addressed the community on several occasions and referred to the context of the meeting for which he had come to Bangalore as well as the importance of the theological formation to be imparted by the new institution.

In the evening of 19<sup>th</sup> February, addressing the community during the goodnight talk he said:

“As one of you put it, my presence in your midst is a dream realized. It is like the dreams Don Bosco had of India – dreams which are full realities today. We have chosen India for this conference not only because India is the geographical centre of Asia but it is also the centre of Salesian activity in Asia. In India we chose Bangalore as the venue because this is a studentate of theology. Theologates are not problems for the Congregation but they are its glory, its future, its hope. The conference to be held here is very very important for the future of the Congregation especially in Asia, in India. As we shall be supported by the rich experience of our revered bishops and provincials, we also request your cooperation, chiefly in the form of valuable prayers”<sup>138</sup>.

<sup>137</sup> AKJCB – Chronicle, vol. I, pp. 27-28, entry of 19.2.1968.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29, entry of 19.2.1968.

Concluding the goodnight, the Rector Major said that he was looking forward with joy to concelebrating the Eucharist on the morrow.

On 20<sup>th</sup> February, concelebrating with three bishops and 30 priests, the Rector Major preached the homily during which he addressed himself primarily to the participants of the meeting.

“You are gathered here from all the leading nations of Asia in order to take part in a conference that will exert an influence on the entire Salesian world, but particularly the confreres and institutions in the Asian continent. Of John the Baptist we read: «He was not the light, but only a witness to speak for the light». This indeed is our mission – a witness to speak for the Light. Let us be witnesses wherever we may be, in our schools, parishes, clubs and oratories. Every Salesian house must be a home, a family, it shall be so if we have love one for another, if we practice charity. Today as we celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, let us pray that our conference may bear abundant fruits; let us also pray that our institutions be real homes, sanctuaries of love”<sup>139</sup>.

In the evening, concluding the well-prepared academy, complete with a Naga Dance and an Indian Orchestra – indications of cultural adaptation – which won the praise of all the visitors, the Rector Major lauded the talents that he saw displayed on the stage:

“Wonderful talents I see here. But remember they must be channelled aright. Music, art, painting are all means of apostolate for the Salesian. They will prove very useful wherever you may be posted. Hence, such talents must be cultivated as much as possible. But do not forget: your first duty is and should be study and personal formation. That is the most important and most necessary. Next to that, all other talents. Congratulations and thank you”<sup>140</sup>.

Fr. Scrivo, the Councillor for Youth Ministry, who gave the goodnight after the night prayers which followed the academy, exhorted the gathering, as true Salesians, to nurture a genuine love and concern for youth.

“To be a Salesian priest means to be a priest of the young. As the youth of today are the leaders of tomorrow, we must strain every nerve, undergo any sacrifice, in order to train and educate the young according to the spirit and system of Don Bosco, our Father and Founder. [...] The Church needs the Youth and the Youth needs the Church!”<sup>141</sup>.

At 11.30 a.m. on 22<sup>nd</sup> February, the Rector Major, when addressing the staff and students of the College told them:

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30, entry of 20.2.1968.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31, entry of 20.2.1968.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

“You are the Congregation of tomorrow, you are the cynosure of all eyes, the centre of attention and anxiety. Take to heart the renewal (rinnovamento) of the Council and be interiorly renewed. Strive to be essentially priests, friends of souls. Be real men of maturity, not trying to destroy everything of the past, not discussing everything, not believing only in your opinion. Do not think you can solve all problems, even those laboriously tackled by the Council and the Chapter. Learn to listen. Try to have a serene and respectful attitude towards the solutions of the Council. Remember, maturity is not registered in the birth certificate. Be detached from earthly things. Live supernaturally «invisibile tamquam videns» [= as seeing the invisible]. Study hard. Don Bosco was a man of study. It is the 8<sup>th</sup> sacrament of the priests... prepare yourself to work for youth, not only to instruct them, but [also] to educate them”<sup>142</sup>.

### 13.3.4. Luncheon at the Archbishop’s House

At mid-day on 24<sup>th</sup> February, the Rector Major, the bishops, members of the General Council and the provincials participated in a luncheon hosted by the archbishop. It was an official and meticulously planned event with the names of all the dignitaries duly displayed on the table<sup>143</sup>. After this gesture of cordiality and esteem on the part of His Grace for the dignitaries come together from different parts of Salesian Asia, the group returned to the College to prepare for the official inauguration planned for the evening.

## 14. Blessing and Official Inaugural Function

The much-awaited official inauguration and blessing of the College by the archbishop took place at 5 p.m., before a sizeable gathering of priests, religious, friends and well-wishers. The ceremony started in the lobby of the College and began with a para-liturgical inaugural function which included the lighting of the *Kuthuvilakku*<sup>144</sup>. In the homily, which followed the venera-

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32, entry of 22.2.1968.

<sup>143</sup> The dignitaries in order of importance as given in the file were: 1. ABp. D. S. Lour-dusamy, 2. V. Rev. Fr. Ricceri; 3. ABp. Mark Gopu, 4. Bishop Ferrando, 5. Bishop Morrow, 6. Bishop Carretto, 7. Bishop Marengo, 8. Bishop David, 9. Bishop D’Rosario, 10. Rev. Fr. Pianazzi (Major Superior), 11. Rev. Fr. Scrivo (Major Superior), 12. Rev. Fr. B. Tohill (Major Superior), 13. Rev. Fr. Dell’Angela (Provincial), 14. Rev. Fr. Jellici (Provincial), 15. Rev. Fr. Casarotti (Provincial), 16. Rev. Fr. Di Fiore (Provincial), 17. Rev. Fr. Cogliandro (Provincial), 18. Rev. Fr. Massimino (Provincial), 19. Rev. Fr. Strosio (Provincial), 20. Rev. Fr. Ruzzedu (Provincial), 21. Rev. Fr. Mampra (Local Rector). AAB, RF 37, vol. III, (1968-1975).

<sup>144</sup> The traditional sacred oil-lamp made of bronze which is lighted at the beginning of any function as a symbolic invocation of the divine. This was also a visible sign of inculturation and was doubly symbolic given the name of the institution viz., Kristu Jyoti = Christ the Light.

tion of the Bible with a garland, flowers and light in the traditional Indian way and the celebration of the Word of God, the archbishop dwelt primarily on “Kristu Jyoti”, the name of the College:

“God is Light. The first thing He created is Light. Christ, His Son is Light. He Himself said: «I am the Light of the World». With Christ, the Church too is Light; and so is every Christian”<sup>145</sup>.

The Prelate concluded his homily, praying that the students formed in Kristu Jyoti College may be true lights, in word and deed, to thousands, both far and near.



Inscription to the left of the main entrance

The blessing of the College which followed was done by all the bishops present on the occasion with each blessing the area assigned to him<sup>146</sup>. The hour-long function being concluded, all the invitees gathered for a tea-party. During the tea-party, the archbishop spoke yet again, this time on a more personal note:

“We are glad to welcome Very Rev. Fr. Ricceri, the Rector Major, into our midst today. I have known Fr. Ricceri already in the synod<sup>147</sup>. He was one of the ten

<sup>145</sup> AKJCB – Chronicle, vol. I, p. 34, entry of 24.2.1968.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34, entry of 24.2.1968.

<sup>147</sup> An obvious reference to Vatican II.

elected Superiors General, and that out of hundreds of others. This shows the tremendous trust that was placed in him. We were good friends at the synod and am very glad to welcome him to my Diocese and with him all other Salesians especially the Bishops [...]. We have been acquainted with one another in the Council and also on other occasions. They have been very good and kind to me, considering me as one of their own brothers. I heartily welcome them, my brethren in the episcopate. I give them freedom to do whatever they want in my Diocese, of course, sin excepted! Next, I extend a hearty welcome to all the Provincials present here"<sup>148</sup>.

Before concluding, the archbishop praised the staff and students of the College for the marvellous help they were rendering to the various parishes in the archdiocese and thanked them saying: "*I thank them all for their cooperation and collaboration*"<sup>149</sup>.

### 15. Farewell to the Rector Major

The Inter-Provincial Congress for Asia concluded on 25<sup>th</sup> morning. During the concelebrated Eucharist, the Rector Major, in his homily, made reference also to the Centenary Celebrations of the First Missionary Expedition of the Salesians and said:

"This is your centenary in a very special way. The missions of Assam are among the very biggest of the Congregation. Remember, when Don Bosco thought of going to the missions, the country that was uppermost in his mind was India [...] The ultimate end of all our apostolate should be "that all may arrive at the full knowledge and acceptance of Christ"<sup>150</sup>.

In the afternoon there was a solemn lunch hosted to bid farewell to the Rector Major and the other dignitaries. During the lunch short farewell speeches were made by Rev. Fr. Alfredo Cogliandro<sup>151</sup> and Msgr. Ferrando, Bishop of Shillong, in which they thanked the Rector Major and all those responsible for the Inter-Provincial Congress, for the hospitality experienced

<sup>148</sup> AKJCB – Chronicle, vol. I, pp. 34-35, entry of 24.2.1968.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35, entry of 24.2.1968.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>151</sup> Cogliandro was born in Italy in 1911 and came to India in 1932. He made his first profession in 1933 and was ordained in 1943 in the internment camp. He was the novice-master at Kotagiri (1947-1950) before he was nominated Provincial of the Province of San Francisco, USA, in 1950. Later he went to the Philippines where he was made provincial in 1964. He died at Canlubang, Philippines, on 11.9.1992 at the age of 81. Cf L. KUMPILUVELIL - C. PANACKEL (eds.),

etc. In his speech<sup>152</sup>, the Rector Major, described the days spent at Kristu Jyoti College “as days of toil, but also days of comfort and consolation” and added:

“My special thanks to the Bishops. I was immensely edified by their example. I feel very small before them. They are a glory to the Congregation. In a very special way I thank Mgr. Ferrando. He is not only a good Salesian Bishop but he is also an orator and a writer. I have read some of his articles in the Salesian Bulletin. «If ideas have legs, I should say his ideas have ‘motors’. We are very grateful to him for all the fine sentiments of affection and love he expressed in his speech. Thanks to all other revered Bishops too [...] In a particular way thanks to the Provincial of this Province, the Rector of this house and the whole community of Kristu Jyoti College. We have enjoyed our stay here in the pleasant company of the clerics. This theologate is one of the best in the Congregation. Some suggested that we shift the Mother House to Bangalore! We would like to show the students our gratitude in a very concrete and precise manner. You are allowed to go for the World Fair at Madras. And now do not forget to apply yourselves to your study. That is of the utmost importance [...] I repeat what I said once before, You are not a problem to the Congregation» no, you are the centre of attention and interest. Cooperate with your superiors, correspond to their care, and measure up to their expectations.

It is time for us to depart. Every departure is death in miniature. We leave, but we shall not forget you. Pray for us [...] Goodbye”<sup>153</sup>.

Later in the day, at 3.25 p.m., the Rector Major, accompanied by Rev. Fr. Bernard Tohill, Councillor for the Missions<sup>154</sup>, and Rev. Fr. Provincial, left for Tirupattur.

Thus was concluded the visit of the Rector Major and the inauguration of the College. Fr. Ricceri, was but only the first among the several other Rectors Major, who, during the course of their term, would visit and interact with the students and the staff. The conclusion of the official inauguration of the College will also be the beginning of a series of meetings for various groups which would take place at Kristu Jyoti College in the years that followed.

## 16. Completing the Structure

Although the official blessing and the inaugural function were gone through, the structure of the College was not yet complete as the College

*A Journey with the Young...*, p. 302; J. THEKKEDATH, *History of Christianity in India...*, II, pp. 968, 1219.

<sup>152</sup> AKJCB – Chronicle, vol. I, p. 36, entry of 26.2.1968.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>154</sup> Bernard Tohill, was born at Antrim, Belfast, Ireland, on 12.8.1919. He made his first profession on 29.8.1937 at Beckford, England, on 29.8.1937. He went as a missionary to the



Chapel, the library and the auditorium were yet to be realized. The work on these were carried on and will be completed only about three years later.

### 16.1. *College Chapel and Library*

The foundation-stone of the College Chapel was laid at 5 p.m. on 24<sup>th</sup> Feb. 1968, immediately after the official inauguration of the College. This was done before a packed crowd of priests, religious, friends and well-wishers<sup>155</sup>. When the Chapel was completed in 1971, although the solemn blessing was fixed for 28<sup>th</sup> January 1971, it had to be postponed to Ash Wednesday, 24<sup>th</sup> February<sup>156</sup>. Finally, the actual blessing of the Chapel and along with it that of the library took place on Tuesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1971. The entry in the chronicle of the house for the day reads as follows:

“A Red letter day marking the completion of the building of this institution and the consecration of the Chapel. At. 4.30 p.m. His Grace, Archbishop Lour-duswamy, commenced the ceremony in the old chapel from where the Congregation went in procession to the new Church. The ceremony went off very well to the admiration of the Archbishop himself and all those present. The ceremony got over at 7.20 p.m.

This was followed by the blessing of the library block by His Grace Archbishop Hubert Rozario sdb, who by happy coincidence was in Bangalore and came over for the occasion.

At 8 p.m. there was a buffet dinner on our lawn between the A and B blocks... there were as many as 200 people in all, mainly priests and religious...

Towards the end, Fr. Di Fiore made a very touching speech tracing back the history of this institution and thanking, nominating those who helped in its establishment. The new Provincial, Fr. P. C. Thomas<sup>157</sup> spoke next, warmly thanking

Chinese Province (CIN) in 1940 and was ordained in Shanghai on 1.7.1948. He was the General Councillor for the Missions for a six-year term (1965-1971). He died in Hong Kong on 21.12.2010 at the age of 91 – SAS.

<sup>155</sup> AKJCB - Chronicle, vol. I, vol. I, p. 33, entry of 24.2.1968.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, entry of 13<sup>th</sup> January 1971, p. 171. It reads as follows: “Fr. Rector together with Fr. Paul visits the archbishop to arrange the postponement of the date of consecration of our chapel. Eventually changed from January 28<sup>th</sup> to Ash Wednesday, Feb. 24<sup>th</sup>”.

<sup>157</sup> Thomas Panakezham (P.C.) was born at Champakulam, Kerala, India, on 27.1.1930. He made his first profession on 24.5.1930 at Mount Don Bosco, Kotagiri. He was ordained at “The Retreat”, Yercaud on 2.7.1960. After completing his doctorate in theology in Rome, he was made rector of the studentate of philosophy at Yercaud on 24.5.1970 and on 15.1.1971 nominated Provincial of the Province of St. Thomas the Apostle, Madras. During the 21<sup>st</sup> General Chapter (1977-1978), he was elected the Regional Councillor for Asia, a post to which he was re-elected twice (1984 & 1990) and remained in office till 22.4.1996. When his third term as General Councillor was completed, he returned to India and was made the rector of Don Bosco, Aluva, the studentate of philosophy of the Sacred Heart Province of Bangalore where he continued for six years (16.4.1997-15.4.2003) before moving over to Visvadeep, Bangalore, in 2003 where he remained on till his death on 21.04.2021: SAS.



Fr. Di Fiore and his collaborators down the years. He ended by exhorting the students to make full use of the facilities provided therein<sup>158</sup>.

The College Chapel, in keeping with the name of the College itself, was dedicated to Christ, the Light of the World.

## 16.2. *College Auditorium*

The College auditorium, although still incomplete, was used for the first time on 30<sup>th</sup> January 1970 for the cultural programme on the eve of the Feast of St. John Bosco. Children from the Indian Telephone Industries (ITI) and parish oratories<sup>159</sup> made up the greater part of the audience. On the next day, a public entertainment was held in the auditorium for a group of 250 invited guests from the neighbourhood and from the city<sup>160</sup>.

For the Feast of Don Bosco, the next day, several parish priests were invited for a special festive lunch. The entertainment held in the new auditorium, for the invited guests and representatives of the seminaries, proved to be quite a success. When the show ended at 9.45 p.m. refreshments were provided and, given the lateness of the hour, the jeep and the car of the College made a trip to ITI colony ferrying some of the guests<sup>161</sup>.

With the construction of the structures completed and inaugurated, with a qualified staff in place and with clear authoritative orientations given, Kristu Jyoti College, the studentate of theology for Salesian India, envisaged and realized at a very critical period in history, was set to launch out on its formative years and make significant contributions to the Salesian Congregation, the Church and to the poor and needy of the country.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 175 & 176, entry of 23.2.1971.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 129.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 129-130, entries of 30 & 31.1.1970.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 130.



## CHAPTER THREE

### IMPARTING A CONTEXTUALIZED FORMATION

After having situated Kristu Jyoti College in its wider historical context, the previous chapter dwelt at some length on the construction, the inauguration and the orientation given to both staff and students by the Rector Major, the archbishop, the rector and other superiors responsible for the priestly formation of the Salesians in India. Remaining faithful to the directives received and keeping in mind the need to be *with the times and with Don Bosco*, the staff paid particular attention to the signs of the times while preparing the academic syllabus and in organizing the life of the community. Quite unsurprisingly, the directives of the 19<sup>th</sup> General Chapter (GC XIX) held in the year 1965, which was itself influenced by the surge of ideas and movements evidenced in the 1960s, appear to have had an undeniable and decisive impact on the College.

#### 1. GC XIX on Theological Formation<sup>1</sup>

In its preliminary statement on theological formation, GC XIX spoke of the importance of this phase of formation as the *period which leaves the deepest impression on the mind and heart of the future priest, and has a significant impact on his personality in its natural and supernatural lineaments*<sup>2</sup>. Going a step further, it also stressed the importance of studentates of theology for the future of the Congregation<sup>3</sup>.

GC XIX insisted also on the need to provide an adequately competent staff and pointed out that during the period of theological formation, the curriculum should include courses on Catholic sociology, as well as literary and scientific disciplines besides such others as would help open the minds of the

<sup>1</sup> Cf *Acts of the Superior Council*, (ACS) 244 (1966). The GC dealt with the question of theological formation in Chapter IV of the First Part of the Chapter documents (pp. 61-62).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

future apostles of the young to a sensitive awareness and understanding of the problems of the times. It further emphasised the need to avoid excessive separation from the world, something, which could prove detrimental to personal discipline and apostolate and suggested that the studentates of theology be situated in a town or a city, where *there would be the desired level of cultural life and possibilities for engaging in a variety of apostolic experiences*. However, wanting to strike the right balance, it also pointed out the need *to ensure a prudent separation from the world and of providing an atmosphere where the students could live in that atmosphere of peaceful recollection which is so much needed for serious and fruitful intellectual and formative activity*. Further, the students were to be prudently encouraged to take part in the apostolate among the young on Sundays and Feast days (oratories, parishes, youth clubs)<sup>4</sup>.

Anyone going through the chronicle of the College during its formative years<sup>5</sup> will be surprised and gratified to see how the College authorities strove to be faithful to the above indicated capitular orientations.

## 2. Juridical Situation

Juridically, Kristu Jyoti College, which was to serve as the Salesian theologate for the whole of India, was under the responsibility of the rector and council of the Sacred Heart Community of the Salesians. The rector and his council were, in turn, immediately responsible to the Provincial of the Province of Madras under whose jurisdiction the community found itself. However, when dealing with certain issues of a significant nature and taking into account the inter-provincial character of the institution, the Provincial of Madras took the required decisions in consultation with the other two Provincials of India viz., those of Calcutta and Guwahati, in the beginning and later also with the one of Bombay.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 61-62.

<sup>5</sup> By the term "formative years" is meant the 9 years from the foundation of Kristu Jyoti College in 1967 to the reopening of the theologate at Mawlai in 1976. During this period the institution established itself as a studentate of theology with its own typical identity in keeping with the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, as exhorted by the XIX and XX General Chapters and taking into account the typical socio-cultural and politico-religious reality of India.



The Façade of Kristu Jyoti College (Photo: Alex Kalathikattil sdb).

### 3. Ambience of the College

Indeed, in its early years, Kristu Jyoti College with its magnificent and much envied concrete structures and convenient single-room accommodation for the students, was criticised for its “un-seminary-like name and appearance” and likewise, its apparently “unconventional” approach to formation. Yet down the years, it has shown itself to be an institution with a heart that beats for the Church and for the country. With insight, study and zeal, it has striven for the cultural, socio-economic, intellectual and spiritual upliftment of the people besides making significant efforts to promote inter-religious and inter-caste harmony. Further, it was to prove itself an institution, which loved the Church and her traditions and was, by all accounts, a true Salesian house, which welcomed all, especially the poor and the needy into its vast spaces and made them feel that they belonged. Indeed, it was a familiar and heart-warming sight – quite unusual for any seminary of the time – to see the poor rural folk seated quietly in the College lobby from early morning, waiting to meet someone from the College to share their problems and to seek help. Definitely, it goes to the credit of the confreres who were formators, and those others who were students, to have created just such an ambience where the poor and the needy felt confident enough to walk in, assured that they were welcome and that they would be listened to.

### 4. Name and Structure

The name of the institution appeared quite *secular* as it did not have any qualifying religious terms like “seminary” or “theological” to mark it out as a centre with a specifically religious scope – the formation of priests. In fact,

*Kristu Jyoti College*, in its early years attracted many an uninformed visitor, who, unaware of its real identity, dropped in from time to time, seeking admission for their wards to various secular academic disciplines. However, with the passing of years, the College succeeded in establishing its credentials and to be known for what it was meant to be.

The general layout of the College – with the bust of Don Bosco in the well-designed front lawn, the statue of the Sacred Heart at the entrance, the spacious corridors, the benign statue of St. Joseph at the centre of the main quadrangle, the extensive flower and fruit gardens, the well-constructed and adequately equipped auditorium, the separate library-block, the spacious classrooms and the facilities for various games – all bespoke the Salesian concern to provide the right surroundings for the studentate of theology meant to serve students from all parts of the country.

Still the structure of all structures in the campus was the College Chapel with its illuminated cross reaching up to the dark blue skies and visible, in those early days, from miles away. The interior was planned with meticulous care. It had at its centre a Crucifix and a concrete artistic illustration symbolizing the heavenward tension that should mark the spiritually-oriented and was flanked by a pipe organ to its right and the Blessed Sacrament Chapel to its left<sup>6</sup>. The two life-size statues – of Mary Help of Christians to the right and of Don Bosco to the left – gave it the typical Salesian flavour while the *Kuthuvilakku* before the altar placed it clearly within the Indian context.

Nevertheless, it appeared to many a tad too early to make such a “display of extravagance” in priestly formation. Hence, it is considered pertinent to present the views of a cross-section of those who visited the College, to indicate that “KJC” was a much discussed topic in various quarters not only in the city of Bangalore but also in the wider ecclesiastical circles in India.

<sup>6</sup> The pipe organ in those early years proved to be a special attraction. It was set up a couple of weeks before the consecration of the chapel. Cf AKJCB - Chronicle, vol. 1, p. 174. The entry of 11<sup>th</sup> February 1971 states: “A man comes from Madras to dismantle the pipe organ and to set it up in the new chapel”.





The College Chapel (Photo: Alex Kalathikattil sdb).

#### 4.1. *Positive Evaluation*

Despite the criticism in different quarters, generally, the structure and the ambience were viewed rather positively as will be evident from a study of the remarks of those who either visited the institution, or who stayed there as participants in seminars or conferences.

##### 4.1.1. Joseph Caprio, Pro-Nuncio<sup>7</sup>

The fact of Kristu Jyoti College being the subject of not so infrequent discussions, prompted several eminent ecclesiastics coming to Bangalore to

<sup>7</sup> Joseph Caprio was appointed Apostolic Pro-Nuncio to India on 24<sup>th</sup> Dec. 1967 and remained in office until he was appointed Secretary of the Administration of the Patrimony of the Apostolic See on 19<sup>th</sup> April 1969. [www.catholic-hierarchy.org/bishop/bcaprio.html](http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/bishop/bcaprio.html) (4.5.2019).



pay it a visit, in order to see for themselves what was spoken of then as a *showpiece ecclesiastical structure*. On 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1968, which day was declared a holiday, Msgr. Joseph Caprio, the Pro-Nuncio, paid the College a short visit. At 11.45 a.m. when he reached the house accompanied by the Archbishop of Bangalore, he was given an enthusiastic welcome. Towards the end of the grand lunch served on the occasion, responding to the words of the Provincial cordially welcoming the representative of the Holy Father to the community, Msgr. Caprio said:

“I am not scandalised at this beautiful institution; nay, on the contrary, it evokes surprise and admiration; religious always find a way, especially the Salesians! During my life as a missionary I have had contact with the Salesians. I remember blessing the scholasticate of Hong Kong. Again, I blessed a Salesian school in Thailand.

I am glad to hear of your sentiments of admiration, affection and loyalty to the Pope. It is worth reporting to the Holy Father [...]

I wish the students all success in their formation. I am consoled to see so many of them ready to help in the Assam missions where troubles are unending. I bring you the blessing of the Holy Father”<sup>8</sup>.

#### 4.1.2. Cardinal Valerian Gracias

About a fortnight later, at 3.30 p.m. on 5<sup>th</sup> October 1968, Cardinal Valerian Gracias of Bombay, paid a visit to the College. At the end of a guided tour of the building and the premises, the Cardinal had tea with the community, during which responding to the words of welcome of the rector, he said:

“It is a privilege for me to visit this institution. I asked His Grace to try his best and include this institution too in my programme of visits. His Grace has done it; [...] The house is fine. The students have much facility to study. I have [seen] your rooms. A certain amount of convenience and comfort is legitimate [...] The Salesians certainly know how to get money, but they also know how to use it well. [...] I am happy to see so many students who are preparing to serve the Church in India. You have a fine set of professors. We are facing difficult times, winds of change are blowing strong, if we are not careful, we will be blown off our feet. Progress there must be, but progress with sobriety”<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> AKJCB – Chronicle, vol. I, p. 55.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 58-59.



A view of the College Campus (Photo: Alex Kalathikattil sdb).

Evidently, the words of both these eminent ecclesiastics are indicative, not only of what they thought of the structure of the institution, but also of what they actually thought of the Salesians themselves as well as the challenges the Church in India was being asked to confront in a world in transition.

#### 4.1.3. Organizers and Participants of Courses

It is also pertinent to add in this context, that the facilities available at the College would, in fact, bring to its premises people from various walks of life and from different parts of India and even abroad, for organizing and attending meetings and courses. Such events contributed handsomely to enhancing the cultural and academic atmosphere of the College. The participants, in general, would later express themselves to have been happy and grateful for the experience.

##### 4.1.3.1. Bible Translation Course

The report of an inter-denominational group of sixty, with six Catholics among them, which conducted a *Bible Translation Course* in the College, showed itself to be highly appreciative of the facilities and location of the institution as is borne out by the following extract from the *Bible Society of India – Annual Report 1971*:

“The third U.B.S. Translators’ Institute for India and for Ceylon was held at Kristu Jyoti College, Bangalore, from 4<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup>. Kristu Jyoti, a Salesian Seminary, graciously offered its facilities. The Fathers Prefects<sup>10</sup> sacrificed their summer vacation in order to play host to us. To them, to the Rector and the Provincial Superior, our deepest thanks. The facilities were ideal: a room to each translator, lecture-halls, auditorium, library, sports equipment, the whole lot. The place was sufficiently removed from the attractions of the city as to make for study and work without distractions”<sup>11</sup>.

#### 4.1.3.2. National Vocation Service Centre, Poona

The same appreciation of the facilities in the College is evidenced also in the letter of Fr. Peter Lourdes, Assistant Director, National Vocation Service Centre, Poona - 14, dated 7<sup>th</sup> April 1972. In this letter, Fr. Peter Lourdes requests the Archbishop to be present for a day with the participants of the one-month *Training Course for Vocation Promoters* (10<sup>th</sup> April - 10<sup>th</sup> May 1972) and informs him that the venue is Kristu Jyoti College and adds:

“We are somewhat out of town here but the facilities are good. We hope your Grace will be able to be with us all one day. We would appreciate a visit”<sup>12</sup>.

It would seem that the Salesians were in effect imitating Don Bosco, their Father and Founder himself, who, reading the signs of the times always thought big and built big. In fact, he would also insist with his sons that they plan and build not merely to address the immediate needs, but rather, keeping in mind the long-term requirements of 10, 20 or even a 100 years<sup>13</sup>!

#### 4.2. *Negative Impressions*

There were also others, less eminent ecclesiastics and religious, who, given their own personal outlook and formation, could not reconcile themselves to what they considered the opulence of the structures of a religious house. In fact, there was a group of ladies from a religious-run institution who

<sup>10</sup> “Prefect” was the term then used for the administrator.

<sup>11</sup> AKJCB – Chronicle, vol. I, p. 183. Entry of 4.5.1971.

<sup>12</sup> AAB – SDB, RF -37, File: Salesian Fathers (1963-1977). The letters have merely been collected and kept in chronological order without marking the page numbers and without any other designatory indications.

<sup>13</sup> On 4<sup>th</sup> September 1983, during the course of the Third General Chapter, Don Bosco had made the following statement: “Una delle cose dobbiamo avere di mira è che le cose che si trattano devono servire di norma di qui a 10, a 20 e a 100 anni. Dobbiamo fare come il pittore *aeternitate pingo*”. Jesús-Graciliano Miguel GONZÁLEZ, *I Quattro Primi Capitoli Generali della Pia Società Salesiana Presieduti da Don Bosco*. Madrid, Editorial CCS 2016, p. 448.

had come to do some work in the parish. They came over to the College seeking accommodation for about 150 girls. But, they considered it to be “too good, too comfortable for the girls” and went off in search of a place more suited to their convictions<sup>14</sup>.

## 5. Realizing the Scope of the Institution

Apart from the facilities provided, the challenge facing the College would naturally be that of forming priests for a fast evolving world trained enough to keep their priestly and Salesian identity while being engaged in working for the total well-being of all people in the very typically diverse context of India. Seen from this perspective the formation imparted could be seen from two distinct yet linked perspectives, viz., priestly formation in its intellectual, liturgical and cultural aspects on the one hand; and on the other, the actual experiential training to make the students capable of dealing, and that to the extent possible, with the ecclesial and social reality in which they would be called upon to exercise their future priestly ministry.

The following pages, limiting themselves to the first of these two aspects, will deal primarily with the community ambience and dynamics as well as the programmes, which contributed to the intended kind of Salesian formation in its various aspects.

### 5.1. *Community Ambience and Dynamics*

The composition of the community reflected the changed and still evolving global, ecclesiastical and congregational situation. In 1967, of the 10 staff members and 64 students, there was only a single European - Bro. Toffoli<sup>15</sup>. It was, hence, a group of Indians – staff and students – from the various parts of the country speaking different languages and brought up in varying backgrounds who made up the community. Under the circumstances, it was challenged to create an atmosphere of trust and communion through dialogue, which in the course of time, would turn out to be a monthly feature. The regular dialogues helped the College to plan out its programmes and to iron out the differences which, given the composition of a large adult commu-

<sup>14</sup> AKJCB – Chronicle, vol. I, pp. 340-341. Entry of 13.11.1973.

<sup>15</sup> Cf *ibid.*, pp. 5 & 6. The list of professors has already been given in section 12 of the second chapter of this work.

nity, were bound to crop up from time to time<sup>16</sup>. On occasions the provincial himself was present at these dialogues as was the case with the one held on 8<sup>th</sup> June 1970 which treated of different matters of general interest to the community and discussed issues including card-playing, films and use of the cassock<sup>17</sup>. In fact, a glance through some of the entries in the chronicle of the house gives one a better idea of the dynamics of these dialogue sessions.

The entry for 18<sup>th</sup> July 1970 reads: “at 2.15 p.m. «Dialogue» held in the lecture hall where many points were cleared with the superiors in charge of the different activities”<sup>18</sup>. Understandably, such dialogues could at times, prove a bit knotty as may be seen from the entry of 1<sup>st</sup> July 1971: “The first official dialogue of the new scholastic year. It went through two long and rather difficult sessions”.

On occasions, such meetings could even prove to be quite stormy as was the case with the meeting of the S.S.G. on 8<sup>th</sup> June 1971, which the chronicler described in the following words:

“A stormy meeting of the Social Service Guild (S.S.G.), nearly brought the association to the verge of disintegration. The assembly dispersed for further consultation unofficially, to consider the future prospects of the S.S.G.”<sup>19</sup>.

These dialogues could prove to be short or could last for as long as three hours of involved exchange of views as was the case with the one held on 15<sup>th</sup> January 1970<sup>20</sup>.

Still, despite the problems associated with open and free discussions, these community dialogues helped serve the better organization of the community especially in its initial years. The entry in the chronicle under 6<sup>th</sup> July 1973, is a pointer in this regard as it says that *the dialogue session led to the setting up of the various committees – entertainment, sports and games, liturgy, exhibition, managing the kitchen etc.* – “about which much discussion had taken place earlier and which, now becoming a reality, helped for the better running of the community”<sup>21</sup>.

In the general climate viz., the post-Vatican and the post-contestations

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 191. The entry of 1.9.1971 reads: “The new month started with the usual monthly dialogue”.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 141.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 146.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 184.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 127.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 313.

era, in which Kristu Jyoti College was born and where the students were all adults, capable and willing to express their views freely, the dialogues could at times prove quite challenging for those involved. This is evident in the entry of 15<sup>th</sup> March 1975:

“After night prayers, Rev. Fr. Rector meets the III year students to tell them that their proposals regarding the time-table for the coming scholastic year were not accepted by the staff. There was a heated discussion in this age of dialogue”<sup>22</sup>.

Though at times the assertiveness on the part of the students was considered a manifestation of their insubordination or disobedience, both the formators and the formees, in the prevailing atmosphere of openness and adjustment, helped the process of human, intellectual and religious maturing of those involved. This obviously made the students capable of making personal decisions and taking initiatives once they passed out and were engaged in active apostolate elsewhere. In fact, one of the catch phrases of the time in the College was “Freedom with Responsibility”.

## 5.2. *Intellectual Formation*

Already on 6<sup>th</sup> November 1967, during the Mass of the Holy Spirit, prior to the starting of the first ever classes at Kristu Jyoti College, the provincial, Luigi Di Fiore, in his homily, had insisted on the need to take theological studies seriously. As a matter of fact, the priority to be given to theological studies appears to have been a regular point of exhortation with every superior who would subsequently make periodic visits to the institution.

As has already been pointed out, the talks of the Rector Major, given on various occasions during his stay in the College, insisted on the need for the intellectual preparation of the confreres. This was something which was insisted on also by Fr. Archimedes Pianazzi, the Prefect General of Studies and Member of the Superior Chapter, who paid a visit to the College on 12<sup>th</sup> February 1968, just a few days before the official inauguration of the College. During his goodnight, he stressed the importance of studying theology<sup>23</sup> and referred to the need for the students to have a critical approach which would allow for necessary changes without however losing out on the essentials<sup>24</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 433.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 25-26.



The intellectual preparation of the students at Kristu Jyoti College will be carried out keeping in mind the above directives received from the interested authorities, be it in the drawing up of the syllabus of studies or be it in the selection of professors, which, given the presence of several other religious congregations in the city and its easy accessibility by road, rail or air proved to be comparatively easy.

### 5.2.1. Resident Staff and Visiting Professors

Apart from the carefully chosen syllabus and qualified professors on the resident staff<sup>25</sup>, the College made sure that it would not be remiss in tapping into the intellectual resources available in the city and even elsewhere in the country. Qualified people, Indians and foreigners, Christians and non-Christians, men and women, were brought in as regular visiting professors or to give occasional talks on a variety of relevant topics in keeping with the requirements of the times. The list of the visiting professors for the academic year 1970-1971, given in the College Calendar, is quite indicative of this very relevant eclectic choice of professors<sup>26</sup>: Rev. Dr. William F. Clarke - "*Group Dynamics*"<sup>27</sup>; Rev. Fr. Connolly Finbarr, C.S.S.R. - "*Pastoral Theology*"; Miss Gaetan Gaskon - "*Community Development and Extension Work*"<sup>28</sup>; Rev. Fr. Thomas Long, C.S.S.R. - "*Ecumenical Theology*"<sup>29</sup>; Rev. Fr. Herve Morrisette, C.S.C. - "*Adolescent Catechesis*"; Rev. Fr. Joseph M. Stevens, S.J. - "*Church Art and Architecture*"<sup>30</sup>; Rev. Fr. Jacob Vaniyapurayil S.D.B. - "*Indian Mysticism*", "*Adaptation*", "*Eastern Mysticism*", "*Karma Yoga*", "*Gnana Yoga*" and "*Bhakti Yoga*"<sup>31</sup>; Rev. Fr. Varkey Vithayathil, C.S.S.R. - Canon Law<sup>32</sup>; Rev. Fr. Henry Volken, S.J. - "*Sociology and the Pastoral Side of Social Work*"<sup>33</sup>.

### 5.2.2. Seminars and Talks

The students were served further opportunities for their all-round formation both with seminars organized in the community or which they were per-

<sup>25</sup> Cf Fn. No. 127 in chapter two.

<sup>26</sup> AKJCB, *Calendar, Kristu Jyoti College, Bangalore-36, 1970-1971*. Madras, SIGA 1970, p. 2.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, Chronicle, vol. I, p. 148. Entry of 20.7.1970. Dr. William F. Clarke was from the Protestant, Union Theological College (UTC), Bangalore.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 145. Entry of 27.6.1970.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 143. Entry of 12.6.1970.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 148. Entry of 18<sup>th</sup> July 1970.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23. Entries of 4<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> February 1968.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 143. Entry of 12.6.1970.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 147. Entry of 8.7. 1970.



mitted to attend at various venues in the city. Often enough, the College itself, given the conveniences it offered, became the preferred venue for a variety of international seminars, consultations, meetings and conferences, all of which contributed to create an ambience of reflection and discussion at different levels and exposed the students to the latest thinking in various fields at the local, national and international levels.

One of the more important of such events held in the College was *The Second Asian Monastic Congress* (14<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> October 1973)<sup>34</sup>. The delegates included members from Vietnam, Cambodia, Korea, Ceylon, Formosa, Japan, Australia, England, New Zealand, Germany, Belgium, Canada and France, besides a significant number of participants from India itself. During the course of the seminar several of the participants – Catholics, Protestants, Hindus, Buddhists – were asked either to celebrate the Eucharist, preach the homily or to address the students at a time of their convenience<sup>35</sup>.

Another significant event was the *Seminar on Prayer* with about 160 participants, conducted from 25<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> August 1974<sup>36</sup>. This seminar gave the students a much-required exposure to the forms of prayer and approach to spirituality in the various religious traditions. One of the more impressive and appreciated of these presentations appears to have been the one of 27<sup>th</sup> August titled *A Comparative Study of Hinduism and Christian Spirituality* by Swami Bhajanananda from the Rama Krishna Mission, Bangalore<sup>37</sup>.

Some of the more important National Seminars held at Kristu Jyoti College were the following: *Estrangement of the Worker from the Church* (23<sup>rd</sup> October 1969)<sup>38</sup>; “*National Seminar on Catechetical Pedagogy for Children*” (20<sup>th</sup> May - 31<sup>st</sup> May 1968)<sup>39</sup>; *Seminar on Development* (28<sup>th</sup> July 1973)<sup>40</sup>; Seminar on “*Christian Prayer in Modern India*” (30<sup>th</sup> March - 7<sup>th</sup> April 1973) organized by the National Vocation Service Centre, Poona, with more than 140 participants<sup>41</sup> and the Seminar on *Management Techniques for Principals* with over 26 participants (priests, sisters and lay persons, including Hindus, Muslims, Protestants and Catholics), organized by the Indian Social Institute,

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 331-335. A list of the participants with their provenience, qualifications and titles is given in pages 330 and 331 of the Chronicle of the College.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 332-336.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 393-397.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 394.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 108-109.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 316.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 303.

Delhi (14<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> May 1973)<sup>42</sup>. The community was also quite involved in the preparatory seminars in view of the *All India Seminar on the Church in India Today* (May 15-25, 1969), as may be evidenced from the entries in the house chronicle of 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> February 1969<sup>43</sup>.

Other seminars conducted in the College or in which it officially took part were: *Seminar on Liberation* organized by the Inter-Sem<sup>44</sup>, Bangalore, and inaugurated by Archbishop Arokiasamy at the *Christian Ecumenical Centre (sic)*, Whitefield, and for which the representatives of the College had earlier presented a much appreciated paper titled "*Liberation of Rural India*" (23<sup>rd</sup> Nov. 1974)<sup>45</sup>; *Seminar on Salvation in Non-Christian Religions* directed by Fr. Paul Puthanangady (9<sup>th</sup> September 1969)<sup>46</sup>; *Seminar on Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation* under the direction of Rev. Fr. Paviotti which concluded with a 90-minute film, *on the Life of Gandhiji* (27<sup>th</sup> November 1969)<sup>47</sup>; and a week-long seminar on *Film Appreciation* by Fr. De Gama from Bombay (9<sup>th</sup> October 1972)<sup>48</sup>.

There were also a number of talks each year by experts on relevant topics like "*Bible and Ecumenism*" by Fr. Lucien Legrand M.E.P. on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1968<sup>49</sup>; "*Mentally-retarded Children*", by Miss Mira Ziauddin M.A. on 11<sup>th</sup> August 1968<sup>50</sup>; "*Social Activity and the Priest*" by Fr. Volken S. J. on 24<sup>th</sup> November 1968<sup>51</sup>; "*Anthropological Evolution*" by Prof. M. P. Joseph, M.Sc., Head of the Department of Zoology, St. Joseph's College, Bangalore, on 6<sup>th</sup> Dec. 1968<sup>52</sup>; Study Session with talks on (a) *Exercise of Authority in the Church*, and (b) *Original Sin Today* on 7<sup>th</sup> December 1968<sup>53</sup>; *Death of God – a Seminar on Radical Theology* on 31<sup>st</sup> July 1969<sup>54</sup>; *The Challenges of the Priest in India Today*" by Mr. George, Director of the American Cultural Centre in Bangalore, on 26<sup>th</sup> August 1969<sup>55</sup>; "*The Role of the Priest in*

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 305.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 173.

<sup>44</sup> The Inter-Sem was an inter-denominational organization of the Seminaries in Bangalore of which Kristu Jyoti College was a founding-member. More about the organization and its activities is given in section 5.5.5 of this chapter.

<sup>45</sup> AKJCB, Chronicle, vol. I, p. 414.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 102.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 114.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 253.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 94.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100.

*arousing Social Consciousness among Students*”, by Fr. Balaguer S.J. on 29<sup>th</sup> October 1970<sup>56</sup>; *Areas of Ecumenical Concern after Vatican II*, by Fr. Gerwin van Leeuwen O.F.M. on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1971<sup>57</sup>; *Conducting Retreats for non-Catholic Boys* by Fr. F. Zubeldia on 20<sup>th</sup> October 1971<sup>58</sup>; *Ministerial Priesthood* by Fr. Dupuis S. J. on 22<sup>nd</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> October 1971<sup>59</sup>; *Experience in the Hindu Ashram of “Rishi-Kesh”* by Fr. Sylvester C.M.I. on 29<sup>th</sup> November 1971<sup>60</sup>; *Evangelization* by Fr. Leser S. J. on 1<sup>st</sup> December 1972<sup>61</sup>; *Marian Theology* by Fr. Cassey C.S.S.R. on 7<sup>th</sup> December 1972<sup>62</sup>; *Structure of the World Council of Churches and Current Theological Trends among Christians* by Rev. Lucas Fisher, from the World Council of Churches, on 14<sup>th</sup> January 1973<sup>63</sup>; *Conflicts in Management and Dialogue* by Prof. Joseph Philip of the Tata Industrial Steels, Jamshedpur, on 4<sup>th</sup> September 1973<sup>64</sup>; *Harijan Christians* by Mr. Reddy and *The Karnataka Bill of Religious Institutions* by Mr. Alexander, on 11<sup>th</sup> November 1974<sup>65</sup>.

It was also a practice with the College to take advantage of the organization of seminars and retreats in its premises and to ask distinguished scholars to interact with the staff and students as was done in the case of Bernard Häring, who had come to the city to preach a retreat to a group of bishops<sup>66</sup>. The talks by distinguished theologians, given in other centres in Bangalore, were also attended by a significant number of students from the College on various occasions. The two stand-out examples were the talks on *Christian Ministry* by Hans Küng at the Union Theological College (U.T.C.) on 28<sup>th</sup> July 1974 and at the Cathedral Hall, on the following day<sup>67</sup>; and *Problems of a Hindu Christian Dialogue* by Dr. Raymond Panikkar, on 13<sup>th</sup> July 1970 at the U.T.C.<sup>68</sup>.

The variety of the topics dealt with by competent scholars belonging to various religious persuasions, both Indian and foreign, with lay and clerical backgrounds, were clearly indicative of the post-Vatican II orientation of the

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 194.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 196.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 278.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 280.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 287.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 323.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 411.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 179. Entry of 18<sup>th</sup> March.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 188.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 147.

College, and the advantages of its being in Bangalore with the immense possibilities offered for similar intellectual and spiritual pursuits. The College lent itself to the holding of these events, given the eagerness of the staff to make it truly an intellectual hub reflecting the national and ecclesiastical context so necessary for the priestly formation of the Salesians in India.

### 5.3. *Priestly and Missionary Formation*

The College was never ever remiss in its efforts to realize its primary scope, viz., the priestly and missionary formation of the students.

#### 5.3.1. Priestly Formation

The priestly formation of the students was sought to be enhanced in those early years with the keeping of the first Thursday of the month as the *Sacerdotal Thursday* with a special liturgy and intellectual input on the priesthood. The entry of 4<sup>th</sup> July 1968 reads: “*Sacerdotal Thursday – a welcome novelty for every first Thursday of the month*”<sup>69</sup>. Likewise, the entry of 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1972 reads:

“*Sacerdotal Thursday: This year the IV course brothers have started the custom of having a special mass for themselves with a homily on the priesthood*”<sup>70</sup>.

The involvement of the students in the parishes where they organised catechism classes, ran clubs/oratories, distributed Holy Communion and preached sermons, gave them a feel of the parish and youth ministry awaiting them in the future.

#### 5.3.2. Missionary Formation

The missionary aspect of formation, with a special reference to the missions of Assam, was stressed by the Rector Major during his farewell discourse at the end of the Regional Congress of the Salesians of Asia held at the College from 20<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> February 1968<sup>71</sup>.

A similar reference was made by Fr. George Williams<sup>72</sup>, the Regional Councillor, during his visit on 24<sup>th</sup> September 1972, when, in his conference

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 221.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.

<sup>72</sup> George Williams was born at Wallasey, Cheshire, Great Britain, in the Diocese of Shrewsbury, on 26.5.1916. He did his novitiate at Beckford (30.8.1946 - 8.9.1947) and made his first profession there on 8.9.1947. Three years later, on 8.9.1950, he made his perpetual profession and after having completed his theological formation at the Crocetta, Turin, was ordained

to the community, he insisted on “*A special orientation to the missions of Assam*”<sup>73</sup>.

In pursuance of the goal of missionary and pastoral formation insisted on by the superiors, the College tried to impart a truly missionary orientation both at the intellectual level and through pastoral involvement in the lives of the people of the archdiocese in general and in particular, through their various engagements in the lives of those in the immediate neighbourhood.

The academic syllabus of the College, the seminars and the courses, which have already been referred to in the preceding pages, albeit in a cursory manner, are indicative of the approach to the future mission of the students in the typical context of India. Specific inputs were given by some of the staff members like Fr. Sylvanus Lyngdoh and Fr. Orestes Paviotti, who made regular trips to the missions or took part in seminars on the subject and who, on their return, shared their experiences with the community. Thus, the entry in the chronicle of 5<sup>th</sup> October 1971 reads:

“Fr. Sylvanus leaves for Nagpur to attend a seminar of many eminent world theologians on the missions”<sup>74</sup>.

Similarly, the entry dated 14<sup>th</sup> July 1971, states:

“Fr. Paviotti gives us a nice conference speaking about his missionary tour and experiences with a special reference to the Bangla Refugee Camps and the efforts of the fathers and sisters in helping the refugees”<sup>75</sup>.

Visits by frontline missionaries to the College also helped to contribute to the missionary orientation in the formation of the brothers. Thus one reads in the chronicle that on 13<sup>th</sup> January 1972 “Fr. Michael, a missionary Salesian from Assam, and four Naga boys spent a few days with us in Bangalore”<sup>76</sup>.

The College took an active part in the diocesan level Missionary Exhibition to mark the *St. Thomas Centenary Celebrations* which was inaugurated on 12<sup>th</sup> November 1972 by the archbishop himself. On that occasion, the students of the College put up a stall highlighting the specifically Salesian areas of apostolate<sup>77</sup>.

priest at Beckford on 18.7.1954. He was the Provincial of Great Britain for a term (1.7.1964 - 17.9.1970) and Regional Councillor for two terms (10.12.1971 - 1.5.1984). He died at Manchester, Great Britain, on 6.6.2017 at the age of 101 – SAS. Cf also Agenzia Info Salesiana (ANS), Monday, 12 June 2017, p. 1.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 245.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 193.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 187.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 199.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 269.

The College will also be closely associated with a number of parishes in the archdiocese especially in the area of youth choir animation as will be detailed in the next chapter of this work<sup>78</sup>.

#### 5.4. *Inculturation and Adaptation*

Although the students were all Indians, the fact that they hailed from different parts of a country with marked cultural and linguistic differences, necessitated that they too be incultured and helped to adapt to the actual situation in which they found themselves. Further, given the fact that the Church in India was also “westernised”, it called for efforts to train the students in such a way as to make them feel that there was a new way of being a Church in India.

##### 5.4.1. Cultural Adaptation

Though during the period under study, the members of the community were almost cent percent Indian, with the exception of a couple of Europeans and a student on the staff for a time, given its actual composition, there was the need for the members to inculturate themselves in the particular context of Bangalore and the state of Karnataka. Aware of this fact, on 1<sup>st</sup> December 1967, less than a month after the unofficial inauguration in November, the community organized the first course in the Kannada language offered by a lay person, with 45 brothers initially registering themselves for it along with some staff members<sup>79</sup>. There were also attempts to familiarise themselves with the local culture, as may be seen from the efforts of the brothers involved in the oratories and the villages to stage cultural shows in the local language, as evidenced from the staging of the Kannada play *Thyaga* on 7<sup>th</sup> February 1971<sup>80</sup>. Screening of Tamil films in the community and for the people of the neighbouring villages and in the parishes, was also done quite regularly especially in those years when the area had a very significant Tamil population<sup>81</sup>.

<sup>78</sup> The next chapter of this work will deal primarily with the College in its involvement and collaboration with the local Church and the wider civil society.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10. However, the chronicle states also that some of them “drop off gradually”.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 173. The entry for the day reads: “*The parish oratory, chiefly due to the initiative of the brothers put up a fine Kannada play THYAGA, from 7 p.m. to 9.30 p.m.*”.

<sup>81</sup> On 6<sup>th</sup> March 1971: A Tamil film: “*Kanneer Papa*” shown first to the brothers at 1.30 p.m. and later in the parish at 7.00 p.m.; 31<sup>st</sup> July, 1971: We are having the Tamil film: “*Alayamani*” brought by Fr. K.M. Augustine of Katpadi; and on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1972, *Enga Mama* sponsored by the Provincial. *Ibid.*, pp. 177, 188, 231.

Some of these films served more than one purpose: to entertain the people of the locality at a time when they had but few options in this regard, to remain in touch and to nurture the relationship with the people in the neighbourhood, as well as, on occasions, to make collections to help fund social service projects in the villages as well as those projects on behalf of the young whom the institution was serving especially in the city parishes. Thus, the film *Enga Mama* which was screened on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1972, was sponsored by the provincial as his contribution towards the expenses of the Youth Rally which the College was planning to organize in the city<sup>82</sup>.

National festivals like the *Ayudha Pooja* viz; veneration of the implements used for work and especially, *Deepavali*, the festival of lights, which had a special significance for the College named after Christ the Light, were also celebrated on a regular basis. These adaptations were particularly important since until some time earlier they were considered to be “Hindu festivals” and hence looked askance at by the Church.

#### 5.4.2. Liturgical Adaptation

Fr. Paul Puthanangady, who was a recognized authority in the area of liturgical adaptation and inculturation, was quite regular in celebrating the Indian Rite Mass, not only for the students but also for the participants of the various meetings organized in the College. The entry in the chronicle of the College dated 6<sup>th</sup> November 1972 reads:

“Deepavali – In the evening the community Mass was celebrated by Fr. Paul in the Indian style. The celebration took place in front of the statue of the Sacred Heart. The parish priest and a good group of people from the parish came to attend the function. After the Mass the façade of the building was illuminated using earthen lamps”<sup>83</sup>.

Similarly, on the concluding day of the Asian Monastic Congress, Fr. Paul Puthanangady celebrated an Indian Rite Mass for the participants<sup>84</sup>. Likewise, on 30<sup>th</sup> October 1974, Fr. Egidio Viganò, the General Councillor for Formation, during his visit to the College, witnessed an *Indian Rite Mass* in the *Indian Chapel* – the chapel set apart for the celebration of Indian Rite Masses, Bhajan Services etc.<sup>85</sup>.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 231.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 266-267.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 335. Entry of 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1973.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 407. Egidio Viganò reached the house on 28<sup>th</sup> October and left for Bombay on 31<sup>st</sup>; cf *ibid.*, pp. 406 & 408 for the entries of the two days indicated.



The *Indian Academy* of the College was officially inaugurated on 8<sup>th</sup> September 1971 and the first function was a short *celebration of the Word in the Indian Style*<sup>86</sup>. The Indian Rite Mass, which became a regular feature on national festivals like the Independence and Republic Day celebrations and the celebration of the Eucharist in the other liturgical rites like the Syro-Malabar<sup>87</sup> and the Syro-Malankara<sup>88</sup> on special occasions, based also on the availability of competent persons, were clear indications that the College, right from its beginnings, wanted to be a part of the social, cultural and ecclesial milieu in which it found itself.

### 5.5. Cultural and Recreational Activities

In keeping with the Salesian tradition, the College engaged itself in promoting cultural and recreational activities in the villages, parishes and clubs with which its students were involved. Such activities also had their own formative value, since most of them, after their ordination, were to be involved with the youth in schools, colleges, youth centres as well as in the rural settings around the country.

#### 5.5.1. Movies and Cultural Events

The college authorities, in a very broad-minded gesture, permitted the students to go for some of the relevant cultural activities in the city including cinemas – in cassock in the beginning but later without it – when films of a certain cultural and educational value were being screened<sup>89</sup>. Seminararians going by themselves to watch movies in the theatres was considered at best a novelty at the time and a sign of the *liberal atmosphere* which reigned in the campus<sup>90</sup>. The community becoming aware of some of the controversies

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 191. *The Indian Academy* was also invited to give demonstrative celebrations to other institutions: On 14<sup>th</sup> November 1973 it was invited to St. Martha's Hospital for a Eucharistic Celebration in the Indian rite.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71. Entry of 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1969.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 158. Entry of 12<sup>th</sup> October 1970.

<sup>89</sup> AKJCB – Chronicle, vol. I, p. 75. Entry of 18<sup>th</sup> February 1969, which speaks of the whole community going to the *Lido Theatre* in the city for the film: "Man for all Seasons"; cf also *ibid.*, p. 101. Entry of 31<sup>st</sup> March 1969: "We are very lucky to be permitted to see another very instructive and enjoyable film: «The Cardinal». It was a morning show at the *Plaza Theatre*"; *ibid.*, p. 107 the entry of 11<sup>th</sup> October 1969: "A full-day picnic. We break new ground since we are permitted to go out in «mufti» and even to see one of three films that were suggested" and *ibid.*, p. 111, where the entry for 30<sup>th</sup> November reads: "Some brothers go to *Rex*, to see the film, «To Sir with Love»".

<sup>90</sup> There is an entry in the Chronicle of the College which reads: P.S. "Earlier in the month,

given rise to by this *new approach to seminary formation*, would discuss it in a mature manner as seen in the entry in the chronicle of 8<sup>th</sup> June 1970:

“At 6.30 p.m. the community assembled and Very Rev. Fr. Provincial presided over a Dialogue treating mainly on points that had appeared in his latest circular i.e., card-playing, films, cassock etc. and other matters of general interest to the community”<sup>91</sup>.

Besides going out to watch movies in theatres in the city, there were regular films screened in the College itself<sup>92</sup>. The films screened in the College were not restricted only to English but included also those in other languages like Tamil, Malayalam and Hindi<sup>93</sup>. Seminars were also held to critically understand and to help appreciate better this rather new and very effective medium.

The pastoral course which began on 9<sup>th</sup> May 1968 had *Apostolate of the Film* as one of the topics<sup>94</sup>, and on 14<sup>th</sup> November 1968, in the context of the Inter-Sem Seminar on youth-related issues, the topic, *Influence of Films on Modern Youth*” was also included<sup>95</sup>. The entry in the chronicle for 9<sup>th</sup> October 1972 also refers to a week-long course on film appreciation by Fr. De Gama from Bombay<sup>96</sup>.

On occasions, well-known groups from the city were invited over to the College itself for cultural performances. The entry in the house chronicle for 26<sup>th</sup> January 1971 reads:

“The Bartley Family, well-known in Bangalore for their musical evenings, came over and gave us a show, accompanied by three guitarists – *the Gay Caballeros*. The show started at 6.15 p.m. and got over at 7.45 p.m.”<sup>97</sup>.

Fr. McFerran sent a long letter addressed to all the brothers. The contents of it were the rumours circulating around Madras, to the dissatisfaction of all, that the brothers, when out for a picnic, go to see films, and that some even saw two films on the same day. A reply was sent placing facts in their right perspective”. AKJCB – Chronicle, vol. I, pp. 115-116.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 142.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32. Entry of 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1968 speaks of a film on the Nagas, screened after night prayers and commented on by Bishop Hubert Rozario of Tezpur; *ibid.*, p. 52, entry of 31<sup>st</sup> August reads: “After compline, documentary film on Community Development”; *ibid.*, entry of 27<sup>th</sup> November 1969 which speaks of a film on the life of Gandhiji being screened; *ibid.*, p. 118, entry of 8<sup>th</sup> December 1969 which reads: “After supper we saw the film «Walk on the Wild Side»”.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 254. Entry of 12<sup>th</sup> October 1972, speaks of the Tamil film “*Thangaikagha*” being screened; *ibid.*, p. 127, on 17<sup>th</sup> January at 8 p.m. Hindi film “*De Aaken Barah Hath*” was screened; and on 24<sup>th</sup> July 1970, a Malayalam film was screened in the community. Cf *ibid.*, p. 148.

<sup>94</sup> Cf *ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*; p. 62.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 253.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 171.

The new auditorium of the College was, in fact, one of the hubs of cultural activities in Bangalore especially in the 1970s, and the programmes held there were eagerly looked forward to by the friends and well-wishers of the institution.

The auditorium also served to hold regular functions for the youth from the parishes and the villages, the religious in the locality, the Inter-Sem, etc. As a matter of fact, it was first used, even before it was fully ready, for a cultural programme on 30<sup>th</sup> January 1970, in which the greater part of the audience was made up of the youth from the neighbouring parishes who also got an opportunity to perform on the stage<sup>98</sup>. The following year too, a variety entertainment was held on the eve of the feast of St. John Bosco, with the children and youth of H.A.L., St. Patrick's, I.T.I., Catholic Centre and Michaelpalayam giving items which were interspersed with those by the students of Kristu Jyoti itself<sup>99</sup>.

#### 5.5.2. Entertainment at the Service of the Apostolate

Regular films in Tamil were screened in the campus, which also helped to gain the good will of the people in the neighbourhood, at a time when they did not have many entertainment options. Thus, on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1969, the Tamil film *Ramu* was screened for a group of 350 children from the nearby oratories<sup>100</sup>. Film shows were also sometimes used to gather funds for some of the requirements of the oratories/S.S.G. On 28<sup>th</sup> October 1970, the film *En Thambi*, was sent from Sagayathottam at the request of the brothers, so that shows could be held with a nominal fee in order to buy a 16 mm projector which could serve to project films in the various oratories and villages<sup>101</sup>. The next day, at 6.30 p.m., this film was screened in the College premises for the people of the parish with tickets priced at 50 and 25 paise<sup>102</sup>.

On 29<sup>th</sup> November 1970, the brothers going to the Sunday Oratories, organized a Benefit Show, *Lilies of the Field*, at the REX Theatre in the heart of the city. The tickets were priced at Rs. 5/-, Rs. 3/- and Rs. 2/-. The project met with great success as it proved to be more than a full house at the REX and additional chairs had to be provided by a friendly and benevolent theatre management. The collection, after deducting the various expenses incurred, came to Rs. 2067/-<sup>103</sup>. With the money thus collected, the brothers were able

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 129-130.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 172.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 94.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 160.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 161.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 165.

to buy a projector on trial on 15<sup>th</sup> January 1971 and project a German documentary for the community<sup>104</sup>. Satisfied with the trial, the projector was purchased definitively and this proved to be a great help in screening films in the oratories and villages. In fact, for several years, the film shows in the College Campus proved to be one of the major attractions for the youth of the area and they looked forward to them with great eagerness. Such events also helped to establish a better rapport between the institution and its immediate neighbourhood.

### 5.5.3. Youth Rally, Athletic Meet and Tournaments

A Youth Rally, the first to be held in Bangalore, for which long and painstaking preparations were made, was held at the St. Francis Xavier's Cathedral on 8<sup>th</sup> October 1972. An excerpt from the chronicle reads:

"Nearly a thousand boys and girls from I.T.I. Colony, Ulsoor Church, Catholic Centre and Cathedral took part in the rally. The brothers in-charge, after an early Mass and breakfast, went to the various centres to gather their members before two state transport buses, that were hired for the occasion, arrived to take the participants to the Cathedral. The function started with the Holy Mass celebrated by the Archbishop. The entire church was packed to capacity. After Mass, a march past and different friendly games followed. The members were left to themselves for the lunch though some very poor children were helped by some brothers to buy something for their lunch. The fete games after lunch added to the serene atmosphere of the gathering and this serenity knew no bounds when tea packets and cool drinks were distributed to all. The cultural programme presided over by Mgr. D'Mello, brought the rally to a happy conclusion and by 8 O'Clock in the evening, the buses were able to transport even the last group of boys and girls to their homes"<sup>105</sup>.

The chronicler also points out that though the Youth Rally was a success, yet being the very first to be conducted by the College, there were a few points to be kept in mind for the future. He pointed out especially the inconvenience of having too small children, which caused problems of order and discipline; the inability to keep to the timings in conducting the cultural programme, which resulted in it being too drawn out and making the audience restive, etc. Yet he concluded stating:

"Nonetheless, we are richer for the experience and the time involved were well spent for a crying need of the day – the good of the young"<sup>106</sup>.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 170.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 251.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 252-253.

Similar functions were held also for the children and youth in the villages. The entry in the house chronicle for 9<sup>th</sup> February 1974, reads:

“The S.S.G. arranged a variety entertainment for the villagers, in the football ground. All the seven villages were represented and displayed many latent talents [...] the show began at 6.30 p.m. and ended at 9 p.m. There were over 1500 people present for the same. The children received food packets prepared by the brothers. The Panchayat Member, Mr. Narayana was the chief guest”<sup>107</sup>.

Other activities of a cultural nature organised by the brothers for the youth were the outings to places of cultural and historical interest. The first of these was had on 18<sup>th</sup> November 1973<sup>108</sup>, and they eventually became an yearly feature for the villages with which the S.S.G. came to be associated.

#### 5.5.4. Games and Sports

The students of the College, given the fact of their being introduced to various games and athletic activities already during their aspirantate days, and the availability of the various facilities for sports in the campus itself, excelled in different games and proved themselves competent in organizing various competitions for the village and parish youth with whom they were involved.

The College was provided with a football ground already from the beginning and the first football game at Kristu Jyoti College was played on 17<sup>th</sup> November 1967, less than three weeks after the opening of the College<sup>109</sup>. Eventually, other facilities were added like the basketball court, inaugurated on 5<sup>th</sup> February 1968<sup>110</sup> and the “Swimming Pool” – actually a water tank built to provide water for the rather extensive farm – inaugurated on 18<sup>th</sup> January 1971<sup>111</sup>. The work on the hockey-pitch was started the next day, with a bulldozer from the Madras Engineering Group (MEG) coming in to level the ground for the purpose<sup>112</sup>. That the College had concern also for the recreational requirements of the senior professors is evident in the entry in the chronicle for 11<sup>th</sup> February 1968:

“8.45 saw the inauguration of the bocce pitch with a match played by Rev. Fr. Rector and Rev. Fr. P.T. Thomas Vs. Rev. Fr. Prefect and Rev. Fr. Longinus”<sup>113</sup>!

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 360.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 341.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 170. The Chronicle records: “The swimming pool inaugurated. Though its actual purpose is (sic) a reservoir of water for the fields, it fulfills the secondary aim well”.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 170. The entry of 19<sup>th</sup> January 1971.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

Slowly but steadily, facilities for other games like volleyball and ball-badminton will also be made available in the campus and put at the disposal of both the staff and students, the oratory boys, the villagers and for conducting the Inter-Sem tournaments.

Making use of the facilities available, the brothers soon felt themselves confident enough to challenge some of the professional clubs in the city. A few of the more important matches played during the first years were the following: On 21<sup>st</sup> June 1971 the College played its first hockey match with an outside team (ITI colony) and won it convincingly with a score of 4-1<sup>114</sup>; on 31<sup>st</sup> August 1972, a hockey match between the College XI and the Indian Gymkhana Club of Fraser Town at the I.T.I. Colony Grounds again ended in victory for the College and that too with an identical score<sup>115</sup>; on 2<sup>nd</sup> September, 1973 a football match was played between the College and the Norton and Grindwell Company which the former won 7-0<sup>116</sup>; and on 24<sup>th</sup> September 1970, Kristu Jyoti played a football match against MEG-A, one of the stronger professional teams in Bangalore, and came out unscathed, drawing the game 1-1<sup>117</sup>.

Besides the matches played by the students, the College organized athletic and sports programmes for the youth centres and the villages. Thus on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1975, the students organized “A Sports Meet” which is reported in the chronicle as follows:

“The oratories conduct «A Sports Meet» on the ITI grounds. In the morning, Rev. Fr. Rector presided over the flag-hoisting ceremony and the March Past. Next followed the heats of the various items. There were five contingents in all: ITI, Marathahalli, Thambuchetty, H.A.L., Michaelpalayam. There was a bit of confusion in the morning regarding the classification of boys into the respective age groups. At 2.30 p.m., the finals of all the events commenced. Mr. Korah, Engineer-in-Chief of ITI, presided while Mrs. Korah gave away the prizes. Cheers to the ITI brothers who organized the Sports Meet”<sup>118</sup>.

#### 5.5.5. Inter-Sem and Collaboration with Ecclesiastical Institutions

One of the more evident advantages of having a studentate of theology in Bangalore, was the possibility of having close and beneficial contacts with the members of the diocesan seminary (St. Peters) and those of the many other religious congregations, besides Protestant seminaries like the United

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21. The entry in the Chronicle on that day reads: “Our first hockey match with an outside team (the I.T.I. Colony) brings us a grand victory with a score of 4-1”.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 230.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 323.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 155.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 426.

Theological College (UTC) and the Southern Asia Bible College (SABC), to share ideas, recreate together and to jointly organise events of an educational, social, cultural and recreational nature. Such interactions naturally helped all to gain a better understanding of each seminary's own specific identity – protestant or catholic, diocesan or religious – and brought with it an additional value to their regular phase of formation. For the religious themselves such interactions provided an opportunity to have a better understanding and appreciation of their own specific religious charisms besides ensuring their formation in the field of ecumenism and dialogue through friendly interactions and joint ventures.

Kristu Jyoti College, which from the very beginning, was very closely linked to the seminary life in Bangalore and was one of the founding members of the Inter-Sem along with UTC, Dharmaram, St. Peter's Seminary, St. Anthony's Friary and Mount St. Alphonsus (Redemptorist Theologate), benefitted much from its involvement in the cultural competitions and games, as well as the study circles and discussions on relevant topics which were shaping the Indian theological thinking in the 1960s and 1970s.

Thus as early as on 14<sup>th</sup> November 1968, at the Inter-Sem meeting held at Kristu Jyoti College with an attendance of more than 250 from the Union Theological College, Dharmaram College, St. Peter's Seminary, St. Anthony's Friary, Mount St. Alphonsus and Kristu Jyoti College, presided over by Rev. Mother Yvonne Marie, Principal of Jyothi Nivas College, the participants engaged themselves in serious discussions on two well-prepared papers: "*The Character of Modern Youth, The Crisis of Faith of Modern Youth*" and "*The Influence of Films on Modern Youth*". The discussions which followed focussed on the question: "*Our present seminary training: Is it sufficient to face the youth*"<sup>119</sup>? Similar presentations and subsequent discussions on relevant themes like *Gandhi and Communalism* (St. Anthony's Friary, 21<sup>st</sup> August 1969)<sup>120</sup>; "*The Worker and the Priest*" (St. Peter's Seminary, 27<sup>th</sup> November 1969)<sup>121</sup>; and on "*Liberation!*" organized by the Inter-Sem in collaboration with the Ecumenical Christian Centre (ECC), Whitefield, as the venue, on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1974, at which the students of the College contributed a much

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62. "14<sup>th</sup> Nov. 1968: 3 p.m. Inter-Sem Meeting attended by 250 consisting of representatives from UTC, Dharmaram, St. Peter's, St. Anthony's Friary, Redemptorists, and the students of Kristu Jyoti". A xeroxed copy of the entire programme of this meeting is given in the Chronicle after page 64.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 99.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 114.



appreciated paper titled “*Liberation of Rural India*”<sup>122</sup>, and others are pointers to the aspirations of the Inter-Sem and also the lived orientations of Kristu Jyoti College itself.

### 5.6. *Manual Work*

The gradual transformation of the Kristu Jyoti College campus from a barren, treeless land into one with orchards and gardens, was the result of the hard manual work engaged in by both the staff and the students. Further, they took various other initiatives which were formative and at the same time beneficial to both the College and to society in general.

The chronicle of the College has an entry for 14<sup>th</sup> October 1970 which reads:

“at 1.30 p.m. quite a number of brothers volunteered on their own initiative to repair the mud road, linking us to the main road. The recent rains had badly damaged it”<sup>123</sup>.

That they viewed living with and working with the villagers as being beneficial both to the villagers and for themselves, is evident from the entry in the chronicle dated 27<sup>th</sup> December 1968: “A group of about 6 brothers start a social service camp near Vasanthapura Village”.<sup>124</sup>

For the benefit of the community, a dairy farm was started and the formal inauguration of the cowshed took place on 11<sup>th</sup> May 1969 with five cows and three calves as its first residents<sup>125</sup>. The starting of the piggery on 25<sup>th</sup> November 1970 is recorded in the chronicle in the following words: “Our livestock increased with the three piglings which Bro. Chacko brought back from Madras”<sup>126</sup>. The students also tried out a poultry farm as a possible source of income for the various social service projects with the first batch of 600 new chicks being brought into the campus on 7<sup>th</sup> July 1971<sup>127</sup>.

Apart from the financial benefits accruing from these new ventures, they provided the students opportunities to engage in manual work and a hands

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 414.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 158.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81. The community appears to have been quite anxious about the growth of this new venture as seen from the entries in the Chronicle: August 15<sup>th</sup> 1969: “Our new cow gives birth to a male calf” (p. 97); April 17<sup>th</sup> 1971: “Br. P.T. Chacko announced the good news that finally we had the first she-calf born in our farm”. (p. 182).

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 165.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 188.

on training for those who, in the future, would be engaged in the missions spread out in the remote regions of rural India.

The adequate structures, the immediate surroundings, the formation programme and above all, the community dynamics characterised by openness, freedom and dialogue, provided the required setting for imparting a comprehensive Salesian formation to the students of the College. The next chapter of this work will deal at some length on what may be referred to as the “hands on training” which they were provided with outside the campus as they moved out to the parishes, factories and villages and involved themselves in collaborative pastoral and social ministries. The experience gained from them would go a long way in making their future ministry the more effective and efficacious.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### **TREND-SETTING CONTRIBUTIONS TO CHURCH AND SOCIETY**

While the first two chapter of this work dealt with the realisation of the long-cherished desire of the Salesians to have a presence in the Archdiocese of Bangalore and how they did it with the construction and inauguration of Kristu Jyoti College, which was to serve as the studentate of theology for the whole of Salesian India, the third chapter dwelt on the formative ambience of the College and how it helped to form priests and missionaries in keeping with the ideals of the post-Vatican II Church. In this fourth and concluding chapter, an attempt is made to present Kristu Jyoti College as an institution which was open to the realities of the local Church and of the civil society in general and how it made significant trend-setting contributions to both in collaboration with the ecclesiastical and civil authorities as well as the other religious congregations in the city.

#### **1. Involvement with and Contribution to the Local Church**

Right from its inauguration, Kristu Jyoti College had a very close collaborative relationship with the neighbouring parishes to whose growth and development it made significant contributions and with the archdiocese in whose various initiatives it involved itself whole-heartedly.

##### *1.1. St. Anthony's Church, Thambuchettypalaya*

As has already been pointed out in the course of this work, right from the buying of the land, the parish priests of St. Anthony's Church, Thambuchettypalaya, extended their whole-hearted collaboration and contributed very generously towards the Salesian mission<sup>1</sup>. These contacts were strength-

<sup>1</sup> The parish priests of St. Anthony's Parish during the period under study were Frs. R. P. J. Gratian, B. L. Colaço, Lawrence Noronha, Stany J. Viegas and Joseph B. Fernandes.

ened and became mutually beneficial once the institution was inaugurated. Several entries in the College Chronicle speak of this relationship that existed between the parish and the College.

In the early years, when the College did not have its own chapel, most of the more important liturgical functions were held in the parish. Thus on 26<sup>th</sup> March 1969, ordinations to the diaconate and the granting of the ministries were held at St. Anthony's<sup>2</sup>. The community for its part, participated fully in the parish celebrations especially on the feast day of its patron, and that also by making adjustments to the regular community programmes<sup>3</sup>.

The Salesians also showed special signs of affection to the parish priests themselves as will be seen from the entry of 10<sup>th</sup> August 1969 in the chronicle of the College:

"Feast of St. Lawrence, the patronal feast of the Parish Priest. We invite him over for dinner. Deac. Joseph Forte reads an address. The PP then expressed his very sincere appreciation for the fine spirit of encouragement, help and companionship he finds in our midst. He also thanked in a special way the work of the brothers in the parish, ITI and Basavanapura, which has improved the life around"<sup>4</sup>.

Another entry in the chronicle, dated 26<sup>th</sup> November 1972, gives further indications of the involvement of the students in the activities of the parish.

"Procession of the Bl. Sacrament in the parish church. The procession started at 4.30 with the celebration of the Holy Mass in our chapel. The procession concluded with the benediction of the Bl. Sacrament in the parish. A few brothers volunteered to decorate the route, from the gate to the entrance, braving the heat on a very sultry morning"<sup>5</sup>.

If the collaboration with St. Anthony's was one with an already organized and well-established parish, the College will be instrumental in building up two others viz., The Holy Family Church, Ramamurthy Nagar and the Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Lourdunagara, which in those early days were sub-stations of St. Anthony's.

<sup>2</sup> AKJCB – Chronicle, vol. I, p. 77. There were 13 tonsures, 13 for the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> minor orders and 22 for the diaconate.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 87. The evening liturgical services in the College on 15<sup>th</sup> June 1969, were cancelled and the students were asked to participate in the solemn benediction in the parish.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 276.

## 1.2. *Holy Family Church, Ramamurthy Nagar – ITI*

In chapter two of this work it has already been mentioned that a 2-acre plot meant for the future church on survey No. 27 in the Kowdanahally Village, Krishanarajapuram Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk, was purchased by the archdiocese from a certain Nanjappa Reddy on 1<sup>st</sup> Oct. 1965 for the purpose of setting up some charitable institutions – schools, church, dispensary etc. to serve the people of the village of Kowdanahally, which area will later be referred to more commonly as ITI, as well as other nearby villages<sup>6</sup>. The request to convert the above-mentioned land for the purposes indicated was made by the Archbishop D.S. Lourdusamy on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1968 and was sanctioned on 18<sup>th</sup> October 1968<sup>7</sup>.

### 1.2.1. Initial Involvement of the College<sup>8</sup>

With the coming of the Salesians, the Parish Priest of St. Anthony's, T.C. Palaya, sought their collaboration in developing the ITI area especially through their work on behalf of the youth. The initiatives and the apostolic and missionary zeal of the students of KJC were evident in their involvement in the construction and animation of the Holy Family Church, Ramamoorthynagar, ITI<sup>9</sup>.

It was, in fact, one of the first oratories started by the students on 17<sup>th</sup> December 1967, hardly two months after their arrival at Thambuchettyalaya<sup>10</sup>. The Salesians were also involved in pastoral ministry at ITI from the very beginning and contributed their share in the formation of the parish community<sup>11</sup>.

The House Chronicle registered the more significant developments with regard to the growth of the Catholic community there as when in its entry of 6<sup>th</sup> March 1969, it stated:

<sup>6</sup> AAB, *Holy Family Church Ramamoorthynagar*, File No. CP - 35. Ramamoorthynagar will also be spelt as Ramamurthynagar. The five-page sales deed in favour of the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Bangalore, presently the Rt. Rev. Dr. D. S. Lourdusamy of Archbishop's House, 18, Millers Road, is given in this section and is in the file titled: Property Document, Trust Deed.

<sup>7</sup> The request of the archbishop and the response of the thahasildar are also given in File No. CP - 35.

<sup>8</sup> The acquisition of the property and the purpose for which it was intended have already been dealt with in chapter two of this work (9.2.2.).

<sup>9</sup> AKJCB – Chronicle, vol. I, p. 76.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12. Entry of 17<sup>th</sup> December 1967.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42. The entry in the College Chronicle for 9<sup>th</sup> April 1968 states that Fr. Catechist was at ITI for the Holy Week celebrations. Some members of the community participated in the Midnight Mass on Christmas 1969 as well as in that of 31<sup>st</sup> December 1971 even though there was a Midnight Mass in the Community. Cf AKJCB – Chronicle, vol. I, pp. 122 and 198.

“5.30 p.m. Blessing and laying of the foundation-stone for the ITI Church and an adjacent English-Medium High School<sup>12</sup>. The estimated cost of the church to be built was put at Rs. 1, 35, 899.46”<sup>13</sup>.

Further, on the occasion of the ordinations and the conferring of ministries which was held in the Parish Church of T.C. Palaya on 26<sup>th</sup> March 1969, the provincial handed over to the archbishop a donation of Rs. 5000/- towards the construction of the church<sup>14</sup>.

The children from ITI were always given a special consideration by the College on account of its close association with them as in the case of their being brought to the College for the screening of Tamil films on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1969 and on 1<sup>st</sup> November 1969<sup>15</sup>, and for the entertainment on the eve of the feast of Don Bosco, 1969, on which days the College also arranged for their to and fro transport<sup>16</sup>.

There appears to have been a delegation of ITI always in the College for any important function as for instance at the Deepavali celebrations of 8<sup>th</sup> November 1969<sup>17</sup>. However, at times such a close association caused difficulties as when on the occasion of the concert held on 4<sup>th</sup> February 1973, it was felt that for this event which was held for special invitees “there were too many children from ITI and the neighbouring villages”<sup>18</sup>.

There was also a good rapport with the ITI Colony and its officers as may be seen from the entry, of 13<sup>th</sup> November 1971, in the College Chronicle:

“The brothers who work in ITI were invited to entertain the children of the colony by the officers. They did so in the afternoon with games and music in the officers’ club”<sup>19</sup>.

Due to the good rapport that existed between the College and the author-

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 76. The English Medium School is a reference to the one which was entrusted to the Sisters of St. Anne Bangalore (SAB).

<sup>13</sup> AAB – File No. CP - 35.

<sup>14</sup> AKJCB – Chronicle, vol. I, p. 77. AAB – SDB, RF - 37, Letter of the Archbishop of Bangalore to Fr. Baracca, dated 31<sup>st</sup> March 1969 to thank him for the money received. “This is to acknowledge, with most sincere thanks, receipt of your kind letter dated 29<sup>th</sup> March 1969 and of the cheque therewith enclosed in the sum of Rs. 5,000/- as an Easter gift from Very Rev. Fr. Provincial to be utilized for the new Church at ITI colony”.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 94 and p. 160.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 130.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 293.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 270.

ities of ITI, the students were allowed to conduct *The First Don Bosco Inter Club Athletic Meet, Bangalore*, at the ITI Grounds on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1975<sup>20</sup>.

Thanks to such a collaborative climate, the construction of the parish church was completed and it was blessed on 1<sup>st</sup> December 1974 by the Archbishop of Bangalore, at a function in which most of the students and staff of the College participated<sup>21</sup>. Eventually the archbishop proposed that the Salesians take over the parish.

### 1.2.2. Parish handed over to the Salesians

The archbishop, His Grace, Packiam Arokiaswamy, in a letter dated 12<sup>th</sup> January 1975 asked Fr. Thomas Panakezham, the provincial, to take over the I.T.I. Parish as also the territory to the east of Kristu Jyoti College (Hosakote etc. up to the boundary of the district of Kolar), for the work of evangelisation. Fr. Panakezham replied on 29<sup>th</sup> January, stating that he had discussed the above letter in the Provincial Council, held on 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> of the same month, and informed the archbishop of its reluctance to take over the parish given the “present situation of the Province”. He enumerated the reasons as follows:

“1. Just lately we received a letter from Very Rev. Fr. Bernard Tohill, one of our Major Superiors, the Councillor in charge of the Missions, asking us to send some missionaries at least to the «North-East India», as this year we are commemorating the centenary of the salesian missions.

2. Some of our confreres are sick, and are not able to do active work.

3. At the beginning of July 1974, we decided, if the Superiors permit, to open at least two new foundations: one in Hyderabad and the other in Quilon. We had already in mind Madurai. The only hitch we have, is the permission of the Superiors. We are waiting for the answer.

Hence, at present, without knowing the exact position of the personnel for the coming year, it is difficult to give a definite answer. Hope Your Grace understands our difficulty, and kindly wait till the month of April when we hope to give you our decision”<sup>22</sup>.

The archbishop responded through a letter dated 7<sup>th</sup> March 1975, which, while addressing the question at issue, also pointed out that if the College were to take over the parish, it would provide an opportunity for the students to have a better training in evangelisation.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 426. The College Chronicle has also the two-page cyclostyled programme of the Meet.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 415.

<sup>22</sup> AAB – file No. CP - 35.



“Your letter of 29<sup>th</sup> January turning down my request «to take charge...», was rather disappointing. However, there was a ray of hope; you said that in the month of April you hoped to give me your decision: Hope you will be able to give a decision in the positive. I do understand your difficulty, chiefly that of personnel.

However, I have thought that it might help your councillors to arrive at a positive decision, if I set forth below, the extra commitments that may be involved in this. I think, the extra commitments are practically negligible, the only extra thing to do for you will be to put one priest to reside permanently at I.T.I. For the rest, the staff and students of Kristu Jyoti College are already helping at the parish of Thambuchettypalayur, I.T.I., and the villages to the east of Kristu Jyoti College. They need only to continue that work.

An advantage in taking charge of I.T.I. will be that it will be a good training ground for your students”<sup>23</sup>.

Seeing the advantage of having the parish, with which the College had been associated from the very beginning, and to the construction of which it had contributed handsomely while creating and maintaining a beneficial rapport with the various sections of the people, being entrusted to the Salesians, Fr. Di Fiore, the rector, wrote to the archbishop on 26<sup>th</sup> March 1975:

“All of us here have insisted with Fr. Provincial to do so [take charge of the I.T.I. Parish] and I am sure that the moment he feels he has someone to spare for the job he will say yes. Till then, let us continue to pray and trust that the good Lord will inspire our Superiors to take that right decision”<sup>24</sup>.

Fr. Panakezham eventually replied on 29<sup>th</sup> April 1975 (Camp: Kotagiri) informing the archbishop of the decision to take over the I.T.I. parish temporarily:

“Thanks for your letter. We discussed it in our Provincial Council, and I am happy to tell your Grace that we have decided to take up temporarily the ITI Parish and the territory up to Hosakote for evangelization, as stated in your letter. For a permanent taking up, we need the permission of our Superiors in Rome. When I come to Bangalore, I hope to send you a draft of the temporary agreement, and thus we will be able to finalize the taking over”<sup>25</sup>.

The archbishop replied on 14<sup>th</sup> May, 1975, accepting the fact of the Salesians taking over the parish temporarily and stated:

“Please let me know when the new parish priest of yours will be able to take charge so that I can make the necessary arrangements before my intended Holy

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

Year pilgrimage which is scheduled to start on 16<sup>th</sup> June.

Yesterday Fr. Di Fiore was here and he informed me that you are giving me an experienced pastoral-minded priest. I am very happy over it. You will understand that in the initial stages, there will be a few inconveniences which I am sure the veteran missionary will be able to put up with”<sup>26</sup>.

Fr. Panakezham replied on 20<sup>th</sup> May 1975 from *The Retreat*, Yercaud<sup>27</sup>, where he was at the time, stating that he was hoping to send Fr. John Nendumpuram sdb to take charge of the ITI Parish, Krishnarajapuram. However, he also informed the archbishop that Fr. John would arrive only in July as he was at the time attending a course organised by the Major Superiors in Rome. He also stated his regret at Fr. John reaching late and expressed the hope that some pastoral help could, in the meantime, be given by Kristu Jyoti College. He concluded his letter saying: “I am sure Your Grace will be able to adjust with Father J.B. Fernandes”<sup>28</sup>.

### 1.2.3. The Contract

The archbishop responded on 24<sup>th</sup> May 1975, thanking the provincial for his letter of 20<sup>th</sup> May 1975 and making a reference to the draft of the contract which Fr. Panakezham had sent him earlier:

“Going through the contract, I find it eminently reasonable. I will make it a model for agreements with other congregations too. Only I would like 8 (b) to read thus: «The Local Ordinary will provide for all the ordinary expenses». By this I mean that for any extraordinary expenditure which may be of some great magnitude, the Ordinary’s prior permission should be obtained in writing if the expenditure is to be met by the Ordinary”<sup>29</sup>.

The contract entered into finally by the archdiocese and the Salesians had 14 points and dealt in detail with the various aspects of the administration as well as the relationship that should characterise the contracting parties vis-à-vis the parish<sup>30</sup>.

The relations between the College, the Holy Family Parish and the archbishop will continue to be cordial also in the years that followed. This is further evidenced from the fact that the archbishop felt himself free to come

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> Fr. J. B. Fernandes [Fernandez] was the then parish priest of St. Anthony’s Church, T.C. Palaya.

<sup>29</sup> AAB – file No. CP - 35.

<sup>30</sup> Cf *ibid.*, for a copy of this contract.

over and enjoy the hospitality of the Salesians even in later years. Thus on 25<sup>th</sup> January 1976, the archbishop, who had come to the ITI Parish for the Feast of the Holy Family, came over to the College after the functions there, for lunch and rest<sup>31</sup>.

Though after a period of three years, the Salesians would give the parish back to the archdiocese, their close association with it continues to this day. Further, it is to be noted, that the area which was given as their field of evangelization was developed by the Salesians and that today there are three full-fledged parishes – Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Lourdunagara (1983); Our Lady of Fatima Church, Hoskote (2006); St. Gasper's Church, Kithiganur (2009) – and a chapel under the patronage of Mary Help of Christians in the campus of the Salesian sisters at Avalahalli, where the Salesians used to celebrate the Eucharist and hold other liturgical services in Tamil, for the benefit of the workers of the convent of the sisters and for the people of the neighbourhood.

### 1.3. *Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Lourdunagara*<sup>32</sup>

Like the Holy Family Church, Ramamoorthynagar, the early organization and development of Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Lourdunagara owes much to the students of Kristu Jyoti College.

#### 1.3.1. The first Christian community at Basvanapura - Seeghalli

About 150 years ago, Mr. Daveedappa and his five sons migrated to Basvanapura – known today as Lourdunagara – from Kadasenahalli, which is a village near Chintamani in the State of Karnataka. Almost at the same time Mr. Papayya and his family from Hosakote settled down at Seeghalli. The

<sup>31</sup> AKJCB – Chronicle, vol. II, p. 8.

<sup>32</sup> Since but a little matter on the history of the parish was found in the archives, this narration is based mostly on two documents, each of which gives a historical note on the parish. The first is a document titled: *A Glimpse of the History of Lourdunagara (Basvanapura-Sigehalli Parish)*. The document is five pages long and is prepared by Fr. Henry Galbao, SDB, Parish Priest & Administrator, on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2013 and is found in the archives of the Our Lady of Lourdes Parish. The second is a letter written by Fr. Lawrence Noronha, parish priest, of St. Anthony's Parish, Thambuchettyalaya, to the archbishop giving the historical background of the first community hall which doubled as a chapel at Basavanapura. The reason why nothing much was found in the archives of the parish for the period in question (1967-1976) is because during this period it was directly under the S.S.G. of Kristu Jyoti College and the parish as such was erected only in the year 1983. It appears that the chronicle of the parish was maintained only from 1996 when Fr. Thomas Punnapadam became the parish priest.

descendents of these two groups and their matrimonial alliances gave rise to the first Christian population of the Basvanapura and Seegehalli villages.

In the 1950s, the means of livelihood for the people in the primarily agricultural community were sugarcane and paddy cultivation. Cattle and sheep rearing was also engaged in by a few. Subsequently, the entire area between the present Old Madras Road and the railway-line/Kodigehalli Road, which today is known as Hoodi and Mahadevapura, came under the influence of the members of the powerful Reddy caste, whose members, using their political and caste influence appropriated and registered in their name several hundred acres of land in the area. The Christians who did not have any financial or political influence remained subordinate labourers in the lands and quarries of these landlords. In the 1960s, a certain Mr. Rayappa, a Christian of some means, came over from Thambuchettypalaya and started a stone-quarry in the Chicka Basvanapura area. Eventually he began to treat the people working in his quarry as bonded labourers.

### 1.3.2. Involvement and Contribution of the Salesians

After Kristu Jyoti College was established in 1967, the students who spanned out into the villages in the neighbourhood came also to the Basavanapura-Seegehalli villages and began to engage in social service activities which resulted also in the much acclaimed case of the liberation, on 6<sup>th</sup> November 1975, of 40 families – men, women and children from bonded labour and their being settled in that part of the parish which has subsequently been named “*Swathanthra Nagara*” (*Freedom Village*)<sup>33</sup>.

From a rather long letter of Lawrence Noronah, the parish priest of Thambuchettypalaya, under whose jurisdiction Basvanapura and Seegehalli fell, dated 6<sup>th</sup> February 1970 and addressed to the archbishop, one is able to have a fairly good idea of the manner in which the parish developed. Hence it is thought opportune to quote the major part of this rather long letter.

“Your Grace,

With ref. to the talk I had with you the other day regarding the donation of some land to the Parish by a Hindu gentleman, and the subsequent construction of an assembly hall in that land at Basavanapura, I think a detailed account of it is due for your information.

Basvanapura and Seegahalli – substations of our parish – are twin villages a furlong apart from each other, and two miles from Thambuchettypalaya on the

<sup>33</sup> AOLPL, *A Glimpse of the History of Lourdanagara (Basvanapura-Sigehalli Parish)*, p. 1.

southern side of KGF Road. In Basavanapura there are 30, and in Seegahalli there are 15 Catholic families with a total population of 375 members, a really neglected and poor lot, mostly working in the fields, a few working the stone quarries and a handful working in the fields. «The Social Service Guild» of Kristu Jyoti College chose to adopt these two villages for their work and for the last two years have been rendering really commendable service to these people – always in consultation, knowledge and cooperation of the Parish Priest. In each of these villages we had to establish «Panchayath Groups» to do some effective and useful co-ordinated work. The villagers were taught some cottage industry and making of handbags; some have their small poultry farms. Two wells were dug to have drinking water.

An urgent need was felt to have a common assembly hall where they could meet, have Mass once in a way, conduct catechism and even have occasional cultural shows. There was no land of their own. It was at this time about a year ago, a certain Mr. Basi Reddy, a Hindu landlord from the neighbouring village who owns some property in Basvanapura, came forward of his own accord to donate some land close to the village. He has done it freely without any obligation on our part. This land measures about 1½ acres, has been registered in the name of the Archbishop of Bangalore and as belonging to the parish of Thambuchettypalaya. As your Grace was in Rome when this was taking place I informed both the Vicar General and the Procurator about the settlement. The settlement deed was effected by Mr. D'Costa, advocate of Mahatma Gandhi Road.

These two villages which for the last 20 years never agreed to a common site for a chapel wonderfully agreed to have an assembly hall in Basavanapura. They agreed to give whatever they could. It was wonderful. They worked freely whenever they were free, donated stones and money. The fathers and brothers attached to the guild from the Kristu Jyoti College joined with them, helped them to a great extent, financially and in supplying material and labour. As a matter of fact, they have been the brain behind it and let me give them their due share of credit. Now an assembly hall measuring 50' x 26' with brick-walls and covered with asbestos sheets has been completed. It has been plastered both in and out, only the flooring remains to be done. Although built in the form of a chapel, it will be called an assembly hall since functions other than Mass will be held there. The hall has been dedicated to Our Lady of Lourdes and the villagers have decided to offer it to Your Grace as their humble gift on your feast day as a mark of love and respect to you. They would have liked Your Grace to bless it on the 15<sup>th</sup> of this month; but You are otherwise engaged on that day and on Your Grace's suggestion we have requested the Vicar General to do the needful...

Thanking Your Grace and requesting You to bless me and our work  
Your Grace's most obediently in O. L.,

Noronha – Parish Priest<sup>34</sup>.

As is evident from this letter, it was the efforts of the students of Kristu Jyoti which finally resulted in the building of the hall which doubled also as

<sup>34</sup> AAB, *St. Anthony's Church, Thambuchettyur*, File No. CP - 46. The letter is dated: Sannathammanahalli, (Thambuchettyur), *Duravaninagar P.O., Bangalore - 16, 6<sup>th</sup> February 1970*.

a place of worship<sup>35</sup>. However, given the experiences of the liberation of the bonded labourers, when the then Parish Priest of Thambuchettypalaya supported Mr. Rayappa, the quarry-owner, the people of Basavanapura sent a delegation to the archbishop requesting that the pastoral care of the area be entrusted to the Salesians at Kristu Jyoti College and not to the parish priest of T.C. Palaya. Hence eventually when the parish was established in 1983, it was entrusted to the Salesians<sup>36</sup>.

## 2. Social Involvement and Contribution to Nation-Building

The goal of the theological formation imparted in the College with its necessarily wide and assorted range of intellectual content had but one goal – to make the students capable of witnessing to Christ and to be competent heralds of the Good News in the very complex reality of the Indian sub-continent. This was in line with the call for adaptation evident in *Perfectae Caritatis* as well as being in conformity with the call of Vatican II to be part of the *gaudium et spes* – joys and hopes – of the contemporary world. Therefore, understandably enough, a good part of the intellectual formation was directed towards equipping the students to be competent and effective in this regard as may be gathered from the syllabus and the seminars referred to earlier in the course of this study<sup>37</sup>. At the same time, the social involvement of Kristu Jyoti College, already from its very beginnings, set it apart from the other seminaries of the time and may, in some sense, be said to have made it a pioneer and that both in theory and practice, in their involvement in and with the locality.

### 2.1. Social Service Guild

The Social Service Group (S.S.G.), which was later to evolve into the

<sup>35</sup> Further details of the land is given in: *A Glimpse of the History of Lourdunagara*, p. 2 where it states: “On December 14, 1969, through the concerted efforts of the brothers from Kristu Jyoti College, Smt. H.A. Nagamma, w/o (late) Sri Shyamanna Reddy residing at Hoodi, Krishnarajapuram Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk, made “an absolute gift of the agricultural dry land bearing S. No. 16/13 in Basvanapura... measuring in extent about one acre thirty five guntas to the Archbishop of Bangalore for the purpose of social service and other welfare and charitable purposes”. Later the brothers of the college organized the youngsters and levelled and added some more karab land to the donated plot and it now measures about eight acres and fifteen guntas. Since the one who gave the leadership in this effort was Bro. Medabalimi Balaswamy, later the villagers named the road closest to the Church property as «Fr. Balaswamy Street»”.

<sup>36</sup> Cf *A Glimpse of the History of Lourdunagara*, p. 2. Here the author of the document bases himself on the testimony of Mr. Anthony Samy.

<sup>37</sup> Cf 5.2.2. of chapter three of this work.

Social Service Guild (S.S.G.)<sup>38</sup>, was active already from the very beginnings of the College and the first house repaired by it at Vasanthapura, about a mile from the College, was blessed as early as on 19<sup>th</sup> August 1968<sup>39</sup>. The College will, in the subsequent years, see itself fully involved in the struggles of the people in the area with one of its finest achievements being the liberation of the bonded labourers of Chickabasavanapura on 6<sup>th</sup> November 1975, which was hailed in several quarters as a model of seminary formation and social involvement<sup>40</sup>. In fact, already on 17<sup>th</sup> December 1967, hardly a couple of months after their arrival in Bangalore, a group of about 28 students had gone to 7 of the neighbouring villages to conduct oratories and to engage in social development activities<sup>41</sup>. Eventually, such involvement spread to more than a dozen villages and had in due course, what may be considered its urban avatar, through its apostolate for the children living on the streets of the city of Bangalore<sup>42</sup>. Later, inspired by the “Kristu Jyoti Experience” the work on behalf of both the rural and urban youth will be replicated in different parts of the country by those formed in the College.

That the Salesians were not showing themselves to be mere good samaritans, but that they were eager to share the lives of the poor, was evident already from the very beginnings of the College. Thus the entry in the chronicle dated 27<sup>th</sup> Dec. 1968 reads:

“A group of about 6 brothers start a social service camp near Vasanthapura Village. The camp lasted for about 10 days during which period the volunteers lived

<sup>38</sup> The term *Social Service Guild* appears for the first time in the College Chronicle on 15<sup>th</sup> June 1969 when it is said to have conducted a very successful LUCKY DIP in the parish premises on the occasion of the Feast of St. Anthony, the patron of the parish of Thambuchettypalaya. AKJCB – Chronicle, vol. I, p. 87.

<sup>39</sup> The blessing was done by Fr. Dennis Duarte, the then Superior of the Mumbai Vice-Province, in the presence of the rector, the prefect and Fr. Paviotti. Cf AKJCB – Chronicle, vol. I, p. 52.

<sup>40</sup> Cf P. JOB, *The Story of Bonded Labour at Chickbasavanapura*, (unpublished) in the files of the Social Service Guild, Kristu Jyoti College. Cf also the reference to Swathanthra Nagara in 1.3.2. of this chapter. The full name of Fr. Job is Tharayilputhenpurayil Job though for short he wrote under the pen-name *P. Job*. He was a student at Kristu Jyoti College from 1974 to 1978.

<sup>41</sup> Cf AKJCB – Chronicle, vol. I, p. 12. The parishes and villages they got themselves involved in were: Thambuchettypalaya Parish, ITI Parish, Ulsoor Parish, Hosakote, Medahally, Kithaganoor and Vasanthapuram.

<sup>42</sup> The work for the children on the streets will be carried out by BOSCO which was an acronym for *Bangalore Oniyavara Seva Coota* which may be translated in English as *The Association Serving the Boys on the Streets of Bangalore* and was started by a group of four students in June 1980. Cf George KOLLASHANNY, “On the Streets”, in *Silver Jubilee Souvenir of Kristu Jyoti College*. Bangalore, Nagasandra, St. Paul’s Press 1992, p. 16.



and worked with the local people. Besides goading them on to healthy habits and hygienic living, the brothers succeeded in impressing upon the minds of the villagers the why and the how of hard labour. Their words moved, but their example stirred the villagers to action and they were not slow in manifesting their admiration and appreciation for the work the brothers did on their behalf<sup>43</sup>.

The S.S.G. was involved not only in the material upliftment of the people but was also actively involved in fighting moral evils and addictive habits as may be seen from its efforts to wean people away from alcohol addiction and to create a healthier moral climate in the villages.

## 2.2. *"Non-Discriminatory Contribution" to Nation-Building*

The students of the College proved themselves to be genuine contributing citizens of the country and this was nowhere more evident than in the sphere of their social involvement in which they sought to realise a comprehensive development especially of the poorer sections of a pluralistic society.

Understandably, in the given context of Bangalore, the vast majority of the people served by the College were non-Catholics: Hindus, Muslims, Protestant Christians and others, who seeing the genuine interest of the College in their general welfare, reciprocated with a great deal of good-will. A very practical and experiential aspect was the building of prayer-halls and grottos in several of the villages with the collaboration and support of the villagers themselves and that irrespective of their religious affiliations. The S.S.G. also took initiatives in celebrating the various Christian and non-Christian feasts and festivals in a truly inter-religious manner in the villages and that with the active and significant presence of both the staff and students of the College<sup>44</sup>.

The Salesians at Kristu Jyoti did not even for once forget that the goal of their mission was, as Don Bosco had intended, the formation of morally sound and contributing citizens. Keeping this ever in mind, the S.S.G. sought to impart "a sense of the nation" to the villages through the celebration of the national events and festivals, particularly that of the Indian Independence and Republic Day complete with flag-hoisting, singing of the national anthem, Holy Mass and non-Christian religious services as well as games and enter-

<sup>43</sup> AKJCB – Chronicle, vol. I, p. 68.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 127 entry of 8<sup>th</sup> January 1970: "A big celebration arranged in the twin villages of Basavanapura & Sigahalli by the SSG. Mass was celebrated for the first time in the new chapel they put up".

tainments. In this context, it is quite revealing to note, that in several of these villages, it was the S.S.G. which started such celebrations for the first time after more than 25 years of Indian Independence. The chronicle of the house under 15<sup>th</sup> August 1972 reads:

“25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Indian Independence and the Feast of the Assumption [...] After breakfast many brothers went out to share the joy of this day with the poor people around. The national flags were hoisted in the two nearby villages of the S.S.G. To the poor people, it was the first sign of freedom in the past 25 years”<sup>45</sup>.

These were all expressions of the fact that the Salesians felt with the country and its aspirations. They marked the Independence and Republic Day Celebrations with the Eucharist in the Indian Rite and the hoisting of the flag at the entrance of the College<sup>46</sup>. The entry in the College Chronicle of 26<sup>th</sup> January 1968 reads:

“Republic Day: Hoisting the Flag, preceded by *Vande Mataram* and followed by a short speech and ending with the *Jana Gana Mana*”<sup>47</sup>.

There were also occasions when the College desisted from rightful celebrations at the exhortation of the leaders of the nation. Thus the entry in the chronicle of 18<sup>th</sup> October 1971, reads:

“*Deepavali* celebration – but no external illumination to respect the call of our Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, to cancel all public illumination for this year as a measure of austerity in the face of the Bangla Refugee influx. Fr. Paul presided over the solemn evening Mass in the Indian style, with a special text”<sup>48</sup>.

That the College maintained its involvement in the various villages during the entire period of this present study is seen from the number of students and the number of villages in which they were rendering their services. The 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Souvenir of the S.S.G. (1972-1973), speaks of there being 32 members in the S.S.G. with the Rector of the house as its president and that it was working in 8 villages. Similarly the Annual Souvenir of 1973-1974, gives

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 225.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51. The entry of 15<sup>th</sup> August 1968 gives the time-table in the morning: “6.30 – Mass, 8 a.m. – Flag-Hoisting”.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21. *Vande Mataram* means “Mother, I bow to Thee” and has to be understood as “Mother India, I bow to thee”. It is the “National Song of India”. *Jana Gana Mana Adhinayaga Jaya He* is the “National Anthem of India” and means: “Thou art the ruler of our minds, of all people”.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 193. Paul Puthanangady proved himself to be a recognized authority in the area of adaptation and inculturation of Liturgy in India and would do his utmost to popularise the Mass in the Indian Rite.

the number of students involved with the S.S.G. as 26 and they are indicated as working in 8 villages<sup>49</sup>. Finally in the last academic year covered by this study (1975-1976) there were 27 student members in the S.S.G. and they were working in 8 of the villages in the neighbourhood.

It is a significant fact that the students of Kristu Jyoti College were introduced to social involvement and hence already making significant efforts towards the liberation of the downtrodden even before the term “liberation theology” was coined some years later<sup>50</sup>.

### 2.3. A Significant Historical Note

In this context it is historically relevant to point out that Kristu Jyoti College was involved in the lives of the poor and the oppressed already a few months after its inauguration. This is evidenced, as has already been mentioned, from the fact, that on 19<sup>th</sup> August 1968, the first house that the students had repaired in the village of Vasanthapura, was blessed. This was in line with the liberation theology (= an interpretation of biblical theology which emphasized a concern for the poor and the oppressed) which had such an impact on the Second Vatican Council, thanks to the active lobbying by the Latin American Episcopal Conference (CELAM). In fact, this very defining aspect of the College was in line with the contemporary ecclesiastical thinking on the “option for the poor” and predates not only the two defining conferences of liberation theology viz., Medellin, Colombia (1968) and Puebla, Mexico (1979), but also the movement’s two celebrated books viz., *A Liberation Theology* by Gustavo Gutiérrez (1973), *The Liberation Theology* of Juan Luis Segundo (1976) as well as any of the writings of the other two great protagonists of the movement viz., Leonardo Boff and Jon Sobrino. Though in subsequent years the ideas proposed by the above-mentioned conferences and by the various authors would reach the Kristu Jyoti College campus and become quite popular, the College had by then given rise to its own brand of home-grown liberation

<sup>49</sup> That the College maintained its involvement in the various villages during the entire period of this study is seen from the number of students and the number of villages in which they were rendering their services. Cf ASC F392, Bangalore, Kristu Jyoti College for a copy of the souvenirs of the Social Service Guild for the years indicated. The pages of the souvenirs are not numbered and the details are found in the *Annual Reports* and in the page where the office-bearers and the members of the Social Service Guild for each year are mentioned. The 8 villages were Buttrahalli, Kithakannur, Basavanapura, Sigahalli, Patpalli, Chickbasvanapura, Thambuchettyur and Jyotinagar.

<sup>50</sup> Thomas PUNNAPADAM, *Social Involvement and Seminary Training*. Bangalore, Kristu Jyoti Publications 1992, p. 79.

theology though no one came forward to articulate it along authoritative scientific lines. However, minor efforts in this regard were not lacking as may be seen from the already mentioned and much applauded paper the participants from Kristu Jyoti College presented on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1974 on the occasion of a seminar on “Liberation” organized by the Inter-Sem at the Ecumenical Christian Centre, Whitefield<sup>51</sup>. The fact that the social involvement of the College was an outreach of its students’ theological studies may be gathered from the letter of Mathai Vellappallil SDB of the S.S.G., dated 1<sup>st</sup> July 1972, to the Archbishop of Bangalore and the latter’s response to it.

“Your Grace,

This month we are going to publish the third annual souvenir magazine of our guild. While we are doing our Theological studies, we could not remain indifferent to the crying needs of so many poor people around our college. So we launched a programme of social work, with the contributions we got from far and near and have been able to do something. Recently we opened a new village called «Jyotinagar», of houses built by us for a group of families who are stone-cutters. We have opened a night school for the old men in the village and help them by Savings Bank Account as also by cottage industries, and poultry farming. Our medical unit too has helped as much as it could [...]

Humbly Yours

(Sd.) Mathew Vellappallil, S.D.B., M.A.”<sup>52</sup>.

The Archbishop’s reply was full of appreciation for the work being realised by the College on behalf of the poor and the needy.

“The houses you have built for the poor, the night school you are running for the benefit of the illiterate adults and the free medical aid given to the sick, not to mention the savings bank scheme, cottage industries, poultry farming etc., are impressive achievements, which, apart from showing your concern for the poor and needy, will help make you good seminarians now and good pastors later on. I hope this meager tribute of well-deserved praise from me, will spur you on to greater involvement in such works”<sup>53</sup>.

It was also such Gospel-inspired socially-oriented thinking echoing in the classrooms and the corridors of the College in the 1970s which led some of the students to launch out into the heart of the city of Bangalore in 1980 and to initiate a work on behalf of the children living on its streets. Today this initiative has blossomed into *Young at Risk* (YaR), a national network catering to thousands of children at risk throughout the country<sup>54</sup>.

<sup>51</sup> AKJCB – Chronicle, vol. I, p. 414.

<sup>52</sup> AAB – SDB, RF - 37, (1963-1977).

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, letter dated 8<sup>th</sup> July 1972.

<sup>54</sup> Cf fn. 42 on p. 154.

#### 2.4. *Scientific Approach to Social Work*

The approach to social involvement of the College was scientific and followed the expected pattern, with the required references to the archbishop and with a plan which took into consideration the actual situation of the villages involved as well as the cost estimate.

Every major project prepared by the S.S.G. was done after a serious scientific study and evaluation of the actual situation. The following examples will bear out this assertion.

When preparing the *Drinking Water Project* at Jyothi Nagar, which at the time had 20 families and a total population of 138, a full description of their thatched huts, their social extraction, as well as their economic status and literacy levels was given. The availability of medical services and other relevant references were also taken into account<sup>55</sup>. In addition, it also gave the name and address of the applicant<sup>56</sup>, the legal holder<sup>57</sup>, the registered owner<sup>58</sup>, location<sup>59</sup>, and the expenses and supervision<sup>60</sup>. It also had the pertinent details with regard to the funding of the project<sup>61</sup>.

Similarly, when preparing a house-building project for the people of T.C. Palaya, a scientific survey was prepared. The summary of the survey showed that the S.S.G. through its members interviewed 185 families with a total of 929 members of which 860 were Catholics, 58 Hindus, 6 Muslims and 5 belonging to other Christian denominations. There was a total of 192 illiterates in the village, of which 81 were men and 111 were women. The families which owned own houses were 82, those living in rented houses were 76 and those who benefited from free lodgings were 6. They had a total of Rs. 92, 320 as declared debts to different people although the S.S.G. had

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> Rev. Fr. Di Fiore, S.D.B., Rector, Kristu Jyoti College, Bangalore - 560 036. It also stated that the project would be implemented through Bro. T. Scaria S.D.B., Social Service Guild, Bangalore - 560 036.

<sup>57</sup> Bangalore Multi-Purpose Social Service Society, Archbishop's House, 18 Miller's Road Bangalore - 6, Mysore State.

<sup>58</sup> Village land allotted for the well.

<sup>59</sup> Jyotinagar is a stone - quarry workers' colony situated at a distance of 25 kilometers to the West from the 16<sup>th</sup> K.M. stone on the Bangalore - Kolar - Madras Highway. This colony which is 4 K.M. from Bangalore City limits, is in Badrahalli Hobli, Hoskote Taluk, Bangalore Dt., Karnataka State.

<sup>60</sup> The Social Service Guild, Kristu Jyoti College, through its members and the contractors who have done similar jobs for the village will be able to supervise and assist at the implementation of the project.

<sup>61</sup> This project was signed by Fr. Di Fiore, Rector and Bro. Lionel Xavier S.D.B., Secretary, Social Service Guild. AAB - SDB, RF - 37.

information from other sources that the total amount was much higher. They had preferred, for various reasons, not to declare the very considerable amounts they owed to the lenders. The total land owned by the villagers was 160 acres<sup>62</sup>.

That these were not isolated cases but were part of the regular approach of the S.S.G. may be seen from the project plans sent to The Director, Trochaire, Ireland, for the social upliftment of the poor people in the 12 villages around Kristu Jyoti College. The project was forwarded with a covering letter by Fr. Di Fiore, the Rector and was prefaced with a brief history of the social involvement of the College.

“The students of Kristu Jyoti College, Bangalore, India, besides their studies also take part in Social Projects in the villages around the institution. Within a radius of 6 K.M. we have 12 villages with a population of 10,000, most of whom live in abject poverty and want. In the past 7 years, it has been a unique experience for us to work with the people conscientising them and uplifting them. We have felt that we could do something to help them to improve their condition. We have met them in their own houses, and discussed their problems and the possibilities for self-help. A socio-economic survey conducted in five villages revealed startling facts”<sup>63</sup>.

After showing the issues like illiteracy, lack of social amenities, poor health conditions etc., the project enumerated S.S.G.’s plans for the future viz., expanding of the existing dispensary into a Rural Health Centre; a *Grihini* School for 40 poor girls; a housing scheme for 100 new houses for the poor in the next 4 years with 25 houses planned per year at the rate of Rs. 4,000/- per house; and a Drinking Water Project – 7 wells for 7 of the villages at the rate of Rs. 37,000/ per well and the required electric pump-set<sup>64</sup>.

Needless to add, such exposure to social realities in a scientific and creative manner during the years of their theological formation, would stand many of them in good stead when, after their ordination, they spanned out to the various parts of the country to begin their apostolic services among the poorer and the more needy.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.* The survey done in T. C. Palaya which has already been cited shows the scientific approach in this matter.

<sup>64</sup> AAB – SDB, RF - 37.

### 3. The Workers' Question

Bangalore was well set on the path to industrialization, was home to a number of well-known industries like the Indian Telephone Industries (ITI), Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), New Government Electrical Factory (NGEF) etc., besides also a number of smaller industries spread throughout the area, with some of them located in the vicinity of the College itself. Keeping in mind the social teachings of the Post-Vatican II Church, the students were involved in organizing the workers of these factories and discussing with them their problems. The entry in the College Chronicle on 1<sup>st</sup> November 1973, reads:

“The first ever meeting for the workers of the nearby factories as well as the quarry workers. The purpose is to organize and form the workers and make them demand their lawful rights”<sup>65</sup>.

Though this was an indication of the right-based approach to which the students were introduced during their period of theological formation, from the available records, it does not appear that this involvement was long-lasting. This was probably because the workers were being increasingly politicised and the students would have found it a formidable task to continue their involvement in this area especially in the face of competition from trade unions affiliated to powerful political parties.

### 4. Collaboration and Cooperation

The College, especially in its formative years, was helped to grow because of the cooperation and collaboration it extended to various groups and which it received in return. References to some such collaboration has already been made in the course of this study, like for instance, when referring to the Inter-Sem. However, it is thought that a more detailed presentation of this collaboration at various levels be explicated further, if only to provide for a more comprehensive exposition.

#### 4.1. *Archdiocesan Authorities*

Mutual collaboration and cooperation between the College and the ecclesiastical authorities was something which was real from the very begin-

<sup>65</sup> AKJCB – Chronicle, vol. I, p. 338.



ning of the College. Thus for instance, the S.S.G. worked with the blessings and support of the archbishop who recommended the various projects and also expressed his appreciation for its work. This is seen from the correspondence between Lionel Xavier, secretary of the S.S.G. and Archbishop Packiam Arokiaswamy. In reply to the former's letter dated 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1973 requesting a message for the brochure being prepared with the goal of raising funds for the dispensary of the Saint Anne's of Bangalore (SAB) sisters at T.C. Palaya<sup>66</sup>, the archbishop wrote on 30<sup>th</sup> June:

"Your S.S.G. has been doing excellent work over the years; especially the construction of so many decent houses for the poor has been an impressive achievement. My hearty congratulations"<sup>67</sup>.

"I am confident that your plan for constructing a small dispensary will soon be an accomplished fact. I wish your fund-raising campaign a grand success"<sup>68</sup>.

The archbishop yet again expressed sentiments of appreciation and encouragement to the College when he wrote wishing the community a Happy Feast of Don Bosco on 30<sup>th</sup> January 1970:

"I avail myself of this opportunity to tell you that I am very happy to have you in my Archdiocese. Your love for your Father in Christ, your unswerving loyalty to him, your spirit of dedication and submission, your willingness and promptitude to take up any service assigned to you and the generosity with which you render that service have won my high esteem, warm appreciation, special predilection and deep gratitude. Also the various parishes and institutions to which your community comes out regularly to be of service speak well of you and will be prepared to render you a return service"<sup>69</sup>.

The archbishop would also feel free enough to request specific helps from the College which were always happily complied with. Two special instances that could be pointed out among the many services rendered by the College, are that of the brass band at the specific request of the archbishop and the enthusiastic support that the College gave to the archbishop in his unsuccessful attempt to set up an Ecclesiastical University in Bangalore.

#### 4.1.1. College Band

The much appreciated brass band of the College, a novelty in a seminary in those years, was also a means of building up good-will both with the arch-

<sup>66</sup> AAB – SDB, RF - 37.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> AKJCB – Chronicle, vol. I, pp. 17-18.

diocese as well as with the general public. In fact, it had a reputation in the city's cultural circles and gave special performances on occasions. The entry in the College Chronicle dated 11<sup>th</sup> August 1970 reads:

“11<sup>th</sup> August 1970: Five of our Band players go over to Max Muller Bhavan to practice together with a few others in the orchestra conducted by Dr. Mascarenhas”<sup>70</sup>.

It appears that the archdiocesan authorities were especially impressed by the musical talents and the liturgical correctness evident in the College. This is seen from what was said by Msgr. D. S. Lourdasamy as early as 5<sup>th</sup> January 1968 during his concluding words after the ordinations held in the T.C. Palaya Parish.

“As bishop and as consultor of the liturgical commission, I can say liturgy is really up-to-date here [...]. You seem to have a monopoly of music. I confiscate it or rather, I reserve it for the many diocesan and national functions we will be holding in the Archdiocese. Please oblige; if you want I shall pay for it [...] you are a great help for the parish; the parish priest speaks very highly of you. Your work is much appreciated”<sup>71</sup>.

In fact, the archbishop would be true to his word and had the band invited to functions organized by the archdiocese. The entry in the College Chronicle for 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1968 reads:

“6 p.m. A contingent of singers and band-players goes to the Cathedral to contribute to the Mass by and reception in honour of the Pro-Nuncio, Msgr. Caprio”<sup>72</sup>.

Similarly, on other occasions like jubilee celebrations of prominent ecclesiastics of the archdiocese or when bestowing special honours on lay people, the College Band was present and played a prominent role<sup>73</sup>.

The Chronicle records several such events: 20<sup>th</sup> July 1968: “At the

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 151.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 59-60. The entry of 9<sup>th</sup> October 1968: “6 p.m. Official Silver Jubilee Celebrations of Msgr. Colaço's ordination to the priesthood. The celebration commenced with the celebration of Mass by the jubilarian in the presence of the archbishop, several priests and prominent laymen and well-wishers. Mass was followed by a reception and dinner in both of which the superiors and the band-players took «active» part”. Similarly the entry of 3<sup>rd</sup> November reads: *House band at the Cathedral at 6 p.m. for the knighting ceremony of 4 Catholic leaders*. *Ibid.*, p. 61.

request of the diocese, the house band goes out to the city to contribute to an operetta"<sup>74</sup>; 16<sup>th</sup> February 1969, "the band was called out to St. Patrick's for a cultural programme"<sup>75</sup>; 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1969: "Our band accepts the request to play at the Annual Meeting of the Catholic Nurses' Guild, at the St. Martha's Hospital"<sup>76</sup>; 30<sup>th</sup> September 1969: "Rev. Fr. Rector is summoned to the Bishop's House to enlist our cooperation for the Gandhi Jayanthi Celebrations organized by the diocese etc. The services of the band is again solicited"<sup>77</sup>; 9<sup>th</sup> October 1969: "The band goes out to the Cathedral, for the Gandhi Jayanthi celebrations at which the acting Governor of Mysore presided. A group of other brothers also attended it"<sup>78</sup>; 16<sup>th</sup> October 1969: "The band plays two religious numbers on the occasion of the reception accorded to the Pilgrim Virgin of Fatima"<sup>79</sup>; 28<sup>th</sup> October 1969: "Our band goes over to St. Peter's at 7.00 p.m. to join the local seminaries presenting a cultural programme for the 200 delegates present; we return at 11.30 p.m."<sup>80</sup>. On these and on several other occasions, the College Band made the Salesian presence known and appreciated at various venues in the city.

#### 4.1.2. Ecclesiastical University

Kristu Jyoti College extended its cooperation and promised its collaboration to the project initiated by the archbishop to establish an Ecclesiastical University in Bangalore. As a matter of fact, Kristu Jyoti was one of the first institutions in the city to be approached and did all it could in the efforts to realize this project, which, if realized, was meant to have an impact on the Church in India in general and in particular on that of Bangalore.

The first meeting on the subject called by the archbishop was held on 14<sup>th</sup> September 1970 and all the professors of the College with the exception of Fr. John Lens, attended it<sup>81</sup>. The idea was basically that of linking together the various ecclesiastical institutions in the city like St. Peter's Seminary, Dharmaram College, Kristu Jyoti College, Carmelaram, the Franciscan Institute (Friary) and Mount St. Alphonsus (Redemptorists), to set up a university

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 109-110. The event at which they will make their presentation was the National Consultation for Seminary Training which had begun its work at St. Peter's Seminary on 27<sup>th</sup> October.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 154.

and reap the benefits of such an organized ecclesiastical academic setting. Kristu Jyoti saw the wisdom in such a move and supported it whole-heartedly. All the professors of the College attended the second meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> March 1971 to finalise the plans<sup>82</sup>. At the election of the president of the future ecclesiastical university, Fr. Rector had the right to vote and the unanimous choice for the post was Fr. Amalorpavadass of the Catholic Centre, Bangalore. At a later meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> October 1971, Fr. Paul Puthanangady of Kristu Jyoti College, was elected as the Dean of the Faculty of Theology<sup>83</sup>. However, since at this point, four of the above-mentioned six institutions showed themselves disinclined to get involved, the project had to be abandoned. The chronicle of the house has the following entry with reference to this unrealized project:

“A meeting of all the rectors and professors of all the seminaries at St. Peter’s to discuss about the proposed *Bangalore Ecclesiastical University*. The outcome of the meeting was that the entire idea of an ecc. university was dropped since three of the constituent colleges had objections to the establishment of the university. However, the National Centre, St. Peter’s and Kristu Jyoti decided to work still for starting a *faculty of theology* while Dharmaram, Carmelaram, the Franciscans and the Redemptorists did not support even this plan”<sup>84</sup>.

The enthusiasm of the College in the realization of the University was also evident in some of the correspondence of the time as may be evidenced from the following letter of Fr. Anthony Mampra, rector, to the archbishop dated 28<sup>th</sup> September 1971. This letter was to get the latter’s recommendation to have the library project of the College presented to a foreign agency with a request for funds. It is interesting to note that Fr. Mampra places this request in the context of the *Bangalore Ecclesiastical University*.

“Kristu Jyoti College is the Inter-Provincial Theologate of the Salesians of Don Bosco. It started functioning in this Archdiocese only since 1967. On completing the four-year course here, the students will be employed in the Missions, Parishes and Institutions of Assam, Bengal, Tamilnadu, Kerala, Bombay and Goa. There are 93 students at present, but the number is expected to go up to 130 in three to four years. Being one of the 9 constituent colleges of the *Bangalore Ecclesiastical University* which is expecting its decree of approbation this year, the fathers are trying to improve their library also as a contribution to the common project. I willingly endorse this request for help”<sup>85</sup>.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 177.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 194.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 288-289. Entry of 25<sup>th</sup> January 1973.

<sup>85</sup> AAB – SDB, RF - 37. The letter was prepared by Fr. Mampra and presented to the archbishop. The actual recommendation on behalf of the archdiocese was given by the Vicar

However, as has already been pointed out, the project could not be realized as intended since some of the more prominent institutions decided to pull out at a crucial point<sup>86</sup>.

#### 4.2. Parish Priests

The special rapport which existed between the College and the parish priest of T.C. Palaya has already been indicated on more than one occasion in the course of this narration. But the same was true also of the various parishes in the city, where the students were engaged in youth apostolate and Sunday ministry. It is obvious that without such collaboration, the formation of the students, especially in the areas of youth apostolate and social service, would not have been complete.

The extent of the collaboration and cooperation may be seen from an entry in the College Chronicle dated 18<sup>th</sup> June 1972 which makes reference to the “short but significant function in the village of Jyoti Nagar situated about one and a half kilometers from the college”, where the inauguration of the community hall, which was also to double as a school and eventually as a hall for prayers and the celebration of the Eucharist, was inaugurated. The hall was actually built with the cooperation of the poor villagers who were stone-cutters by profession. On that occasion 5 houses built by the brothers were blessed and handed over to the intended owners by the Provincial, the Rector, the Parish Priest, Fr. Paviotti and Fr. Sylvanus. During a short function, the Parish Priest eulogised the selfless service of the clerics. The chronicler noted that *the poor but good people of the village were visibly moved*<sup>87</sup>.

#### 4.3. Religious Congregations

Several of the religious institutions had also a mutually beneficial collaboration with the College and they came forward to support some of its

Capitular using the above text literally and it is dated 29<sup>th</sup> September 1971, (sd.) Rt. Rev. Msgr. Wm. L. D’Mello, Vicar Capitular. The V. Capitular signed this since the See was vacant at the time as on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1971, Pope Paul VI, had appointed Archbishop Lourdasamy as Secretary adjunct of the S.C. for the Evangelization of Peoples and consequently the latter had resigned as Archbishop of Bangalore on 30<sup>th</sup> April 1971 and left India to serve in the Curial Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duraisamy\\_Simon\\_Lourdasamy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duraisamy_Simon_Lourdasamy) (02/10/2018).

<sup>86</sup> There is a file in the Archives of Kristu Jyoti College which contains all the material related to the unrealized project of the Ecclesiastical University in Bangalore.

<sup>87</sup> AKJCB – Chronicle, vol. I, pp. 210-11.

ventures of a socio-cultural nature. A typical case that could be mentioned in this context, is the staging of the play *Man Without Love*. This was staged on 27<sup>th</sup> August 1972 in the St. Francis Xavier's High School Hall, Fraser Town, with the much appreciated College orchestra in attendance and with tickets priced at Rs. 10, 5, and 3. For the convenience of those interested, tickets were made available also at different locations in the city like St. Martha's Nurses' Hostel, St. John's Medical College, Catholic Centre, Holy Ghost Parish, Catholic Youth Club (CYC), and Jyoti Nivas College. In all, about 350 people turned up. The entry in the Chronicle on the occasion is quite revealing:

"Nearly 350 people came to see the play and enjoyed the performance of the brothers. Although the profit collected towards the expenditure of the proposed youth rally in October was very little considering the amount of work and time expended, yet it was a useful contact with the people in the city to win friends"<sup>88</sup>.

Apart from the above and other passing mentions already made during the course of this narration, it is considered fitting in this context to make mention of three of the institutions which were the more closely associated with the College.

#### 4.3.1 Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (FMA)

The year after the inauguration of the College, there were some discussions about asking the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians for their collaboration in some areas of administration. However, the sisters showed themselves more interested in starting a novitiate in the plot of land adjacent to the College kitchen. But this was judged inconvenient by the Provincial Council held at Tirupattur, as can be seen from the following entry in the minutes of the Provincial Council:

"Tirupattur 22-9-68: Sisters next to our compound in Bangalore: A number of objections were put forward to this, now that the staff of our theologate have a clearer picture of the fact. The sisters were to be in charge of the laundry and kitchen and being this the case in most of our houses in Europe, no much thought was given to it. But when in addition to this the sisters wished to have their novitiate and juniorate and purchased for the purpose a ground just attached to ours, then all realized that this would bring about quite a number of difficulties. The good number of young girls even though novices and sisters, a good number of servants, these too probably young girls, would not be appreciated by the people, by seeing them so near to a college. To these other objections were raised and therefore all agreed to stop the plan and retain the land purchased by the sisters, giving to them

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 229.

the price for the same, and suggest to them either to buy some other plot, some furlongs away, since it is available or to go somewhere else – Fr. Provincial would approach Mother Provincial and convince her to accept our decision”<sup>89</sup>.

Subsequently, the superiors of the Salesians and those of the sisters met on 9<sup>th</sup> July 1968 and the latter very reluctantly accepted to abandon their original plans for the novitiate near the College and purchased a plot of land at Avalahalli, 3 miles away in the direction of Hoskote<sup>90</sup>.

The first batch of the novices, 40 in number, came over from Katpadi to their new house on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1969 and, at the request of the sisters, Fr. Thomas Pazhayampallil, agreed to serve as their chaplain while the other fathers agreed to take classes for them on different subjects<sup>91</sup>.

In the years that followed, besides the spiritual animation and classes provided on a regular basis, on several occasions, the facilities of the College were placed at the disposal of the sisters, like for instance, to accommodate the guests coming for the professions and jubilees of the sisters<sup>92</sup>. A couple of entries in the chronicle of the house are also indicative of the relationship that existed between the Salesians and the sisters.

“The parents and relations of the Salesian sisters arrive in great numbers. Some of them had informed us earlier whereas many others came unexpectedly. We had anticipated about thirty but more than eighty turn up. Some of them at the last moment. There is also a good number of priests and salesians among them. Fr. Economer and a group of brothers went out of their way to make everyone feel at home”<sup>93</sup>.

“The Golden Jubilee celebrations of the Religious Profession of 4 Salesian Sisters are held in their novitiate house. But in the evening, after the benediction service in our chapel, they have a variety entertainment in our auditorium. Practi-

<sup>89</sup> SPAM, *Minutes of the Provincial Council Meetings: Jan. 1968 - Oct. 1978*. Cf also AKJCB – Chronicle, vol. I, p. 123, which reads: “ADDENDA: *Salesian sisters*: With the intention of utilizing their services for supervising in the kitchen, it was originally proposed that the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians should be invited to begin a convent adjacent to our studentate. The kitchen had been planned with this idea in view. Later the sisters wanted to bring here their juniors as well and it was tacitly agreed to. Serious objections were however, raised by several Salesians when they heard the sisters were intending to shift their novitiate also to the new site. After much discussion and consultation, the Provincial Council judged it was inadvisable to have a large community of young sisters so close by and agreed to dissuade the sisters from their proposal”.

<sup>90</sup> Cf AKJCB – Chronicle, vol. I, p. 63. Entry of 19<sup>th</sup> Nov. 1968. Cf also *ibid.*, p. 123. Entry of 9<sup>th</sup> July 1968.

<sup>91</sup> Cf *ibid.*, p. 123.

<sup>92</sup> “4<sup>th</sup>: August 1971. We have with us some guests who have come to take part in the religious profession ceremony of some of their relatives (salesian sisters). The guests hail from different parts – Bombay, Vellore, Madras”. *Ibid.*, p. 189.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 222. Entry of 4<sup>th</sup> August 1972.



cally all the houses of Madras, and North Arcot take part in the dances, dialogues, singing etc. Our clerics contributed two musical items and helped in the preparation of the stage. The sisters expressed their gratitude by presenting a big centenary cake in the shape of India"<sup>94</sup>.

#### 4.3.2. Congregation of St. Anne, Bangalore (SAB)

The College had a special rapport with the Sisters of St. Anne, Bangalore. In fact, right from the beginning of the College there would be a close association with this group of sisters, who helped out with the various programmes of the S.S.G. especially those related to health care, hygiene and family visits<sup>95</sup>. The College Chronicle mentions several instances of this collaboration.

11<sup>th</sup> February 1968: "the sisters conducted a Fancy Fete at ITI and both in the afternoon and in the evening several brothers took part in it"<sup>96</sup>; 29<sup>th</sup> November 1969: "Some brothers, together with Fr. Rector, Fr. Longinus and Fr. Mathew go to the Town Hall to witness a Musical Entertainment in aid of St. Anne's Convent"<sup>97</sup>; 26<sup>th</sup> July 1973: "The Feast of St. Anne, Fr. Rector and a few of the brothers went to the Generalate of the sisters to take part in the Jubilee Celebrations, to sing at the Mass – a day on which they celebrated the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Religious Profession of the Mother General of the Congregation"<sup>98</sup>; 7<sup>th</sup> August 1973: "Two sisters from St. Anne's have come to take care of the kitchen. One is old and the other is young"<sup>99</sup>; and the entry of 27<sup>th</sup> March 1974 states that "The Nursing Course which began on 25<sup>th</sup> is in progress. Besides the 12 Salesian students of KJC there are four novices from St. Anne's Convent. Most of the lectures are held here"<sup>100</sup>.

One of the more lasting monuments to this collaborative effort in the area is *Shanthi Nilaya Dispensary*, which had its foundation-stone laid on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1974. The College Chronicle reports the event in the following words:

"The foundation-stone of the new hospital of the S.S.G. was blessed by the parish priest and placed by the Superior General of the St. Anne's Congregation, Bangalore. It was a simple ceremony that commenced at 4.30 p.m."<sup>101</sup>.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 223. Entry of 6<sup>th</sup> August 1972.

<sup>95</sup> Cf Joseph M. THELEKATT, *Shanthi Nilaya Dispensary*, in *Social Service Guild, Annual Souvenir 1972-1973*, Kristu Jyoti College, Bangalore - 560 036; *ibid.*, *A New Direction for Shanthi Nilaya*, in *ibid.*, 1973-1974.

<sup>96</sup> AKJCB – Chronicle, vol. I, p. 24.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 315.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 317.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 367-368.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 414.

The entry in the House Chronicle for December 8, 1975 speaks of the blessing of the dispensary in the following words:

“December 8: Feast of the Immaculate Conception. At 9.45 a.m. Archbishop Arokiaswamy blesses the new dispensary «Shanthi Nilaya» built by us and given to the Sisters of St. Anne”<sup>102</sup>.

#### 4.3.3. Good Shepherd Sisters

Another group of sisters, with whom the College was closely associated from the very beginning, was the Good Shepherd Sisters, especially those of the St. Martha’s Hospital.

The sisters at the hospital were always friendly and helpful especially in treating the sick confreres. Several entries in the House Chronicle speak of one or more confreres being admitted due to illness<sup>103</sup> or after meeting with accidents which were not so infrequent in those early years<sup>104</sup>. In fact, the more serious of the accidents involved the Rector, Fr. Di Fiore, himself. On 18<sup>th</sup> September 1970, after alighting from the train at K. R. Puram on his return from Madras, Fr. Di Fiore took an autorickshaw to reach home and along the way met with an accident which smashed his hand up to the wrist. The chronicler describes the subsequent hospitalization in some detail:

“Anyway Fr. Rector will have to stay in the hospital for a couple of months and the community will be constantly caring for him and praying for his speedy recovery [...] There will be expressions of fraternal solidarity from all quarters with provincials and others coming over to visit him [...] the doctors and sisters at the St. Martha’s Hospital would also be very concerned and caring towards him”<sup>105</sup>.

Fr. Di Fiore will be forced to make frequent visits to the hospital for a long time after this incident<sup>106</sup>.

It appears that in some years there have been many who were admitted in the hospital. The entry in the House Chronicle for 30<sup>th</sup> September 1972 reads:

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 2, (June 1975 - May 1989), p. 8.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 1: “14<sup>th</sup> Oct. 1969: Rev. Frs. Baracca, Maggioni and James Oreglia come over from Madras. Fr. James needed to be admitted to the St. Martha’s Hospital” p. 107. The entry for 1<sup>st</sup> Feb. 1970 reads: “Fr. K.S. Paul admitted to St. Martha’s Hospital”; *ibid.*, p. 132.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, “10<sup>th</sup> November 1970: Bro. Kuriakose meets with a scooter accident while returning from Hoskote. He got his shoulder bone fractured and several cuts on his face. A passing motorist brought him here and he was later rushed to St. Marthas”, p. 162.

<sup>105</sup> Cf *ibid.*, p. 238. Cf also *ibid.*, pp. 237-238 for the description in full of the accident.

<sup>106</sup> Cf *ibid.*, pp. 374 and 376 for the entries of 6<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> June 1974.

<sup>107</sup> Cf *ibid.*, pp. 247-248.

“Since Fr. Economist was running a temperature he was taken to St. Martha’s Hospital. *If sickness is a sign of God’s blessings on the house, then we have plenty of it this year*”<sup>107</sup>.

The hospital also facilitated the participation of some of the students in the nurses’ training course<sup>108</sup> and in those courses meant for training chaplains of Catholic nurses<sup>109</sup>.

The College reciprocated the very accommodating and helpful attitude of the sisters by obliging them on special occasions by sending the College Band to solemnise some of the functions at the hospital<sup>110</sup>, by celebrating the Indian Rite Mass there<sup>111</sup> and through the donation of blood whenever emergency situations arose<sup>112</sup>.

#### 4.3.4. Benedictines (Sylvestrians)

The Sylvestrians were the first men’s religious congregation, other than the Salesians, to come to T.C. Palaya and while they were having their house – *Vanashram* – constructed, they resided in the community of Kristu Jyoti College. In fact, they have left a lasting impact on the institution, as even today, that part of the house which was assigned to them is referred to as *The Monks’ Quarters*.

The first contact of the College with the Sylvestrians was when the Superior General, along with some others from the Order, came to search for a suitable piece of land in the vicinity of the College<sup>113</sup>. After having bought the land near the parish cemetery, they built their monastery which was blessed on 21<sup>st</sup> March 1975, Feast of St. Benedict<sup>114</sup>. However, already on 9<sup>th</sup> March 1973, the Superior General had come to the College and announced that he hoped that his students would be able to move over to their new house by the following academic year and as a gesture of appreciation to the community, for having hosted

<sup>108</sup> Cf *ibid.*, p. 139: “1<sup>st</sup> April 1970 Fr. E.C. Chacko goes over to St. Martha’s Hospital to commence an abbreviated nursing course. He is joined by Fr. Edward D’Souza and Bro. A.T. James”.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 190: “20<sup>th</sup> August 1970: 4 brothers attended the seminar for the chaplains of Catholic nurses at St. Martha’s Hospital”.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103. Entry of 22<sup>nd</sup> Sept. 1969.

<sup>111</sup> Cf *ibid.*, pp. 341 and 342, entry of 14<sup>th</sup> Nov. which reads: “Fr. Paul and his Indian Academy is [sic]invited to St. Martha’s Hospital for a Eucharistic Celebration in the Indian Rite”.

<sup>112</sup> Cf *ibid.*, p. 254. Entry of 12<sup>th</sup> October 1972; p. 432. Entry of 5<sup>th</sup> March 1975.

<sup>113</sup> Cf *ibid.*, p. 135.

<sup>114</sup> Cf *ibid.*, p. 434.

his students there for about three years, treated it to a tea party<sup>115</sup>. In fact, for the new academic year 1973-1974, the 10 Sylvestrians left the community and went to reside in their new monastery<sup>116</sup>. However, even with the change of residence, the Sylvestrians in different ways, continued to manifest a special attachment to the College and the College to them.

#### 4.4. *Collaboration with Civil Authorities*

The many programmes, organised each year by the College, could not have been carried out without the good will and collaboration of a large number of people and that from a cross-section of the wider civil society.

The students of the College, especially in the aspect of social work, had the support and close collaboration also of the civil authorities. The entry in the Chronicle of 8<sup>th</sup> September 1973 reports:

“The Tahasildar, the BDO and a few other Taluk officials were invited to Jyoti Nagar to open a new house. The Tahsildar was very much taken up by the work done and promised to do his best in assisting the brothers. Later they came to the house for a simple tea”<sup>117</sup>.

The flag-hoisting ceremony on 26<sup>th</sup> January 1974 was done by the local Member of the Legislative Assembly as the entry of the day in the College Chronicle bears out:

“26<sup>th</sup>: The MLA from S. Bangalore Constituency graced the Republic Day flag-hoisting ceremony. Mr. Bhaskar, the MLA, was taken around the villages after breakfast. He was all praise for the constructive work of the SSG. He left at 1.30 p.m.”<sup>118</sup>.

Again when, on 9<sup>th</sup> February 1974, the S.S.G. organized a variety entertainment in the football ground of the College with about 1500 people present, it was the Panchayat member, Mr. Narayana, who was the Chief Guest<sup>119</sup>.

Such contacts proved effective in building a beneficial rapport with various officials and helped favour the work of the S.S.G. on behalf of the people in the neighbouring villages.

<sup>115</sup> Cf *ibid.*, p. 299.

<sup>116</sup> Cf *ibid.*, p. 308.

<sup>117</sup> Cf *ibid.*, p. 324.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 358.

<sup>119</sup> Cf *ibid.*, p. 360.

#### 4.5. Gestures of Appreciation and Gratitude

One of the ways in which the community expressed its appreciation and gratitude to all the many friends, benefactors, parish priests, religious, civil servants and police officials, who were linked to its multi-faceted presence and activities, was to organize an annual concert or entertainment for them on 15<sup>th</sup> August, when it celebrated the twin feasts of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin and that of Indian Independence. This tradition was begun already in 1968 with the staging of *Tons of Money*, a comedy in three acts<sup>120</sup> and will be continued also in the following years with the staging of other plays like *The Merry Muddle*, a one-act farce (1969)<sup>121</sup>, *Are you Mr. Cheemasa?*, a three-act comedy, (1970)<sup>122</sup>, *Paradise Villa*, a three-act comedy (1971)<sup>123</sup>, *The Man Without Love*, a two-act play (1972)<sup>124</sup> etc.

The College expressed its appreciation for those associated with the institution in different ways and in different degrees also on 31<sup>st</sup> January, the Feast of St. John Bosco. That those concerned were quite pleased at such gestures may be seen from the entry in the House Chronicle of January 31<sup>st</sup>, 1971:

“12.30: Feast day lunch for the parish priests of Bangalore (quite a crowd turned up). After a few words by Fr. Rector towards the end, Fr. Amalorpavadass thanked the community on behalf of all present and also made praiseworthy reference to the good work done by the Salesians in Bangalore”<sup>125</sup>.

In some cases special consideration was shown to certain categories of people. Thus the Chronicle of 4<sup>th</sup> February 1973:

“The concert «The Challenge» was staged again for the benefit of the public. Some important doctors and nurses from St. Martha’s Hospital were specially invited as a sign of our appreciation and gratitude for what they do for our fathers and brothers when they are sick. But the invitations given out far exceeded the number of seats available so much so it was difficult to accommodate some of the V.I.P.s who arrived even a bit late. Altogether there were over 400 people present for the concert [...] after the concert a dinner was arranged for a few specially invited guests [...] mainly doctors and their families”<sup>126</sup>.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51 and the attached programme of the feasts.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 97 – attached cyclostyled sheet with the programme.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52 and the attached programme.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 189.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 226 and the attached cyclostyled programme.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 172-173.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 293.

#### 4.6. *Occasional Issues and Misunderstandings*

Although things were generally going well, inevitably, with the passing of time and the change of persons at various levels, there were occasional happenings which led to understandable misunderstandings and subsequent efforts to clarify issues and re-establish strained relationships with greater clarity. Some cases in question are referred to in order to bear out this situation and as a pointer to the very human nature of the institution.

A case in point is the one linked to the efforts of the S.S.G. to raise funds through a cultural show in the city. The chronicle of the house records the incident in the following words:

“17<sup>th</sup> August 1969: It is a busy day for the Social Guild. Since morning they have been on the move, getting up the Good Shepherd Convent Hall for the musical evening they have organized. The show was quite a success and commemorated the first anniversary of the inception of the Guild. It was presided over by J.C. Lynn. Admission was by sale of tickets priced Rs. 5, 3 and 2. The entertainment itself brought in a profit of Rs. 355/- after reducing the expenditure. The Brochure prepared for the occasion fetched Rs. 2560 from advertisements from which Rs. 400 had to be deducted by way of expenditure.

The Hall of Jyoti Nivas College was first agreed upon and posters and tickets printed, but later had to be changed due to an objection raised by His Grace, the Archbishop. The Guild next sought the help of St. Martha's Hospital Auditorium, but they themselves suggested Good Shepherd's belonging to the same order and of easy access. Nevertheless, the Archbishop did not seem pleased even with this arrangement. A contribution of 10% of the proceeds of the show had to go to the Diocesan Fund. Later, however, His Grace allowed the show and condoned the percentage. A donation however, was sent to the Fund”<sup>127</sup>.

A similar issue occurred between the S.S.G. and the Parish Priest of Thambuchettypalaya which is chronicled as follows:

“11<sup>th</sup> June 1972: Feast of St. Anthony. No community Mass in the house since all go to the parish. At 10.00 all the fathers who are free join the concelebration presided over by the Archbishop. With the exception of three, all the fathers go for lunch in the parish house. Our brothers put up three stalls – S.S.G., ITI Parish Oratory and (T.C. Palaya) Parish Oratory. In the evening there was no service here and the brothers were left free to join the procession which began at 8.00 and ended at 10.30 p.m. Remarks: 1. The parish priest seems to feel that three stalls by KJC are too many. He is also likely to put a 20 % “tax” on every stall. 2. Some people were also heard to remark that our brothers were prominent in arranging the stalls, selling etc. but not in the church functions”<sup>128</sup>.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 208-209.

The involvement of the students in the parishes of the archdiocese being quite substantial, there were also some instances when, for one reason or another, the parish priests stopped their services. A case which could be pointed out was that of the Cathedral Parish. The entry in the Chronicle states:

“At Francis Xavier Cathedral Parish, the Vicar General Mgr. William D’Mello had actually stopped the brothers. But Fr. Rector spoke to the Archbishop of our work and asked him for his assurance and good will. On 25<sup>th</sup> June, Fr. Rector went to felicitate Mgr. D’Mello on his name feast day – St. William. It was then that Mgr. asked father to continue sending his brothers. There is quite a stir in the community on account of this”<sup>129</sup>.

The fact that the parishioners, especially those of the neighbouring parishes, felt themselves to be a part of the community celebrations was evident from their presence and participation in the various functions in the College. However, with the passing of time, it did not fail to cause some inconveniences to the community itself. Thus, after the Deepavali Celebrations of 6<sup>th</sup> November 1972, at which a large number of parishioners took part, the chronicler made the following entry:

“No one seems to know how and why the tradition of the parishioners coming to attend the function was started. To some, and the rector is one of them, it appears strange that they should come to attend a community programme”<sup>130</sup>.

The cases pointed out above are indications to the reality of an evolving situation and could lead one to make the following remarks.

\* That despite the generally close relationship that the College had with the archdiocese and the parishes, misunderstandings did occasionally crop up especially when and where mammon was concerned.

\* The general view which the people had of the students was that they were more involved in social activities and did not always give evidence of that manifest spiritual dimension to which seminarians were expected to give witness.

\* That some practices which were started in the beginning like soliciting the presence of the local parish priest and the parishioners as well as the religious in the neighbourhood for all the functions in the community would prove untenable in the long-term and that changes and a more rationalised approach would be called for.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 379. Entry of 28<sup>th</sup> June 1974.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 266-267.



In fact, with the growth of the College as well as the changed circumstances which evidenced an increase in the population and of the religious institutions in the area, there was a natural evolution in both thinking and approach. Thus, for the Community Day held on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1973, the parish priest did not come for the celebrations stating that it was a “private function”<sup>131</sup>. Subsequently, also the SAB sisters as well as the FMA, although invited, would not come for all the functions which they used to participate in earlier<sup>132</sup>.

## 5. Towards the Reopening of the Theologate at Mawlai

In 1973, about seven years after the theologate in Bangalore was opened, the Provincial Chapter of the Province of Guwahati, decided in favour of reopening the theologate at Mawlai. Fr. Mathew Pulingathil<sup>133</sup>, the first Indian Provincial of Guwahati, wrote to the three other provincials of India, viz., of Madras, Calcutta and Bombay, that he intended to have the studentate of theology at Mawlai reopened by the year 1976. He added that he was planning to do so since it was the unanimous decision of the Provincial Chapter<sup>134</sup>, and that he would do it after a three-year period of preparation. A paper which gave a brief history of its earlier closing and the need to reopen it was also prepared and presented by Fr. Thomas Menampampil the Vice-Provincial of Gauhati<sup>135</sup>, at the meeting of the Salesian Provincial

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 343.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 422. On this occasion the two groups of sisters did not come for the celebration of the New Priests’ Day although they were invited.

<sup>133</sup> Pulingathil Eliamma Mathew was born at Ayarkunnam (Kerala), India, on 7<sup>th</sup> May 1928. He did his novitiate at Kotagiri from 15<sup>th</sup> May 1951 to 24<sup>th</sup> May 1952 on which date, he made his first profession. He made his perpetual profession at Sonada on 20<sup>th</sup> May 1958 and after being ordained deacon at Shillong-Mawlai on 6<sup>th</sup> December 1961 was ordained priest in Madras on 29<sup>th</sup> June 1962. He served two terms as Provincial (3 November 1972 - Gauhati and 24<sup>th</sup> July 1981 - 1<sup>st</sup> June 1988 - Dimapur). From 12<sup>th</sup> December 1997 he is at Catholic Church, Gellapukhri Road, Tinsukia, Assam – SAS.

<sup>134</sup> This decision was taken at the Special Provincial Chapter of the Province of Gauhati which was meant to implement the decisions of the Special General Chapter in the Provinces and was held at Don Bosco, Maligaon from 3<sup>rd</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> January 1973. S. AELAVANTHARA, In *His Name...*, pp. 262-263. This decision was further discussed and favourably agreed upon at the subsequent Provincial Council. Cf *ibid.*, p. 264.

<sup>135</sup> Msgr. Menampampil Thomas was born at Vakkadu (Kerala), India, in the Diocese of Palai on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1936. He made his first profession at Yercaud on 24<sup>th</sup> May 1955 and his perpetual profession at Sonada on 24<sup>th</sup> May 1961. He was ordained priest at Mawlai on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1965 and on 29<sup>th</sup> November 1981 made the Bishop of Dibrugarh. Later he was the Bishop of Gauhati (30<sup>th</sup> March 1992 - 10<sup>th</sup> July 1995) and the first Archbishop of Gauhati (10<sup>th</sup> July

Conference of India (SPCI)<sup>136</sup> held in Bombay in 1973 and presided over by Fr. George Williams, the Regional. However, the other provincials of India showed themselves to be decidedly opposed to it “as it would affect the unity of the Salesians in India”<sup>137</sup>. Fr. George Williams himself, appeared to be in favour of the majority view. Still, without pronouncing himself decisively on the issue, he said that the matter could be referred to Fr. Egidio Viganò<sup>138</sup>, the Rector Major, who was expected to visit India and Bangalore later in the year<sup>139</sup>.

However, since the scheduled visit of the Rector Major to India did not materialise, the issue was brought up afresh at the meeting of the Provincial Conference, with the Rector Major presiding, held at Hong Kong in October 1974. At this meeting, Fr. Bernard Tohill, the Councillor for the Missions, who had earlier presided over the meeting of the Provincial Council of Gauhati in 1963, which had decided on closing down the theologate temporarily and sending the students to Bangalore, was also present. However, even at this meeting, despite the presentation on the issue made by the Provincial of Gauhati, the Rector Major did not pronounce himself on account of the fact of all the other provincials being not in favour of reopening it<sup>140</sup>.

Finally, the dogged pursuit of the Provincial of Gauhati to have the theologate at Mawlai re-opened bore fruit when the Rector Major being made aware of the fact that the theologate of Mawlai was only *temporarily shifted*

1995 - 18<sup>th</sup> January 2012). He retired as archbishop on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2012 and was later appointed the Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Jowai, Meghalaya. SAS.

<sup>136</sup> The SPCI had begun to function in an informal way from 1970 when the then three provincials of Calcutta, Gauhati and Madras as well as the Superior of the Vice Province of Bombay used to meet twice a year and hold discussions on issues of common interest. In 2002, the SPCI gave way to the Salesian Provincial Conference of South Asia (SPCSA) consisting of all the Provinces of India and the two Vice-Provinces of Sri Lanka and Myanmar. Cf L. KUMPILUVELIL - C. PANACKEL (eds.), *A Journey with the Young...*, pp. 280-281.

<sup>137</sup> S. AELAVANTHARA, *In His Name...*, p. 283.

<sup>138</sup> Egidio Viganò was born at Sondrio, in the Diocese of Como, Italy, on 26<sup>th</sup> July 1920. He began his novitiate at Montodine on 31<sup>st</sup> August 1935 and made his first profession on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1936. In 1939 he went as a missionary to Chile and made his perpetual profession at Santiago-Macul. He was ordained deacon on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1947 and about two months later, on 31<sup>st</sup> May 1947, was ordained priest. After his ordination, he became professor of theology in the Salesian studentate of theology, a service he later rendered also at the Catholic University of Santiago. He participated in the Second Vatican Council as an expert representing the Bishops' Conference of Chile. He was a member of the Special General Chapter and was elected Councillor for Formation and during the 21<sup>st</sup> General Chapter (1977-1978) was elected the 7<sup>th</sup> Successor of Don Bosco to which post he was twice reelected. He died in office on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1995 – SAS.

<sup>139</sup> S. AELAVANTHARA, *In His Name...*, pp. 282-283.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 284.

to Bangalore, gave the go-ahead for its reopening and himself wrote to the Salesian bishops of the North-East and the Salesian provincials of India, that the studentate of theology at Mawlai would be reopened<sup>141</sup>.

Being set on reopening the theologate, Fr. Pulingathil contacted Fr. Thomas Panakezham, the Provincial of Madras, and told him that he would be pulling out the professors belonging to the Province of Gauhati from Kristu Jyoti College by June 1976 as he intended to reopen the theologate on 4<sup>th</sup> August 1976, the feast of St. John Marie Vianney. It was also decided to have the to-be-reopened theologate upgraded to issue M.Th degrees in Missiology to students who qualified for the same. Though in the beginning the province was in favour of affiliation to the Pontificia Università Urbaniana, Roma, primarily due to the expenses involved in having it affiliated to the Pontifical Salesian University (UPS), the personal intervention of Fr. Egidio Viganò, guaranteeing for Mawlai the same financial concessions as were assured by the Urban University, led to the reopened theologate in Mawlai being affiliated to UPS<sup>142</sup>.

## 6. Reopening of the Theologate

The theologate was reopened in a simple ceremony on 4<sup>th</sup> August 1976. Fr. Orestes Paviotti, who had returned to Mawlai from Bangalore<sup>143</sup>, was made the rector and Fr. Sebastian Karottemprel<sup>144</sup>, the dean, of the reopened Sacred Heart Theological College. The other professors were Fr. John Zampetti<sup>145</sup> (Canon Law), Fr. Sylvanus Sngi<sup>146</sup> who had left Bangalore for Mawlai

<sup>141</sup> Cf ASC F183, Gauhati, Correspondence with D. Fedrigotti (1957-1967) Letter dtd. Turin, 7<sup>th</sup> June 1967 of the then Rector Major, Fr. Luigi Ricceri in this regard. The relevant text of this letter has already been quoted in the first chapter of this narrative.

<sup>142</sup> S. AELAVANTHARA, *In His Name...*, p. 288.

<sup>143</sup> AKJCB – Chronicle, vol. II, p. 17, entry of July 9: *Fr. Paviotti takes leave of the house and is given a grand send-off. He goes to Shillong.*

<sup>144</sup> Sebastian Karottemprel was born at Paikai (Kerala) India, in the Diocese of Palai on 15<sup>th</sup> September 1931. He made his first profession at Kotagiri, on 24<sup>th</sup> May 1952, and his perpetual profession at Yercaud on 24<sup>th</sup> May 1958. He was ordained priest in Madras on 29<sup>th</sup> June 1962. He spent most of his Salesian life in the theologate at Shillong (22 February 1971 - 1 September 1994; 1 September 2000 - 20 July 2014). He died at Shillong on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2014. Though originally a member of the Gauhati Province, on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012, he was made a member of the newly erected Province of Silchar, which was later renamed the Province of Shillong – SAS.

<sup>145</sup> John Zampetti was born in Italy in 1908 and made his first profession in 1929. He came to India from China in 1953 and was a professor at Mawlai and Kotagiri. He returned to Italy in 1967 and died there on 27<sup>th</sup> July 1983 at the age of 75. Cf L. KUMPILUVELIL - C. PANACKEL (eds.), *A Journey with the Young...*, p. 312.

<sup>146</sup> AKJCB – Chronicle, vol. II, entry of April 4, p. 11. *Fr. Sylvanus bids goodbye to us and leaves for North India.*

on 4<sup>th</sup> April 1976 (Sacred Scripture) and Fr. Palathinkal Kuriakose<sup>147</sup> (Administrator). Only the first course, numbering 23 students, was started that year while the students from the North, who were already in Bangalore, were to continue with their studies there<sup>148</sup>.

After it was re-opened, The Sacred Heart Theological College, was given a special academic orientation as from 1977, the Institute began to promote missiological studies through research, symposia and seminars and eventually started publishing the quarterly *Indian Missiological Review* which later evolved into *Mission Today*<sup>149</sup>.

The reopening of the Salesian studentate of theology at Mawlai, Shillong, where the first theologate of the Salesians in India was inaugurated about fifty years earlier, during the Extraordinary Visit of Fr. Peter Ricaldone in 1927, was also with the scope of serving the missionary dioceses of North-East India. In fact, on being informed by the Provincial of Gauhati, of the intended reopening of the theologate, the bishops of the region too, considering it a very welcome development, showed themselves in favour of this move. However, realizing that the interests of the dioceses in the region would be better served if the diocesan students of theology were formed in a diocesan seminary, the Bishops of the North-East built and inaugurated *Oriens*, the Diocesan Study Centre, on 24<sup>th</sup> July 1979. This in a way, led to further developments in the area of theological formation of the priests in the region. The inaugural souvenir of *Oriens Theological College*, dated 10<sup>th</sup> November 1979, describes its beginnings in the following words:

“In the year 1975 the Salesians of Don Bosco informed the bishops of their intention to re-open their Sacred Heart Theological College at Mawlai, Shillong and offered seats for attending the lectures to the Diocesan Seminarians of this region. [...] The Sacred Heart Theological College started functioning from August 4, 1976 [...] The Oriens Theological College, Shillong, was opened in a simple function by the Archbishop of Shillong-Gauhati on July 24, 1979, with a happy community of two priests and four students of theology. The four seminarians attend classes at Sacred Heart Theological College, eight minutes’ walk away from Oriens”<sup>150</sup>.

<sup>147</sup> Kuriakose Palathinkal was born at Kothamangalam, (Kerala) India, on 16<sup>th</sup> February 1945. He made his first profession at Upper Shillong on 7<sup>th</sup> April 1966 and his perpetual profession at Gauhati on 31<sup>st</sup> January 1972. He was ordained at Nellimattam, Kerala, on 18<sup>th</sup> December 1975 and since 1<sup>st</sup> September 2018, is at Don Bosco School, Dergaon, Assam. He belongs to the Dimapur Province – SAS.

<sup>148</sup> S. AELAVANTHARA, *In His Name...*, pp. 288-289. From the two northern provinces there were 17 students (8 cta. and 9 gau.) in the second year, 9 (7 cta., 2 gau.) in the third year and 9 (1 cta., and 8 gau.) in the fourth year. Cf AKJCB – Chronicle, vol. II, p. 15.

<sup>149</sup> ASC F392 which has a copy of the Annual College Calendar of Sacred Heart Theological College, Gauhati.

<sup>150</sup> ASC F653 for a copy of the Inaugural Souvenir of Oriens Theological College, Shillong – 793 008, Meghalaya dated 11<sup>th</sup> November 1979. It was printed at Don Bosco Press, Shillong.

Although in the beginning Oriens was only the residence of the diocesan students who attended the classes at the Salesian studentate of theology, in 1986, Oriens began to hold lectures on its own premises after the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples raised it to the status of an Inter-Diocesan Seminary with all the bishops of North-East India as members of the Governing Body. In 1990, it became a full-fledged theological college offering the four-year theology programme for candidates to the priesthood<sup>151</sup>.

In the meantime, in the South, the Provincial Council of Madras which met on 30<sup>th</sup> September 1975 at the Provincial House, Citadel, took stock of the situation arising from the re-opening of the Salesian studentate of theology at Mawlai. The relevant section of the minutes of the meeting places in perspective the issues which this decision would have on Kristu Jyoti College.

“Theologians of the N.E. India will not be coming down to Bangalore for theological studies from next year. Hence, we need to consider our future plans for Kristu Jyoti. The Provincial of Gauhati asked for Fr. Paviotti to be sent back to Shillong as soon as possible. Kristu Jyoti College could be utilized: 1) For publication and Catechetical Centre; 2) Youth Animation Centre; On-going formation centre; 3) A Retreat House for 20 to 25 confreres or any other group. With regard to the Library of Kristu Jyoti: Every Indian Province gave Rs. 10,000/- towards library maintenance. They have now stopped. Fr. Scaria Mattam has a sum of Rs. 50,000/- This money should be kept as a fixed deposit and the interest to be utilized for books. The Province will give Rs. One lakh towards financial assistance to KJC, Bangalore”<sup>152</sup>.

Evident from the tone of the minutes is a certain well-founded anxiety on the part of the Provincial of Madras and his Council about the impact that the new developments would have on the College and about providing for the needs of an institution which was planned and built as one meant for the theological formation of the Salesians in the whole of India.

In fact, the new academic year 1976-1977 began with no confrere from the Northern Provinces on the staff and with no student from the Province of Gauhati in the first year. Nevertheless, there were a total of 105 students, including six Sylvestrians on the rolls <sup>153</sup>.

<sup>151</sup> Cf [orienscollege.com/about.html#history](http://orienscollege.com/about.html#history), retrieved on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018. It is further to be noted that on 4<sup>th</sup> December of the same year, the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples approved its statutes. On 7<sup>th</sup> December 1993, Oriens Theological College was formally affiliated to the Pontifical Urban University, Rome, through a Decree of the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education. Since then, the B. Th. (Bachelor of Theology) Degree has been conferred on students who fulfill the academic requirements. *Ibid*.

<sup>152</sup> SPAM, *Provincial Council Meetings: Jan 1968 to Oct. 1978*.

<sup>153</sup> AKJCB – Chronicle, vol. II, p. 15. The break-up of the students according to the years was as follows: 1<sup>st</sup> year: 20 Salesians (9 mr. 7 by 4 cta.) and no Sylvestrians.

In the years that followed, Kristu Jyoti College will have its own specialization viz., Youth Pastoral and Catechesis even as the theologate at Mawlai had opted to specialize in missiology. In 1981, the College was affiliated to the Faculty of Theology of the Pontifical Salesian University (UPS), Rome, and began to confer the Bachelor's Degree in Theology (B.Th.) and in 1995 it was aggregated to the same Faculty of Theology and now confers also the Master's Degree in Theology (M.Th.) with specialization in Faith Education and Youth Ministry.

2<sup>nd</sup> year: 32 students: 29 Salesians, (12 mr., 8 cta, 9 guw.) and 3 Sylvestrians.

3<sup>rd</sup> year: 31 students: 23 Salesians, (9 mr, 5 by, 7 cta, 2 guw.).

4<sup>th</sup> year: 22 students: 19 Salesians, (6 mr, 4 by, 1 cta, 8 guw.) and 3 Sylvestrians.





## CONCLUSION

Kristu Jyoti College, the first Salesian presence in the Archdiocese of Bangalore, was indeed a point of arrival and a point of departure as far as the Salesian Congregation in India was concerned. It was a point of arrival from four historical perspectives. Firstly, it was the realization of the desire expressed in 1927 by Fr. Peter Ricaldone, the Extraordinary Visitor, who gave expression to a great desire to open a house in Bangalore. Secondly, it was a point of arrival for the theological formation of Salesians since the theologate opened at Our Lady's House, Shillong, in 1927 was forced by natural calamity and wars to lead a wandering existence and the new studentate in Bangalore, meant for the whole of India, was expected to provide the necessary stability in the ideal settings of a city which promised many and diverse possibilities for a more comprehensive formation of future Salesians. Thirdly, it was a point of arrival since it, given the composition of both the staff and the students as well as the academic and cultural orientation, was a truly "indigenised" or "Indianised" studentate of theology. Fourthly, it was an expression of the thaw in the relationship between the archdiocese and the Salesians which resulted in the latter were welcomed "with open arms" into the archdiocese after their efforts were cold-shouldered for several decades. The eventual collaboration led to very satisfactory results for both the parties involved, as seen from the letter of the archbishop himself dated 25<sup>th</sup> march 1965<sup>1</sup>.

It was at the same time a point of departure since with a staff of competent professors and with the directives of Vatican II and those of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapters to guide it, the College set about the task of forming priests for the new Post-Vatican II world, while at the same time making significant contributions in the fields of theology, liturgy, canon law, moral theology and Church history at the local, national and international levels. These contributions and the personalities who made them, it is to be augured, will be studied and the results placed in the public domain by competent scholars in the future, as the strict canons of historical research and studies, do not permit the present author to go beyond the formative years of the College which he had at the very outset delineated for himself as the scope of this study.

<sup>1</sup> Cf Chapter two, fn. 93.

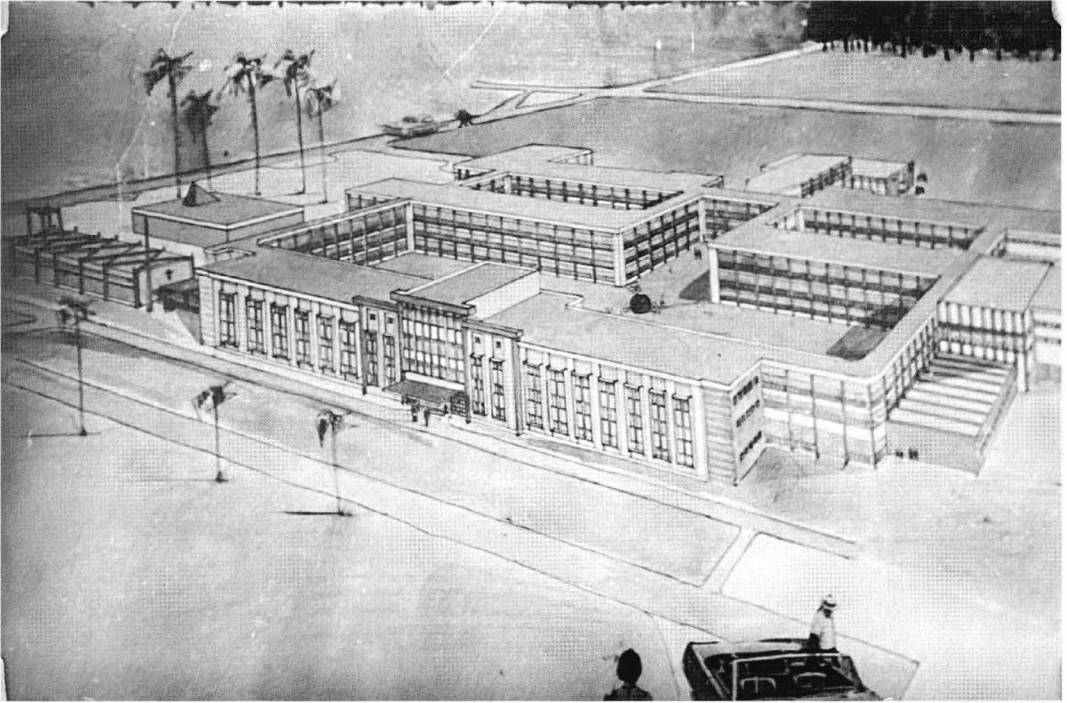


## PHOTO APPENDIX <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The photoes presented here are, for the most part, taken from the photo-archives of Kristu Jyoti College, Bangalore (AKJCB), found in the office of the Rector. Those inserted from other sources are indicated with the appropriate references.



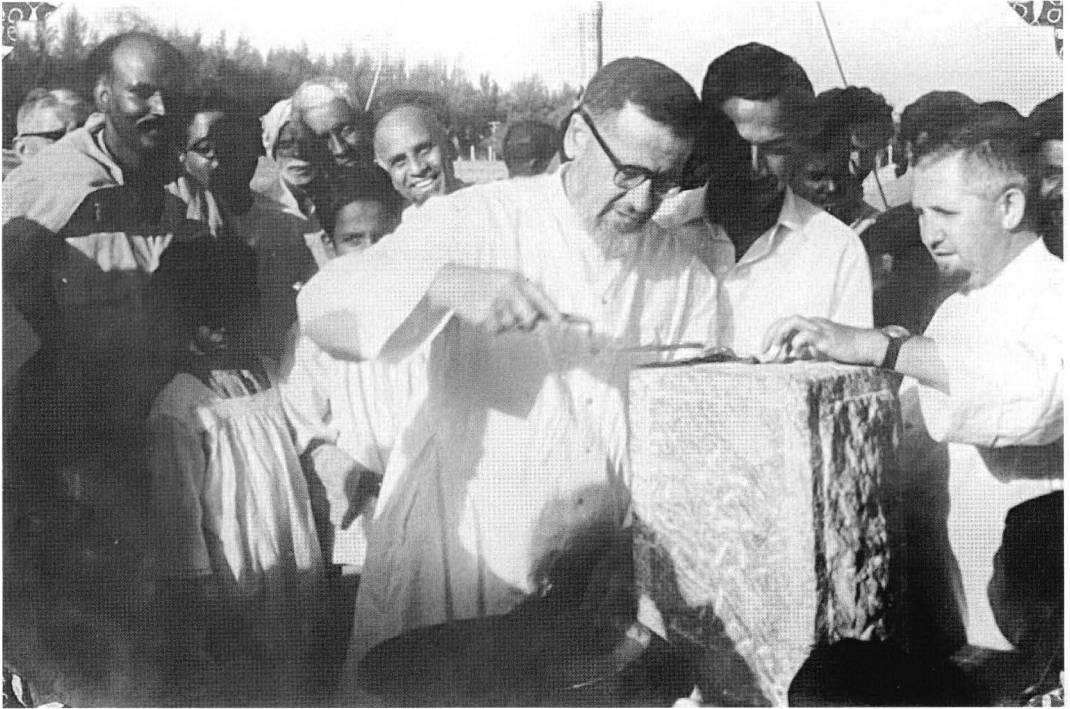
**1. Building-Plan of Kristu Jyoti College and Laying the Foundation-  
Stone – 25<sup>th</sup> March 1965**



Kristu Jyoti College, Bangalore – A project to be realized for the theological formation of the Salesians of Don Bosco in India. Building-plan prepared by Rev. Fr. Peter Maggioni sdb (AKJCB).



The Coadjutor Archbishop of Bangalore, Msgr. Duraisamy Simon (D. S.) Lourdusamy, signs on the foundation-document to be inserted into the foundation-stone. To his right is the Provincial, Fr. Aloysius Di Fiore SDB and the Provincial Economer, Fr. Joseph Baracca SDB (25th March 1965) (AKJCB).



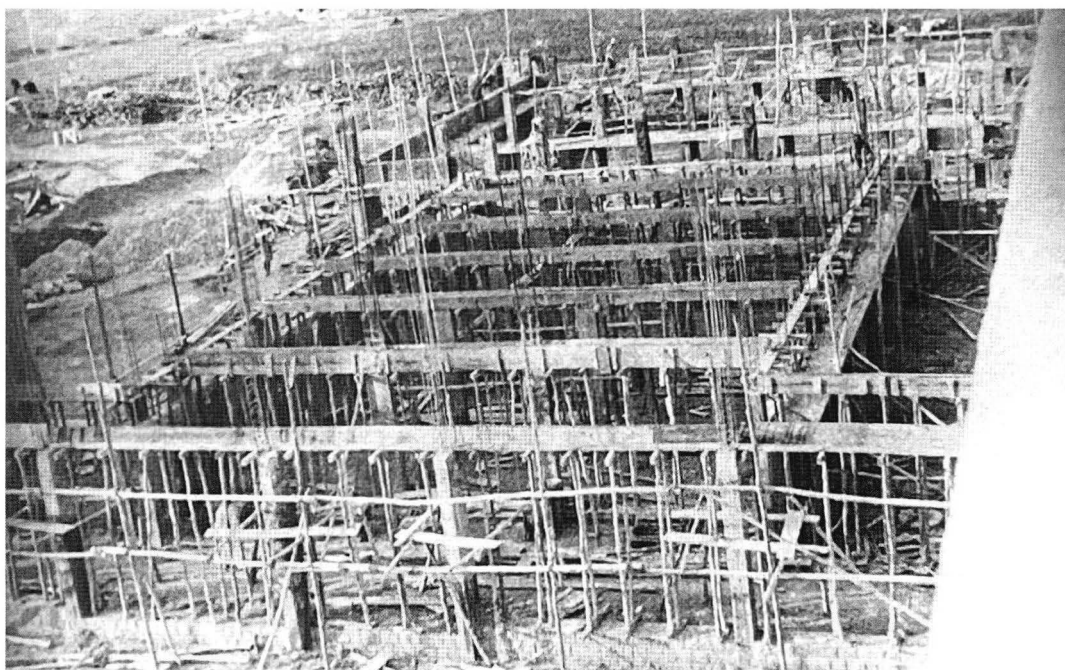
Surrounded by some Salesians and villagers, Fr. Joseph Baracca, Economer of the Province of Madras, and Fr. Emilio Dabove, Rector of Don Bosco Boys' Home, Sagayathottam, prepare the foundation-stone of Kristu Jyoti College (AKJCB).



## 2. The Building under Construction – 1965-1968



Kristu Jyoti College: Construction in its earliest phase (AKJCB).



Kristu Jyoti College: Rising on a firm foundation (AKJCB).



Fr. Aloysius Di Fiore, the Provincial, accompanied by two confreres, visits the construction site (AKJCB).



The rising structures (AKJCB).



The rising structures (AKJCB).



The rising structures (AKJCB).



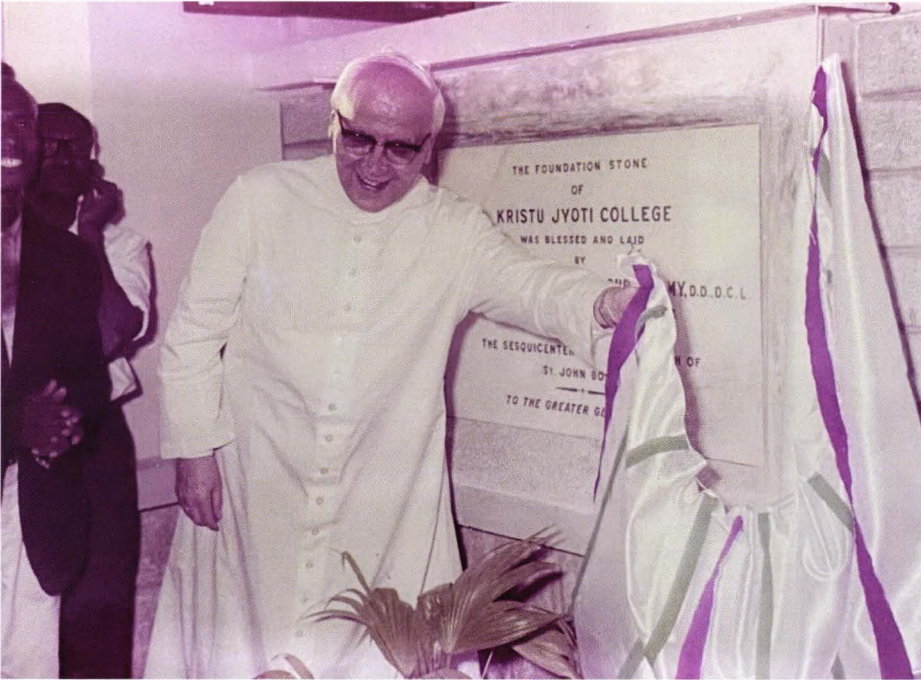
Kristu Jyoti College - A project realized (AKJCB).



### 3. Inauguration of the Studentate of Theology for Salesian India – 24<sup>th</sup> February 1968



The Coadjutor Archbishop of Bangalore, Msgr. D. S. Lourdasamy, lights the *Kuthuvilakku*, the Sacred Indian Lamp symbolizing *Kristu Jyoti* (Christ, the Light of the World). The College will, in due course, be known throughout India and beyond as a pioneer in inculturation and indigenization of the Catholic Liturgy. To the right of the Coadjutor Archbishop is Fr. Paul Puthanangady SDB, who in subsequent years would play a significant role in the inculturation and adaptation of the Catholic Liturgy to the Indian context (AKJCB).



Rev. Fr. Aloysius Ricceri, the Rector Major of the Salesians of Don Bosco (1965-1977), Inaugurates Kristu Jyoti College, the Salesian Studentate of Theology in Bangalore, on the occasion of the *Asian Congress of Salesian Bishops, Provincials and Vice-Provincials* at which several members of the Superior Chapter/General Council were also present (AKJCB).



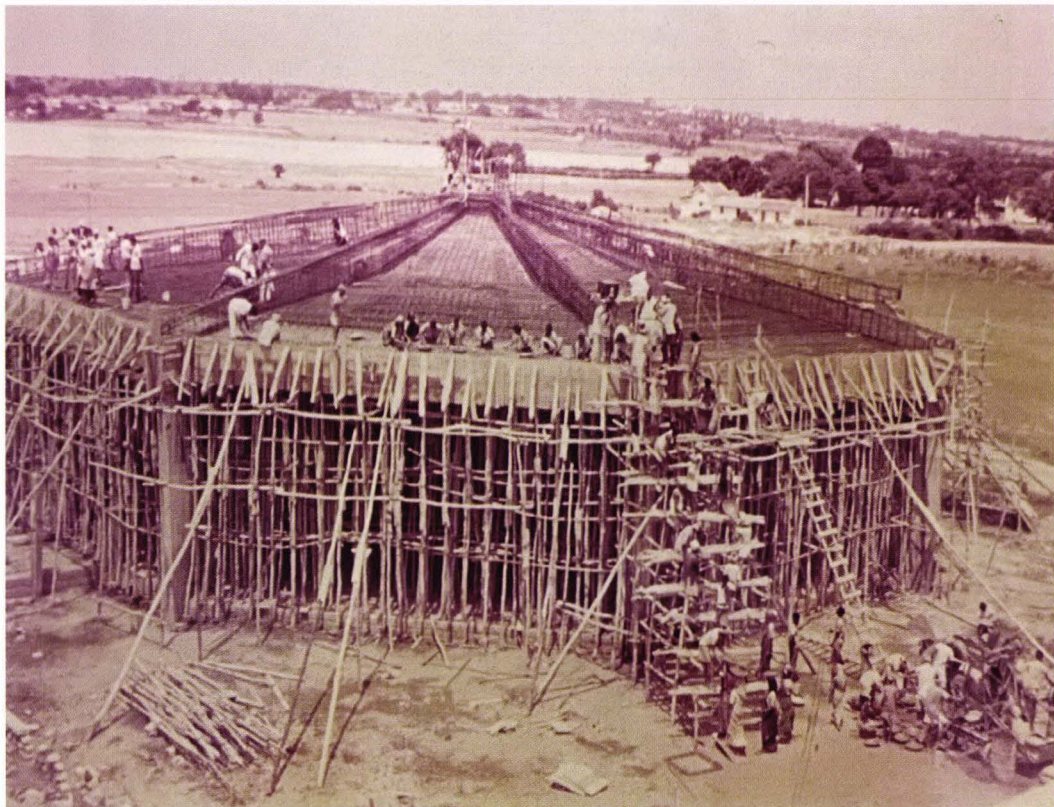
Msgr. D. S. Lourdasamy and the Rector Major with some of the participant-bishops at the *Asian Congress of Salesian Bishops, Provincials and Vice-Provincials* present on the occasion (AKJCB).





The Coadjutor Archbishop of Bangalore and the Rector Major in an informal and lighter moment (AKJCB).

**4. Kristu Jyoti College Chapel – *By Your Light We See the Light* – 1968-1971**

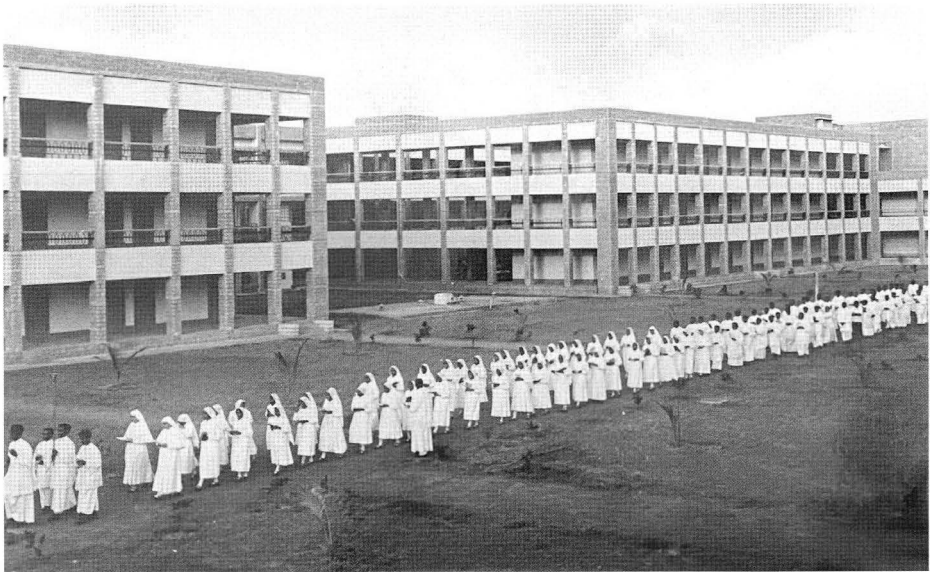


The College Chapel dedicated to *Kristu Jyoti* (Christ the Light) under Construction. The foundation-stone of the Chapel was laid by His Grace, Most Rev. D. S. Lourdasamy, Archbishop of Bangalore, on 24<sup>th</sup> February 1968, immediately after the official inauguration of the College (AKJCB).



The specially designed sanctuary lamp, signifying *Christ, the Light of the World*, before the Blessed Sacrament Chapel (AKJCB).





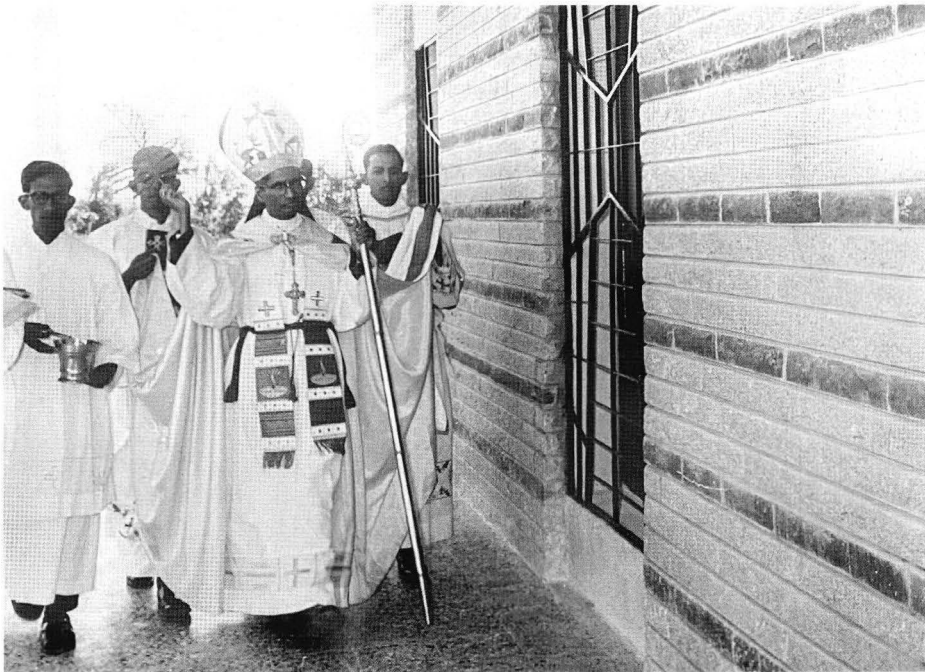
Solemn Procession to the College Chapel prior to its blessing on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1971 (AKJCB).



Ceremonial opening of the door of the Chapel by the Archbishop of Bangalore for its blessing and the consecration of the altar (AKJCB).



Prayer of blessing in the Chapel led by Archbishop D. S. Lourdasamy (AKJCB).



Blessing of the Chapel and its immediate surroundings in progress (AKJCB).



The Sanctuary of the College Chapel with the pipe organ to its right and the Blessed Sacrament Chapel to the left. The structure behind the altar with the Crucifix in the middle signifies the exclusive heavenward tension that should characterise the one who has chosen to seek God's will and serve Him alone. This Chapel has been a source of inspiration, instruction and consolation for generations of Salesians (AKJCB).



The life-size statue of the Blessed Virgin Help of Christians, to the right of the sanctuary, has helped scores of Salesians and others to nurture a solid devotion to the Mother of God (AKJCB).



## 5. In the Salesian Tradition of Band and Music – 1968



The *Kristu Jyoti College Band* was a much acclaimed part of the then limited cultural space in Bangalore (AKJCB).



In Rhythm with the Beatles (AKJCB).

## **6. Ordinations and First Mass in Bangalore and Ernakulam – December 1969**



Humbly Prostrate in His Presence: “Who shall climb the mountain of the Lord? Who shall stand in His Holy Place? The man with a clean hands and a pure heart; who desires not worthless things” (Psalm 24:3-4) (AKJCB).



Completing the Initial Formation Phase of the Salesian Vocation – To be His priests for ever! (AKJCB).



Ordination ceremony presided over by Msgr. D. S. Lourdasamy at Bangalore (AKJCB).



Concelebration by the newly ordained in Bangalore (AKJCB).



The "to be ordained" in Ernakulam go in procession to the Church for the ordination ceremony (AKJCB).





Ordination by Msgr. Joseph Attipetty, the first Indian Archbishop of Verapoly (1934-1970) in Ernakulam, Kerala (AKJCB).



The new priests in Ernakulam bless the faithful at the end of their First Mass (AKJCB).

## 7. Outings and excursions - 1968-1969



Taking a break from books to be in a very friendly environment (AKJCB).



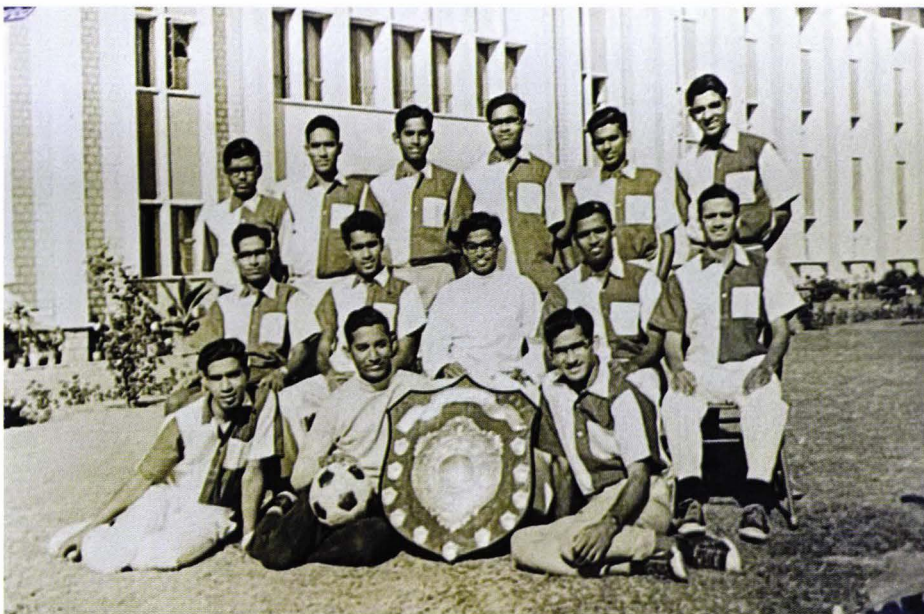
Merging with nature (AKJCB).



## 8. Excelling in Games – 1968-1969



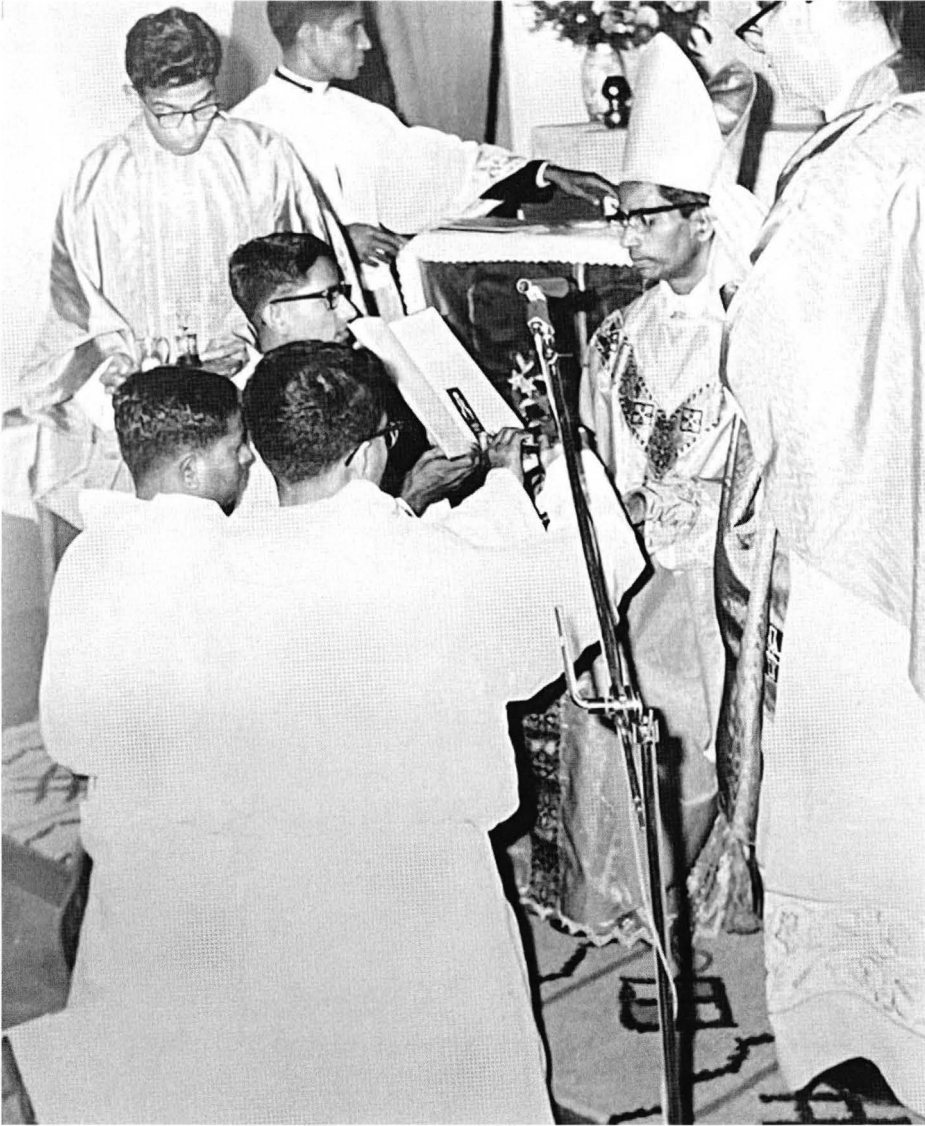
Keeping in line with the well-known Salesian tradition, Kristu Jyoti College proved itself to be a force to be reckoned with in the field of sports and games (AKJCB).



The victorious Kristu Jyoti Football Team and the Rector, Fr. Anthony Mampra, pose with the shield (AKJCB).



## 9. Ordinations to the Priesthood – Bangalore 1970



The Ordination ceremony presided over by Msgr. D. S. Lourdasamy in Bangalore in progress (AKJCB).



Ordinations in Bangalore.

## 10. Ordinations to the Priesthood in Ernakulam – 1970



Ordination service in Kochi in progress (AKJCB).



The newly ordained priests moving out after the concelebrated Eucharist (AKJCB).

### **11. Receiving the Minor Orders in Bangalore – 18<sup>th</sup> December 1971**

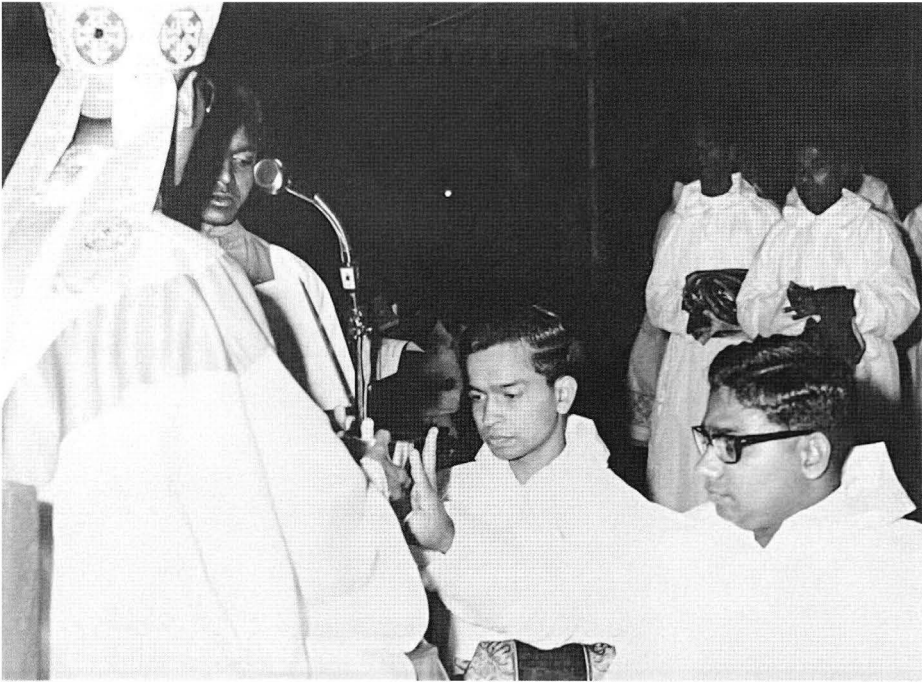


The Candidates preparing to receive the ministry of acolyte (AKJCB).





Receiving the Patten from Archbishop D. S. Lourdasamy (AKJCB).

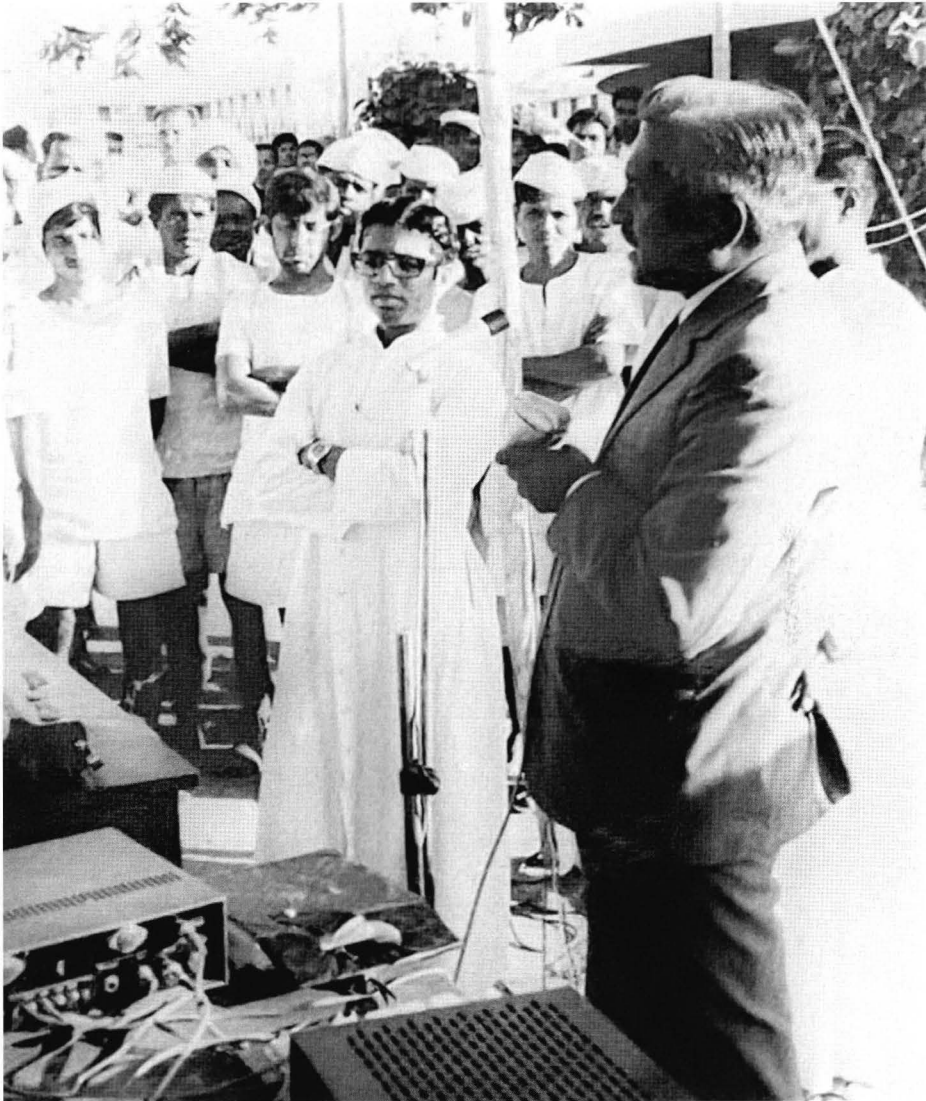


Archbishop D. S. Lourdasamy giving the Chalice to one of the candidates (AKJCB).

## **12. Visit to the Central Jail, Bangalore - 26<sup>th</sup> January 1973**



In the afternoon of the Indian Republic Day, the students of Kristu Jyoti College under the auspices of the Inter-Sem, organized a visit to the Central Prison, Bangalore. They entertained the prison inmates with a cultural programme and distributed about a thousand tea packets (AKJCB).



The initiative of visiting the prison and spending time with the prisoners was greatly appreciated both by the prison authorities and by the inmates. This was evident from the words of the Superintendent of the Central Prison who complimented the staff and students of the College for taking this very laudable initiative. Standing at the centre is Bro. James Sequeira, who was a very active member of the S.S.G. (AKJCB).





Fr. Aloysius Di Fiore, the Rector, interacting with the prisoners (AKJCB).



Students of Kristu Jyoti entertaining the prison inmates (AKJCB).



Fr. Aloysius Di Fiore addressing the prisoners (AKJCB).



Fr. Aloysius Di Fiore addressing the prisoners (AKJCB).



**13. Blessing the Statue of St. Joseph – 31<sup>st</sup> January 1973**

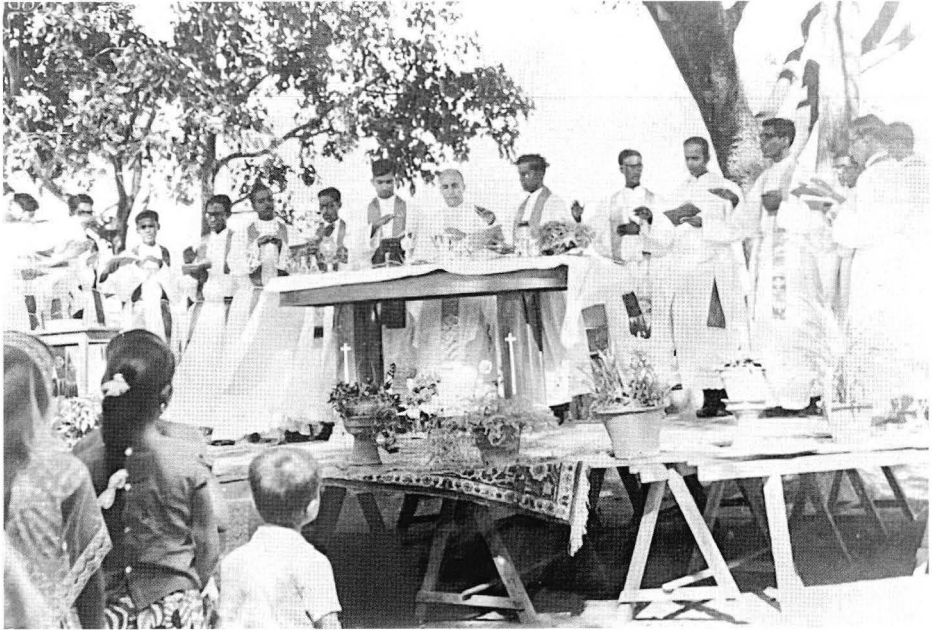


Blessing the statue of St. Joseph in the central quadrangle of the College (AKJCB).

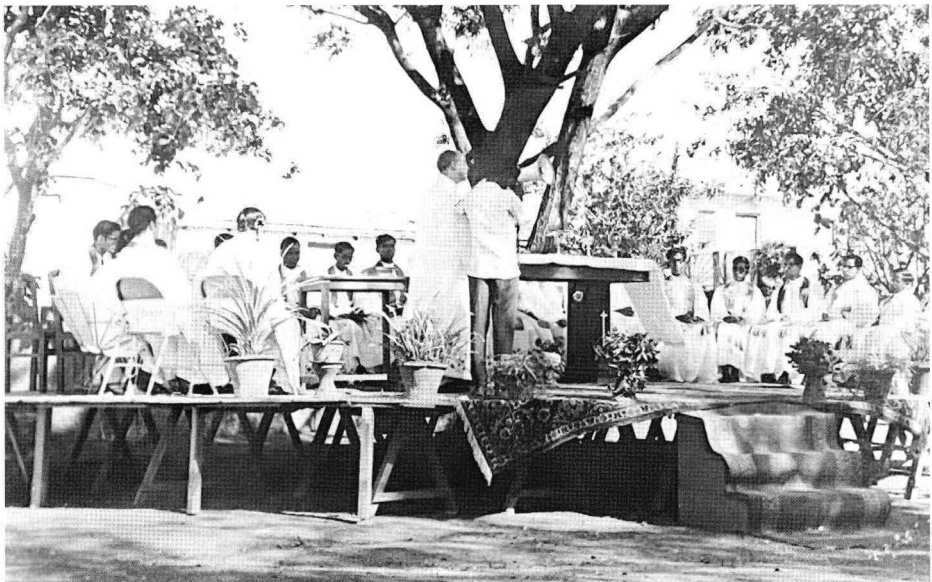


Statue of St. Joseph in the central quadrangle of the College (Photo: Jiji Kalavanal sdb – 2022).

**14. The Newly Ordained Concelebrate on the Open Stage at KGF –  
24<sup>th</sup> February 1973**



The solemn moment of the consecration (AKJCB).



A final word of appreciation and thanks (AKJCB).



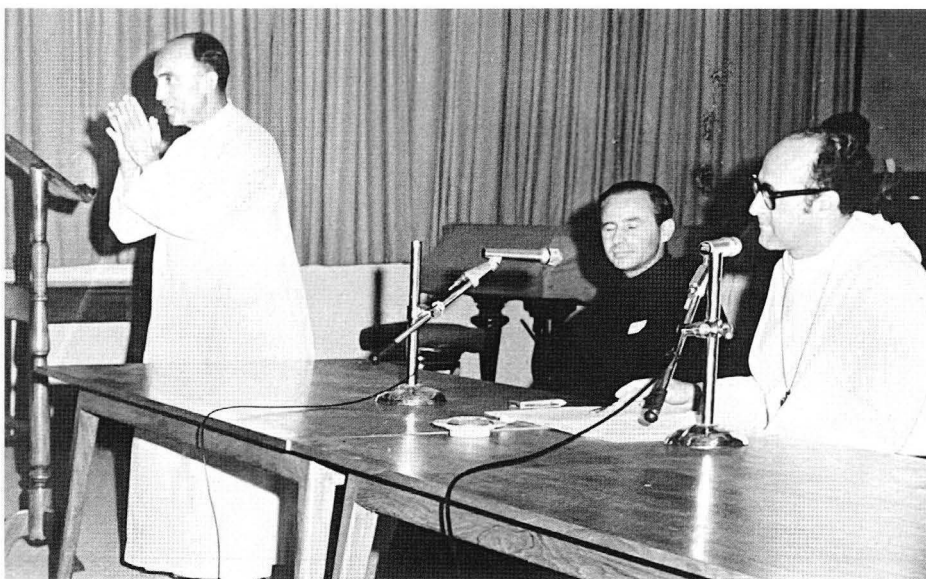


The recessional procession (AKJCB).

### 15. The Second Asian Monastic Congress – 14<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> October 1973



The Second Asian Monastic Congress held at Kristu Jyoti College had delegates from Australia, Belgium, Canada, Cambodia, Ceylon, England, Formosa, France, Germany, Japan, Korea, New Zealand and Vietnam. The delegates included Buddhists, Catholics, Hindus, and Protestants (AKJCB).



Rev. Fr. Aloysius Di Fiore, the Rector, welcomes the delegates to the Second Asian Monastic Congress (AKJCB).

## **16. Inter-Faith Seminar on Prayer – 25<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> August 1974**



Participants of the Inter-Faith Prayer Seminar in meditative postures (AKJCB).



Attentive listening to formal discourses (AKJCB).



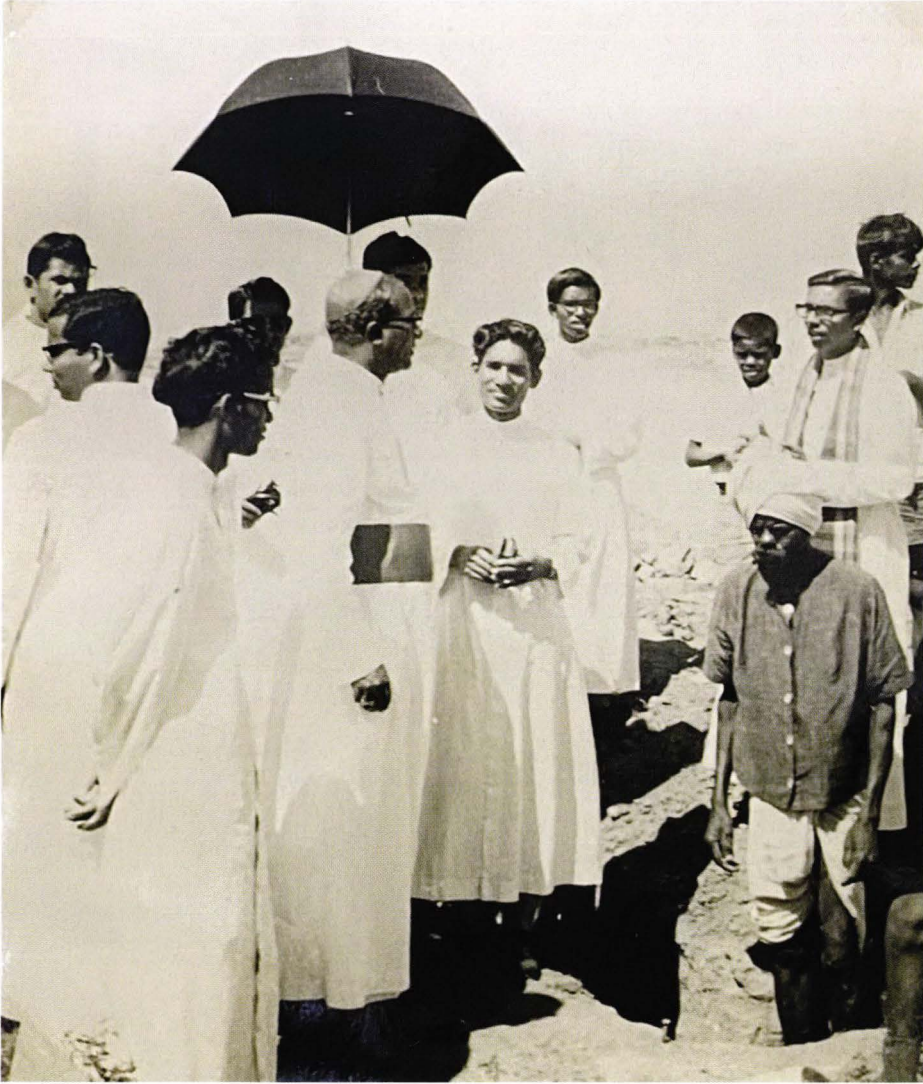
Informal sharing during a break (AKJCB).



Informal sharing during a break (AKJCB).



**17. Social Service Guild (S.S.G.) – Helps to Build a Village (Jyoti Nagar) - 1975-1976**



Archbishop Packiam Arockiaswamy, Archbishop of Bangalore (1971-1986) visiting the site of a building under construction (AKJCB).



Students of Kristu Jyoti supervise the roofing of the new houses built by S.S.G. (AKJCB).



Digging the foundation for a new house (AKJCB).





S.S.G. members at the site of the brick-kiln (AKJCB).



S.S.G. members with the villagers engaged in building a road to their village (AKJCB).





Digging a well to provide water for the villagers in collaboration with the Sisters of St. Anne, Bangalore (AKJCB).



Starting a poultry (AKJCB).



Mr. Bhaskar Reddy, the local M.L.A., after hoisting the national flag at the College on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1974, visited the villages to see for himself the services rendered by the College in the neighbourhood and addressed the beneficiaries of the various S.S.G. projects. Here he is seen addressing the people of Jyoti Nagar (AKJCB).



View of the newly built houses (AKJCB).



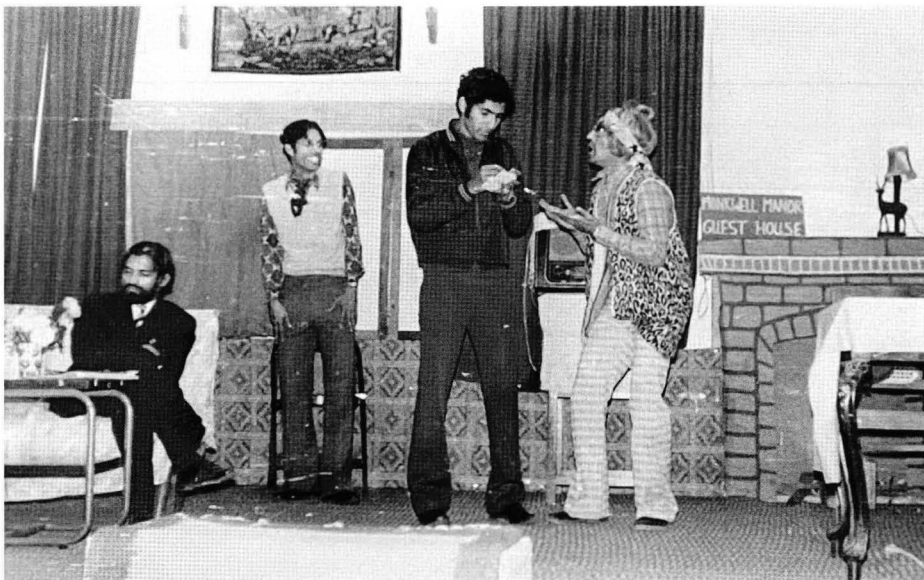


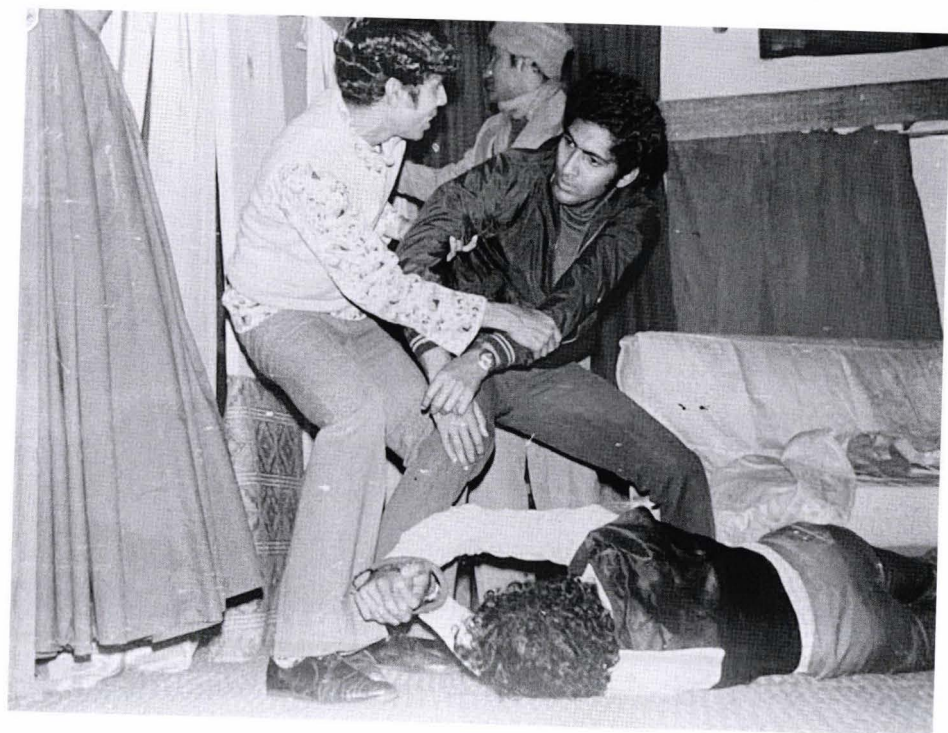
Fr. Anthony Mampra, the Rector, with Sr. Martin Alappat sab, and some of the members of the S.S.G. before *Shanti Nilaya*, the dispensary built by the S.S.G. and run by the Sisters of St. Anne, Bangalore. This dispensary has subsequently grown into a full-fledged hospital catering especially to the poor villagers in the neighbourhood (AKJCB).



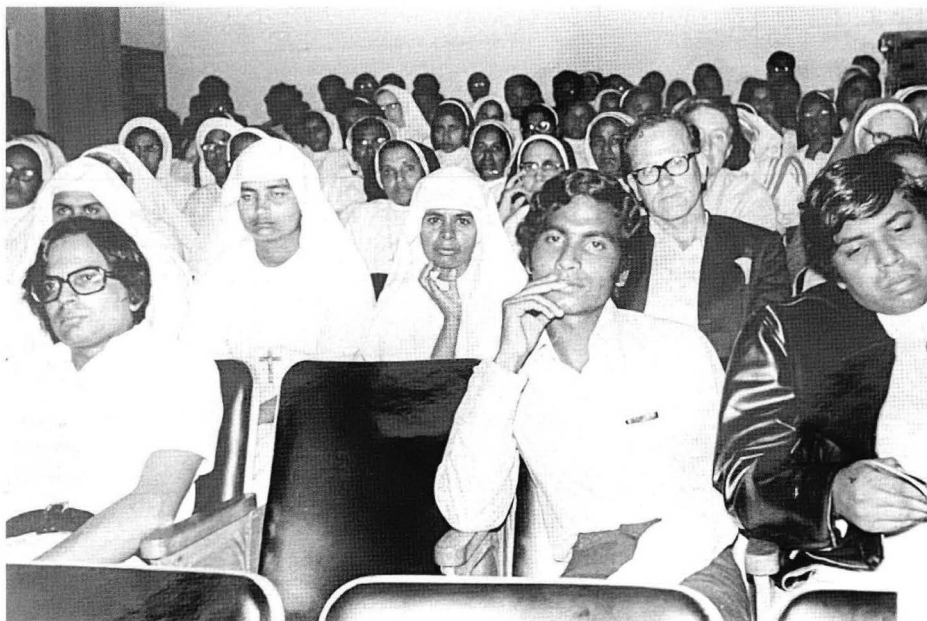
A little girl from the village honouring its benefactors (AKJCB).

**18. Stage Performances and Audience: Scenes from *The Mousetrap* –  
15<sup>th</sup> August 1976**









## **19. Kristu Jyoti College Today – 2022**



A structure that has not lost its majestic charm (Photo: Jiji Kalavanal sdb).



Kristu Jyoti College as dusk descends on the campus (Photo: Jiji Kalavanal sdb).



The central quadrangle with the statue of St. Joseph in the middle (Photo: Jiji Kalavanal sdb).



The entrance with the welcoming statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (Photo: Jiji Kalavanal sdb).





The tamarind-tree-lined drive leading to the farm (Photo: Jiji Kalavanal sdb).

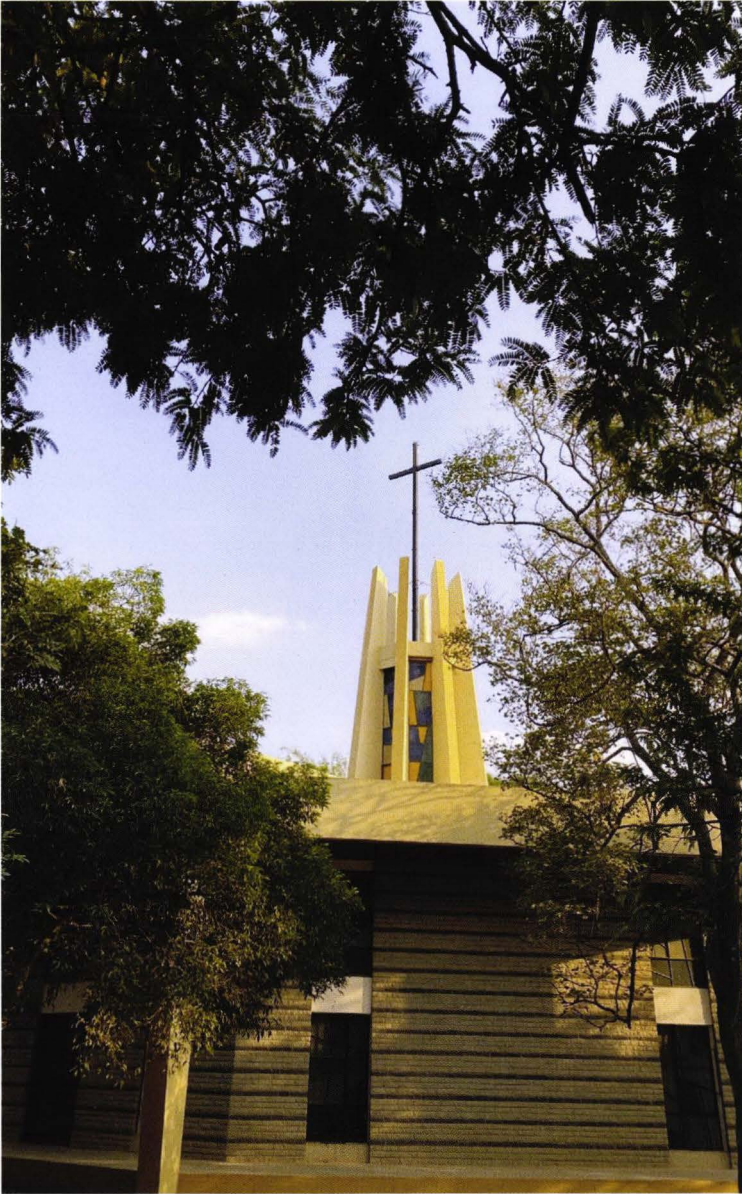


The newly-laid basketball court by the side of the library building (Photo: Jiji Kalavanal sdb).



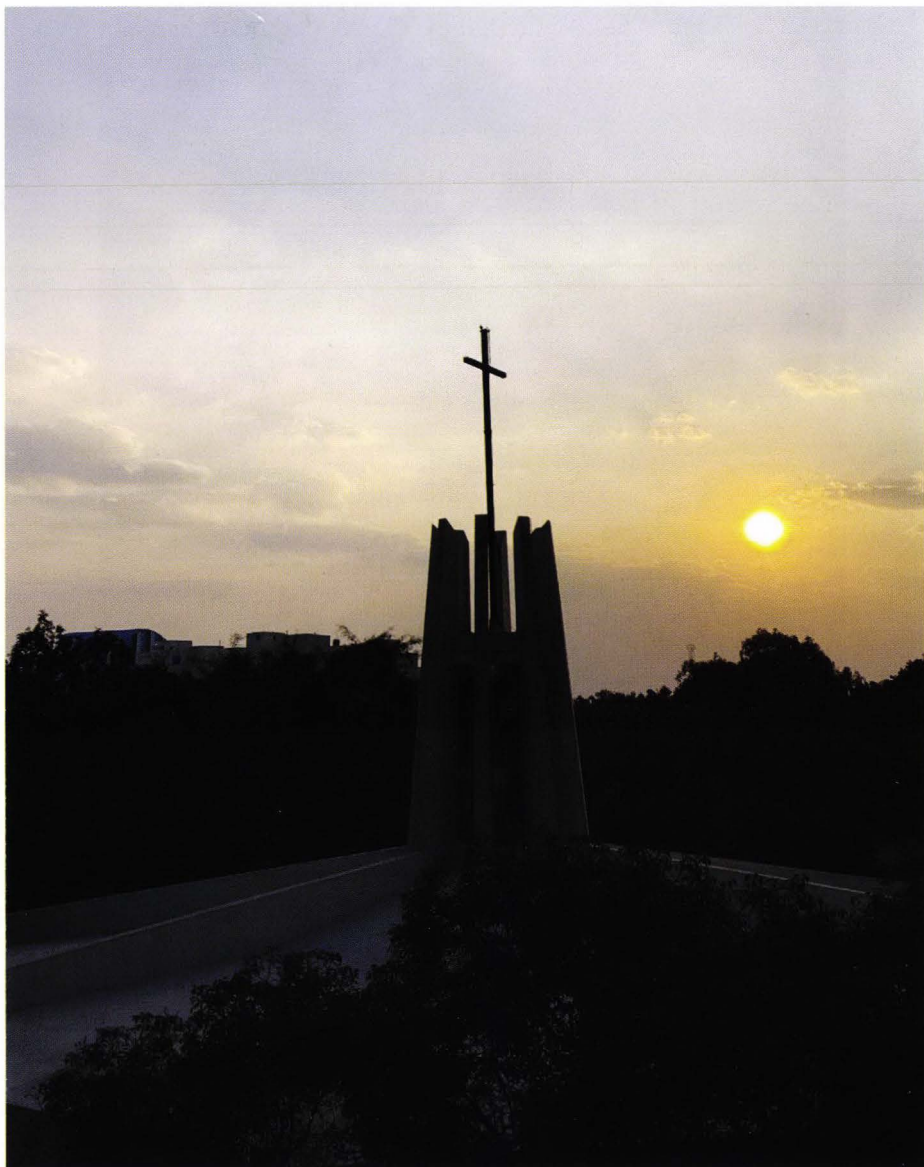
New structures rising in the once barren /empty neighbourhood (Photo: Jiji Kalavanal sdb).





The tree-surrounded College Chapel (Photo: Jiji Kalavanal sdb).





The Cross of Christ, symbol of the Christian Faith and the focus of all Catholic theological formation, reaches out into the evening sky from the College Chapel (Photo: Jiji Kalavanal sdb).

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ACT - Archives, Sacred Heart College, Tirupattur

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No. 128 Tanjore Missions 1906

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AME - Archives of Missions Etrangeres, Paris

Vol. 1000, 1842-1847

AOLLPL - Archives of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Lourdunagara, Bangalore

Chronicle

APGH -Archives, Provincial House, Gauhati

Sacred Heart Theologate Chronicle 1942 Deoli

ARY- Archives, The Retreat, Yercaud

Chronicle of the Theologate, Yercaud 1951-1953

ASC - Archivio Salesiano Centrale, Roma

F 175

<sup>1</sup> The entries for the years 1958-1962 are missing and the second volume has entries from the year 1963.

F177  
F178  
F183  
F185  
F186  
F392  
B729

CHK - Chronicle of the House of Kotagiri<sup>2</sup>

SAS Scheda Anagrafica Segreteria (Sede Centrale Salesiana – Roma)

SPAC Salesian Provincial Archives Calcutta (Kolkata)

B.67.1  
B.67.3  
B 67.4  
B.67.5  
B 67.6  
B 67.8  
A 913

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File: Tirupattur 1949, 1950, 1951-1952  
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File Mgr. Mathias to Fr. Cinato (1939-41)  
File: Interned Salesians to Mgr. Mathias (1940-1943)  
File: no.53 Interned Confrere' Correspondence.  
File: "About the Orphanage"  
File: Mgr.Mathias' Correspondence with Fr. Cinato (1933-1936)  
File: Superior Chapter  
File: Verbalì delle riunioni ...  
File: Yercaud, July 1950–1952

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<sup>2</sup> The Chronicles of the House of Kotagiri (2nd December 1962 to 21st June 1966) is found in the Archives of AKJCB.

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*Theological Formation of Salesians in India with Special Reference to Kristu Jyoti College Bangalore (1967-1976)*, places the shifting of the Salesian Studentate of Theology from Shillong to Bangalore in its historical perspective. Since setting up their theologate in Shillong in 1938, the Salesians were constrained, either by natural calamities or on account of wars, to move out temporarily to safer locations. In 1962, the Indo-Chinese War, yet again forced them out to Kotagiri and eventually led to the decision to construct a *Salesian Studentate of Theology for the whole of India* at Bangalore. The choice of Bangalore was based on the obvious advantages linked to setting up a studentate in a vibrant and growing metropolis with a mild climate, which was already home to a number of prestigious ecclesiastical institutions. The syllabus of studies as well as the life of the community were so organized as to help those passing out after their studies, to be effectively at the service of the Post-World War II Society and the Post-Vatican II Church, in the pluri-religious and multi-cultural context of India. As was augured, from the very beginning, KJC distinguished itself in reading the signs of the times and responding to them with that degree of creativity and dedication called for in a rapidly evolving society and Church. A team of qualified resident professors and a number of visiting professors, which included members of the various Christian denominations and those of the non-Christian religions, helped the College to realise the hoped for results. The facilities available at the College favoured the holding of international congresses and seminars, like the *Second Asian Monastic Congress* (14th-22nd October, 1973) and the *Inter-Faith Seminar on Prayer* (25th-31st August, 1974), and offered both the staff and students opportunities to listen to and interact with some of the many eminent personalities and specialists who came to the College on such occasions. A particularly significant aspect of the formation imparted by the College was that of offering the students the possibility of reaching out to the poor in the surrounding villages and of engaging in youth apostolate in the various parishes in the Archdiocese of Bangalore.



**Anchukandam Thomas**, holds a doctorate in Ecclesiastical History from the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome (1994), received the title of *Professore Ordinario*, from the Pontifical Salesian University, (UPS), Rome in 2005 and in 2015, was nominated Director, *Istituto Storico Salesiano* (ISS). He has authored or edited eight books, including *Grow Free Live Free: A Source Book for Value Education*, (1985) and *Catholic Revival in India in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century – Role of Mgr. Clément Bonnard*, Vol. 1 (1996) & Vol. 2 (2006), both published by Kristu Jyoti Publications, Bangalore. His articles include *General Division of the Indian Missions into Vicariates Apostolic: Luquet's Role and Subsequent Controversies*, in *Fede e Libertà, Scritti in onore di P. Giacomo Martina S.J.*, a cura di Maurilio Guasco-Alberto Monticone-Pietro Stella, Brescia, Morcelliana

1998, and *Christian Contribution to Karnataka*, in *Indian Christian Directory for the New Millennium*, Kottayam, Deepika Publications, 2000. He has also, for varying periods, taught in eleven ecclesiastical institutions in India and abroad, including Mount St. Alphonsus Theological College, Bangalore: (October-November 1999; 2001; 2003) Pontifical Atheneum, Poona, (2005-2006) and *Università Pontificia Salesiana* (2015-2016).

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