

The Changing Faces of Christianity in Goa

From Being Portuguese to Being Indian ?

The present paper might sound a long survey of Christianity in Goa since the arrival of the Portuguese in India in 1498 and in Goa in 1510. It is meant, however, really to be a look at dynamics of insertion of the Portuguese Christian faith in a culture much alien to its thinking and how initial opposition to conversion made way gradually over the centuries for an amiable acceptance of a foreign religion.

Records of the sixteenth and later centuries, however, also speak of a certain « Indianness » creeping into forms of worship and devotions and art of the people, tacitly allowed by the clergy of the time. An attempt at inculturation we might say, it was, but meant primarily to win over the believers to a different ideology and way of life. It did not always work and one can only be proud of the many Goans who off and on showed their true feelings and antagonisms to the Portuguese political and ecclesiastical leadership. Faithfulness to church worship had not given these « rebels » the greater participation in economic and hierarchical prosperity.

Various Goan writings (documents, ecclesiastical journals, etc.) for the present century show often a « calculated lethargy » on the part of the educated Goan believers to challenge structures and happenings and a willingness to go along with the then Portuguese ideology. Matters changed in 1961. The post-liberation church in Goa, happily, shows itself as a quick learning church, alert and open to new trends. But does one find in it an equivalent admiration for the larger Indian church and ideology as it had earlier for the Portuguese church ?

The Church is a Depository of True Wisdom...

In the process of inserting herself in a foreign culture, the Church had to make herself acceptable. One reads from among the many profiles of the Church, one given by a staunch Church historian : « The true church is universal », he wrote over forty years ago.

« It is not restricted to any definite country or nation, it is not tied down to any particular culture or civilization, it is not identified with any distinct race

or people [and] is ready to adapt itself to all sane customs, climates and conditions of life. Everywhere it can find itself at home. And in the church all men, all nations, all cultures, all values, can find and achieve their perfect fulfillment »¹.

And we also know that Pope Pius XI had once said that the principal duty of the papacy was to plant the church in all countries of the world.

The Church came to the East in dramatic circumstances. Pope Leo X had the following words to say to king Manoel of Portugal in 1515 :

« Receive this warlike sword in your always victorious and warlike hands. With this you will wage wars under the most happy auspices you will subject the enemies of the Faith, as you have done up to now [...] [May] you use your force, strength, and power against the fury of the infidels may you consecrate, not only your most religious spirit, but also the kingdom itself, and the forces of the kingdom, to the giver of them, to God the best and the greatest, so that having received through this gift the help of heaven in battles, you may bring back abundant spoils and most famous triumphs »².

Words such as these which reflected the forthright spirit of the times, spurred the Portuguese church to spread its influence far and wide.

« The Church is a depository of true wisdom and cannot renounce its duty to teach men not only individual obligations but social and civic ones as well »³. With ideas such as these did the various religious orders and secular clergy work at building the Church and various institutions connected with it.

One historian remarks that « the simple most important contribution to the West was the introduction of the redeeming message of Jesus Christ with its own world of symbols and rituals, which seems to have been incorporated into the religious and spiritual drives of the natives with relative ease ». It is hard to agree with this view totally and with his further point that with the redeeming message of Jesus Christ came the Christian principles of the sacredness of the human person which would ultimately be the foundation for the principles of human rights and social justice. True they did, but often instances of Christian hardness and intolerance over the locals is all too evident in history⁴. The spirit of segregation was part of the strategy of the Church in Goa. As in Latin America, Jesuits founded small settlements of new converts in Goa around their churches the better to protect them from contamination with their fellow Hindus.

There was also, all said and done, a rift between the clergy and the religious orders and conversions led to divisions among the people of Goa themselves. My earlier work⁵ shows the tension-ridden relationships that existed between the Jesuits and the local clergy on the one hand, and with sections of the local population on the other.

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1. C.M. de MELO, *The Recruitment and Formation of the Native Clergy in India (16th-19th century) : An Historico-Canonical Study*, Lisbon, Agência Geral do Ultramar, 1955 : xxv.
 2. V. PERNIOLA, *The Catholic Church in Sri Lanka. I. 1505-1565*, Dehiwala, Tisara Prakasakaya, 1989 : 465-466 ; *Bullarium Patronatus Portugalliae Regum in Ecclesiis Africae, Asiae atque Oceaniae*, 1847, I : 110.
 3. T. da SILVA, *Boletim Eclesiástico de Arquidiocese de Goa*, [Goa], March 1946, 9 : 323-326.
 4. R. RAMIREZ, « The Question of Columbus : Evaluation of the Result », *Boletim Cehila* (São Paulo), 43-44, January 1993 : 33.
 5. C. BORGES, *The Economics of the Goa Jesuits 1542-1759 : An Explanation of their Rise and Fall*, Delhi, Concept, 1994. Worth seeing is the document in Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu, Fondo Jesuitico, Rome, 1443/9, file 23, Goa 22, I, fls. 59-62.

As regards the manner of worship, the church in Goa allowed a certain Indianness in worship with the motive to bring about a submission of the people. A writer believes that « it pertains to the maturity of a local Church that it spontaneously express its faith in local art forms. In their worship, converts should find the artistic atmosphere of Christian churches congenial to their own sense of sacred art and an incentive to make further contributions to this highly refined expression of their faith. The Church must take seriously the total world of the convert : his social relationship together with his legal status, his cultural and religious traditions, and his mental framework. Conversion in India today still involves an unnecessary break with this inheritance »⁶.

The pages of the Bombay Catholic weekly *Examiner* in 1956 carried a letter of R. Pannikar chiding an innovative Indian Christian artist of his time for distorting what he believed « the true form of representing Jesus and his Mother ». He advised artist Angelo da Fonseca who had broken new ground with his art in the mid 1950s to « paint Mary as a Jewess seen with your Christian and Indian eyes. Represent Christ as you -- Indian after all and Christian first of all -- yourself see, feel, imagine, love -- and touch him ». Another reader attacked the use of forms similar to those of the pagans to describe Christian themes saying that :

« The pagan must never be allowed to confuse the real, historic figures of Christianity with his old gods and goddesses. Nay, the missionary's chief aim must be to help him to escape from the confusion. You have laboured to convince the neophyte that Our Lord and the Saints are in an altogether different order of truth from the figures of mythology. If you now represent them in picture or statue as both alike after all, you are undoing your whole work and throwing back the poor man into his worst error »⁷.

Some believed that in Goa there was a strong Europeanization in worship. The city became a second Lisbon and church festival days corresponded to those observed in Portugal with saints like St. James, St. Sebastian and St. Anthony making a lasting appearance here. « Luckily », maintained on critic, « over the years the Goan church has evolved an original manner of worship suitable to the traditions of her people »⁸.

But in the 16th century Goa, for instance, there was a large leeway given by the Church in matters of worship, especially in matters of devotions. There were devotions which were similar to the local traditional ones. People used blessed water and relics in time of illness, venerated the Cross and holy pictures and used images and beads. People had a special attachment to the Mother of God. Lent saw the enactment of the passes or representations of various states in the history of Jesus death⁹.

In an earlier article¹⁰, I have described the forms of popular devotion in Goa in the sixteenth century. Various reports of the period speak of the variety of religious expressions of the people. Being converts from

6. J. SALDANHA, « Indian Christian Art », *Indian Missiological Review*, Bombay, October 1980 : 371-372.

7. *Examiner* (Bombay), October 12, 1929 : 474.

8. F. PLATTNER, *Christian India*, London, Thames & Hudson, 1957 : 56.

9. A. D'COSTA, *Christianisation of the Goa Islands*, Mumbai, Heras Institute, 1965 : 182-184.

10. « Popular Religiosity in Catholic Goa », *Souvenir of the Holy Family Chapel*, Goa, 1992 ; J. WICKI (ed.), *Documenta Indica* (henceforth *DI*). Vol. VI, Rome, Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu : 315, *DI*. Vol. XIII : 523-525 ; *DI*. Vol. XII : 412-413.

Hinduism they needed these to feel at home in their new-found faith and events like processions, baptisms, feasts, and conversions helped in this process. The church in Goa allowed them to unfold lest the new converts felt the absence of their former practices and reverted to them.

These Christian religious devotions, the processions in particular, marked an important time in their lives. The people had very little else to look forward to in normal days and longed for the special days when the processions to mark the *Corpus Christi* (Body of Christ), the rosary, and the passion of Jesus, came around. One may wonder how these practices persisted for so long. There is the fact that the presence of local elements in these festivities and practices from the earliest times make them popular even today. The sense of the mystery of God and his inscrutable ways led many then as now to attempt practices in the hope of cure or protection. Yet the clergy of the time and the civil authorities suggested by their tacit approval of these practices that only supernatural intervention could solve their problems thus preventing the people from improving their economic and social world in a way they thought fit.

Goa and the Destabilising of Sri Lanka

The picture one finds of Religious activities in Ceylon is quite interesting. In an article « Goa's Role in the Destabilising of Sri Lanka : A Missionary Enterprise »¹¹, I have shown how right from the start of Portuguese presence in Sri Lanka, Goa remained an important centre for attempts to destabilise the island. The various religious orders in existence at the time aided greatly the process though overtly engaged in traditional tasks expected of them. Overall they did help in the gradual « destructuring of the traditional Sinhalese life and society ».

As an example of explaining the gradual destructuring of Goan society, I might sight a very similar process that was at work in Ceylon. F. Houtarat in his *Religion and Ideology in Sri Lanka* analyses well the role of colonization in the destruction of a society occupied by a colonial power. The process can take place, he believed, at the economic or political levels. At the

11. C. BORGES, « Goa's Role in the Destabilising of Sri Lanka : A Missionary Enterprise », unpublished conference paper, Panaji, 1993. See also T. ABEYASINGHE, *Portuguese Rule in Ceylon, 1594-1612*, Colombo, 1966 ; S.D. BAILEY, *Ceylon*, Stratford, Hutchinson's University Library, 1952 ; C.R. BOXER, « A note on Portuguese missionary methods in the East : 16th-18th centuries », *Ceylon Historical Journal*, 10 (1965) : 77-90 ; C.R. da SILVA *The Portuguese in Ceylon, 1617-38*, Colombo, 1972 ; W.L.A. Don PETER ed., *Franciscans and Sri Lanka*, Colombo, 1983 ; F. HOUTART, *Religion and Ideology in Sri Lanka*, Bangalore, TPI, 1974 ; S.G. PERERA, *The Oratorian Mission in Ceylon*. Vol. IV-V-VI, Colombo, Caxton, 1936-1938 ; V. PEMIOLA, *The Catholic Church in Sri Lanka (The Portuguese, Dutch and English Periods 1505-1844)*, Dehiwala, Tisara Prakasakayo, 1989-1992 ; P.E. PIERIS, *Ceylon : The Portuguese Era being a history of the island for the period 1505-1658*, Colombo, Colombo Apothecaries Co., 1913 ; P.E. PIERIS, *Some Documents relating to the rise of the Dutch power in Ceylon, 1602-1670 from the translations at the India Office*, London, Curzon Press, 1973 ; P.E. PIERIS, *Ceylon and the Portuguese 1505-1658*, Delhi, Sri Satguru Publications, 1986 [2nd ed.] ; F. QUEYROZ, *The Temporal and Spiritual Conquest of Ceylon*, trans. S.G. Perera, Colombo, A.C. Richards, 1930 ; Frei Paulo da TRINDADE, *Conquista Espiritual do Oriente*, ed. Felix Lopes, vols. I-II-III, Lisbon, Centro de Estudos Históricos Ultramarinos, 1962-1967 ; G.D. WINIUS, *The Fatal History of Portuguese, Ceylon, Transition to Dutch Rule, 1638-1658*, Harvard University Press, 1971. *Historical Archives of Goa*, n° 7536 contains obituaries of Oratorians in Sri Lanka for 1819-34 (Source : H. FENNING, « Records of the Dominicans of Goa 1700-1835 », *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum*, Rome, 60, 1980 : 389). *Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo* (ANTT) (Lisbon), *Cartório dos Jesuítas*, Maço 90, doc. 107 deals with the court decision about the villages bought in India by the Ceylon Jesuits (Source : J. CORREIA-AFONSO, « Indian History in the Cartório dos Jesuítas », in *Indo-Portuguese History : Sources and Problems*, Mumbai, 1981 : 84).

religious level, there was a definite destructuring of Buddhism, a destruction of symbols so as to weaken the system of meanings and the elimination of the religious organization. The political and economic objectives were joined to the religious as well, and they formed an integral part of the colonial undertaking.

Yet the Portuguese could not bring about a fundamental transformation of the systems and all these continued at the local levels. The fact that Buddhism regained a new vitality with fundamentally similar characteristics two centuries later suggests that the tradition was always passed on, and that basically the popular religion was barely affected.

This then was the process of destructuring of the Sinhalese political and religious systems by the Portuguese conquest. Goa was largely the place from which plans were executed for the de-structuring of the island. The religious orders (Franciscans, Jesuits, Augustinians) and the Oratorians used their powers well, and even the Dutch presence on the island did not prevent them from working for a de-structuring of Sinhalese life to bring about a society patterned on and beneficial to Portuguese interests and culture.

In studying the psychology of the discoverer and well as that of the discovered while analysing the colonial process, a psychologist spoke recently about the dynamics of interaction between the two, referring more to the situation in Goa¹². The trampling on local sensibilities and on age-old cultural traditions, psychologically, were the most debilitating to the collective identity of a people. This led to their degeneration, conquest and humiliation. « However, benign and noble the colonisers may have claimed themselves to be » he adds, « the very act of colonization is brutal and destructive. Since the colonised had to learn to live according to the rules drawn up by the colonisers, they had of necessity to develop psychological-coping mechanisms, the more common being that of submissiveness. This enabled the local population to avoid conflicts and tensions with the coloniser ».

Reactions in Goa and the Seminary

In Goa it ought not to appear that submission was the order of the day. Reactions have shown itself in many ways and many have been the modes of protest. I refer to the Revolt of 1787 which Joaquim Heliodoro da Cunha Rivara has explained in vivid detail and has shown the activities of Fr. Caetano Francisco do Couto and others in trying to undermine the Portuguese military in order to gain some personal ends. Yet his account leaves many points unanswered and suggests only one point of colonial view. P. Kamat mentions that the protests of the various priests she studied for their non-submission to the Portuguese authority in Goa were by and large manifestations of their immediate personal grievances arising out of racial discrimination and administrative abuses¹³.

One needs to study the role of the Church in Goa in indoctrinating the people in its charge, especially those it was training for the priesthood. One

12. A. da SILVA, « The Discovered versus the Discovered: Psychological Perspectives on Portuguese-Goan Prejudices in the 16th-18th centuries », in T.R. de SOUZA (ed.), *Discoveries, Missionary Expansion and Asian Cultures*, Delhi, Concept Publishing Co., 1994 : 45-54.

13. P. KAMAT, « Some Protesting Priests of Goa », in T.R. de SOUZA (ed.), *Essays in Goan History*, New Delhi, Concept Publ. Co., 1989 : 103-117.

needs to read about the directives for seminaries and schools run by the diocese to understand this charge.

An editorial in the souvenir of the Seminary of Rachol speaks of its history, long and glorious which has given much honour to the archdiocese of Goa and the Catholic Church, by its immense services to the cause of the faith in India and during times when there were no other ecclesiastical institutions in India. It quotes Barreto Miranda who in an article « As ordens religiosas e a civilização de Goa » in *Arquivo Pitoresco* wrote that like the old Seminary of the Holy Faith, the Seminary has sustained the faith of the people, and spread its influence to all parts of India, and no literary establishment competes in matters of instruction and education with these two children of St. Ignatius. In spite of the many years that have passed, the influence of its education and instruction remains irresistible¹⁴. The Seminary is a mother to many and cannot forget her sons and follows them in their triumphs and defeats and in their joys and sorrows, it goes on to add¹⁵.

The Seminary while celebrating its centenary referred to its role as representative of a multiseccular, rich and brilliant tradition. There does not exist in the Orient any ecclesiastical institution like the Seminary, it tells us. Nothing in her three hundred years has lessened the exuberance and vigorous action of evangelization and civilization that it irradiates. She forms men who trained in science and culture go to the world to teach the gospel and they are a garden of rare and marvelous flowers and delicate seed for the future – *sementes melindrosas do futuro*¹⁶.

Archdiocese and Parochial Schools

The Constitutions of the Archdiocese for the year 1953¹⁷ inform us about the high calling of the seminarians. They mention that in the seminary the education should be so oriented that candidates for the priesthood acquire a solid and profound priestly and missionary conscience, adapted to the times. Superiors and directors will do all besides giving an example themselves, to instill a strong spirit, virile and apostolic and will help seminarians to grow in piety, purity, love for truth, discipline and study. When seminarians go home they will be under the paternal vigilance of the parish priest who will protect them from harm and help them to do their duties with exhortation and salutary councils. They must not omit their duties of piety and the parish priest ought to help them with catechism and will have to send a regular report to the rector of the seminary.

A note by Dom Antonio Sebastião Valente, Archbishop of Goa mentioned that the Seminary was meant to instill the spirit of the Council of Trent and make seminarians ministers of the altar. The timetable was read out at the start of the year by the Rector and later repeated in the course of

14. J. de SOUZA, ed., *Anuário do Seminário Patriarcal de Rachol, Goa (1932-1933)*, Nova Goa, 1934 : 1-2.

15. *Anuário do Seminário Patriarcal*, [Nova Goa], [Tip. A voz de S. Francisco Xavier], 1960-1961 to 1979-1980.

16. *Anuário do Seminário Patriarcal*, [Nova Goa], [Tip. A voz de S. Francisco Xavier], 1934-1935 : 1.

17. *Constituições da Arquidiocese de Goa*, Pilar, Xaveriana, 1953.

the year. It was meant to bring about discipline and policing of the seminarians. In an exhortation the Archbishop told his men :

« You are the priests of tomorrow. it behoves you to be not only good scholars, but holy seminarians, for this is demanded by the sublime ministry for which you are preparing yourselves. It is on the rock of sanctity that you must form and strengthen our vocation. To be a priest means to be a saint. The priesthood is not a profession or a career. Hence a seminarian who does not have in himself the courage and strength to become a saint must have at least the courage and the strength to leave the Seminary »¹⁸.

Another pastoral said :

« Dear Seminarians you are the hope of this archdiocese. Prepare yourselves well to reach this dignity well in a spirit of humility, piety, and purity. Observe obediently the statutes of the seminary which express the will of God. Practice cleanliness, order and punctuality. Follow always the dictates of your conscience. The Lord observes you always. Piety is the first and important duty of a priest. Be men of character, sincere, open, detesting hypocrisy, and lying. Piety is a most beautiful crown of the seminarian, and remember that your spiritual and bodily needs will have our constant pastoral and paternal love »¹⁹.

The parochial schools were also important areas for church guidance. A look at the Constitutions of the archdiocese of Goa for 1953 gives one an idea of the way these schools conducted themselves²⁰. Some of them are that :

« an important point of education is the establishment of the Catholic schools where the young may be educated in the principles and practice of Christian religion [n° 344]. A special secretariat is to study various problems connected with education especially with the raising of the level of education of backward classes, and also of orienting all activities according to the dictates of the Bishop [n° 346]. Parents have a grave duty to see to the Christian education to their children [n° 347]. Priests have an obligation to give a Catholic education to the youth in their instructions and in their catechesis. They must make parents aware of their serious obligations with regard to the religious, moral and civic education of their children. The parish must celebrate a youth day [n° 348]. Schools founded by persons other than those of the church are not considered Catholic until approved by the Bishop [n° 350]. In Catholic schools the teaching programme, books and organisation must be guided by a Christian spirit, and religion must be the foundation and crown of education at all levels [n° 351]. In Catholic schools the principal place must be given to the teaching of Christian religion. In the primary schools, there must be the daily reading of the Bible and in the higher classes of the New Testament. In middle and high schools students must be taught to reflect on social life in the light of the principles of Christian sociology. Non-Catholics are to be given moral science classes if they do not wish to attend the catechism classes meant for the others [n° 352]. There ought to be an annual retreat for students [n° 354]. In recreation and excursions there must be nothing harmful to the Christian faith and morality [n° 355]. For the sake of harmony and to uphold the principle of Christian pedagogy there must be separation of boys and girls. In mixed schools religion has to be taught separately [n° 356]. In primary schools music ought to be taught according to the traditional customs of the

18. *Pastoral Exhortation by the Metropolitan Archbishop of Goa and Damaum and Patriarch of the East Indies to the Clergy, the Seminarians and the Faithful of the Archdiocese of Goa and Damaum*, Bastora, Rangel, 1940 : 5.

19. *Carta Pastoral do Arcebispo Metropolitano de Goa e Damão e Patriarca das Indias Orientais*, Bastora, Rangel, 1931 : 1.

20. *Constituições da Arquidiocese de Goa, Pilar, Xaveriana, 1953.*

parochial schools of Goa along with subjects like language, arithmetic, general knowledge, manual work, agriculture and gymnastics [n° 357] ».

Priests should be aware about their duties to backward classes :

« The Church extends her saving actions to all social classes without distinction and therefore efforts must be made to raise the education of these [n° 358]. If there are more than 20 such families a private schools must be opened for them [n° 359]. Children of these classes must in turn help members of their own class and priests must cultivate among them vocations to the priesthood [n° 361] Lay people are advised to help in the formation of minds and hearts of the young according to the teaching of Christ » [n° 368].

Archbishop Antonio wrote on September 15, 1901 that the school was a means of either salvation or perdition for the youth. He wrote with reference to schools which had Hindu teachers²¹. The parochial schools were advised to have classes in the mornings and in the afternoons. An ecclesiastical decree mentioned that they must have classes on literature, to learn singing and the playing of violin. Catechism ought to be taught with all perfection along with the reading of hymns and litanies. Students must be invited to take part in the sacraments with frequency, and encouraged to come to church with decorum. A list of educational activities had to be sent to the archbishop regularly. The parish priest had to visit the school at least once a week to observe the progress being made. There were specified books for the teaching of violin and solfejo. In all schools prayers had to be said by the teacher and students on their knees at the start and finish of both morning and evening sessions. Some of the prayers were « Vinde Espirito Santo » and « Salve Rainha » Indulgences accompanied their accompaniment. All class rooms had to display the pictures of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary²².

One notices that the parochial schools and ecclesiastical centres of learning in Goa did make an impact on the minds of the students primarily but also on their parents and those they were in contact in. Education was meant primarily to further the Christian faith. It was based on a European model, and was taught till the mid eighteenth century by Europeans. It did give the students a wider vision of things. The missionaries themselves excelled in many departments of life (writing, adventure and diplomacy) and shared this spirit with their students. The monopoly of education had been in the hands of the religious. The studies at the universities were based on the European model. They were arts and humanities, scholastic philosophy, theology, languages, logic, and rhetoric. In the college for native boys and clerics Pombal had hoped to introduce a modern system of education patterned on the English public school model with the introduction of sciences and mathematics²³. After 1759 the Portuguese government sought a different model of education²⁴ but the going was not so easy. Overall they popularised primary schools over secondary or professional

21. P.J.T. MARTINS, *Collecção de Decretos Diocesanos da Archidiocese de Goa 1900-1911*, Nova Goa, Archidiocese de Goa, 1912 : 258 [n° 338, 339, 341].

22. M.J.S. de ALBUQUERQUE, *Sumário Cronológico de Decretos Diocesanos do Arcebispo de Goa desde 1775 até 1922*, Bastora, T. Rangel, 1922.

23. M. de Jésus dos Mártires LOPES, « Teaching Methods in Goa (1750-1888), Jesuits and Oratorians », in T.R. de SOUZA (ed.), *Discoveries, Missionary Expansion and Asian Cultures*, New Delhi, Concept, 1994 : 169-174.

24. S.M. de MENDONÇA-NORONHA, « The Economic Scene in Goa 1926-1961 », in T.R. de SOUZA (ed.), *Goa Through the Ages*. Vol. II, New Delhi, Concept, 1990 : 273-274.

colleges²⁵. There was a need for technical education, for even after twelve years of liberation, there was nothing of the kind and often children could read and write but could not « light a petromax »²⁶.

Acção Católica de Goa

Acção Católica de Goa was meant as a forum for the religious, intellectual and moral formation of the youth in particular. Its object was the moral and intellectual formation of Catholics, not on difficult topics but to give all a reason for the faith, and help them be conscientious and articulate Catholics²⁷. A special issue of *A Voz de S. Francisco Xavier*²⁸, focussed on the Congress of *Acção Católica* on 26-28 November 1933, and put forth proposals about buying books, publishing lists of good books, translating the Gospels into Konkani, translating the Beatitudes, and encouraging each Christians to read it every Sunday. Each chapel or church was urged to keep prayer books, to advise those who could read to form centres for reading and to have good books, especially those on morals so that Christian charity could be practised.

There were proposals that children be taught the prayer of St. Francis Xavier to get people converted, that it be translated into Konkani, that there be an Academy of Missions of competent people to study the customs, character of the people of the New Conquests, that all learn Konkani in the devanagari script, and that the Trappists be invited to Goa to call on the blessings of God for the conversion of the New Conquests in Goa²⁹. On Sundays the programme could be amplified. A day was to be set aside to read the Gospel in communion, and domestic workers could be made to raise their thoughts to God. Thus the whole week, and the whole year could be holy. There were proposals for starting an organisation of mothers of families to intense Christian life, *A casa de Abrigo*, where students could feel the warmth of a paternal home, *Círculos de Educação* for domestics to learn hygiene and morals, and homes for the uplift of girls.

Also intended was a medical association for Goan women to give medical help to all without distinction, to catechise the ignorant and teach hygiene, to have its base in Old Goa and a new branch in the New Conquests. There was a need expressed for a medical mission for Catholic women to learn within a year about religion and to be prepared for the propagation of faith. Clothes were to be under fixed limits, short dresses were to be banned, as well as styles and dances harmful to health and morals. Three study circles in Panjim, Mapusa and Margao were to be started to study economic problems, social problems with Hindus, and the problem of reversion, their causes, the means and remedies.

Acção Católica was a religious apostolate to help Christians to be moral and religious, preparing them for associations and for social organizations, defending the Church and making its beauty and rationality a blazing light.

25. M. MASCARENHAS, « The Church in the eighteenth century Goa », in T.R. de Souza (ed.), *Essays in Goan History*, New Delhi, Concept, 1989 : 96.

26. *Renovação*, 1-15 March 1974 : 21 -22.

27. J. Vieira ALVERNAZ [Patriarcha das Índias Orientais], *Avante*, October-December 1956, II (1) : 1.

28. *A Voz de S. Francisco Xavier*, 6 December 1933, 13 : 137.

29. *Ibid.* : 146-170.

A Escola Social Católica, an organ of the *Acção Católica*, was formed to impart moral, intellectual and social education to the youth, started a *lar feminino para estudantes* in which girls who went to schools in Panjim besides staying in a healthy place would have a good moral and religious instruction.

An apostolate for the sick was formed. Among the activities of *Acção Católica* and the Legion of Mary, were the offering of one's sufferings for the conversion of sinners. The *Acção Católica* in its annual programme had the feast of Pentecost as a day for the sick. As in Holland where there was a Holy Union of the apostolate for the sick, a similar one was recommended for Goa³⁰.

Though problems did exist prior to Goa's liberation, the mood was subdued and the clergy had a certain lethargy due in part to their inability to govern their own affairs or willingness to side with the authorities. Since 1965, the global Vatican Council II set the tone for directions in the Church at large and the church in Goa followed suit. A look at some of the details of the Council help to see the direction of the church in Goa.

Christian Mission according to the Second Vatican Council

The second Vatican Council had statements on issues like the working class, youth, the Church, communications, ecumenism, education, non-Christians and religious freedom. It reminded Catholics that the Church had never ceased to keep before her eyes the complex problems of the working world, echoes of that concern showing themselves in previous pontifical encyclicals³¹. The Church is their friend, they are told. It is not only the bread of the earth which can satisfy people's hunger. Thus, they were advised to accept the message of the Church and the faith which she offered them to enlighten their path³². The Council had a special word for the youth encouraging them that it was for them that the Church offered to enlighten their path to the future. The Church, they were told, was particularly anxious that the society in which they lived allow the free expansion of the faith, and that their souls bask freely in its helpful light. She was confident that they would find such strength and such joy that they would not be tempted to yield to the seductions of hedonistic philosophies or to despair and annihilation, and that in the face of atheism, they would know how to affirm their faith in life and in what gave meaning to life. The Council appealed to them to open their hearts to the dimensions of the world, to heed the appeal of their elders, and to place their youthful energies at their service³³.

The Council affirmed that children and young people had a right to be encouraged to weigh moral values with an upright conscience, and to embrace them by personal choice and to know and love God more adequately. It earnestly entreated all who exercised government over peoples to see that youth was never deprived of that sacred right³⁴.

30. *Boletim Eclesiástico da Arquidiocese de Goa* (BEAG), [Goa], [Arquidiocese de Goa], May 1956, XIV (10) : cxiff.

31. W.M. ABBOTT, ed., *The Documents of Vatican II (DVII)*, New York, Corpus Books, 1966 : 735.

32. *Ibid.* : 736.

33. *Ibid.* : 737.

34. *Ibid.* : 639-640.

Since parents had conferred life on their children, they had an obligation to educate their offspring. They had to be acknowledged as the first and foremost educators of their children. Their role as educators was so decisive that scarcely anything could compensate for their failure in it.

The office of educating belonged to the Church, also, because she had the responsibility of announcing the way of salvation to all³⁵. In discharging her educative functions, the Church was more concerned with the means which were proper to her. Of these catechetical training was the foremost, a training which gave clarity and vigour to faith³⁶. Among all the agencies of education the school has a special importance. It sets up a kind of centre which needs the common participation of families, teachers, various kinds of cultural, civic, and religious groups, civil society, and the entire human community³⁷. As regards the Church, the Council wrote that it was highly important, especially in pluralistic societies, that a proper view existed of a relationship between the political community and the Church. The faithful would thus be able to make a clear distinction between what a Christian conscience leads them to do in their own name as citizens and what they do in the name of the Church and in union with her leaders³⁸.

A Very Portuguese Viewpoint

Coming closer to our times, what is the profile of the church in Goa after 1961 ? A perceptive editorial in a Catholic magazine remarked that after 1961, one can say that the church of Goa was still passing through the effects of the trauma of Goa's integration in the Indian Union and it was facing all the problems of a period of uncertainties, resettling of its assets, evaluation of the new conditions in which it had to act and react — the period of transition from a protected, privileged institution supported by a helpful temporal power to that of self-serving, suspicious-looking, perhaps, guilt-conscious institution which was very much considered a natural ally of the former power³⁹.

Church publications had very little to say about the events preceding or following December 19, 1961 (the liberation day of Goa). The viewpoint if any was very Portuguese. A letter from the then Archbishop-Patriarch of Goa, Dom José Vieira Alvernaz requested all to go on a walking pilgrimage to the Basilica of Born Jesus on May 6, 1961 in order to pray for peace in Angola and in Goa, Daman and Diu and to pray for the souls of victims of acts of terrorism and especially for the deceased police killed in the then preceding few days⁴⁰.

In Goa after Liberation

In Goa too there was a felt need for reform in the Church, for a « rupture with one's tradition keeping only what was essential to construct a Church of the future while giving up what was past (*destruindo a do passado*) ». From

35. *Ibid.* : 642.

36. *Ibid.* : 643.

37. *Ibid.* : 643-644.

38. *Ibid.* : 287.

39. *Renovação* (Goa), 1-15 March, 1992 : 83-84.

40. *BEAG*, May-June 1961, (20), 5-6 : xxv-vi.

27 to 31 December, 1968, a regional seminar was held with 103 representatives of all sectors of Goa. Various resolutions were proposed. Resolution 1 was on spiritual renewal, regular refresher courses for perfect methods of theology, morals and liturgy. Resolution 2 was on catechetics, liturgy and missionary spirit, for a Catechetical centre, a Catholic information centre, need for accepting symbols and forms of Indian culture to deliver the message of Christ to non-Christians to start a dialogue with them and to acknowledge, preserve and promote the spiritual, moral and cultural values among the non-Christians. Right solutions to the problems of *confrarias*, their possible revitalization with a uniform and thoroughly revised *compromisso* or their eventual abolition. Resolution 3 was on socio-economic plans to coordinate the activities of the Church and to set forth guidelines especially with large scale development to be carried out. Agricultural development reforms, cottage industries, encourage volunteer to take up social work, that landed property of the Church be put to public use, in urban areas housing colonies and commercial buildings be set up, in rural plots agriculture and cash crops to be grown, partly by voluntary manual labour, that the question of *mundcarato* in Goa should be viewed and solved in the spirit of Christian love and social justice, that Catholics take up commerce where ever possible. Resolution 4 was on educational activities, educational system be reoriented with a view to provide emphasis on Indian culture and an agricultural and technical bias to meet the agricultural needs of the country, provided skilled workers for industry, start a law college under Catholic management in Goa to provide adequate training of political leaders among our youth. Resolution 5 was on civic and political leadership and national integration: a Catholic association of Goa be formed to foster better integration of Goan Catholics in the mainstream of national life and to make them fully conscious and proud of their glorious culture, civilization and heritage, labour leaders be trained. Resolution 6 was on Christian family movement, child guidance and post marital counselling guidance, youth guidance, volunteer corps of doctors and nurses, family planning. Alcoholic Anonymous be started⁴¹.

Nevertheless, problems erupted all through the years following 1961. There were disturbances in the church in Cuncolim. It seemed strange that in the fourth centenary year of the violent deaths of the Jesuits at Cuncolim in southern Goa (1983), a revolt within the ranks of the Catholic Church should have taken place in a place that gave a number of Blessed to the Church. Church priests were shocked and preferred to remain silent on the issue. An editorial in the diocesan fortnightly put it aptly. « For various reason, but specially not to upset the delicate balance of peaceful forces by any inopportune word, we have abstained from commenting on the facts subsequent to the juridical solution of the so-called and notorious Cuncolim Church case ». It spoke of what it called « a big communication gap inside the Goan Church » and of how the priests in charge of the Cuncolim church were not being helped in their ministries. On the contrary, those who had accepted courageously with a deep love for the Church of God and of fidelity to Church authorities, the mission of conducting the pastoral work there, were under continuous psychological tension and harassment and mental cruelty. « We are with you, dear pastors, in charge of Cuncolim

41. BEAG, 1-2, January-February 1969 : 34-39.

Church », it went on to add. The pastoral letter of the Archbishop-Patriarch of Goa, Raul Gonsalves on the issue asked whether we were authentic Christians since divisions of caste and colour, of *ganvkarponn* and non-*ganvkarponn*, existed. The dissidents within the parish there had even exhumed the dead body of one of the then recently deceased. Others had taken possession of the newly built church and obstructed the performance of religious rites. They had managed to get a priest, Fr. Alvaro Vaz on their side and he performed the sacraments invalidly. He later « repented » for his actions and had his suspension revoked. The Patriarch called the events « a tale for tears » and wanted the first of that February to be observed as a day of prayer and penance for Cuncolim⁴².

One writer raised the issue that religious institutions based on caste were banned only on paper. *Cofres* were part of the exclusive confraternities (*confrarias*). They owned huge properties and were powerful. There were administrative committees selected from among the confrades (based on caste) and approved officially by the ecclesiastical authorities. He went on to comment that there are festivities celebrated exclusively at the cost of these *cofes*. With the exception of the uniform which had become obsolete and which is rarely used by the few selected ones, there is little or no difference between the *confrarias* and the *cofes*. But the exclusive *cofes* are still alive today, and are the black spot on the face of the Church⁴³.

In 1987 a certain Antonio Fernandes had had a vision of Our Lady at Velim. Robert Newman has analysed brilliantly the phenomenon terming it « the statement of the oppressed and powerless people not yet involved in the formal political structure thought they are affected by it ». He went on to describe the event mentioning that though miracles are about faith, they always stem from a particular cultural context and from a particular historical situation. The vision at Velim, according to him was one act in a long drama in which Goan Catholics, and on a wider stage, Indian Christians act out the conflicts and contradictions in their society. The drama is shaped by politics, culture, and history. The conclusion will be the transformation of Christianity and the people themselves⁴⁴.

Since Goan culture had been a matter of great pride to all, schools were encouraged to uphold it. The greatest chapter of that culture was the rich heritage of folklore, it was felt, especially songs. Hence the theory and practice of singing and reading notes was to be encouraged from the earliest classes⁴⁵. One priest wrote about the need for pastors to teach the people to live a religious life which was authentic and which avoided sumptuousness in meals, the money which in the plan of God belonged to the poor⁴⁶.

Fighting for Social Justice Issues

Over the last three decades there has been a growing consciousness to take up and fight for social justice issues. Lay groups have pointed the way

42. *Renovação*, 1-14 February 1983 : 47. See also R. ROBINSON, « Cuncolim : Weaving a Tale of Resistance », *Economic and Political Review*, XXXII (7), Feb. 15-21, 1997 : 334-340.

43. J. DIAS, « Exclusive Cofres », *Renovação*, 1-14 February 1995 : 54-55.

44. R.S. NEWMAN, « Vision at Velim : The meaning of a Miracle at Goa », *Indo-British Review*, XIX (1), Madras, 1993 : 131-144.

45. *BEAG*, XXVII (3-4), 1968 : viii.

46. « As nossas festas religiosas », *Renovação*, I August 1971 : 15-16.

tackling issues like child labour, five star tourism, injustices against women, paedophilia, etc. Priests have been the more traditional of groups but today some among them have found the healing ministry something to latch on to successfully. Goan Catholics seem at times a lost group. The strains of modern day living are beginning to tell and the recourse to many a new spiritual feature shows their need for quick and happy solutions.

All is not bad with the Goan church. The years since 1961 has seen the Church actively involved in various stages of the growth of Goa. As one

writer has said, « Every decade brought its own challenges : Survival in the 60s, *Ramponkars* in the 70s, the language issue in the 80s, and tourism in the 90s »⁴⁷.

One priest reacting to the cases of sexual attacks on children called on parents, teachers. Catholic institutions, Christians and non-Christians to rise as one man and woman in a spirit of solidarity and corresponsibility and to appeal courageously to the government and the representatives of people, to safeguard the moral fabric of Goa and to save Goans, the flowers of the society, the hope of the future, from the civilization of death⁴⁸.

The reaction of the Chief Minister of Goa, Pratapsing Rane, however, was very different indeed. He called incidents of paedophilia « stray cases » saying that he was not getting overly excited about those isolated cases. *India Today* reported that over sixty cases of paedophilia had been reported in Goa in 1995. A full-page appeal by expatriate Goans in the *Renovação* read « Sign our petition. Stop child sex trade in Goa. The people and friends of Goa around the world are outraged by the spread of this scourge and need your help. Please sign this petition to be sent to the Chief Minister, Goa Government. Ask for stronger policing of the flesh trade in Goa, severe fines and sentences for those found guilty, and the control of tour operators who serve this unacceptable practice »⁴⁹.

The Jagrut Goenkaranchi Fouz of Goa (Vigilant Goan Force) on the occasion of International Day against drug abuse and illicit trafficking of narcotics called for greater transparency in the anti-drug operations, prosecution of those arrested and an immediate end to corruption linked to drugs that had crept into the police department. It called for a white paper on the narcotic trade in Goa so that effective steps could be taken⁵⁰.

Bailancho Saad (Women's Collective) formed a decade ago is one among the many active women groups in Goa and have been fighting issues connected with gender discrimination, tourism, health, violence, the impact of the new economic policies and the Konkan Railway. They have demanded family courts and have called for a revision of Portuguese law as it affects women. An exhibition depicting the activities of the *Saad* showed that it has helped over the years in toning down the derogatory representations of women in commercial carnival parades, and in advertisements promoting tourism, getting the Dowry Prohibition Act extended to Goa, the setting up of a special cell to deal with crimes against women, and resolving cases of harassment. It held rallies against rape and mass

47. T.R. de SOUZA, « Church Card or People's Card in Goan Politics ? », *Boletim do Instituto Menezes Braganza*, 166, 1992 : 42.

48. A. PINTO, « A frightening menace », *Renovação*, 16-31 May 1996 : 221.

49. *Renovação*, « Stop Child Sex Trade », 16-30 June 1996 : 250.

50. *Renovação*, 16-31 July 1996 : 300.

awareness campaigns in villages, and has set up a detoxification centre of women⁵¹.

The Church too has made its stand clear. The Diocesan Service Centre of Social Action on the eve of civic and parliamentary elections invited Goans to reflect specifically on issues like the Konkan Railway Project, the increase of bars, proliferation of drugs, child labour, child prostitution, casinos, night clubs, overcrowded buses, free port, depleting of water resources, etc. The

The Archdiocesan Communications secretary Fr. Loyola Pereira told the UCAN News that the evil (beach parties) must be fought because any activity that endangers society's moral fabric is a concern for the Church⁵².

A Christians for Social Action and Democracy Project was launched in 1995 as a contribution to the process of conscientization and empowerment of the Christian community in Goa. It decided to take up issues of immediate concern, the diminishing tree cover, land conversion, pollution, Kaiga Nuclear plant, the growth of five star hotels, golf courses, Japanese holiday villas, commercialised festivals, carnival, dances, and an election code of conduct for candidates⁵³.

The Diocesan Pastoral Council on Alcoholism in Goa recommended that the government adopt a public policy of discouraging the consumption of alcoholic drinks and that advertising should be curbed and licences for new bars and liquor shops should not be issued without consulting the local people especially through *gram-sabhas*. Existing liquor shops and bars should strictly abide by government regulations including timings to open and close, and the minimum age of customers. Christians should give an example in the moderation of drinking. It would be proper not to serve alcoholic drinks at the end of religious celebrations like funerals and Cross feasts and litanies⁵⁴.

Diocesan Society of Education which was started in 1963 to manage primary schools, middle schools and colleges had the duty to safeguard and organise systematically the education of youth, both Christian and non-Christian at all levels, conducive to making them enlightened, loyal and useful citizens of the motherland⁵⁵.

On another issue, an editorial in the *Renovação* remarked that in Goa people had false notions and prejudices that hampered enormously their collective development and made it particularly difficult to find adequate solutions to the problem of unemployment. « Goans have been traditionally wherever they are in the world, the chronic candidates to the white-collar jobs. The Church which has rendered yeoman service to education in Goa has not been yet able to contribute much in the field of technical education », it added⁵⁶.

Church Activities on the Increase

Church activities have been on the increase. Besides the traditional ones

51. *Navhind Times*, 16 October 1996 : 4.

52. *Renovação*, 1-15 March 1996 : 126.

53. *Renovação*, 1-15 January 1995, p. 16.

54. *Renovação*, 1-15 September 1997 : 360.

55. *Renovação*, 16-31 October 1997 : 452.

56. *Renovação*, « Human Labour », 1-15 May 1996 : 190,192.

some have been organising more meaningful ones. A five-day « Meet Jesus » seminar was held at the Saligao Church along the lines of the retreats at Muringor (Kerala). It was conducted by the charismatic groups of Mapusa, and several people gave their testimonies of the transformation in their lives. One said that « it has brought about a spiritual revival in Saligao through which a strong wind of change is sweeping ». The Calangute parish invited a team from the Retreat Centre at Moringoor on May 27, 1996 and over 7,000 people took part in the two-day retreat. Respecting the directives of the Archbishop-Patriarch no physical healing sessions were held.

A catechetical training course « Jezuche Sondexkar » was held over eight weekends to impart catechetical training to parish catechists and six weekend seminars for liturgical animators in parishes who would help pastors in their parishes in organizing liturgical activities. A look at the year long activities of the Pastoral Institute at Old Goa lists Bible seminars for charismatics, marriage formation courses, courses for couples for Christ, recollection for teachers, and monthly meetings and retreats for priests.

There is an increased consciousness to preserve Church monuments in Goa. A seminar in December 1995 brought together historians and architects from India and abroad to evolve a plan of action⁵⁷.

Church policies on various issues have generally been welcomed. One non-Catholic wrote that the Church had openly canvassed and supported the agitation to have Konkani included in the seventh schedule of the Constitutions, and the fall-outs arising from that inclusion was being enjoyed more by non-Christians than by Christians. Nearly all the major decisions taken by the Church have had far-reaching beneficial implications to the general population of Goa, and not entirely to Christians alone. The stand taken by the Church, he believes, in asking for realignment of the railway has no communal bias⁵⁸. One historian believes that « the Catholic Church in Goa has freed itself from the pre-liberation shackles and is trying to witness to the hopes and aspirations of the common people »⁵⁹.

Meetings are on to evolve a pastoral plan for the diocese of Goa. It is meant to see, as an editorial of the *Renovação* put it « the changing reality of Goa, one which is marked by many new factors, both socio-economic and politico-cultural (liberalisation-globalisation, mass media, construction boom, industries, tourism, unemployment, corruption, destruction of environment) »⁶⁰.

There is an active social consciousness in the church in Goa. The Family Social Issues Cell of the Family Service Centre, Panjim, issued a 23-points call entitled « Family Issues Manifesto ». Among the points are that no new licences for bars be issued by the Excise Department and all existing ones be reviewed a cell be set up to register crimes against women at all town police stations and with a full-fledged forensic laboratory in the state and an effective ban on night beach drug parties and narcotics sale⁶¹.

57. Newman FERNANDES, « State of Conservation : Se Cathedral », *Renovação*, 1-14 February 1995 : 49.

58. A.G. KANTAK, « Church in Politics : A Proper Perspective », *Renovação*, 16-30 April 1993 : 65-67.

59. T.R. de SOUZA, *op. cit.* : 41-53.

60. L. da Veiga COUTINHO, « Diocesan Pastoral Plan », Goa, 16-31 May 1996.

61. *Renovação*, 16-31 May 1996 : 220.

A look at the pastoral engagements of the Auxiliary-Bishop of Goa, Filipe Neri Ferrao for May 1-20, 1996 gives an idea of the hectic round of activities in the diocese. He administered the sacrament of Confirmation at Verna Church, had a meeting of the Diocesan Pastoral Council in Panjim, did ordination ceremonies at the churches at Mercês, Orlim, Chinchinim, Majorda, Canaguinim, Loutolim, Cansaulim, Chinchinim, Confirmation ceremonies at the churches at Galgibaga, Tropa (Siolim), Chandor, Reis Magos, Socorro, final profession of Bethany sisters at Sao Jose de Areal, centenary celebrations at Salem chapel (Salvador do Mundo), blessing of a new church at Cotto de Fatorpa, and golden jubilee of St. Anne's Church at Bodiem.

Goa and vocational education has been a subject of discussion and the need of the hour has been to provide job oriented vocational courses so that the students are competent to take up unemployment. The Diocesan Society of Education has been planning to set up a resource cell so that some of these courses can be offered in remote areas of Goa⁶².

Goa's first multi-disciplinary clinical facility, the Sangath Centre has been launched to look after development, behavioural and emotional health problems of children and adolescents below 18 and their families. The rapid pace of change in society places an increasing burden on children and the young which is being reflected in the growing incidence of problems such as drug and alcohol abuse, school dropouts and even teenage suicide⁶³.

Sects for all Tastes...

About the sects which have grown over the years in Goa, one wrote, « the proliferation of various Christian sects with their own churches, and beliefs at variance with the mainstream Catholic church, poses a challenge to the archdiocese of Goa. In Goa dissent within the Christians has begun to manifest itself with an intensity uncharacteristic of Goans »⁶⁴. One elderly and confident Goan priest, Fr. Amaut Pinto believes that the recent mushrooming of sects in Goa is a sign for a search for fellowship. These are persons with problems who feel bereft of a sense of belonging in a large church. An issue of *Renovação*⁶⁵ remarked that there were sects for all tastes and of all shades of opinion some with « classic » and old beliefs and others with certain eccentricities some innocuous and others dangerous some asking from their followers a rigid moral code of conduct and others offering sexual permissiveness and promiscuity some born and grown up in the West and others made in East. Healing at these meetings through the power of prayer is emphasised in such a way and degree that the followers of some sects asked for miracles and extraordinary interventions when faced with ailments and illnesses which could have been tackled through normal medical means. Inner healing was also resorted to without recourse to the sacramental means like the sacrament of reconciliation.

There has sadly been no scientific survey of sects in Goa. A large number of its members are non-Goans who come to Goa for job purposes. Each urban parish has about 25 families joining them. Low income

62. *Renovação*, 1-15 August, 1997 : 297.

63. *Renovação*, 16-31 August 1997 : 39.

64. M. Cabral e SA, « Stairway to Heaven », *Goa Today*, February 1994.

65. 1 November 1988 : 391.

Catholics join mainly because of financial aid and support during crises. The middle class group wants a personalized God experience or is disenchanted with a parish priest or is faced a serious problem and did not get support from the priest. Sects are not popular in because Goans are Goa attached to Our Lady⁶⁶.

A perceptive journalist has called the retreat centre at Muringoor « a healing machine » and believes it represents a revolt against formal religion. « There is a need to fill the void that has been created in the lives of people », he writes, « and a need to renew faith. There are however, no shortcuts to spiritual salvation »⁶⁷.

With regard to the cases of healing, the Church commission said that healing is certainly as is clear in the Gospels, part of the Christian ministry. « However given the marked tendency of the people for exaggeration and fancy flights, it has to be exercised with utmost care. The Archbishop has constantly warned priests and religious against public healing ministry and service to be conducted during the Mass and or adoration of the Blessed Sacrament or in connection with or on the occasion of such services »⁶⁸.

At the Mãe de Deus chapel at Gaunsavaddo, Siolim, Fr. Salvador Gomes had been conducting healing services and the Diocesan Centre for Social Communication had the following to say :

« It is the policy not to allow public healing services, open indiscriminately to all and sundry as past experience has shown that such a delicate ministry offered to people uninitiated to its exact meaning according to the Christian understanding, gives easily rise to deviation and abuses detrimental to Christian faith and life. A healing ministry that does not lead the faithful to appreciate and accept this Gospel of Christ needs to be pruned so that it may bear fruit »⁶⁹.

The diocesan policy on public healing ministry had not been published, said the Patriarch, but had been adopted on the occasion of happenings at Nuvem in the late seventies. A committee, appointed then, presented its report, and based on that a diocesan policy was adopted. Charismatic healing services then followed. A diocesan service team is functioning and it regulates the conduct of such healing services that are restricted to small groups, wherein an intense catechesis is imparted on the meaning of suffering, and cure, in the light of faith. The Patriarch asked whether in the light of the happenings in Siolim, and the healing conventions at Panjim it might not be necessary to revise the diocesan policy and whether a new committee for the purpose might not be in order⁷⁰.

... and Visitation

The visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary to Mrs. Yveta Gomes (a Goan-born hair stylist from Canada) at the hill of Batim since 1995 has made much news in the local and religious press. Hordes of devotees flock to Batim and the 13th of September, October and November (anniversary of the first apparitions) have seen record crowds. Most have been impressed

66. *Renovação*, 1997 : 402-403.

67. R. NARAYAN, « Matter of faith », *Herald*, 18 September 1996 : 4.

68. *Renovação*, 1-15 October 1994 : 369.

69. *Renovação*, 16-31 October 1994 : 387.

70. *Renovação*, 16-31 March 1995 : 118.

by the life and sufferings of Mrs. Gomes and go with the hope of being similarly blessed by Our Lady.

The incident at Velim did not catch on and was soon forgotten. The mood in the Batim visitation case however, is positive. Olga Rebello mentions that after reading Marc de Souza's *Was Mary there ? Apparitions at Batim-Goa*, she felt that Our Lady had come alive for her whole family⁷¹. Another writes that with candles, garlands and anticipation, she went to Batim. For hours, dark clouds were forming overhead, the lightning and the first bolts of thunder cracked through the canopy of dark clouds. She felt that she was on another religious planet. There was an extraordinary spiritual power perceived in the holy site which moved hearts⁷².

Anne Menezes mentioned that « when people find an appropriate answer to their quest, nothing will deter them from a complete and mature surrender. There is vibrant hope that Batim will bring a tremendous resurgence to the Church in Goa through the intervention and leading of our Blessed Mother »⁷³. Fr. Anastasio Gomes, OCD, has been prominently supporting Mrs. Gomes. He writes that it is only to be expected that in view of the present situation of the work and the Church, heavenly interventions would multiply and so indeed has happened. He quotes Acts 2, 17-18 : I will pour out my spirit upon you and your sons and daughters shall prophesy and your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams⁷⁴. Another writer however, in another context, had been more circumspect in his observations and believed that apparitions of Our Lady are usually for the two reasons : one to revive the first centuries of Christianity in which miracles occurred to strengthen the Church as it consolidated itself⁷⁵.

One writes that people are today living with a high level of anxiety. They cannot have a control over the economy, unemployment, epidemics. When they look at the world, they feel insignificant and they need the assurance from God and Mary that they are not far away⁷⁶.

The Goan church has been blessed with the beatification of Fr. Jose Vaz, Apostle of Sri Lanka. Various books were published on the occasion, among them one by Fr. Cosme Jose Costa, SFX, entitled *Achievements of Blessed Joseph Vaz* (1996). One wrote that « of special importance and interest in the Goan historical background is the extremely difficult context in which Blessed Jose Vaz responded to the divine call and fulfilled with amazing courage his singular mission in the turbulent seventeenth century ». February 23, 1969 was the 350th year of the apparition of our Lord on the Monte de Boa Vista in Old Goa. The people were invited to attend the services and to pray for the beatification of Padre Jose Vaz⁷⁷.

A Mere Commonwealth of Saudade ?

71. *Renovação*, 16-30 September 1996 : 383.

72. Molly Gonsalves, *Renovação*, 16-30 September 1996 : 383.

73. A. MENEZES, « My Impression at Batim », *Renovação*, 1-15 December 1994 : 456.

74. « Give Heaven a Chance », *Renovação*, 1-15 September 1995 : 334-335.

75. A. LOURENÇO, « Discernibilidade de Aparições », *BEAG*, March 1961, XX (3) : 97-103.

76. M. de SOUZA, « Seeking Refuge in Apparitions », *Navhind Times*, 15 October 1996 : 4.

77. *BEAG*, January-February 1969, XXVIII (1-2) : 3-4.

The above sketch of the Church in Goa shows that it has been active in the social field always. A recapitulation of its history shows the many eminent men and women some of them now canonised who extended the limits of charity and social concerns. Each age brings its own peculiar problems and it is good to see that the Church in Goa is seized with these which affect the lives of the people. One hopes it can go further.

What is the image of today's church in Goa ? Buoyant is the shape of the Church in Goa since 1961. There seems to be a revival all around helped in large measure by the regular trips Goans are making to Muringoor in Kerala, to Vailankanni in Tamilnadu and to Batim (scene of a visitation by the Blessed Virgin in this Goan village).

A sense of buoyancy is the mood of the church in Goa today. The hierarchy is pleased that the laity is going in large numbers to the retreats at Muringoor in Kerala. The initial fears that the sects that taken over have been unfounded though some claim that they are not a spent force yet. The presence of the relics of St. Francis Xavier and the periodic expositions of these, and the recent beatification of Blessed Joseph Vaz make the Goan church feel special. There is a sense of popular religiosity in the air with people attending prayer and healing meetings in large numbers making the work of the clergy a lot easier. Social issues have not been neglected and the Church has spoken out forcibly on certain issues. The strains of modern day living are beginning to tell on the lives of people and the recourse to the retreats and place of Marian visitation is an attempt to make sense of it all. The hierarchy is not sufficiently aware or concerned about what they are going through though it takes a certain credit for it. Part of the clergy have seen the trends of the time well and are actively involved in the praying and healing ministry though they are aware that sooner or later they will come under the partly conservative supervision of the hierarchy. A healthier trend is to see people aware of the issues of concern doing their best to solve them without a too total submission to prayer and revelations alone.

One editorial in the *Renovação* mentioned that the presence of Dr. Mário Soares, the then President of Portugal at the Republic Day parade in Delhi was an affront for Goa was liberated not by freedom fighters but by the Indian army. The earlier Portuguese governments had always insisted that the Catholic church would be insecure in a liberated Goa. Would Dr. Soares and his government manage to build something more palpable in the socio-cultural-economic fields through mutual cooperation and common endeavours than a mere « commonwealth of *saudades* »⁷⁸.

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Charles J. BORGES

Xavier Centre for Historical Research (Goa)

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78. « A Commonwealth of Saudades », *Renovação*, February 15, 1992 : 63-64.