

The Two New Dioceses of Batticaloa & Trincomalee

On 3rd. July 2012, the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI, by a special Bull created the Diocese of Batticaloa, by dividing the former diocese of Trincomalee-Batticaloa into two dioceses. But this is not without its precedents. The new diocese has a history going all the way back to the time of the coming of the Portuguese to the then known Ceylon.

Our Historical Past

Long before the creation of the diocese of Batticaloa, and the creation of the diocese of Trincomalee, Christianity was introduced into Batticaloa and Trincomalee by the Portuguese in the 16th. century. Fr. Simon de Coimbra in a letter to the King of Portugal in 1549 speaks of having instructed the Prince of Batticaloa, and when the expedition of Monis Barretto landed in Batticaloa the same year, the Franciscan Priests in the expedition baptized him with the name Dom Louis. This has been reported by Monis Barretto to the Portuguese Governor of India in 1549. Besides a Vannichi who ruled from Pannichankernie from 1477 to 1552 along with her two sons and households too were baptized by the early missionaries.

In Trincomalee however the situation in the years between 1549 - 1552 were different. A young prince of the Vanniars of Trincomalee belonging to the royal house in a dispute over the succession was forced out by the King of Jaffna, Sangiliyan, and took refuge on the Fishery Coast of Tutucorin, with his uncle and a group of bodyguards. At that time the prince was only 8 years old. The Paravar Christians there welcomed them cordially and afforded hospitality. Father Enrique Enrigues, s.j. who was the first to have mastered the Tamil Language visited the group and comforted them. The princely band was very much touched deeply by the kindness of these Christians and their priest, that they requested to be instructed in the Christian religion and receive baptism. The little Prince was baptized with the name Dom Alonso (Dom Alfonso) and was later admitted to the College of Goa, as 'Dom Alonso Rey de Trincomalee.

The Christians of the Fishery Coast raised a force of thousand men, who assisted by the Portuguese soldiers accompanied the Vanniars back to Trincomalee and secured the Principality for the Prince with his uncle as regent. Apparently many of the Paravar people chose to remain in Trincomalee and its environs, where they with the Vanniar converts formed the first Christian Community in Trincomalee and Kottiyar. Even to this day, we have in Kottiyar (present day Mutur) a paravar Catholic Community who trace their origin to the Fishery Coast of India. Their existence in Mutur ante date the arrival of Venerable Father Joseph Vaz.

Their names such as Corera, Fernando, Peiris, Croos, Mascharenhas betray their evident connection with the Fishery Coast Paravar Christians.

Thus the early Christian Communities sprang up in and around the two towns of Trincomalee and Batticaloa and for many years remained without any priestly help and as a result there was no expansion of the faith into the other parts of the coastlands. In fact, Fr. Melchior Nunes who accompanied the Bishop of Cochin, Dom George Themudo, a Dominican in 1556, remarks in his memoir, "in Jaffna some conversions have been made, but there is little progress in the interior of the country. In Trichinamalech and Batecalou, there are few Christians of whom we have to take care".

We have no record as to how these early Christians were assisted by priests in their faith until the Portuguese established their two forts at Batticaloa and Trincomalee in 1628. But from this date on wards there were priests stationed in these two provincial towns. In each fort there was a small chapel and a priest to take care of the soldiers. Fr. Sebastian de Fonseka was placed in Trincomalee and Fr. Antony de Soeiro at Batticaloa. It goes without saying that these two chaplains in addition to their services to the garrison, would have assisted the little Christian Communities in each town.

But the greatest proof we have on the existence of Christians in the East of Sri Lanka from the time of the Portuguese period is the present day Burgher Community that has kept up the Faith and the Portuguese language and customs, inspite of the Dutch persecutions of later period.

The Dutch Persecution

Batticaloa was taken over by the Dutch in 1638, and Trincomalee in 1639. By 1658, the Dutch were masters of the entire maritime coasts of Ceylon. Immediately, there began the persecution of Catholics and Catholic priests. According to the Statutem van Batavia – the Batavian Code of the Dutch East India Company of 1642, the Dutch Reformed Church was the official Religion of all the territories coming under the administration of the Company. Consequently, no other religion was permitted to be practised therein. Although in other countries the Dutch authorities did not strictly adhere to this piece of legislation, in Ceylon it was ruthlessly enforced. Thus all Catholic Churches and chapels were seized and priests banished from the place under pain of death. Catholic worship was forbidden and all the Catholics were compelled to send their children to the Dutch proselytizing schools, and forced to baptize, marry and bury their dead ones according to the Dutch Reformed religious rite only. Harboursing a Catholic priest was courting death. The Dutch issued their first 'Plakaart' on 19th September 1658, which prohibited harbouring or concealing Catholic priests under pain of death. A second Plakart was released on 11th January 1715, which forbade conducting private or public meetings of Catholics or maintaining Catholic [places of worship. A third plakaart that was issued on 8th August 1715 forbade children being baptized by Catholic priests. Analysing the reasons for such strong measures of the Dutch, Fr. S.G.Perera, s.j., one of Ceylon's renowned and much respected historian says : "On becoming masters of the land once held by the Portuguese, the Dutch began promptly and pitilessly to persecute the Catholics. This was not due to religious bigotry alone or to national hatred, but chiefly to a cold-blooded state policy, adopted owing to the peculiar circumstances of the country. There were many Portuguese descendants in Ceylon under the Dutch rule, and large number of the people of the country living in the territories occupied by the Dutch were Catholics. Sympathy with the Portuguese was lingering in the hearts of both the one and the other class of

Catholics and it was kept alive by the link of religion and the use of Portuguese language. As the Dutch fell out with the King of Kandy at whose invitation they had come to Ceylon and by whose help they had ousted the Portuguese, they felt they could not well be safe in the island till they had severed every bond with the Portuguese and destroyed every vestige of the Catholic Faith. Though in their other conquests they had tried after the first outburst, to conciliate the Catholics by leaving them free to profess their religion and permitting Catholic priests and churches to exist, in Ceylon they seized all the Catholic churches, colleges and schools and razed them to the ground or turned them to heretical or profane use, expelled all priests, fixed by law the penalty of death on any priest that dared to enter the island or on any catholic that ventured to harbour a priest, compelled all Catholics to attend the Dutch kirk, to baptize, marry and bury according to Dutch rites, to send their children to proselytizing schools set up by them and held out the most tempting inducements to apostasy making the profession of the Catholic Faith a disqualification not only for holding office under the Dutch regime, but even for the traditional headman system of Ceylon".

Thus, the Catholic religion and adherents of the Catholic Faith, persecuted by the Dutch authorities, went underground, and remained so, for a long time. Some, being too shallow in Faith and lured by worldly gains, succumbed and fell away. Yet many remained firm in their faith against all odds and absence of priests, until the coming of Fr. Joseph Vaz. So strong was their faith, that the threats of punishments imposed by the Dutch could not make them change. As stated in a supplement to the Catholic Messenger, published in 1848, "Many of the Catholics, as might naturally have been expected did indeed conform themselves to the new creed partly for fear of the penal laws and partly for the sake of obtaining office under the Government but a great many intimidated neither by dangers or seduced by temptations, clung with fervour to the ancient faith, and though deprived of their spiritual guides, nevertheless continued to hold their religious meetings at their houses in the middle of the nights".

Further, Sir Tennent Emerson, a scholarly historian, who has read up all sources available in his time, while himself not being a Catholic, testifies to the fidelity and tenacity of the Catholics during the Dutch persecution, in these words: "Notwithstanding

every persecution, however, the Roman Catholic religion retained its influence and held good its position in Ceylon. It was openly professed by the immediate descendents of the Portuguese, who remained in the Island after its conquests by the Dutch; and in private it was equally adhered to by large bodies of natives both Sinhalese and Tamils, whom neither corruption nor coercion could induce to abjure it". Further, during this period, some of the Catholics from the Dutch occupied territories at the invitation of the King of Kandy, moved over into the Kandyan Kingdom and established themselves.

Fr. Joseph Vaz and the Oratorians

Thirty years after the occupation of Ceylon by the Dutch, in 1687, Fr. Joseph Vaz, an Oratorian Missionary from Goa, disguised as a beggar landed in Mannar, and laboured hard for 24 years to re-establish Catholic Faith. He made his first visit to the Eastern Coast, about the year 1694/1695. Tradition has it that there existed in the land of the King of Kandy, in Batticaloa, a Catholic Church, at a place called Thandavanveli, already from 1624. The same tradition further continues that Fr. Vaz visited this church one night while the Angelus was being said by the Catholics and revealed himself to few of them as priest. He was later betrayed by an apostate, tied to a 'vammi' tree and beaten. Canagaretnam writing about Batticaloa states the following: "It is said in a letter dated 1st. February 1868, Father A.M. Rauffiac states that the construction of the first Catholic Church at Batticaloa was in 1624, according to some of the oldest inhabitants living at that time. This building is identified with the old church at Thandavanveli; then came the persecution by the Dutch heretics. It was at this time that a priest named Father Joseph Vaz arrived in the district with the intention of reviving the Catholic Faith. It is said that that holy priest coming one night to Batticaloa at the time the angelous was recited by Catholics fell in with some of the faithful and made himself known as a priest. After sometime he was betrayed by an apostate and beaten after having been tied to a Vammi tree, which was much visited and venerated by the Catholics. The small church was set on fire and reduced to ashes, except the statue which was miraculously preserved".

Even to this day there is a statue at Thandavanveli with some burn marks at the foot, and it is taken in procession every year on the 2nd. February, on the feast of the Presentation. Later the Catholics of the

place said to have collected funds and with the permission of the king of Kandy rebuilt the church in 1660.

Father Vaz made a second visit to Batticaloa and other parts of the East in 1704. On 9th. September 1705 Fr. Vaz received 8 new missionaries from Goa, of whom Fr. Joseph de Menezes was entrusted with North and East of Ceylon. In the following year, Father Vaz along with Fr. Miguel de Mello and Fr. Jacome Gonsalves made a journey on foot from Puttalam to Kottiar (Muthur), where Fr. De Mello suddenly fell ill and died. He was buried at the Church premises at Kottiyar. There is an interesting narrative of the whole incident by Fr. S.G. Perera, S.J. based on the Oratorian Reports of 1706. Perhaps it would not be out of place to give the entire description. It seems at first Father Vaz had wanted to introduce Fr. Miguel de Mello to the King of Kandy and obtain permission for him to live in the hill country. But due to some misunderstanding with the King, Father Vaz had postponed the idea. And so he decided to take him along with him in his eastern tour. Thus sometime in February 1706, Fr. Vaz, together with Fr. De Mello and Fr. Jacome Gonzalves started from Puttalam towards Kottiar, 'which was at a distance of two weeks journey from Puttalam through thick jungle. After a day's journey Fr. Vaz fell grievously ill. The people of Kottiar, who had come to conduct him, had brought a rough conveyance, but the jolting of the vehicle was too much for the infirm priest who had so far preferred to go on foot. They remained some days to nurse the patient, and as there still remained a long trudge before them it seemed better to return to Puttalam where physicians and medicines were available, and whither Fr. Menezes was hurrying on receipt of the news of the Father's illness. But Fr. Vaz gradually recovered and was for continuing the journey, while others in the party thought it better to turn back.

In this perplexity Fr. Vaz requested Fr. Gonzalves to decide the question as he thought best. He took counsel with his companion and with the people of Kottiyar who were in their company, and decided to trust in Providence, and continue the journey, as they being both new comers and ignorant of the country, could not well go by themselves, and Kottiyar and Batticaloa had not been visited for sometime. They therefore sent word to Fr. Menezes and set out again by slow stages and reached Kottiyar after the Middle of March. While in Kottiyar, Fr. De Mello suddenly fell ill and died.

There is a grave in Kottiyar (Muthur) where the old church had been built, said to be the very place where Fr. De Mello was buried. And the name of Fr. De Mello is held in high esteem by the people of Kottiyar even to this day.

In 1707, Fr. Pedro Saldana visited the East Coast and in 1710 Fr. Vaz tried another visit to the East, but fell ill at Kottiyar and returned to Kandy. The following year he died in Kandy. From the time of Fr. Vaz unto 1845 the Eastern Seaboard was cared for and looked after by the Oratorians, and inspite of Dutch persecutions, they had carefully nurtured the Faith of the little communities scattered here and there

The Dutch persecutions had been very vigorous during the first one hundred years or so. But from about the year 1755 onwards, there began a gradual relaxation in their treatment of Catholics and Catholic priests. The first of these is verifiable from the secret letter dispatched from the Dutch Headquarters in Batavia, in Indonesia, dated August 21st; 1752. It says : "Considering, however, how Papal Inquisition is so abhorrent to us, we should avoid all oppressive coercion, though it is both equitable and reasonable that our Reformed Religion should predominate in our territories. But we should allow each and every Christian the same liberty we have accorded to Muhammedans and Heathens to follow their own religion and to worship their God peacefully....We have deemed it proper to write to Your Honours regarding the blind Roman Catholic fanatics and to recommend that as far as possible, you should see that all their public religious acts of worship in the territories of the Company should be checked and that any meeting or gathering of Roman Catholics should be prevented in accordance with the prescriptions of the plackaarts. On the other hand, the private and peaceful exercise of their religion should be over looked and tolerated. You should very strongly recommend moderation to the predikants in this respect. In everything let them act with moderation and equity and let them in a special way restrain any undue zeal on the part of the village school masters or any other native church official and remove all cause of complaint and improper harassment". This piece of instruction by the Dutch authorities in Batavia was a reply to the letter written by the then Dutch Governor of Ceylon, G. Vreelandt, wherein he asked for instruction 'as to the policy to be followed in the future.'

Herein we notice that policy-wise the Dutch rulers had slightly changed their minds towards toleration of private and peaceful practice regarding Catholics. Accordingly, the Dutch Political Council in its meeting in Colombo decided to inform its lower officials that they see to it "that the Roman Catholics do not hold any public religious conventicles or build churches and to arrest any priest who publicly conducts religious service. For the rest the Roman Catholics should be left unmolested in the private practice of their religion.."

In later years, we notice still more further relaxations. For instance, in the Political Council Meeting of the Dutch Government in Ceylon, held on the 31st. July 1762, a decision was made to accomodate the request of Roman Catholics that they be not obliged to solemnize their marriages in the Dutch Reformed Church. Accordingly, "it was then unanimously decided that in the future they could enjoy such a liberty in keeping with the general practice in the Netherlands. Hence, both here and in places where there is a court of Justice their marriages will be solemnized in the court-house, in the presence of the Commissioner of such Court...." This decision was later ratified by the Batavian authorities.

War broke out between the Dutch and the King of Kandy in January 1761. For the first two years the Dutch fared very badly on the war front. Besides, the King of Kandy had approached the British for help against the Dutch. It was this time, the Oratorians offered to cooperate with the Dutch in the war against Kandy. The letter was dated 17th. December 1764, and signed by Fr. Raphael dos Anjos, the superior of the Oratorians and Vicar General of Ceylon and by 4 other priests.

This offer was accepted by the Dutch War Committee, especially erected to handle the war against Kandy, in the meeting held in Colombo on 20th. December 1764 : "After deliberation it was unanimously resolved to avail ourselves of this honourable offer, and to accept 1000 men from this commuity. Of these, 200 will serve in arms, and the rest will be used as coolies to make up for the shortage experienced now. We can rely on the loyalty of this people since they have given repeat proofs of it from the beginning of the present troubles until now".

Subsequently some concessions had been given to the Catholic church by the Dutch. The Oratorian

Report on the Ceylon Mission, dated 21st. December 1765 says : "For all that Fr. Miguel Francisco did for the Dutch army, the Governor of Colombo was very grateful and spoke of him very highly to the Council of Batavia, and thus obtained several favours for our Mission such as: that the Catholics could marry and baptize their children without having to go to the heretical predicants and to their kirks; that our missionaries could dress in civilian clothes, like the Europeans, since so far they had been allowed to go about in the dress of the people of the country; that they might go to visit the sick and those in jail whenever they liked, which formerly they had found extremely difficult".

Later in 1767, freedom was granted to the Catholic Tamil teachers to teach Catholic children, their own religion. To this effect a decision of the School Board in Colombo dated 5th. October 1767, states : "it was decided that in future the Tamil schoolmasters who profess the Roman Catholic religion, may educate the children of the community in the doctrines of the same Roman Catholic religion without hindrances from anyone in the world. Further the Tamil School masters of the Reformed Religion should be notified of this by the Hon. Dissave and severely warned that they should not interfere in future with the Roman Catholic school masters, who are at liberty to instruct their pupils like other school masters".

By the year 1774 a Catholic priest was permitted to reside publicly in a Catholic Church and minister to the people, provided he makes a deed of Allegiance to the Dutch Company. A resolution to this effect had been passed at the meeting of the Dutch Political Council, held in Colombo on 9th. April 1774". The declaration goes as follows :

"I declare on my priestly word of honour, in place of an oath, that I shall do nothing, or permit nothing to be done with my knowledge, that could directly or indirectly tend to be detrimental to the welfare of the States of the United Netherlands, her Chartered East India Company, or the Government of the Same; that I shall not obey any orders which may be contrary to the interests of the same; that I shall to the best of my ability, do all in my power to exhort the members of my congregation to be obedient to Their High Mightiness the States-General, and to the Government of the Company in the East Indies as to my lawful master, subjecting myself, by this my declaration and signature, in case of default, to the usual punishment meted out to disturbers of the public peace".

Once such a declaration is given, the priest is granted a certificate giving him permission to work in the Dutch area. Besides, "priests who possess such a deed of admission shall serve without any restriction among the people of the Island, without being obliged to renew the original declaration on transfer from one parish to another".

Among the Oratorians who subscribed to this declaration, we find Father Bonaventura Mascarenhas of Trincomalee. His declaration carries the date 26th. August 1774. There is one more resolution passed by the Political Council of the Dutch in Ceylon in 1785, which permits marriages between Catholics and members of the Dutch Reformed religion. The resolution states, "that the marriage of Roman Catholic men with women of the Reformed Faith would in future be permitted in individual cases for special reasons, on condition that their marriage banns be authorized in keeping with this resolution of the Council".

All these enactments clearly indicate that by and by the Dutch had relaxed their regulations and attitudes towards the Catholic Church and Catholic priests, and the Church enjoyed quite an amount of freedom and peace in her works; and the earlier persecution began to subside, although there were heavy pressure from the Predikants. Even though the Plakkarts issued earlier against Catholic Religion and Catholic priests were not revoked, they were not adhered to in the last stages of the Dutch rule.

With the arrival of the British in 1796, all persecutions eased and Catholic religion began to flourish still more. The first baptismal Register was started in Trincomalee in the year 1784 by fr. F. Rodriguez, an Oratorian. In 1806 all the penal laws enacted against the Catholic Church were abrogated and made ineffective by the British Government. Accordingly, the Catholics were allowed unmolested possession and exercise of their religion in every part of the British settlements in Ceylon; they were admitted to all civil privileges and State services; all Catholic marriages solemnized since 1795 validated in law. This provision was promulgated on 27th. May 1806, by John Dean, the Secretary of the Council in Ceylon.

Our Diocese under Northern Vicariate

In 1847 Ceylon was divided into two vicariates, Colombo and Jaffna. The Eastern Province came

under Jaffna. Horatio Betachini was made Pro-Vicar of Jaffna. From then on for some years we notice Oratorians, Oblates, Jesuits, Cistercians and Secular priests working together in various parts of the north and east. In Trincomalee there was Fr. Garcia a Cistercian and in Batticaloa Fr. Vistarini, an Italian Secular priest, called by the people of Batticaloa "Nalla Sammanasu Swami" (). Later on we see Fr. Louis-Mary Keating, an Oblate in Trincomalee and Fr. Bruni a Jesuit at Batticaloa, who after sometime was replaced by Fr. Frederick Mouche, OMI and Fr. Constantine Chounavel OMI. Gradually the other men disappeared from the Mission field and the entire northern vicariate was taken over by the Oblate Missionaries.

The Oblates of Mary Immaculate had charge of the Eastern Seaboard for almost 50 years, from 1848 to 1895. During this period there had been almost 35 Oblates and some secular priests, Fr. Francis Xavier, Fr. Vistarini, Fr. Vincent Cassinelli and Fr. J.C.Mola, doing missionary work in the East. "Outstanding among the Oblate Missionaries from the point of view of length of service", states Fr. W.A. Lange, s.j., "were Fr. Auguste Rauffiac, who laboured for 25 years in Batticaloa and Trincomalee as chaplain of the armed forces in Trincomalee, but most in Batticaloa. Fr. Louis-Mary Keating was 24 years in Trincomalee as Chaplain of the armed forces, parish priest and founder and director of the first Boys' English school in the area. Fr. Frederick Mouchel and Anthony Larnandie each ministered to the people of the East coast for about nine years, the latter dying in Jaffna at an advanced age in 1931. Besides, here were Fr. Constantine Chounavel, Aimes Delpechne and Pousseq, Ceylon's first secular priest, Fr. Francis Xavier, a native of Jaffna, but truly an exceptional person.... He was founder of St. Michael's Boys school, St. Cecilias' Girls' School and St. Mary's Tamil school."

One Mrs. Flannagen, who started an English School for Girls in Jaffna at the invitation of Bishop Betachini, after handing it over to the Holy Family Sisters, came over to Trincomalee and at the encouragement of Bishop Semeira who succeeded Betachini, started two schools in 1864 for girls, one in English and the other in Tamil medium. She managed both institutions until the Holy Family Sisters came to Trincomalee in 1891.

There had been two great Mission Preachings in 1858, one in Trincomalee in March, and another in Batticaloa in July. It was conducted by Bishop Semeira,

Frs. Keating, Pussacq, Chounavel, Bonjean and Auguste Rauffiac. During the Mission Preaching, Fr. Christopher Bonjean who later became Bishop of Jaffna made his solemn vows in the Oblate Congregation at Trincomalee on 20th. May 1858. A letter written by Fr. Andrew Bruni, s.j. who was one of the five Jesuits loaned to the Northern Vicariate by Madurai Jesuit Mission, gives us a picture of the situation of Christians in the East at that time.

He was writing to his Superior in Madurai, on 1st. July 1849 :-

"I started with Bishop Betachini and Fr. Keating for Trincomalee. This station had been in charge for years of Frs. Garcia and Cassinelli, a secular priest, we found things pretty much in good order. All the Christians having to receive confirmation, we had a number of confessions and communions.

"At Kottiyar, there were about 200 Catholics, except a few old women, nobody made their First Communion.

After returning to Trincomalee, I went with the Bishop and Fr. Cassinelli to Batticaloa. Here everything had to be organized. No Bishops had ever visited these parts. The station had been administered till then by Goanese priests, the last of them was a certain Dom Gadino (Godhino), the best of men but with somewhat Jansenistic notions. The fact is that at Batticaloa there were hardly a hundred person who had made their first communion."

On a request made by the Bishop, Fr. Bruni remained in Batticaloa for some more time and visited the southern part of Batticaloa, most probably Sorikalmunai. He says; 'I visited a village in the interior somewhat far from Batticaloa. I heard their confessions, gave them Communion and in virtue of the powers conferred on me by the Bishop I administered the Sacrament of Confirmation. On the 16th. day of August, I left Batticaloa, having on the day of the Assumption given 250 Communions. Sometime afterwards Fr. Mouchel an Oblate who had recently arrived in the Island took my place at Batticaloa.'

Fr. Reichard, a Jesuit, writing about these early Oblate pioneers, says : "This portion of the Jaffna Mission was far from offering any attractions from a human point of view and promised only privation

and hard labour. Having only small resources at their disposal, among a population of the poorest, two or three Fathers were in-charge of a territory as large as our present Diocese...In spite of their small number, one cannot but be surprised at the amount of work undertaken and realized during those 50 years. They have in all truth sown in tears, at the sweat of their brow; but such tears and sweat gave the soil its fertility and solidity to their work."

During the time of the Oratorians, besides Batticaloa and Trincomalee, there were 06 mission stations. But when the Oblates left the Eastern Seaboard in 1895, the number of stations had increased to 17, with 10 churches and chapels and 6690 Catholics. Besides, there were 4 English schools and 4 vernacular schools with about 750 students.

Thus it has been rightly said that when the new diocese of Trincomalee was born, " what the new missionaries found was not a virgin mission land such as they could have had in China or Madagascar but a mission that was established many years before, and had been subjugated to persecution and had emerged from this wound but intact and now consisted of small pockets of old Christians whose practice of the Faith was in need of much improvement and rectification."

The Jesuits and the New Diocese

With the coming of the Jesuits a new chapter was opened in the history of the Eastern Province. When the first Jesuits arrived in the diocese of Trincomalee in 1895, they had just a sketchy knowledge of English and no Tamil whatsoever. Hence they were very greatly handicapped as regard their ministry and communication with the local people for a long time. Fortunately, fr. Larmy, s.j. of the Papal Seminary of Kandy and a Seminarian Anthony by name had accompanied them in order to help them organize and establish themselves and study the Tamil language and customs of the people. Fr. Larmy had been a missionary in South India for about 20 years and so knew the Tamil language and Tamil customs pretty well. Anthony was the interpreter for the new missionaries.

The first encounter of the new missionaries was a caste struggle between two rival groups of Catholics in Batticaloa, where anger and rancour, faction and fights reigned supreme. At this time

there were two churches in Batticaloa, one for the fisher folks (St. Anthony's) and the other (St. Mary's) for the Vellalar caste, the Burghers and the Barbers. Bishop Julian of Jaffna Diocese, in his welcome letter to Bishop Van Reeth, who was appointed Apostolic Administrator of Trincomalee, tells him what to expect in Batticaloa. "There are two main churches, the congregations of which have been at war for the past 6 months over which church should have the priest. Each church wants its own priest and expects to get him when the Jesuit Fathers arrive. Unfortunately, only St. Anthony's is suitable. The Fathers would be able to reach an agreement but they should be on their guard. I fear I foresee trouble for Your Greatness."

In order to have some peace among the Catholics at Batticaloa, Bishop Julian had made the following agreement, according to which, during the year, each church should have all the important services for six months. During this period the other church will have Mass on week-days and could also have private ceremonies such as Baptism, Marriages and Funerals. In fact, both churches were too small to contain even half the combined congregation at that time.

Due to such a delicate situation, when the first Jesuit Fathers came to Batticaloa, they first stayed in a small church in the suburbs, most probably at Amirthagaly at the Church of Our Lady of Good Voyage, and prepared to enter Batticaloa on the following day. A message was sent around to this effect, and the people hastily prepared a welcome for the new missionaries. Accordingly, "At 4.00 p.m. on November 24th. Fr. Roux led us to the entrance of the village; arriving at the parting of the way, Fr. Moreel and Fr. Larmy continued on towards St. Mary's church, Fr. Evrard and the Seminarian Anthon towards St. Anthony's. At once, from both parties arose shouts of joy, accompanied by fire-crackers, 'We have our own Fathers' exclaimed both groups" and thus was averted the first clash.

To each church was attached a small Mission House, both too small for the group. And so the Fathers occupied both houses and had their meals in one or the other according to their convenience. Soon after taking possession of the two churches, the new missionaries started with earnestness and vigor to learn the Tamil language leaving most of the pastoral work to Fr. Larmy.

The new missionaries made it a point, that in all

matters religious they rule, and not give in to the whim and fancies of the congregation and would not get involved in the caste struggle for supremacy. During the first few days, there were some rivalries among the two communities as to who should supply the meals for the Fathers, as it would give access and control of the Mission House. The Fathers sensing their intentions, immediately stopped it, and made their own arrangements to have their meals prepared in the Rectory itself.

One thing that made these first Jesuit missionaries wonder at and be stupefied was that there were hardly any communicants at Mass, even on big feast days and Sundays. In fact, it is reported that at the first Sunday Mass celebrated at Batticaloa, there were only 8 communicants at St. Mary's and only 4 at St. Anthony's. Further at Mass on January 6th., 1896, while there were about 300 participants, only 3 communicated. The new missionaries later came to know that many of the youths about the age of 16 and above had not even received their First Holy Communion and not yet made their Confession.

On further enquiries, they came to realize that it was mostly due to the Jansenistic tendency of the Goan priest who had manned the station at the last stages. Fr. Bruni, s.j. who had worked earlier at Batticaloa and then moved over to Calcutta, writing to Fr. Moreel sometime in July of 1898, says that a Goan priest who had worked at Batticaloa had himself told him that he considered Communion once or twice a year sufficient and hence had discouraged the people from frequent Communion. To counteract this attitude among the flock, Fr. Lamy organized Sunday afternoon Catechism for young men and women separately, and began to explain the meaning of prayers and the importance of frequent Communion and Confession.

Another big problem the missionaries faced was the prevalence of widespread concubinage and marriages without the blessing of the Church. On looking into the reasons and root causes for such disregard for Church weddings, the following emerged as decisive :-

- 1) In order to make sure that their daughters had a partner in life, mothers easily parted with their daughters and permitted them to live with a man of their choice.
- 2) Marriages outside the caste were unacceptable within the community, and the missionaries were having difficulties of obtaining easily dispensation from 2nd., degree of Consanguinity.

- 3) The men of the fisher folks were of the habit of testing the fecundity or otherwise of their future brides long before the marriage itself.
- 4) There were in addition, many social customs demanding heavy expenses at the time of wedding, which some of them were unable to cope up with.
- 5) In some instances there had been concubines who had gone to Communion and no detection or action was taken over, since the earlier missionaries were not able to identify them.
- 6) The practice of fixed days and time for Confession had not been brought into vogue, as most of the time the early missionaries were on the move.
- 7) Youngsters who wanted to marry outside the caste, found that the only way was to take the girls they liked without any ceremony or legal bond.

The Fathers made a vigorous campaign against all such abuses and unlawful unions and imposed public penance on concubinarious and even refused at time church funerals to such unrepentant persons in order to curb the menace and keep the future generation out of such situations.

At Trincomalee however, Fr. Heimbürger had been spared of the caste problems as in Batticaloa, at least for the time being. The British garrison in Trincomalee seemed to have had some influence on the local population, that the caste differences did not surface very much as in Batticaloa. Soon after Fr. Heimbürger arrived, Fr. William Owen, OMI, the outgoing Oblate missionary, briefed him regarding the temporal and spiritual situation of the district. Since Fr. Heimbürger did not know Tamil language at all and had only a sketchy knowledge of English, at once he began to learn Tamil and improve his English, since he had also to take care of the spiritual needs of the Catholic soldiers stationed at the British garrison.

The Holy Family Sisters who managed so far the Girls' English School were preparing to leave Trincomalee shortly, after the departure of the Oblates. Bishop Julian of Jaffna advised Bishop Van Reeth, the Administrator, to buy from them the house and property now being used by them. Fr. Owen left Trinco soon after Christmas leaving Heimbürger to manage the place all by himself.

In Batticaloa sometime in January 1896, Fr. Moreel he had an Orphanage, dedicated to St. Joseph, with

three boys, of the age of 10, 7, and 6. He put them in a small room at St. Mary's Rectory. Later a fourth one was taken.

On the 15th. February 1896, Bro. Wright, s.j. arrived at Batticaloa, and immediately he was posted to Trincomalee to help Fr. Heimburger. As Brother Wright was an Englishman, he was immediately put in-charge of the club for army and navy men in the British garrison.

In order to know the flock and their conditions of life, Fr. Larmy started making a census of the Catholics in Batticaloa. He never got to complete it. It was later taken up by Fr. Evrard. It was a very tedious process and made according to castes, one for the Vellarlars, another for the fisher folks, then another for the Burghers and another for the Barber caste.

The missionaries noted that just like the Hindus, even Catholics resorted to diabolical practices at times of illnesses, and had charms made against their enemies and offered or at least paid for fowls to be offered to the devil. Two places, especially Veechukalmunai adjoining Batticaloa and Sorikalmunai, 29 miles south of Batticaloa, were famous for such practices. The Fathers had to take strong measures against such unchristian practices and even deny the Sacraments and Christian burial rites to persons who have had recourse to such diabolical practices.

Transport facilities at this time was in a very primitive stage. One has either to take a launch which sometimes took 7 hours to cover a distance 24 miles or travel by bullock cart. The Fathers used both means to reach out to as many places as possible in search of the scattered Catholics.

Hardly 10 weeks had passed since their arrival, there were three young applicants who wanted to become priests. They were John, Lazarus, and Martin. The missionaries were overjoyed at this first catch so soon. These three youngsters approached the Fathers and expressed their desire to become priests. The candidates were examined regarding their motives and aptitudes by means of a questionnaire sent by Bishop Van Reeth and in March 1896 they were sent to the Papal Seminary, Kandy. Of these three candidates to the Priesthood, Martin left the Seminary in a short while. John persevered and later died as a seminarian. Sebastian Lazarus made it to the end and became the first diocesan priest. After sometime a fourth candidate,

Martin's brother Cyril Sebastian joined and persevered to the end. Both these brothers were ordained priests in 1906.

On July 4th. 1896, it was finally announced that Bishop Charles Lavigne of the Society of Jesus, former Vicar Apostolic of Kottayam, India and co-adjutor of Madagascar has been appointed Bishop of Trincomalee. As he was then under medical treatment in France, he was not expected soon in the diocese.

On September 11th. 1896, Fr. Charles Bonnel, s.j. who had worked in Kottayam with Bishop Lavigne arrived in Batticaloa. Then on 7th. November three others arrived as well, Fr. Charles Alfred Royar, the Jesuit Superior Regular of the Mission and Vicar General, Fr. Henry Bury, and Fr. Remy Outerleys as reinforcements for the new diocese.

Soon the new Superior of the Jesuits called together his little group of priests now in the diocese for a plenary session at Batticaloa. As Fr. Lange remarks, "it was little like the one Fr. Joseph Vaz had with his newly arrived reinforcements at Mantota 200 years earlier". Fr. Heimberger had come from Trincomalee and the Jesuit Diary describes the gathering as a "renewal of the Jesuit spirit through intimate conversation, through exhortation given us by our good Father Superior – a spirit of obedience and poverty".

About this time, the Apostolic Delegate Msgr. Zleski had written to Fr. Royer, the Jesuit Superior, welcoming him to the new mission and encouraging all the missionaries in their endeavours. He says, "I was glad to hear of our arrival in Ceylon. It cannot fail to give a new impetus to the mission of Trincomalee where the first Fathers of your province had already begun to work with the zeal which I cannot praise too much. It is a mission which one day will give you great consolation, but it is a mission which begins. You cannot expect it to yield much fruits in the first years. When a new mission is started, it offers little else than difficulties; the harvest comes later. Conversions begin when the missionaries have become popular among the pagans and 1896 they will acquire such popularity only when one has mastered the language of the people. The true influence of the missionary begins to be felt when the pagans cease to consider him as a stranger. Until then he can only gain their esteem by the care of their children".

Hardly six months elapsed since the arrival of the New Missionaries, there was the sudden death of Fr. Outerleys, the First French Jesuit to give his life for the Trincomalee Mission. It happened on May 17th. 1897. Prior to that he had been working at Thannamunai Church, preparing children and adults for their First Holy Communion. Soon after the event, he was suddenly struck by Malaria and succumbed to it. Fr. Evrard found him unconscious and delirious and anointed him. Within 15 minutes, the saintly priest who previously been saying "I am ready for anything, I have no preferences" went to meet his Lord. He was buried behind St. Anthony's Church. His burial place is still marked by a cemented Cross. A week later Fr. Gabriel de Beaurepaire, arrived from Madurai, to join the new mission.

As the people were not used to the habit of receiving frequent Communion, the Fathers wanted to impress upon them its important and grandeur. Hence they made Ascension Thursday, a day for First Holy Communion. All care was taken to make the occasion solemn and memorable. Children and their parents were carefully instructed and prepared long in advance. According to Lange, "A procession from St. Mary's church to St. Anthony's with banners and each girl child wearing a crown of flowers and all carrying candles were nicely arranged. Inside the church, the First Communicants were seated in a special place and given First Communion at the Altar itself. In the evening they were all enrolled in the Scapular and all were ceremoniously consecrated to Our Lord and Our Lady, with the renewal of their Baptismal promises. As time went on this First Communion Service became one of the important events throughout the diocese. Alas, sad to say, at the later stages, many an abuse had crept into it, and it began to lose all its spiritual values and began to take on a mere external show of one's wealth and status. Parents, each wanted their child to be the best dressed, the most fussed over. Expenses for fancy silk suits and dresses, First Communion parties at home, band of musicians, a decorated cart or car to conduct the child to and from the church, photographs etc.....made the First Holy Communion a luxury that poor families could not afford. Some would go into debt over it in order to maintain their real or imaginary status in the community; others just kept their children away. At the parties, liquor flowed."

When Bishop Van Reeth made an official visit of the

diocese on 3rd. July 1897, some dissension arose between the two communities of St. Anthony's and St. Mary's as to who should welcome the Bishop. The Vicar General Fr. Royer decided that this time the Christians of St. Anthony's church should have the honour of receiving the Bishop. But the people of St. Mary's church were very displeased at this decision and boycotted the reception. At the formal reception, the Bishop gave a brief sermon on the need for charity and kindness towards one another arising from their Christian Faith. At the Confirmation ceremony held at St. Anthony's church 180 people were confirmed. Only a few members of St. Mary's participated in this celebration. The Burgher community totally absented themselves. Later there was another Confirmation service held at nearby outstation church at Thannamunai. The Burghers of Batticaloa brought their 142 candidates from St. Mary's community to this place for Confirmation.

The animosity and ill feelings between members of St. Anthony's and St. Mary's have a long and unpleasant past, which had given the Fathers immense pain of heart and headache. When the first Jesuit missionaries arrive in 1895, they found at Batticaloa popularly known as Puliyantheevu, two churches built close to each other, St. Mary's and St. Anthony's. The former patronized by the Vellalars, Burghers and Barbers, and the latter by the fisher folks. In between the two, there was a Presbytery. St. Mary's church being smaller than St. Anthony's the Christians of St. Mary's decided to build a bigger church. The priest in-charge then, Fr. Francis Xavier, a high caste Jaffna man, being in sympathy with them, laid the foundation for an elaborate church on 19th. July 1874 and constructed part of the upper structure. He left the work unfinished, when transferred in 1881. In 1886, under Fr. Lafrage, the construction resumed. Again work came to a standstill in 1889, when he was transferred out. Later in 1892, under Fr. Meary, work resumed once again.

When the Jesuits came in 1895, it was not completed and had been exposed to the elements for almost 25 years. Hence doubt has been cast on the advisability of continuing the construction. Further the Jesuits wanted St. Mary's to be the future Cathedral of Trincomalee Diocese. And so it was decided that the foundations should be examined to ascertain its solidity and firmness, before continuing any further. But the people of St. Mary's had refused to permit any digging and

uncovering of the foundation for an inspection. Thus began the long drawn tug-o-war between the people and the priests, that led to many a riot, excommunications and final intervention of the police and other civil authorities. After many months of struggle and riots and court cases, reconciliation was brought between the people and the Fathers and the ring leaders made their submission to their pastors and peace restored. Finally on the order of Bishop Lavigne, after the restoration of Episcopal jurisdiction over the building, the church was completed and blessed in December 1901.

Trinco Diocese under Bishop Charles Lavigne

Bishop Lavigne arrived in Ceylon in November 1898. Already before his arrival in the island, Msgr. Zaleski, the Apostolic Delegate, had written a letter of welcome, wherein he said : "It is a small diocese, which contains very limited number of Christians, but it is a fertile field of apostolate and in spite of the 'kulappams' which the Tamils seem to create from time to time, Votre Grandeur should have some consolation, and certainly much less problems than in Malabar. They are a good people, these Tamils of Ceylon, but one must apply to them more perhaps than to others the words of St. Francis Xavier : 'Vitreum ad offensiones, genus vehementer resilet ac frangitur, mansuetudine ducitur ac flectitur quo veils'. I hope that when Votre Grandeur arrives in Ceylon, you will do as Bishop Van Reeth did and stay at the Delegation until everything is ready at Batticaloa to receive you, and consider Kandy as your town anytime you have need for a rest."

Soon after landing in Colombo, Bishop Lavigne went to Kandy, to pay his respects to the Apostolic Delegate, and then proceeded by train to Matale and from there travelled by bullock cart for 2 days and reached Trincomalee on the 22nd. December 1898. There he was welcomed by the people and the priests at the entrance into the town and taken in procession to the Cathedral where the 'Papal Bull' of enthronement was read in Tamil and English.

Then in mid January 1899, Bishop Lavigne came over to Batticaloa, his place of permanent residence. Prior to his coming to Batticaloa, there were some tug-o-war as usual among the various communities as to who should welcome the new Bishop. But the Parish Priest Fr. Charles Bonnel, in consultation with the Vicar General, Fr. Royer, were able to pacify all sectors of the community and thus

there were no protests or boycotts as in the past, when the Bishop arrived.

Soon after, the new Bishop got started to acquaint himself regarding the condition of the diocese. He first listened to what his men on the spot had to say. "Many of the Fathers were not quite pleased about the presence and activities of the Wesleyan Mission in the district, and narrated some of their bitter experiences with the Wesleyan ministers. Some even considered as their bitter enemies, particularly Father Royer seemed to have been almost fanatical in his attitude towards the Weslyans". Fr. Bonnel having had many problems with the Catholics themselves, was more reserved and said, "Our enemies are found not only among pagans and Protestants and Muslims, but even certain Christians add to our difficulties by their opposition".

Bishop Lavigne made his own investigation and drew his own conclusions and priorities. He found it too unchristian to brand the Weslyans or for that matter any man or woman as 'enemies'. In this he was very much influenced in his dealings with other Christians in Malabar and realized the need and importance for cultivating friendly relations with other Christians. The Bishop then began to admonish the Fathers for a change of attitude, of tolerance towards other Christians.

Secondly the Bishop concluded that the root cause for all these problems with our flock was due to ignorance of the Faith. Hence he himself began to organize meetings and public lectures in English on dogmatic, scriptural and historical questions. And he himself delivered many of these lectures.

Later in 1899, when he visited India, for the consecration of one of his friends Fr. De Saune, s.j. as co-adjutor Bishop of Madagascar, the Bishop made a special journey to Pondicherry to see the superior of the Cluny Sisters and requested their help for the running of the Girls' English School in Trincomalee, fallen vacant by the departure of the Holy Family nuns. His request was accepted and shortly after, the Cluny Sisters of St. Joseph took charge of the Girls' School at Trincomalee. The Superior General writing to the Bishop from Paris on 7th. July 1899, says "The Cluny Sisters do not demand all the comforts of Europe and as missionary religious they will be content with the little". Later a formal contract was written between the Bishop and the Superior General. Accordingly, the Bishop has to provide lodging and essential

furnitures for the Sisters and pay Rs. 25/- for the choir sisters and Rs 20/- for the lay Sisters per mensem for their support. But the Sisters will have the freedom to manage their own affairs and the discipline of the school, without any interference by the Bishop. The choice of Cluny Sisters seemed to have been very providential, for they really fulfilled all expectations. Soon admission to the school under the Cluny Sisters began attracting more and more students.

Later on the Bishop tried to get another group of Cluny Sisters to Batticaloa. But as they could not spare the persons immediately, he invited one Miss Mary Appoo of Aleppy, India, with whom he had been in contact. She had been a religious earlier and had resigned and left the congregation, but observed her vows and retained her religious dress. Bishop Lavigne offered her a place at the Girls' school at Batticaloa as headmistress, until the arrival of the Cluny Sisters. Writing in June 1900, Lavigne said that he would pay Rs. 15/- per mensem as salary and arrange for board and lodging. And "if you would like to retain your dress I shall not object" said the Bishop. But he warned her that within an year or two the school will be handed over to the Cluny Sisters. "If you agree with their mode of life, and if they agree with your temper of mind and heart you will try to be admitted. But on this account I cannot give you any promises or hope. It will be your private affair" wrote the Bishop. Accordingly, shortly afterwards Miss or Sister Mary Magdalene as she was later called by the people of Batticaloa, together with two of her own sisters arrived, and Cecilia's Girls' school got started as an English school. The original St. Cecilia's was started by Fr. Francis Xavier in 1876 as a Tamil school. Actually Sr. Magdalene was not paid Rs. 15/- per mensem, but Rs. 40/- per mensem and on retirement Rs. 20/- p.m.

The Bishop had also invited the Trappist monks to the diocese, but the General Chapter of the Trappists in 1898 and 99 ruled out any further foundations, due to shortage of personnel and did not come through. He further wanted to get the Cluny Sisters into Batticaloa General Hospital as well in order to improve the quality of treatment and to raise its status. But since he did not receive any favourable answer from the Government, that too had to be given up.

In the year 1900 cholera broke out in the Eastern Province and began moving up north towards

Trinco town. Fr. Heimburger in Trincomalee called his parishioners together and encouraged them to make a vow to Our Lady that if they are spared from this epidemic they would build a shrine honouring her apparitions at Lourdes. Sure enough,, it did happened that cholera stopped at Muthur and did not touch Trincomalee. Hence in order to fulfill the vow a jungle shrine was inaugurated at Palayuthu.

Soon after some caste trouble erupted in Trincomalee. It was in connection with the admission of some low caste children into the Catholic English school. Those of the high caste threatened to withdraw their children and would not allow their children to be 'polluted' by coming in contact with children of the low castes. Fr. Heimberger then arranged separate classes for the low caste children with a separate teachers. Then the parents of the low castes children complained that they were being discriminated against, and put the Parish Priest into a very precarious and embarrassing situation. About this time there was decree by the Government imposing a fee on all English medium schools islandwide, on account of which the Fathers started charging fee on all students in the English medium schools. Not understanding the circumstances under which the Fathers were charging fees, the parents also complained against the Fathers and accused them of greed. Eventually with tact and prudence, the matter was explained to all concerned and the whole affair was straightened out to the satisfaction of the majority of the parents and the schools were saved from being closed down.

The Bishop in his desire to foster indigenous vocations to the Priesthood, on 4th. November 1902, started St. Charles Minor Seminary, in Batticaloa, with three students. They were Santiapillai Marian, Swani Mariampillai, and Philip Joseph Mary. The Bishop himself set the rules and time table for these seminarians and placed them under the care of the Parish Priest Batticaloa. Besides he himself taught them the Latin language. For the rest of the subjects they attended classes at St. Michael's. After sometime this Minor Seminary had been discontinued for no specific reason. Most probably, after the opening of the new St. Michael's College as an English medium school, the early Fathers and the Bishop must have expected this part of the work to be done by the College, specially through its boarding house.

When Fr. Ferdinand Bonnel and Bro. Bouvier

arrived in 1902, Bishop Lavigne himself gave them their first lessons in Tamil. This the Bishop had been doing whenever new missionaries arrived. Then in September 1904 came Fr. Gaston Robichez, Fr. Moreel Gouth and Bro. Alphose Drouan. Soon Robichez was appointed Vicar General of the diocese and Superior of the Jesuits.

The efforts of the Jesuit missionaries to make a break through in the caste distinctions and their evil effects and impacts on the Christian communities seem to have made some definite change of attitude among the flock during the Jubilee celebrations of the promulgation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, conducted in the year 1904. The Jubilee was celebrated throughout the diocese on 8th. December. It is reported that people from all the churches in and around Batticaloa came to St. Mary's church, carrying their respective statues of the Blessed Virgin Mary for the evening Vespers. On the day of the feast, to the joy of everyone, the fisher folks of St. Anthony's and the Vellarlers of St. Mary's "amicably participated in a ceremony of laying the foundation stone for the new façade for St. Anthony's church. Rice was distributed among all castes and parties".

The Retreat Movement too seemed to have helped in breaking down the caste barriers. For it is stated that "the retreat movement achieved much during the years it flourished. For it managed to bring together retreatants of different castes, a proof of great spirit of faith". Also the formation of various Sodalities with membership spanning the boundaries of caste and party, helped very much to bring different people together...The English schools helped even more".

In 1905 December 23rd. the major Seminarians Lazarus, Cyril and John were ordained deacons at Batticaloa by Bishop Lavigne. Shortly after their diaconate Lazarus and Cyril went back to Kandy to continue their studies, while John being somewhat sickly went to his home town Kalmunai to recuperate. While in Kalmunai John was teaching for sometime in the English school. But on 13th. October 1906, John passed away in the arms of Fr. Moreel in Kalmunai and was buried there. But in December 1906, Bishop Lavigne had the great joy of ordaining the first two diocesan priests at Trincomalee, Fr. Sebastian Lazarus and Fr. Cyril Sebastian. Soon after Lazarus was put to teach in school in Batticaloa, and Cyril to teach in Trincomalee.

In 1907 March 9-10 a severe cyclone hit Batticaloa and Kalmunai, and brought heavy loss of human lives, properties, such as schools, hospitals and houses. Even Thandavanveli Church of Our Lady of Sorrows was heavily damaged by the cyclone. But by the end of 1907, Fr. Alphonse Reichard, s.j. arrived in Batticaloa from France. Immediately he was posted to the Catholic school at Kalmunai.

In their attempt to educate and evangelize the Rock Veddhas (Nomads and aborigines) of the Bintenne Pattu in the southern part of the diocese, the Bishop and the Jesuit fathers opened six Catholic schools in 1907. But one fine day all the Veddhas packed up their meager belongings and moved off to another place, leaving the school buildings deserted and so the schools had to be closed down and the entire project given up.

Later sometime in 1908 the Bishop bought the major portion of Kumblamadu coconut estate that was put up for sale, as 'mensa episcopalis' in order to have some regular income for the maintenance of the Bishop. As time went the Bishop also bought some more adjoining lands and the total came to 100 acres. This was later named 'Haven Estate'.

The year 1910 marked the arrival of the Cluny Sisters to Batticaloa. They arrived in Batticaloa on 14th. March and took over St. Cecilia's school. Soon the number of girl students increased from 35 to 130.

About this time the diocese had committed itself fully to promote education, and the Fathers spent most of their time in the class rooms. The Bishop did not like it, as he was trying to take them for evangelization work and pastoral ministry outside schools. He wanted to replace them with others. Thus on 27th. March 1911, he was fortunate to have 5 Marist Brothers, all of them very young, to take up teaching in the diocese. All of them were qualified teachers and were placed at once to teach at St. Michael's College.

It had been the dream of the Bishop that Batticaloa should have a school second to none. This dream and expectation began to show fulfillment when on 16th. July 1912 Sir Henry MaCullum, the then Governor of Ceylon, laid the foundation, for the new St. Michael's College. In 1913 a new science lab was added. But unfortunately, before the construction of this proposed St. Michael's College could be completed, Bishop Lavigne was called to rest in the lord, on 11th. July 1913, while in France.

Fr. Lange reports that his death 'was a personal loss to every soul in the Eastern Province. To the clergy, priests, Sisters and Brothers Lavigne has been a true Father, wise, strong, gentle and affectionate. He was like an elder brother to his priests, never standing on ceremonies....He was not merely interested in their problems, but made them very much his own and while never making the slightest move to interfere or impose his own solutions, he was a tower of strength in every crisis, great and small".

Trincomalee Diocese under Bishop Gaston Robichez

After the death of Bishop Lavigne, in 1913, Fr. Gaston Robichez, the Vicar General, took over the administration of the diocese, and exhorted everyone to pray for guidance in the nomination of a new Bishop.

While the priests and people were praying for guidance of the Holy Spirit in the nomination of a new Bishop, there had been some correspondences between the Jesuit General and the Holy See, regarding the future of the Trincomalee Diocese. The Champagne Jesuit Province was not able to send anymore missionaries to Trinco, due to the war in Europe and on account of its commitments in China and Madagascar. And in comparison with these two major Missions, Trincomalee was considered too small, comprising too few Catholics. Hence a decision was made by the Society to pull the Jesuits out of Trinco diocese and another by Propaganda Fide to suppress the diocese of Trincomalee and partition it with Jaffna and Kandy. Accordingly letters were dispatched to the Administrator of Trincomalee.

On 11th. March 1914, which was the death anniversary of Bishop Lavigne, Fr. Robichez broke this startling news to the Fathers, Brothers and Sisters in the diocese, and exhorted them to accept it with humility and obedience. Thus runs the draft of the speech prepared by Fr. Robichez on this occasion :

"It is not without emotion that I make known to you today, a decree of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide which has sanctioned a new partition of the dioceses of Ceylon. The diocese of Trincomalee judged too small and comprising too few Catholics is suppressed, the northern parts, ie. The district of Trinco, passes to the diocese of Jaffna and the central and southern part, ie. The districts of Batticaloa and Kalmunai

passes to the diocese of Kandy.

"Rome has spoken, faithful children, obedient soldiers of the Holy Church. We all my very dear Brothers, have no course, but to bend our will to execute the order given" ..

It was too big a blow to all the Jesuits who had laboured all these years, and who had tried to become part and parcel of the people of the Eastern Seaboard of Ceylon. However they made the sacrifice generously, and began preparing to leave the diocese.

But in August of the same year, to the great joy of all, there was another letter, notifying the suspension of the earlier order of suppression, and the Jesuits were told to remain indefinitely. It seems that the Apostolic Delegate Msgr. Zaleski had intervened in the meantime and got Rome to suspend if not cancel the suppression of Trinco diocese.

In the meantime, the construction of St. Michael's College was going at full speed, and on May 3rd. 1915, Mr. Howard, the then Director of Education declared open the new class rooms in the new building.

About this time Fr. Robichez, finding the maintenance of the missionaries causing anxieties due to financial difficulties and with a view to inculcate on the Catholics their duty to support their pastors, inaugurated on 10th. June 1915, the Mission Fund contribution in to the diocese. This practice has continued to this day, practically in all the parishes, even though the amount collected has never been sufficient to support all the missionaries.

The 22nd.March 1917 is another mile stone in the history of the diocese of Trincomalee. It was on this day that Pope Benedict XV raised Fr.Robichez to the rank of Bishop to succeed Lavigne. This piece of good news was received in Batticaloa on 25th. of April and all the bells of the churches began to peal announcing the nomination of the new Bishop. He was consecrated at Batticaloa on the 8th. July by the Archbishop of Colombo, Dr. Anthony Coudert, omi, and Dr. Henry Julian, the Bishop of Jaffna, and Dr. Bede Beckmeyer, osb, the Bishop of Kandy.

One of the first things that Bishop Robichez attempted soon after his consecration was to re-baptize the diocese by including the name of Batticaloa. As Batticaloa was in the centre of the diocese, and had the highest percentage of Catholics and was the Provincial Capital, Bishop

Robichez had thought of a change in the name of the diocese as proper. Accordingly he had written a letter to the Apostolic Delegate Msgr. Zaleski, seeking advice, on 30th. August 1917. The Apostolic Delegate had replied discouraging him of his move, saying that Propaganda does not like such changes, and that there does not seem to be any major reasons for it. "My advice is to renounce this proposal, as it is sure to be turned down" concluded Msgr. Zaleski.

In the meantime, soon after his consecration, Bishop Robichez preached the annual Retreat to all the Fathers in September 1918. And on October 19th. created two new parishes of Puliyadikkudah and Thandavanveli, by trifurcating Batticaloa.

Sometime in 1919 there appeared a new decree from the Government stating that in those villages, where the religion of the majority of the people differs from that of the Institution that runs the school, the Government was empowered to close down such schools and start its own schools where religion need not and would not be taught. Until then, full freedom was given for anyone to open any number of schools anywhere, provided there was a minimum of 60 students, and Christianity could freely be taught.

All the Bishops of the Island jointly made a protest against this latest move of the Government to restrict their freedom of action, but it was not heeded to. As a result, later in the year, the diocese of Trincomalee had to close down 05 of its schools on account of this decree, and transfer another school to a different place. The schools thus closed down were those at Kattankudy, Ampalanthurai, Maha Oya, Chenaikudiyiruppu, and Thampattai. The one at Kayankerny was transferred to Nasivantheevu.

About this time the Cluny Sisters in the diocese were facing some difficulties. The two communities at Batticaloa and Trincomalee were far apart from each other and very much isolated from all quarters. Besides, the maintenance of the two communities was costing the congregation quite an amount of sacrifice back in France. There were no possibilities of fresh reinforcements coming in on account of the war in Europe. Hence fear was setting in on everyone's mind that very soon the two convents may have to be closed down due to lack of personnel. This would also have a bad repercussion on the schools that the Cluny Sisters were managing. Hence Bishop Robichez hit upon

the idea of founding a local congregation of Religious nuns who would be trained by the present band of Cluny Sisters and could take over gradually all the work of the Cluny Sisters. After reflecting and discussing about the prospect of such a venture with some Sisters Congregations, he inaugurated the Congregation of the Sisters of the Presentation, at Trincomalee with two girls as aspirants, on 21st November 1920. The Cluny Sisters at Trincomalee gladly provided facilities and a novice mistress for the training. After an year of training as novices the two aspirants made their first simple vows, one becoming Sr. Margaret Mary of the Sacred Heart and the other Sr. Mary Therese of Jesus. They were put in charge of the little children's' section of the Tamil school at Trincomalee. Later Bishop Robichez set up a foundation of Rs. 10,000/- for their maintenance and support and applied to Rome for approval and recognition.

In the meantime news had come that very soon the Cluny Sisters would be recalled and would have to leave the diocese. The Bishop then applied to the Apostolic Carmel Congregation and invited them to come to the diocese and take up the work of the Cluny Sisters. The invitation was accepted by the Congregation of the Apostolic Carmel of Mangalore and on their arrival in January 1922, the Cluny Sisters handed over Trincomalee Girls' Schools. And in May of the following year the Carmelite Sisters also took charge of the convent and school at Batticaloa. And the Cluny Sisters, after 22 years of dedicated service to the diocese bade adieu and left on the 16th. May 1923.

With the departure of the Cluny Sisters at Trincomalee the affairs of the little community of the local congregation came under the care of the Carmel Sisters. But things did not fare well. The two sisters of the Presentation were not very happy in their vocation. There had been some correspondence between them and the Bishop for sometime on the matter. The newly arrived Carmelite Sisters were prepared to take the two into their congregation as lay sisters. This they did not like. And so finding no other way to overcome the impasse, on August 25th. 1923, the Bishop granted an indult of secularization to one, enabling her to give up her religious life. The other left Ceylon and went over to Bangalore and stayed with the Good Shepherd nuns. Thus came to an end, the one and only effort to found a Diocesan Congregation of Religious Sisters in the Trinco Mission.

A year before the arrival of the Apostolic Carmel Sisters into the diocese, the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary had come and established themselves at Mantivu, to look after the leper colony.

About this time (1923), Fr. Hoppenot was slowly extending his missionary endeavours into the villages south of Batticaloa, with Navatkudah as his residence. About 09 miles south of Batticaloa, i.e. at Thalankudah, there was a small coconut estate with a big bungalow owned by a good Catholic from Jaffna. He was an overseer in the Public Works Department, in-charge of the construction of roads. Many of the Thalankudah folks were employed by him in his estate, as well as in road making.

The Church had only a school at Thalankudah, which Fr. Hoppenot visited often. From Puliyadiikkudah he moved over to Navatkudah his residence, since the Catholic school there at Navatkudah was closed down. It so happened that at Thalankudah a fight broke out between two groups. On one side was the Mukva caste people, and on the other were the Dhobys and the Barber castes. Finally this caste struggle led to a case in the Batticaloa courts. The people of one group approached the PWD Overseer for help with the civil authorities in their law suit. He advised them to have recourse to Fr. Hoppenot. When they approached Fr. Hoppenot, he promised to do his best for them; but he advised them to think of their ultimate end in life and think of spiritual interests in life as well.

Some of them volunteered to become Catholics, and were enrolled as Catechumens. Fr. Hoppenot with the help of a Catechist began instructing these catechumens while the case in the courts was proceeding. It is reported in Fr. Reichard's unpublished manuscript, that according to Fr. Hoppenot, "there were wrongs on both sides but mostly on the side of the catechumens". When the verdict at the courts was proclaimed, sixteen of the catechumens were convicted and sentenced to six months imprisonment at the Batticaloa jail. Undaunted by this initial set back and disappointment, Fr. Hoppenot often visited the prisoners in jail and comforted them. He also helped the families of those imprisoned with material helps as they had no bread-winners for six months and had mortgaged all their belongings to defray the cost of the case in the courts.

The Governor of Ceylon then, Sir Gaems Thompson, was making his first visit to Batticaloa at this time. As he alone had the power to pardon any prisoner in Ceylon then, Fr. Hoppenot hit upon the idea of appealing to him for clemency on these poor creatures. So he wrote out a petition signed by all the wives and children of the convicted and recommended by the Government Agent and some of the leading men of the town, to be handed over to the Governor. Soon after the Governor was given a welcome at the courts house, and when coming out, the weeping wives and children of the prisoners cast themselves down at his feet and presented their petition. The Governor promised them that he would consider the matter and let them know.

Few days later, an order came from the Governor to free the prisoners. Fr. Hoppenot was notified by the Government Agent to come to the Prison for the occasion. Fr. Hoppenot collected all the wives of the prisoners and came to the prison. In his presence, the Government Agent in person came to the jail and released the prisoners. People were delighted and were now more enthusiastic about becoming Catholics, and continued their instructions and preparation for Baptism.

But Fr. Hoppenot, besides this initial victory also had to contend with the menace of the money lenders in the village. The people of the village, for their seasonal cultivation, were very much dependent on the money lenders for money to do their cultivation. These money lenders actually fleeced the people at the time of the harvest. Fr. Hoppenot, appealed to his people in France for assistance. And with the little money he received he opened a small 'bank' at very low interest to snatch these unfortunate creatures from the clutches of their exploiters". In this way he gained the confidence of these poor people, who showed a greater desire to know a religion which inspired such disinterestedness. "The zealous catechist continued to instruct them and God's grace did the rest. The catechumens with great fervor, seriously began to learn their prayers. In their first fervour, they rid their houses of all the signs of idolatry, and in their places they put holy pictures of Our Lord, the blessed Virgin and the Saints".

And on the feast of the Holy Trinity in 1924, 20 adults and their children were happily baptized at Thalankudah by the Superior of Jesuit Fathers. Sometime later, Bishop Robichez himself baptized four more, and confirmed the entire lot. Soon after,

there were another 50 catechumens under instruction for Baptism. In the meantime, the PWD overseer at Thalankudah was moving out and his coconut estate and bungalow was donated to Fr. Hoppenot by him. And so Fr. Hoppenot made Thalankudah his place of Residence. Fr. Hoppenot then built a beautiful Church, dedicated to St. John the Baptist, which stand still even to this day.

Within a short time another 25 catechumens from the nearby village of Araipattai were baptized and received into the Church, thanks to the efforts of one Mr. Emmanuel Kanapathipillai, a teacher, who himself was converted to Christianity from his youth, while studying at St. Sebastian's School, Batticaloa. Later one of his sons, Saminathan became the first diocesan priest of Thalankudah parish. Fr. Hoppenot built for them a small church dedicated to the Little Flower, St. Theresa of the Child Jesus.

The people of Thalankudah loved Fr. Hoppenot so much, that when he died on 27th. September 1940, they requested the Bishop to bury him at Thalankudah itself. Contrary to all customs, the Bishop acceded to their request, and Fr. Hoppenot was buried near the Church at Thalankudah. His grave is daily visited by the people coming for Holy Mass and candles lit at his grave side even to this day in thanksgiving for the light of Christian Faith he brought to the people of Thalankudah.

For quite sometime, Bishop Robichez had been contemplating of opening up a dispensary for the poor, as part of the Church's healing mission. With the arrival of the Franciscan Sisters, he found that this could become a reality. And in 1924, the Bishop bought up the famous "Crowther Property" at Kallady and some adjoining lands as well. On this spacious land, the Bishop established a charitable institution for girls under the care of the Franciscan Sisters, with a convent, school, needle work-room, orphanage and a boarding house, instead of the dispensary.

Right from the beginning the missionaries had encountered tough opposition from the Hindus against any mass conversions. Even when people of the low castes preferred to join the Catholic Church for various motives, some of which are questionable today, the Hindus of the high castes reacted violently. An incident is reported in a remote village called Valaithottam in Muthur Parish, which gives an example of the hostilities manifested by

high caste Hindus towards conversion of people to Christianity. In this village there were some semi-nomadic people and the missionaries tried to make an entry into the village by establishing a school for them. It was Fr. Lazarus who started the school. He used to visit the school occasionally and also teach the children. Slowly he won over the hearts of the villagers. Seeing the good will and the kindness of the priest in providing education for their neglected children and the love and generosity he showed them, many of the villagers wanted to become Catholics and asked the priest for baptism. About 22 of them were enrolled as catechumens and Fr. Laxarus started instructing them on the faith. When the high caste Hindus in the adjoining village came to know of it, they began to harass these poor neophytes and even threatened them with punishments if they ever became Christians. Out of fear 8 of the neophytes postponed their baptism for more favourable time and only 14 were baptized. Soon after many petitions had been sent to the civil authorities, saying that the priest was using the school as a pretext for proselytizing. They also accused the Father of having taken over the land of the new Christians for Church purposes. One fine day, some fields of the villagers were set on fire and the blame was put on the Christians. A chapel was erected near the school dedicated to the Little Flower. Shortly after the statue of the Little Flower was stolen and the school set on fire. On account of the complaints made by the High caste Hindus, the Government did not want to help the priest put up his school again. Sometime after the High caste Hindus of the adjoining village put up a Hindu school just opposite the Catholic school. Animosity ran so high that the new Christians were frightened to go out of the village for anything, for fear of reprisals. The Church had to close down the school and abandon the place for the time being and wait for better times. To this day, Valaithottam is a deserted place neither cared by the Hindus nor by the Catholic Church. And the people today are no better than their ancestors.

The apostolate of the Press had been one of the favourites of Bishop Robichez. Already in 1910, during the time of Bishop Lavigne, due to the efforts of the then Fr. Robichez, a small Catholic Press had been started in Batticaloa. After he became Bishop, Robichez was very much interested in improving the Press. Encouraged by Bishop Robichez, Fr. Alphonse Reichard had been publishing a small monthly called "The Pilgrim". It was an eight page magazine half English and half Tamil. When Bishop had his audience with the Holy Father, he had

spoken about his efforts in the Press Apostolate. The Holy Father expressed his interest in the apostolate of the Press and gave Bishop Robichez some financial assistance for the expansion of the Press Apostolate. Soon after, the Bishop bought some new equipments for the Press and housed it in a new building called, 'The Catholic Orphanage Press'. It was meant to train orphan boys as printers and book binders and thus enable them to find some employment when leaving the orphanage. Later with the coming of the Brothers of the Society of St. Joseph, the management of the Press was handed over to them along with the Orphanage. During the time of Bishop Ignatius Glennie, additional equipments were purchased to improve the quality of printing, and transferred the ownership of the Press to the Brothers of the Society of St. Joseph. In 1987, the Press was shifted to a new building close to the Brothers' House, with upto date machineries and re-named "St. Joseph's Press". Today it is one of the best equipped printing presses in the whole of the Eastern Province, though the quality of its printing is much to be desired.

For quite sometime, there had been repeated requests from the small Catholic community at Kalmunai for an English Girls' School. The Bishop differed the project for lack of Religious Sisters to take up the venture. About this time, the Apostolic Carmel Sisters had well consolidated their position in Batticaloa and Trincomalee. The Bishop thought it opportune to focus their attention to Kalmunai now. Accordingly a suggestion was given that the Carmel Sisters should span out to Kalmunai. In spite of their limitation of personnel and resources, the redoubtable Mother Eulali promptly took up the matter in hand. There was no house that could even be rented out for a convent, but there was a garage belonging to a Catholic who was prepared to rent it out to the Sisters. The garage was then taken on lease for a term of three years and soon the Sisters moved into it. Father Bury, the then parish priest of Kalmunai, found some benefactors in Europe and the United States to start the Girls' English medium school, and on the 17th. July 1929, the new school was opened with 18 students on roll.

In Trincomalee, seeing the increase in the number of Catholics, chapels, and schools, the Bishop thought it time to bifurcate the Cathedral parish. And so, on the 20th. March 1930, Sinnakadi parish was constituted as a separate and independent entity with Fr. Reichard as parish priest. And on the 1st. of August 1931, by an agreement between the Bishop

and the Society of Jesus, St. Joseph's College at Trincomalee, was officially handed over to the Society, to be run and managed by them. Until then, it had been the property of the diocese under the Bishop. From now on the Society of Jesus will have to shoulder all responsibilities for the College, and meet all the expenses of having to run it. The Bishop will have only a supervisory role through his General Manager of Catholic schools.

Catechists have always been an important group in the Mission of the Church. Already St. Francis Xavier had realized the importance of Catechists in the mission field, and had placed at least one in each village. Following his foot-steps, every Jesuit priest in the Trinco diocese was dreaming of the day when he could have the luxury of a catechist in every village. At the same time there was an acute shortage of good Catholic teachers to man the schools in the diocese. The financial position of the diocese daily becoming very precarious, it could not afford the luxury of both a Catholic teacher and a catechist in every village. Hence in order to beat two birds in one stroke, a plan was devised to have a Catholic teacher who would also act as a catechist in every village. It was with this in view that the Teacher Training School was started during the time of Bishop Lavigne. However, for a long time this institution had not made much progress, and was in need of fresh blood and new impetus. Bishop Rebichez too had been making request to his French benefactors for the formation of Catholic teachers and catechists. In one of his letter to them sometime in 1929 he wrote : "Every one agrees that the work of the missionary is doubled, tripled, and quadrupled according to the number and quality of catechists at his disposal. But a catechist can do little unless he has the efficiency he ought to have. A good catechist, sure, zealous, patient and well informed, and who has religion at his fingertips and is able to defend it against the attacks of non-Catholics, is a 'rara avis'. Our Teacher Training School must be a school of catechists. Each village must have a Catholic teacher who is also a trained Catechist."

And so, knowing the performance and capabilities of the Brothers of the Society of St. Joseph in the field of education, they were put in charge of the Diocesan Teacher Training School of St. Augustine at Batticaloa., where they really did a good job of producing some of the best Catholic teachers the diocese has had at that time.

With the year 1933, a new chapter was beginning in the history of the diocese. Since the French Jesuit Province of Champagne could not send any more men to the depleted man power of the Trincomalee Mission, it had requested the General of the Society to look out for some other Province, that would take up the responsibility of Trincomalee. At this time, the only other commitments outside, was the New Orleans Jesuit Province. Hence the General of the Society of Jesus had requested the New Orleans Province to help the Trincomalee Mission, and New Orleans sent its first man to Trinco, in the person of John T. Linehan, 1933.

The crowning event of the year 1933 for the Church was the baptism of about 200 adults in October-November at Kallar. Mass conversions usually are forms of social protest against conditions of oppression and discrimination in human society. The need for protection and liberation from oppression and tyranny often drives people into the bosom of the Church. And Kallar was no exception. The first beginnings of Christianity in Kallar was in 1894 by the Oblate Fathers. Fr. Aimee Depeche, OMI, baptized a group of lime burners (Kadears). They were people ostracized and oppressed for generations by the people of the high caste. The coming of the Catholic priest and the starting of a new school, opened the way for emancipation of these downtrodden poor in Kallar. The internal structure of the Tamil Hindu society, divided as it were into a hierarchy of castes, put one subservient to the other in an ascending and descending scale.

This time it was the 'chandar' caste people. On this group of people for generations had been thrust the duty of providing coconut palm leaves for the temple decorations at the time of the feasts throughout the year, without any remunerations. Vexed and impoverished, they rebelled and said that they would provide such a service only for the chief festival. But the high caste Hindus refused to accept this offer and retaliated by forbidding the Barbers and Dhobies from serving these people. By this they hoped that they would be able to get them to submit to the age old tradition and custom without interruption. But the people of 'chandar' caste, seeing the freedom and independence enjoyed by the Christians of the kadear caste and the protection and care afforded by the Catholic priest at Kallar, appealed to the Father to help them. In Hindu villages and societies, exclusion of the services of the Barbers and Dhobies amounted to practical ostracism. And so Fr. Lazarus, the priest in

charge of the mission, made some arrangements and provided them a Barber and a Dhoby from a distant village. This timely help of the priest won over the hearts of the 'chandar' community, and they voluntarily requested to be baptized and join the Catholic Church. Fr. Lazarus for months instructed them on the basic teachings of the Catholic religion, and in groups of 100 at a time, organized solemn baptisms of the neophytes. The last batch of baptisms were administered on the 18th November 1933, by Fr. Bonnel and two other priests, thus bringing the total number of Catholics at Kallar to well over 300. He later built a school for their children, and had to fight his way against the objections and obstacles placed by the high caste Hindus, in getting it registered and recognized by the Government.

The year 1935 saw the arrival two new hands from New Orleans Province, Fr. Cassidy and a scholastic by the name of Ignatius Trigeros Glennie. After two years Fr. Cassidy left the mission and returned to the United States, due to ill health. Glennie continued his studies in Kandy Papal Seminary and in Kurseong and later became Rector of Kandy Papal Seminary, and succeeded as Bishop of Trincomalee after Robichez. He was the last Jesuit to become the Bishop of Trincomalee diocese.

Even though the Trincomalee diocese was erected in 1893, and St. Mary's Church at Trincomalee was chosen as the Cathedral of the diocese, it had never been consecrated as such. In fact, when Bishop Robichez made his 'ad limina' visit to Rome in 1920, the Holy Father Pope Benedict XV had asked him whether he had a Cathedral Church properly consecrated according to canon law. The Bishop seemed to have replied that he could not think of a consecration, until the church was modified, enlarged and totally renovated. He had then given the Bishop a gift for the renovation of the Cathedral Church, and told him to have it consecrated. But when the Bishop returned to the diocese, the money given by the Pope was spent on other and more important tasks.

There are some documents in the diocesan archive in Batticaloa, according to which a Catholic community, and consequently a church or a chapel was in existence at Trincomalee during the time of the Portuguese occupation in the 16th. century. But we have no document to trace the actual place of this church or chapel. But during the Dutch persecution, there seemed to have been some

secret place or places of worship for Catholics in Trincomalee. In the Oratorian Report of 1751 there is mention of a church being destroyed in Trincomalee during the Dutch persecution. Speaking of the missionary endeavours of Fr. Francis de Manroy, the report says, "From Kottiyar he went to Trincomalee. As the church of that place had been destroyed during the same persecution, he borrowed a sail from a Dutchman and set up a tent in which he celebrated Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, administered the sacraments and baptized more than 90 persons adults and children"..

It is only around 1774 that the Dutch Government permitted priests to reside publicly within their territories and minister to the Catholics, after having signed a declaration of Alligiance to the Dutch Company. We find Fr. Bonaventure Mascarenhas in Trincomalee had signed such a document on 24th. August 1774. Further the Dutch did not permit to build any Catholic churches, and that even in the last stages never in prominent places. As the present site of the Cathedral in Trincomalee is practically in the heart of Trinco town, it could not have been the place where the Oratorians had their original church that was burnt down. It must have been away from the town and hidden.

And Baptismal registers are maintained at Trincomalee only from 1783 and marriage registers from 1796, one year after the British took over Ceylon from the Dutch. Hence from all these it would seem very definite that the present St. Mary's Cathedral church could not have been built during the Dutch occupation. But it is possible that the land for the church could have been purchased somewhere around 1796 or little later. Yet for all we are unable to ascertain the actual site of the building of the original St. Mary's church at its present site, for there are no documents available today. According to Fr. Reichard, s.j. St. Mary's church at its present site must have been built around 1802, primarily for the British garrison and naval soldiers. The construction pattern, three feet thick walls of random rubble and clay, indicates that the builders were used to Dutch models of construction, which again goes to prove that it must have been constructed during the political power transfer period at the end of the 17th. century and the beginning of the 18th. century. The building has survived to this day.

However in 1852 Fr. Louis Mary Keating, with the generous contributions of the Irish soldiers erected the front façade and portico. In 1893 a dome was constructed above the sanctuary, by Fr. Julian Collin, omi. In 1935, the day after Christmas a portion of the roof suddenly fell down.. The Bishop immediately authorized a complete renovation of the entire church. Fr. Vandanbussche, s.j. who was then parish priest of the Cathedral, undertaking the repairs, raised the main wall of the church by 8 feet , replaced the original circular dome by an octoganal one, extended the wing on one side, and refurbished the front façade, and embellished the sanctuary with a marble altar, and completed the renovation of the church. He also paid up all the expenses and made it free of all debts, which is a pre-condition for consecration. Finally on 7th. March 1937, 42 years after the creation of the diocese, Bishop Robichez consecrated the diocese as prescribed in the Canon Law of the Catholic Church.

The year 1943 was the golden jubilee year of the founding of the diocese and in 1945 the Jesuit Missionaries reached their 50th year in the Mission of Trincomalee. On account of the World War and Ceylon having been placed on a war footing, these events were allowed to pass by without much notice or celebrations. By 1946, Bishop Robichez had reached his 80th.year, now very feeble and run down by constant travelling and care and concern for the diocese. In early February he fell ill, never to recover again. He was anointed by the youngest of his diocesan priests Fr. John Peter and on the 13th. February 1946, he quietly passed away in the peace of the Lord. It was just above this time, away in Rome, Fr. Norbert de Boynes, s.j. the Vicar General of the Society of Jesus, had signed the document, transferring the care of Trincomalee Mission to the Jesuit Province of New Orleans.

The funeral of Bishop Robichez took place at Batticaloa on 15th. February 1946. His body was laid to rest in the Sanctuary of St. Mary's Church, Batticaloa. Immediately after, Fr. Linehan, s.j. the first American Jesuit to set foot in Trincomalee Mission, was appointed Superior of the Mission, and elected Vicar Capitular of the diocese.

Trincomalee Diocese under Bishop Ignatius Glennie.

With the passing away of Bishop Robichez, the Trinco Mission too passed hands from Chapagne Province to that of New Orleans. Soon after, Fr. Linehan took charge of the diocese as Administrator, and the Jesuit Mission as Superior Regular. He was asked to give the three names of possible candidates in the order of preference to choose a successor to Bishop Robichez.

By the 23rd. July 1947, it was announced that Fr. Ignatius T. Glennie, s.j. the Rector of the Papal Seminary, Kandy, has been appointed Bishop of Trincomalee. He was consecrated at Trincomalee on 21st. September by the Archbishop of Ranchi, Most Rev. Dr. Oscar Sevrin, s.j., the co-consecrator Bishops being Most Rev. Dr. Thomas Pothucamary of Bangalor, and Most. Rev. Dr. Regno, o.s.b. Bishop of Kandy.

The new Bishop Glennie, being convinced of the importance and urgency of the Native Clergy for the future of the diocese, gave top priority to the promotion of vocations to the diocesan clerical state. As a first step a new Minor Seminary was inaugurated under the patronage of St. Joseph. It was declared open on January 4th. 1948, in the now vacant building of the former St. Augustine Teacher Training School. Fr. Felix Clarkson, s.j. was appointed Director of the Minor Seminary.

Soon after the Bishop issued a Pastoral Letter on Vocation to the Priesthood, wherein he treated the causes for the lack of vocations, the role of the parish priests and parents and emphasized the importance of indigenous clergy. He said 'If there were few vocations in our diocese, the reason is not that God is not generous, but that the human instruments do not cooperate'. He also manifested the type of priorities envisaged by him when he stated "Indeed the Church can never be permanently and solidly established in a country or a diocese, unless it is assured of being able to carry out its Divine Mission from its own resources without having to depend on external assistance.

This means that Pastors and Priests must come from the diocese itself, and that the faithful of the diocese must be able to support them. This, the permanent and solid establishment of the Church, is the primary end of missionary activity. Hence we have this very first occasion to address you on this topic of encouraging local vocations". The history of the next 25 years, will clarify how far he has been able to achieve this desired goal.

In 1949 the Government passed a bill creating the Gal Oya Development Board (G.O.D.B.) as a semi-autonomous institution, for the development of the southern part of the Eastern Province, now called Amparai District..With the construction there of the 'Senanayake Samudra', the largest and biggest irrigation then, supplying water for cultivation of well over 100,000 acres and generating electricity more than enough for the whole of the Eastern Province, the process of colonization was set in motion. Majority of those colonized were Sinhala Buddhists, most of them from the district of Kegalle. This trend went unabated and slowly changed the ethnic composition of the Eastern Province.

One of the biggest events of the year 1950 as far as the Catholic Church is concerned, was the visitation of the Pilgrim Virgin Statue of Fatima to the Eastern shores. Every parish was carefully prepared spiritually for this great event. Bishop exhorted the Catholics of the diocese to make this occasion a moment of fervent prayer and penance for peace throughout the world. The statue arrived from Jaffna on 13th. June and was received at Trincomalee at the entrance into the town and taken in procession to the Esplanade. Later the Cathedral, St. Joseph's Convent, and Sinnakade Church received the statue. Thereafter the Royal Navy provided transport to take the statue to Muthur and back. At Batticaloa the statue was received on the 16th. and was taken in procession to the esplanade (now called Weber Stadium). People of all religions and ethnic groups gathered together at the esplanade. Fr. Aloysius Mary, s.j. preached in Tamil before the people of all faiths. On the 19th. the Pilgrim Virgin made her journey to the south of the Diocese as far as Akkaraipattu and Sorrikalmunai and departed on the 21st. to Kandy.

The visit of this statue of Our Lady of Fatima had not only created a sensation in the diocese, but has also awakened a sense of Faith in the powerful intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary. For, soon

after the event there was an unprecedented increase in the devotion to the Holy Rosary in the parishes and homes. People in groups began to pray the Rosary with unction and devotion.

On the 1st. November 1950, when the Holy Father Pope Pius XII defined the dogma of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, the entire diocese was called upon to rejoice in this glory of the Blessed Mother Mary. The event was broadcast over Radio Ceylon. In Trincomalee and Batticaloa people listened to the Pope as he read the solemn words of the definition. In fact at St. Michael's College at Batticaloa, the radio was connected to an amplifier and loud speakers were fitted outside for the benefit of the students and others living around the College. On this occasion Bishop Glennie issued a Pastoral Letter explaining to the people, of the fact that the bodily assumption of Mary was not a new doctrine, but had been the belief of the Church from its earliest times. And now the Pope was only solemnly declaring it to be part of the deposit of Divine Revelation.

About this time, in Trincomalee as St. Joseph's College was being cramped into the Cathedral premises, without any hope of improvement or expansion for short of space, and New Orleans Province was eager to improve the College, a suggestion was made to move the College to another more spacious place. Accordingly lands were purchased at Uppuveli. Later this was given up since it was too far away from the town then. Finally the Palmyrah Gardens at the Power House road was purchased by Fr. Linehan and work began on the construction of the new buildings for St. Joseph's College. The land at Uppuveli was given over to the diocese for the future Minor Seminary.

An important event that put in some fresh thinking and enthusiasm among the pastoral workers was the Missionary Meeting of the diocese, held on the 27th. April 1951. The Bishop had called together all the priests, religious brothers and sisters in the diocese to discuss the policies and forms of apostolate for the entire diocese. This was something new not only for the diocese, but for the whole island as well. Till then, policies were set by the Bishop and instructions were sent around through Circulars and Pastoral Letters to be executed. But at this meeting, the Chief Pastor became the listener of those men and women working at the grass root.

In this meeting Pastoral Ministry and Missionary Work, Education and Schools were taken up for discussion and the following conclusions and recommendations were arrived at :-

1. That there should be continuity of work in every parish and institution based on programme of action pre-arranged. Even when a priest is transferred and a new man comes in, the programmes already started are to be carried out to the end, before starting anything new. The need for such a decision was felt by everyone, as there was beginning a practice that whenever a new person is appointed to a place or post, he starts his own petty projects, disregarding whatever that has been started by his predecessor. By doing so, we have always been starting afresh newer and newer programmes and projects but never building up or growing forward on the foundation put by another. As such real progress was beginning to be hampered very much.
2. That every effort should be made to deepen the faith-life of the people. The earlier call of the Bishop for more indigenous clergy and the inauguration of the new Minor Seminary seem to have had some impact on the participants to arrive at this conclusion.
3. As the Mission was expanding and new communities sprang up, new churches and chapels had been constructed. The annual church feast has become one of the major events everywhere. Due to the increased number of churches, there were clashes on the days when such feasts were celebrated. In some places two neighbouring churches were celebrating church festivals on the same day. As such, many people who would like to go for both were not able to do so. Besides, and much more, neighbouring priests were unable to help each other. Hence a decision was made to coordinate these festivals.
4. For a Mission Diocese, purchase of land becomes a necessity wherever Christian Communities spring up, for the construction of churches and schools. As such, priests were asked to be on the look out and acquire lands in view of future developments.
5. A pre-requisite for any missionary enterprise is wide contact and cordial relation with people of other religions. Respect for other people and their customs are stepping stones for entry of the missionary into the lives and homes of people of other religions. Hence every missionary was strongly advised to know peoples' customs and

- to be sympathetic and kind hearted towards those of other religions.
6. As more and more Sinhalese were being brought in, due to the colonization schemes, the importance of knowing the Sinhala language was emphasized.
 7. A proposal was made for a Catechists Training Institute either diocesan or inter-diocesan. The Bishop promised to take up this matter with the Bishops' Conference.
 8. Regarding schools and education, there had been divided opinions from the very start. Some were questioning the very purpose of having so many schools in the midst of Hindu and Muslim communities, on the basis that they were a drain on the finance of the diocese. Others argued that these were means of making the Church present in a non-Christian environment and as entry points into the villages, which is a pre-requisite for any kind of evangelization. Giving up the schools would cut short our contacts with non-Christians, and even make us strangers and intruders. Finally, when the matter was put to a vote, except two all participants favoured the retaining all the Catholic schools.
 9. Some parish priests complained that Colleges and Convents did not cooperate very much in parish programmes and activities. The interests of the children were centered around the schools and school activities that they did not pay attention to the parish. They do not even come for Mass to the Parish Church, instead go to the College or Convent chapel for not only week day Mass but even for Sunday Mass. Even the parents it was said were going to the College and Convent chapels for Sunday Mass. On the other hand those in schools, Colleges and Convents complained that the parish priests do not visit them and their children, and show no interest in the activities of the schools.

The Bishop had finally to intervene in this hotly debated topic to bring about peace and amity among the participants. He said that whether at parish level or at school level all were engaged in the same task of the Church, namely in deepening of the faith of the flock. Hence, there should be cooperation between parish priests and those in the institutions. Many a problem would instantly be solved if there be consideration, cooperation and good will from everyone.

Following this meeting, the Bishop sent out a circular proclaiming June 3rd to the 10th as Catholic

School Week. "We are committed to keep all our schools", he said, "but there are great financial difficulties. Many schools are in a deplorable condition. The Government plans to spend large sums of money on the development of its own schools. We cannot condemn our pupils to inferior schools; in fairness we must make every effort to improve them". Efforts were made subsequently during the School Week to raise funds by the sale of special School Week stamps.

In Trincomalee there was an inflow of new Sinhala colonists among whom there were good number of Catholics. As a result there arose some real need to organize Catholic education of their children. Demands were being made by the Sinhala Catholic parents for a school. Subsequently Bishop Glennie built St. Anthony's Sinhala Mixed School in 1952 and placed one Mr. Lyanage, a convert as headmaster. Few months later the school was blessed and opened in the presence of the Director of Education.

Towards the end of the year Bishop Glennie issued a Pastoral Letter on the forthcoming Marian Year, and recommended pilgrimages to the churches dedicated to Our Lady. He specially made mention of the jungle shrine of Palayuthu and Rosary Church of Pullumalai as fitting places of pilgrimage. Every Marian event and devotion had always a word of encouragement from Bishop Glennie. In fact, he had from the very beginning of his episcopate dedicated the diocese and his ministry to the care and guidance of the Blessed Virgin choosing 'Sub Matris Praesidio' as his motto.

For sometime the Bishop has been contemplating of a Home for the Aged in Batticaloa. He wanted the Little Sisters of the Poor, who already have a home in Colombo, to come over to the diocese and start a home. The land bought by Bishop Lavigne for the Trappists was offered to the sisters for the Home for the Elders. About the beginning April 1954, the Little Sisters of the Poor visited the diocese to inspect the place. They travelled as far as Kalmunai and finally decided on the land offered by the Bishop at Thandaavanveli. Glennie later told me that he made a special trip to the United States to raise funds for the construction of the Home for the Aged at Batticaloa.

In early February Bishop Glennie issued another Pastoral Letter on the Marian Year, wherein he stated: "In Ceylon, we are free to practice our

religion. In many parts of the world our Christian brothers and sisters are deprived of the gift of God in part or even totally. There is no Mass, because their priests have been either murdered or sent to prison and their churches turned to profane uses. There is constant vexation, corrupting the hearts and minds of children. Cardinals, Bishops and priests with large numbers of the faithful are in prison....There are thousands of refugees, exiled by force or obliged to flee from the tyranny of their rulers". Thus saying he exhorted the Catholics of the diocese to unite around Mary in prayer and sacrifice against all dangers besetting the Church throughout the world. He called for special days to be organized throughout the diocese for prayers for priests, for the sick, for children, for those suffering persecution and for those ailing in hospitals and homes.

July 31st.1955 to July 31st. 1956 had been proclaimed 'Ignatian Year' by the General of the Society of Jesus to commemorate the 400th. anniversary of the death of St. Ignatius, the founder of the Society. The diocese of Trincomalee a Mission entrusted to the Jesuits, and St. Ignatius being the Patron of the Diocese, could not forget the countless services rendered by the Jesuit missionaries. To mark the occasion the old Boys of St. Michael's College, erected a statue of the soldier Ignatius offering his sword at the foot of Our Lady at Montserrat and in Trincomalee 'an Ignatian peagent' was staged.

In the year 1955 there came into force a Government regulation restricting the arrival of any more foreign missionaries into the country. The Bishop and the Superior Regular of Trincomalee Mission Fr. W.A. Lange, s.j. met the Prime Minister Mr. John Kotalawela on 12th. June 1955, to explain their difficulties and requested a relaxation of the law for at least for another 5 or 2 years. But it all came to no avail.

At about the same time agitations were slowly building up throughout the country to make Sinhala ONLY the State Language under the leadership of Mr. S.W.R.D.Bandaranayake. In the north and east the Tamils were clamouring for parity and for a federal form of Government. Many of the Tamil Members of Parliament in the ruling United National Party resigned when negotiations with the Prime Minister failed. The Prime Minister then decided to go to the polls for a fresh mandate from the people. The Parliament was dissolved on 18th. February

1956 and elections held on 4th. April 1956. Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandaranayake came to power with a landslide victory. Immediately after a bill was passed in Parliament making Sinhala the ONLY official language of the country. As a protest against this legislation, the Tamil Federal Party organized a non-violent 'Satyagraha' in Colombo. The pro-Government thugs man-handled all the participants and no action was taken against them by the government. On the contrary they were " ridiculed in the Parliament. Riots broke out in the Gal-Oya valley – a new Sinhala Buddhist colonization area – and about 150 were killed there, mostly Tamils". Thus began the ethnic violence in Sri Lanka between the Tamils and the Sinhalese.

For sometime the Bishop had been considering of a new site for the Minor Seminary. Different locations had been indicated around Batticaloa but none spacious enough. Besides more and more church related institutions were being put up in and around Batticaloa and complaints had come that Trincomalee, the seat of the diocese was being neglected. And so the Bishop decided that the New Minor Seminary should be constructed in Trincomalee. The Jesuit Fathers had bought some lands at Uppuveli on the outskirts of Trincomalee town as a new site for St. Joseph's College, and later changed their minds and settled for Palmyrah gardens within the town. This vacant land was found suitable for the Minor Seminary, being close to the town still away from the town. The adjoining piece of land too was purchased, and in July 1957 foundation for the new Minor Seminary was laid in this spacious compound by Bishop Glennie. The Apostolic Delegate Mgr. Robert Knox had been instrumental in finding part of the money for the building.

For sometime negotiations had been going on for the purchase of a suitable residence for the Bishop of Trincomalee. There was a vacant Bungalow belonging to a Planter at Orr's Hill, which he was prepared to sell. At the beginning this Bungalow was taken on rent. Since the construction of the Minor Seminary was in slow progress, the then Director of the Minor Seminary, fr. Joseph H. Meyer,s.j. wanted to move over to Trinco in order to personally supervise the construction and expedite matters And early in January 1958, he moved over to this Bungalow at Orr's Hill, with his little band of seminarians. Later when the new Minor Seminary was competed and the seminarians began occupation of it, this bungalow at Orr's hill was

purchased and made the Bishop's residence in Trincomalee. The cost of purchase at that time amounted to 48,000.00 Sri Lankan Rupees, the equivalent of 10,000,00 U.S. Dollars.

In May-June 1958, racial riots broke out between the Tamils and the Sinhalese throughout the country. Tamils and Sinhalese were brutally massacred everywhere. And Trincomalee diocese had its full share of the blood-bath during those days of merciless killings. Yet there were "many heart-warming instances of Tamils sheltering and protecting the hunted Sinhalese and Sinhalese doing the same thing for Tamils, persued by raging mobs". Nevertheless the Tamils sustained heavy loss of life and property in this man-made violence. "The whole southern section of the Eastern Province was like a funeral house. People wondered whether the country would ever recover from this trauma, both physical and psychological inflicted during those days of rampaging violence".

Soon after the racial riots, the Jesuit Fathers opened a Juniorate in Trincomalee with the view of fostering priestly vocations to the Society. Father F.X.Mayer, s.j. was placed in-charge. During his stay in Trincomalee he introduced the art of making cheap bricks from clay and gravel, by the use of CINARAM machine, for the construction of low cost houses for the poor. It had been a great boon to the diocese in its social apostolate in providing the poor with cheap, yet decent dwellings.

Im July 1958, Fr. Leo Rajendram Antony of Jaffna diocese was loaned to Trinco diocese as Secretary to the Bishop, later following the recommendation of the Apostolic Delegate, Mgr. Robert Knox. the same Fr. L.R. Antony became Bishop after Glennie.

About this time a new Retreat House was being constructed in Batticaloa, at Veppadithurai, in order to expand the Retreat Movement in the diocese, by providing a suitable place and accommodation for the retreatants.

In the political arena, the Bandaranayake-Chelvanayagam pact was signed in July 1957 between the ruling Sri Lanka Freedom Party Government and the Federal Party representing the Tamils in the north and east, to give more consideration to the Tamils and the use of Tamil language in the north and east. Later it was unilaterally abrogated by the Prime Minister due to heavy pressure from the Buddhist monks. Soon

after the Government introduced the Sinhala Sri series into the registration numbers of motor vehicles. Until then English alphabet was used. This action of the Government greatly angered the Tamil population as it signified one more step towards Sinhala domination over Tamils. There were violent reactions and fresh fighting broke out throughout the country in the ensuing months. In predominantly Tamil areas Sinhala writings and letters on boards, shops and roadside signals were plasted with cow dung and covered with tar.

In the meantime Bishop Glennie had reached his 10th. year of his episcopate. To mark the occasion a small booklet, indicating in pictures the new churches, chapels, mission houses, and institutions constructed during the ten years was released. Fr. Del Marmol was behind this enterprise.

In September the Prime Minister S.W.R.D. Bandaranayake was due to go to the United States to address the United Nations General Assembly. Prior to his leaving he had nominated Mr. W. Dahanayake as acting Prime Minister in his absence. But few days before his departure on the 26th. September he was shot dead by a Buddhist monk at his own residence in Colombo. Mr.Dahanayake then headed the care-taker Government till the General Elections on the 19th. March 1960 Following the death of the Prime Minister, all the Bishops met Mrs. Bandaranayake, the briefed wife and offered their condolences. The church bells were rung throughout the country as a mark of honour to the late Prime Minister.

Then, in view of the forthcoming General Elections, Bishop Glennie issued a Pastoral Letter around Christmas, reminding all Catholics of their civic duties and obligations as citizens and good Christians, and stressed the need to vote, and vote honestly and intelligently. He also broached the subject of religious freedom and freedom of religious education. "As Catholics we have the right to practice our religion in perfect freedom... As Catholics we have the right to educate our children according to our conscience. As citizens of the state and as Catholics we have the right to receive financial aids from the Government for the education of our children", he reiterated. Thus he exhorted them to vote according to their conscience.

In the General Election that was held on March 19th. the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (S.L.F.P) emerged in

the first place with 75 seats in Parliament and Mrs. Bandaranayke was elected head of the Party, yet without a seat in Parliament. Later she was appointed to the Second Chamber, the Senate and through the Senate, she was sworn in as Prime Minister.

Soon after the S.L.F.P. came to power, the Government of Mrs. Bandaranayake imposed a Rs. 400/- visa tax on all foreigners holding temporary residence permit with retroactive effect. As a result every missionary had to pay Rs. 800/- in the first year, which was a heavy drain on the financial position of all the Religious Congregations.

By the beginning of 1959, the Government began to give shape to its policy of nationalization. As a first step a decision was taken by the cabinet of ministers on 20th. May, to take over all the denominational schools. This was followed by a communiqué by the Director of Education released on 23rd. June informing all the heads of the denominational schools of the decision of the Government. It immediately set in motion a wave of protests from all quarters against the decision.

Public meetings and protest marches were organized throughout the diocese against the decision of the Government. People joined together irrespective of religious differences, as they too valued very much the Catholic schools. Leaflets and pamphlets were printed at the Catholic Press by the Catholic Teachers' Union and distributed to parents, in order to appraise them of the dire consequences that would come about if the Government were to take over the Catholic Schools.

All the Bishops of the Island met together on the 11th. October to consider the question of school take-over by the Government and prepared a uniform policy for the entire island. It was the majority opinion that the Church should not give up any of her schools. On the contrary, while maintaining all her present schools, the Church should also create few more 'Central Schools', i.e. schools comprising all grades in different areas, and staff them with priests, brothers and nuns and encourage parents to support them. At this time Bishop Glenie was in the United States.

As soon as Bishop Glennie returned from the United States in September he was given a complete picture of the whole situation and events.

Already while in the U.S. , he had been kept briefed in broad terms of what was taking place in Ceylon and in the diocese. In the meeting that Bishop had with Fr. Crowther, the Diocesan General Manager of Catholic Schools, and a few consultors, the Bishop said the on his way back, he had discussed the matter with the General of the Society of Jesus, who wanted the Jesuits of Trincomalee diocese to keep their schools, namely St. Joseph's College and St. Michael's College at all costs. At this meeting a question was raised by Fr. Crowther, as to the meaning ness of keeping these two schools as private. He asked whether it would be worth-while to concentrate on two schools to the possible detriment of other forms of apostolic activities. But the Bishop was insistent that St. Michael's and St. Joseph's should go private. He was also in favour of opening new 'Central Schools' in Trincomalee, Muthur, Batticaloa and Kalmunai and staff them with priests, religious and run them as private schools.

By this time all the Catholic schools in the diocese and throughout the Island were occupied by the parents and well-wishers, as a protest against the decision of the Government. Classes could not be held in the school premises as people were living in the schools day and night and would not permit anyone to enter in or conduct business unless and until the Government changed its policy. Even Hindu parents had joined in protests and occupation of Catholic Schools. In our diocese even Muslims were cooperating with us. Thus over 625 Catholic schools throughout the country were occupied.

Inspite all opposition, the Government went ahead with the Assisted Schools and Training Colleges (Special Provision) Act and passed the bill in Parliament. Accordingly the Bill become effective from the 1st December 1960.

Suddenly the Prime Minister had requested all the Bishops to be present for a meeting on 25th. November to discuss the school question. The Bishop of Jaffna, Dr. Emilianuspillai did not attend this meeting. The meeting began on 25th. night around 9.00 p.m. and lasted throughout the night, against the wishes of the Bishops, till about 3.00 a.m. In this meeting, the Prime Minister had given assurance that for all practical purposes, the assisted schools would continue as at present, even after the take-over of the management. She also assured the Bishops that the Educational

Commission to be appointed shortly would take into consideration the views of all the religious bodies when drafting the second bill. Accordingly, an agreement was signed by the Catholic Bishops and the Government and the next day the Hierarchy issued a statement saying that the Prime Minister had given assurances that for all practical purposes the Assisted schools would continue as before under the new management and that a commission would be appointed soon which would give due consideration to the views of all religious bodies on the matter. Hence the Bishops had decided to persuade the faithful not to resist the take-over but to take other democratic means to manifest their opposition to whatever is objectionable in the legislation.

But in the information released to the Press by the Government regarding this meeting with the Bishops, the Government did not mention anything about the conditions stipulated by the Bishops or about the assurances given by the Prime Minister, but merely stated that the Catholic Bishops had agreed to hand over all grade II and III schools to the Government. This announcement by the media made the Catholics feel that the Bishops had not stood by them but betrayed them. Hence in order to inform the Catholics as to what had actually taken place, the Bishops issued another statement giving the full details of the meeting.

In the first bill that was passed in Parliament regarding the nationalization of Assisted Schools, the Government took over only the management of the Assisted schools. Soon they realized that they could not implement the provisions of the Bill, as the land and the buildings did not belong to them. How could the Government run a school in the property of another person? Seeing the weakness of the law, the Church authorities took up the matter in the courts, asking for an immediate injunction, prohibiting anyone to enter the school properties without their prior permission. This kept out all the Government officials from entering the school premises to disperse the squatters. Hence a second Bill was moved in Parliament to take over also the ownership of the properties and buildings of all the Assisted Schools.

According to this Bill, all lands and properties of the schools were vested in the State, and the Minister of Education was empowered to issue the vesting order that was final and conclusive and could not be challenged in a court of law. Beside, the Bill also

explicitly stated that no compensation need to be paid to the owners of such properties, and made all owners accountable for any loss or damage done to school buildings or furnitures from July 21st. 1960.

Further, those Grade I schools that opted to go 'private' according to the same Bill adhere strictly to the following stipulations:

That they follow the general educational policy of the Government.

That they maintain all facilities and services granted to the students before they became private.

That they levy no fee from the students.

That they do not reduce the accommodations for pupils.

That they promptly comply with the provisions of any written law applicable to such schools in regard to Education.

That they retain the same staff and pay them at the same salary scale as before.

That they run the schools to the satisfaction of the Director of Education.

Under such difficult circumstances it became practically impossible for any school to go private and for a long time. Yet 42 Catholic schools throughout the country opted to go private. Of these 2 were from the diocese of Trincomalee, St. Joseph's and St. Michael's.

In connexion with the school take-over the All Ceylon Students Welfare Association staged a massive demonstration at Colombo in front of the residence of the Governor General, asking for an interview. Their request was refused, yet the representative of the Association succeeded in getting across a petition to the Governor General. The Governor General promised to send a reply. Later he had sent a reply acknowledging the petition and stating that he had referred the matter to the Ministry of Education. Beyond that nothing was realized. This demonstration was later called off, because the ever increasing crowd could not possibly have been kept under control, owing to certain groups of outsiders who joined them in order to break up their peaceful march into a violent event and the management of 'Lake House' Printers wanted their premises to be vacated as they were causing considerable loss, and a change of position under those circumstances would have meant a violent disregard for law and order, and certain political minded individuals as well as some others

were trying to interfere with the demonstration, in order to gain their own ends.

As all the Catholic schools were still occupied in January 1961, they could not reopen as desired. Hence orders were issued by the department of Education for teachers to report to other schools and take up teaching. The sisters and brothers in Catholic Schools then requested that the department give them a written transfer order to work in other Government schools. But their requests were ignored and instead they were first interdicted and a few days later dismissed. Later after protracted negotiations they were reinstated.

In mid-January His Eminence Valerian Cardinal Gracias, Archbishop of Bombay had come to Ceylon to participate in the 250th. anniversary celebrations of Fr. Joseph Vaz. The Ceylon Hierarchy consulted the Cardinal on the school question." The result of the Bishops' deliberations was the decision to call off the resistance movement cooperate with the government and accept the take-over, trusting the Government to be just and honest". This decision was communicated to the Catholics of the Island, and immediately resistance terminated and the people left the schools and went home. Many Catholics have condemned this decision of the Hierarchy and the suggestions and influence of Cardinal Gracias on this matter as unwarranted. With this the school question came to an end and the Government finally had the full control and monopoly of education in the island.

Later in mid-February, Bishop Glennie issued a Pastoral Letter stressing in no uncertain terms the importance of Catechetical Instruction under the special circumstances created by the school take-over. In it the Bishop clearly brought out the parental responsibility of bringing up their children in the Christian Faith and practice "Parents should realize", wrote the Bishop, "that the religious instruction of their children is their most sacred duty. They do not need a special commission. This is given by virtue of their office of parents, based on Christian Marriage". After having dealt with the unique role of the teachers of the Faith and the method of imparting Christian Faith, the Bishop made some specific directives to be carried on in the diocese. These include :-

The organization of Sunday Catechism classes at the Parish level and on week days in the outstations;

The careful choice lay religious instructors;
The commissioning of suitable Catholic teachers to teach Christianity in the schools taken over by the State

The invitation extended to all priests, religious, and parents to help the Parish Priests in the work of catechizing;

The appointment of a Diocesan Director (Fr. Henry Ponniah) and 3 Regional Directors for Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Kalmunai for the coordination of religious instruction.

In the past many of the older generation of priests have set a great example of zealous and sustained work in evangelization in various parts of the diocese. Due to their untiring and pioneering efforts and endeavours and in spite of many difficulties, lack of fast means of conveyance and communications, and strains on financial resources, many new Catholic communities and mission stations have been opened and developed. The latest of these series was the successful evangelization work of Fr. Godfrey Cook among the gypsies in the southern part of the diocese, at Aligambay. They were people most neglected and uncared for by all sectors. They were not used to any type of residential enterprises, but as Fr. Lange remarked a sort of 'dolce fa niente' (happily doing nothing) type, hunting in the jungles, and going around from place to place and house to house with their snakes and dogs, eking out a meager existence. Fr. Cook's efforts at persuading them to stop their wanderings and settle down somewhere finally met with some success. He obtained crown land for them at Aligambay 12 k. m. away from Akkaraipattu town, and settled them. Besides simple hut like houses, Fr. Cook built for their children a school and got a teacher too. In fact Fr. Cook meant everything for them. Finally on April 9th. 1961, about 200 of them were baptized by Bishop Glennie.

Having witnessed the power of the laity and the Catholic Action movements during the school crisis, Bishop Glennie was now contemplating of harnessing this force, for the good of the diocese and deepening the faith of the flock at large. With this in mind he planned to re-organize the Trincomalee Diocesan Union, by setting up three Regional councils of the T.D.U. for the districts of Kalmunai, Batticaloa and Trincomalee, while maintaining the Diocesan Union as an umbrella organization of the three. The purpose of these organizations was to coordinate Catholic Action throughout the diocese.

Now that the schools were no more under the management of the Church, catechetical instruction of the children were being talked about everywhere. New ways and means of imparting religious knowledge outside the schools were being discussed among priests. The importance of the Parish as the centre of Christian Worship and Christian formation was slowly emerging. The importance of well trained full time Catechists at parish level was becoming a necessity. About this time, the famous German Catechism along with the 'Munich Method' was gaining ground all over. Fr. J.V.Sommers, s.j. who was very much interested in Catechism and one of the pioneers of the Catechetical Movement in the diocese at this time, organized a seminar at the diocesan level to introduce the new method. The seminar was held at Batticaloa from 24th. to 26th. April 1962.

For quite sometime the Jesuits in Trincomalee and Galle dioceses had been discussing the possibility of amalgamating the two missions into one Vice Province. Finally they applied to the General of the Society. The General in reply directed Fr. Conget of Ahmedabad as Spical Visitor to Ceylon to send a report on the feasibility of the suggestion. Fr. Cognet visited Trinco and Galle and had talked the matter over and then submitted his report. Soon after the General of the Society effected the necessary changes and created the Jesuit Vice Province of Ceylon and appointed Fr. Emmanuel Crowther as its Provincial from the 15th. August 1962.

Following the reform proposed by the 2nd. Vatican Council, Bishop Glennie issued a circular establishing the Diocesan Liturgical Commission to look after the matters relating to Sacred Liturgy, Sacred Music and Christian Art. The Commission was composed only of priests and it was to operate under Episcopal direction. There was another circular in June appointing a Director and a Deputy Director to take charge and organize Catholic Acton throughout the diocese. By July Bishop Glennie announced the formation of the Diocesan Catechetical Commission and the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in the diocese. In this Commission besides priests, there were religious brother, sisters and lay people as members. According to the circular the Bishop himself was to preside over the Commission, and the following tasks were entrusted to the Commission.

Organizing Catechetical Centres.
Find and prepare suitable teachers of religion.
Compose a syllabus for Sunday Catechism.
Find ways and means of improving religious instruction both for adults and children.

The circular also imposed on all parish priests the duty of organizing the Confraternity of Christian doctrine for the religious education of all Catholics who are not in Catholic Schools. Fr. J. V. Sommers of the Catechetical Commission was charged with the task of helping the parish priests in the erection of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine.

The year 1964 ended with another Cyclone in the Eastern coast. It was Trincomalee and its surroundings that met the brunt of the cyclone. Roof tops were blown off. Big trees, especially on the road side were uprooted. Wattle-and-daub houses were all reduced to their original elements. All shanties destroyed. Aluminium sheets and asbestos were ripped off from roofs and flew all over. Fortunately loss of human life was at its minimum. Sinnakade Parish Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe was badly damaged. St. Joseph's College and the Jesuit Fathers' residence too were damaged badly.

At this time Fr. Brady was in Trincomalee. He was in-charge of Social work in Trinco. Immediately he organized a volunteer youth force to help the refugees and the cyclone victims. Seminarians, Jesuit Scholastics and youths from all over the island poured into Trinco to help Fr. Brady in his relief works. The Archbishop of Colombo appealed to the people in the Western coast and dispatched their contributions in a convoy of lorries. In response to Bishop Glennie's appeal 'Misereor' of Germany came forward to help in the rehabilitation programme. Fr. Brady organized a meaningful rehabilitation programme, in which low cost houses would be provided to all the poor cyclone victims. In this project the owners of the houses themselves will have to cooperate and work in the very construction of their houses. The team of youthful volunteers organized by Fr. Brady did a splendid job in the construction of these houses.

As part of the renewal programme mooted by the 2nd. Vatican Council, a seminar was held on the 5th. and 6th. of April 1965 at Batticaloa, in which parish priests, religious brothers and sisters and heads of institutions participated, to discuss the pastoral and missionary problems of the diocese. The following recommendations and conclusions were arrived at in this seminar:-

- a) That there be an Information Centre in the diocese to disseminate news and initiate meaningful and cordial relations with non-Catholics. The Diocesan Director of Religious Education be put in-charge of this Centre. He should organize a mobile film unit and a good library.
- b) That Social Apostolate along the lines taken by Fr. Brady be promoted vigorously throughout the diocese.
- c) That a Marriage Bureau be established in the diocese in order to help Catholics to find suitable partners in life.
- d) That ways and means be found to impart religious knowledge to adult Catholics and the information centre should take responsibility for this.
- e) That parents be impressed of their responsibility to educate their children in Christian Faith.
- f) That the Diocesan Director of Religious Education be responsible for the catechizing of children and be actively supported by the parents
- g) That special arrangements be made for those students who are taking Christianity as a subject for G.C.E.(O/L) public examination.
- h) That the parish priests make regular visits of their flocks in their homes.
- i) That there be closer cooperation among the clergy.
- j) That the T.D.U., Sodality and the Legion of Mary cooperate closely with one another and coordinate their apostolic activities.
- k) That parishes and religious institutions cooperate more closely and take interest in each others' activities.
- l) That the religious brothers and sisters attend parish Mass on Sundays and on special occasions.
- m) That priests promptly answer all letters.
- n) That in cases of those who propose to become Catholics prior to a marriage to a Catholic party, their motivations be checked carefully, and if there be any doubt about it, marry them with a dispensation rather than confer baptism and risk apostasy.
- o) It has been observed that there were serious problems arising from the marriages of Catholics to those who were newly converted and baptized. While such marriages take place in the Catholic Church and according to Church regulations, often time the conversion and baptism of the partner seem to be an 'ad hoc' event; baptism is given hastily and without sufficient catechetical instruction and

preparation. Besides it has generally been observed that when the bride belongs to a non-catholic denomination before marriage, she is easily absorbed into the Catholic tradition and practice of the bride-groom, and she quickly adapts herself to the religious practice of the husband. But when the husband comes from a non-Christian milieu, such as Hinduism, it becomes very difficult for the bride to practice her Faith and educate her children in her faith. Many a time, soon after wedding, the newly converted partner, especially the bride-groom falls back into his old religion, giving up his Christian Faith and also imposes on the wife to follow his own religion and apostatize. The secondary and subservient role which women play in our society and in the decision making process of the family is one of the reasons for this unfortunate situation. Hence it was decided that neophytes and catechumens should be instructed for a period of three months or follow a minimum of 25 lessons before being baptized..

The diocese re-named

Like Bishop Robichez, for a long time Bishop Glennie too had been considering the prospect of re-naming the diocese to include the name Batticaloa. Over the years Batticaloa has become the centre of Catholic life and Catholic concentration. More and more parishes have been established in and around Batticaloa. Many more chapels, churches, convents, and Church Institutions have sprung up around Batticaloa. As a regional Capital Batticaloa has gained more importance in comparison to Trincomalee.

Considering all these, Bishop Glennie had applied to the Holy See for a change in the name of the diocese. Besides during his visit to Rome, for the Vatican Council, he had explained the matter and discussed it with the relevant authorities. Subsequently by the end of the year 1965, the diocese was officially re-named as TRINCOMALEE-BATTICALOA, and St. Mary's Church at Batticaloa was declared as Co-Cathedral of the diocese.

The year 1966 saw the cancellation of Sundays as public holidays and the introduction of Buddhist 'Poya' weeks by the Government. Accordingly all Sundays became normal working days and the weekly holidays were transferred to the four phases of the moon in keeping with the Buddhist tradition,

the new moon, first quarter, full moon and the fourth quarter. This change effected on January 6th. greatly affected the Christians throughout the island, yet was hailed very much by the Buddhists.

Nevertheless the Catholic Church re-adjusted its Mass arrangements and other activities to suit the conveniences of the people going for work and children attending classes. Bishop Glennie issued a circular saying: "Although Sunday has been declared a working day in Ceylon, for us Catholics Sunday is the Lord's day. We have a duty to attend Mass....It may be almost impossible for some to keep away from work on Sunday; the Church's law does not bind them... We assure our Catholics that every effort will be made to provide them with facilities to participate in Holy Mass with due considerations for their difficulties.

In April 1966, Bishop Glennie established three panels of 'District Counsellors' for the diocese. It was an attempt on the part of the Bishop to involve as many of the clergy and the faithful as possible in the administration of the diocese, and to have as wide a consultation as possible in the affairs of the Church. Accordingly "each one of the three Vicariates Forane will have a body of counselors, each body consisting of Parish Priests, Superiors of Religious houses, Principals of Private Schools, and (if applicable) of Brothers' and Sisters' schools, Presidents of Parish Unions, and the Regional Presidents of the TDU, regional heads of the Sodality, Legion of Mary.... Meetings will be held every two months and the Bishop will preside". These consultants were in addition to the Diocesan Counselors.

Sometime later the Bishop established the Diocesan Commission for Social Apostolate. "Desirous as we are to put into practice the decree of the Ecumenical council on the Apostolate of the Laity", said the Bishop, "we find this decree is much more concerned with the Social Apostolate. In particular section 26 of the decree specifically recommends the formation of a group, whereby all in the diocese, priests, religious, and the laity can cooperate in the social apostolate. To foster such an apostolate in our diocese, according to the mind of the Council, we are appointing a Diocesan Commission for the Social Apostolate...All social action in the diocese is entrusted to the guidance of this Commission. Since its purpose is to coordinate and unify our endeavours in the social apostolate, any social action taken independently of it will not be

recognized as a diocesan work".

In an effort to improve the quality of the catechetical instructions, the diocese had already launched into a programme of getting well trained full time catechists. In 1963, two catechists had been sent to Tamil Nadu Catechetical Centre, Tindivanam, India, for a two year course. And now in July 1966 five more candidates were sent to the same institute for catechetical training.

Ever since the foundation of St. Joseph's Minor Seminary in 1948, it had been entrusted to the Jesuit Fathers for direction and operation. The Bishop in the meantime had been looking forward to and slowly preparing the way for the day when the diocesan clergy itself take over the training and preparation of the future priests of the diocese. In view of this he had sent Fr. Noel Senaviratne to Rome for a course on Spiritual Theology. When he returned in September 1966 after completing his studies, he was appointed Director of the Minor Seminary.

And the year ended with the arrival of the Holy Angel Sisters to Trincomalee. They were put in-charge of the kitchen department of the Minor Seminary, and entrusted with the catechetical and social work among the scattered Sinhala Catholics in Trincomalee.

In January 1967, history was made when the General of the Society of Jesus, Very Rev. Fr. Pedro Aruppe visited Batticaloa for a day on the 20th. He was the first Jesuit General ever to have come. It meant much for all the Jesuits in the diocese, that their top most Superior had visited and seen for himself their field of work.

Another big event during this same year was the appointment of an auxiliary Bishop in the person of Mgr. Bastiampillai Deogupillai for Trinco diocese. Bishop Glennie sent a circular around announcing the appointment. "The Holy Father has graciously granted my request for an Auxiliary Bishop. For quite sometime", continued the Bishop, "I felt the need of native son of Ceylon to share with me the responsibilities of my office. The reasons for this are obvious and need not be enumerated. For more than one year investigations and inquiries have been going on to find the most suitable person for this office. Finally the choice fell on Fr. Deogupillai. All of us welcome him, most heartily, not only because of his outstanding qualities, but especially

because he is sent to us by the Vicar of Christ in the name of Christ". Subsequently the new Auxiliary Bishop was consecrated at Trincomalee by Bishop Glennie himself, assisted by Bishop Emilianuspillai of Jaffna and Dr. Marcus Fernando, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Colombo on 11th. May 1967.

In July Bishop Glennie established the Senate of Priests, to function as an advisory body to the Bishop. There were three categories of members to the Senate, ex officio, by election, and by nomination by the Bishop.

On 24th. August 1967, Bishop Glennie, ordained Dominic Saminathan who was studying for the Priesthood at the Pontifical Athanaeum in Poona, India, a priest, at St. Mary's Church, Batticaloa. Soon after, he appointed Bishop Deogupillai as Administrator and proceeded to the United States to raise some funds for the Diocese. Fr. Saminathan went back to India to finish his priestly formation.

In the diocese many attempts have been made in the past to have a diocesan Catholic magazine that would help the generality of the Catholic population in their Christian formation and in diffusing news of Christian importance and values. Way back in 1927 Fr. Alphonse Reichard had the 'Pilgrim' as a monthly Catholic Bulletin. It was an unpretentious eight page monthly with news and articles in Tamil and English. But after sometime it had its natural death. Later on in 1947 Fr. O. Thambimuthu began 'The Beacon' another monthly magazine. It went on for few years inspite of financial constrains. After a few years that too was discontinued. Soon after Bishop Deogupillai came to the Diocese as Auxiliary, the question of starting a monthly magazine was raised at the Annual General Meeting of the Trincomalee-Batticaloa Diocesan Union (T.B.D.U.) in October 1968. Bishop Deogupillai was very much in favour of the idea. Hence a decision was taken to start a Diocesan Monthly of our own. Various titles were suggested for the monthly, and finally the name 'Thondan' (Servant) was chosen on the advice of Bishop Deogupillai, who at that time was the Diocesan Director of the T.B.D.U. The first issue of 'Thondan' under the editorship of Mr. S. Anthonypillai, the then Secretary of the T.B.D.U. was released in December 1968. Over the years it has survived the usual financial constrictions, thanks to the constant encouragement and unfailing support of Bishop

Deogupillai. After sometime, when Mr. Anthonypillai fell seriously ill, the responsibility of editing and publishing 'Thondan' was taken over by Bishop Deogupillai himself. Later on it was transferred to the Diocesan Director of Religious Education, Rev. Fr. Bertie Bartelot, s.j. Thus it went on for quite a number of years. Later on it was transferred to the Director of Social Communication Centre. Over the years 'Thondan' has improved in quality and changed its shape and size many times. Today we have a standard magazine that caters to the Catholics and others not only in the diocese but throughout Sri Lanka.

Bishop Glennie has been thinking for quite sometime of a suitable house for the priests of the diocese, especially in their old age. All these time there was no proper resident for priests at all. Fr. Vandebussche lived and worked in one single room. Attached to that there was an office for his clerk Mr. Sellar. The building now used by the Social Communication Centre was the office of the General Manager of Catholic Schools Fr. O. Thambimuthu. Other priests occupied the former horse shed, modified and transformed into rooms. Even Bishop's secretaries had only one of these rooms. All these rooms had no attached toilets or bath rooms. Even sick Fr. Lambert was placed in one of these. Bishop Glennie could not bear this up, to see his priests living in such a situation. Hence, as a legacy of gratitude to his priests he built the Clergy House adjoining the Bishop's House, and the Clergy Ward at the Batticaloa General Hospital. The Clergy House was solemnly blessed on 24th. November 1969 by the Apostolic Delegate Mgr. Luciano Storrero, and the Clergy Ward was completed the following year.

In August 1970 Social Centre and Youth Hostel at Trincomalee was solemnly blessed and declared open. The hostel provided accommodation for about 40 working youths, and the Social Centre was to be the power house for motivation and organization of Catholic Social Apostolate throughout the diocese.

Later Bishop Glennie built the Boys Town at Sathurukondan 'Haven Estate', as a Technical Training Centre for the education of the youth of the diocese, and put the Brothers of the Society of St. Joseph to direct and manage it.

In 1972 Bishop Glennie reached the 25th. year of his Episcopate. The diocese celebrated solemnly the Silver Jubilee of the Episcopal consecration of

the Bishop on 21st. September 1972, at Batticaloa. The whole hierarchy of Ceylon was present at the Jubilee celebrations.

By the end of the year, news was received that the Auxiliary Bishop Dr. Deogupillai has been appointed the new Bishop of Jaffna, and that Dr. L. R. Antony, the Administrator of Jaffna diocese and the former secretary of Bishop Glennie, has been appointed co-adjutor to the Bishop of Trincomalee-Batticaloa 'cum iure successionis'. Bishop Deogupillai was installed in Jaffna on 9th January 1973, and thereafter Bishop L.R.Antony came over to Batticaloa to take up new responsibilities.

By April 1973 Bishop Glennie established the Finance Committee, later called Diocesan Administrative Council, to adjust the diocesan Budget according to its income, to sanction all expenses not covered by the budget and to make available to the Procurator the funds necessary for all expenses, under the Chairmanship of the co-adjutor Bishop, L.R.Antony.

In mid-year 1973 Bishop Glennie submitted his resignation in order to enable his co-adjutor to take over the diocese. Prior to accepting the resignation of Bishop Glennie, the Holy See consulted the priests of the diocese on the matter, and in early 1974 accepted the resignation. It was announced in March 1974, and Bishop Glennie left to U.S.A. in April in 1974.

During the 26 years he spent as Bishop of Trincomalee-Batticaloa, Glennie had set before him the task of building up a strong diocesan clergy as his chief work. Towards realizing this he established the Minor Seminary. While the Minor Seminary was in Batticaloa, it was the usual custom that daily 2 seminarians visit the Bishop between 6.30 p.m. to 7.30 p.m. Thus he had a very personal and thorough knowledge of all the future priests. Even after the Minor Seminary was shifted to Trincomalee, Glennie made it a point to visit them every month, celebrate Mass for them, and see them personally and individually.

Besides he had personal and regular correspondences with all his major seminarians, wherever they may have been studying. And whenever he visited the National Seminary, Kandy, he did not fail to meet every one of his major seminarians individually.

Thus over the years he was able to build up a strong band of youthful and promising diocesan priests responsible for the future of the diocese. During those 26 years he had provided the diocese with 27 new diocesan priests, of whom 24 were ordained by him and the other three in Rome.

His reasons for retiring early was that his knowledge was insufficient to enable him to be of effective service in a milieu that was becoming more and more vernacular oriented, while he was still not too old for active ministry. On the other hand, he thought that he would be of more use in his own mother tongue Spanish among the Spanish speaking people in the southern part of the United States. Thus he moved over to city of Corpus Christi, in the U.S.A. to serve the Spanish-English speaking Catholics for the rest of his life.

Trincomalee-Batticaloa Diocese under Bishop L. R. Antony

With the departure of Bishop Glennie, the administration of the diocese came into the hands of Bishop Antony and the diocesan clergy as well. The Jesuits no longer playing a leading role, began to recede to the back ground, with the satisfaction that they have completed the primary task entrusted to them, when the diocese was created and entrusted to them way back in 1893. For them it had not been an easy task, but a slow and painful process. They had to carry many burdens and face imposing and difficult situations, the Bishops as well as the Society of Jesus.

By now the Society too had established itself solidly and firmly with its own native priests and its own institutional structures in the eastern part of the Island, it could look forward to being partners and cooperators with the new Bishop and the diocesan clergy for furthering the Mission of the Church in the Eastern Seaboard, according to the vision proposed by the Vatican II Ecumenical Council.

In March 1974 Bishop L. R. Antony turned another leaf in the history of the diocese, as the first diocesan priest to become Ordinary of the diocese of Trincomalee-Batticaloa.

Already when he was co-adjutor, he was entrusted with the task of organizing pastoral councils at the parish and diocesan levels. Bishop Glennie had envisaged two parallel organizations – pastoral councils including the clergy, religious and laity on

the one hand, parish unions and diocesan unions as a purely lay organizations on the other. But Bishop Antony did not want to have two parallel organizations at any level, as they could bring about multiplication of institutions and create problems of coordination. And so, immediately after taking, Bishop Antony scrapped the T.B.D.U. and promoted the union of the laity at the District level. In its stead, he instituted the Diocesan Pastoral Council. Thus in the mind of Bishop Antony, the structures envisaged would be : Parish Union leading to District Union. Parish Pastoral Council leading to Diocesan Pastoral Council.

Soon after Bishop Antony took over the diocese, the financial position of the diocese deteriorated once again, and the maintenance of the pastoral workers were becoming difficult and problematic daily. Hence he wrote a circular requesting everyone to develop the parish properties and become self-supporting “especially as regards food and maintenance”. He also initiated a fund at the diocesan level for the maintenance of the diocese and parishes, to which each parish priest was to contribute an agreed amount every month together with one Sunday Collection. But the Cathedral and Co-Cathedral were asked to give half the festival collection on the feast of St. Anthony of Padua, as both had shrines of St. Anthony.

Besides, Bishop Antony wanted the Church and its leaders to be men who advocate justice and fair play in society. Hence he wrote “It is also my desire that we take a firm stand against all social injustices and malpractices prevalent in our society today. We shall all see that social justice is practiced in our environment”.

One of the priorities in Bishop Antony's thinking was that the Church in the Eastern Coast should be a Church geared primarily to the task of Evangelization. He had envisaged that this task should be promoted initially by establishing cordial relations with the Hindus in the interior and making them accept Christians and the clergy as friends and not as agents of Western domination. With this in mind he declared St. Jude's Shrine at Thettatheevu as the Centre of Evangelization and appointed Fr. Joseph de Koning Director for Evangelization.

Thereafter he brought the Holy Family Sisters to Sorikalmunai and moved the Franciscan Sisters from Veechukalmunai to Thettatheevu. He also encouraged the Franciscan Sisters who were

closing their house at Vakara, to open another at Amparai, among the Sinhalese. Thus in his own way he began to give shape to his priority of engaging in Evangelization.

About this time the Diocesan Commission for Catechetics, had drawn up an ambitious master plan to improve and consolidate the catechetical apostolate throughout the diocese. Accordingly catechesis was given a community-centered orientation, based on the principles that the children are not alone but members of a community exposed to and influenced by the others around them. Thus it called for a coordinated catechetical programme that aimed at influencing the whole society and not just one unit of the society. It was divided into Children, Teachers, Youth, and Parents, each having its own group of priests, religious and laity, with definite programme of work to be carried out over the years.

This ambitious and elaborate plan of action needed well trained and qualified catechists and animators. And so was started the formation of Volunteer Lay Catechists, Youth Organizations, Teachers Associations and Family Welfare Groups.. Besides, two more Religious Education Centres were opened one in Trincomalee and another at Kalmunai, in order to decentralized streamline the envisaged plan.

About this time a new diocese was created in Sri Lanka, comprising the whole of the North-Central Province (NCP). Accordingly, the district of Thammankaduwa, hitherto forming part of the diocese of Trincomalee-Batticaloa, was detached and made part of the new diocese of Anuradhapura, on 19th. December 1975.

Bishop Antony was Ordinary of the Diocese only for a short period of nine years, very tragic and painful years both for the Bishop as well as the Church. As he took over the diocese, five of his priests defected one after another bringing down the long cherished admiration and respect of the people for the Catholic Priesthood. The entire diocese so to say became a funeral house for years. By the time the priests and people got over it, there came the communal disturbances and racial riots in 1977, 1978, and 1981. Added to all these, was the great cyclone in November 1978, a cyclone with tidal waves, unseen since 1907, that completely devastated the area and destroyed 2/3 of all the institutions and houses in the diocese. It took many years to recover from these destructive forces.

Thus after the cyclone of 1978 :-

Number of churches newly built	22
Number of churches partly damaged and repaired	16
Number of Mission Houses newly built	8
Number of Mission Houses partly damaged and repaired	7
Number of Convents newly built	5
Number of other Church Institutions repaired	10

But in a way the cyclone of 1978, providentially was also an occasion for the Church to start some meaningful social apostolate among the people. Since the cyclone had completely destroyed about 40,000 houses, the Church along with other Government and non-Government Organizations, started a rehabilitation programme that ran into many years.

Fr. Joe Fernando, the National Director of Social Apostolate along with his team of workers from the Social and Economic Development Centre (SEDEC) Colombo, came over to the diocese and stood by shoulder to shoulder, with the entire Presbyterium in organizing and supporting relief and rehabilitation of the cyclone victims, and in the reconstruction of all the buildings and institutions. The housing scheme started by the Church was used as a means towards community building programme, and for eliciting social awareness among all sections of the people through a process of conscientization. It was not an easy task, either for the priests and other pastoral workers or for the people. Everyone wanted to do something for the suffering and homeless people. But neither the diocese nor the people were organizationally and ideologically prepared to shoulder the responsibility. Hence as a first step, while relief work was carried out through existing Church machineries, new organizations and institutions were established at the diocesan level and in every parish in the form of Rehabilitation Societies of the people. Thereafter a process of conscientization and 'indoctrination' was started detailing the social principles of the Church. The regular Tuesday meetings played a major role in forming and educating the priests and other pastoral workers, regarding the meaning and the underlying principles of community building and social apostolate. A bi-monthly news letter, 'CYCLONE' was released giving news and informations on the work and some spiritual thoughts and reflexions to enable one and all on the orientations to be taken

with regard to the rehabilitation programmes. A coordinated and stage by stage rehabilitation and re-construction of the diocese was drawn up and carried out.

Reflecting on the out come of all the endeavours made then, there were many points to be commended and praised for; at the same time, there were many short comings and set-backs and failures too. Construction wise and work wise, the Church workers and Church institutions did a splendid job and people irrespective of caste and creed admired the Catholic Church for her part in the rehabilitation of the people. Every one came to realize that the Catholic Church was genuinely interested in the welfare of the people, that she was an out-going institution, at the service of the people.

Nonetheless, regarding the education of the people and the shaping of peoples' attitudes towards one another, there was much to be desired. The values and motivation that should underlie all rehabilitation works, so that people start thinking together, working together and thus becoming a caring and sharing community and group, this aspect did not reach as much as desired. Even many priests did not really grasp the full significance and purpose of the Catholic Social Apostolate, as forming persons and groups that want to share and care for each other. On the other hand, there were some groups and pastoral workers, who had grasped to a certain extent this orientation and attempted to formulate their activities on this basis, thanks to those priests and animators who spared no effort to educate their flock, through rehabilitation programme. If everyone had taken to the same line, the Church would have achieved much more and reaped still greater a harvest for God. Yet it must be admitted that on the whole a new orientation was making its way in many hearts and a thrust was being made towards a better and deeper understanding of the Church's social apostolate. But for the cyclone, this new thrust may not have even begun to take shape.

It was about this time that the Social Apostolate Commission of the diocese was given a new name – EHED, i.e. Eastern Human Economic Development, and a new organizational set up. Accordingly the commission for Social Apostolate envisaged a two-fold objective:

- a) of manifesting the concern of the Church towards her people & others.
- b) of being a witness unto the teaching of Jesus

Christ in regard to the total development of the poor and the needy.

In order to achieve these ends organization and participation of the people in all the development oriented programmes, through a process of conscientization and mobilization of peoples' power is a sine qua non. Hence emphasis was placed on the formation of small units of social workers at the grass roots in order to confront and find Christian solutions to the socio-economic and political problems emerging in their environment.

Due to the repeated racial violence which brought into the diocese thousands of Tamil refugees from the Plantation areas, and the 1978 cyclone most of the priests willy-nilly were involved in the rehabilitation of the refugees and victims of these unforeseen calamities.

In order to enable and the pastoral workers to reach out to all the people, and be efficient and effective in their needs, the Bishop initiated a programme of providing them all with a motor cycle each paid by the diocese. Thus it was expected that the social and pastoral ministry of the Church would expand and the process of evangelization would take a new turn for the better.

One other important note-worthy enterprise initiated by Bishop Antony was the establishment of the Diocesan Youth Commission. In 1978, for the formation and animation of the younger generation, in Christian principles and for the building up of lay leadership, among the youth of the diocese. This has been in all truth a very successful venture. Since its inception, the Youth Commission had been at pains in training and organizing the youth and bringing about some youthful lay leadership in the diocese.

A custom started by the early Jesuit Missionaries which persists uninterrupted to this day is the meeting of all priests in the region on Tuesdays at Batticaloa and Trincomalee. Most of the priests make it a point inspite of their commitments to the flock to take part in this fraternal gathering on Tuesdays, where they meet one another and also share some of their experiences in the field. On these occasions, the monthly recollections and some discussions on current problems both socio-political and theological are also held. In one of these meetings, the Fathers of Batticaloa Deanery proposed that a news bulletin be put out for the

better communication and encouragement among the Fathers, Sisters, and Brothers of the district, similar to the one released soon after the Cyclone. The task was then entrusted to Fr. R.S.Loppu and soon came out the BAT News, giving news, birthday greetings, jokes and points to ponder. The first bulletin of BAT news was published in April 1981. It lasted for about 3 years until the diocesan news bulletin 'INTERNOS' was established in May 1984.

Bishop L. R. Antony finding the diocese too vast, and unable to cope up with the demands made on his person, proposed the division of the diocese. Accordingly, a petition was forwarded to Rome for making Batticaloa and the south (Kalmunai deanery), a new diocese. Thus he thought that Trincomalee under its own resident Bishop would be able to expand and develop smoothly and Batticaloa which institutionally was better organized could take care of itself under its own Local Bishop. But the Holy See seemed not have thought it timely to divide the diocese. And so there was no response from Rome for his petition.

In January 1982, a Retreat-cum-Seminar was organized for all the priests in the diocese both secular and religious, under the direction of Fr. D.S.Amasorpavadas, the Director of the National Biblical, Catechetical and Liturgical Centre, Bangalore. It was held at Tewatte for all the priests of the diocese of Trincomalee-Batticaloa. During those days of intense prayer and reflection, the basic and major needs of the diocese were spelt out by the participants, with a view to re-vitalizing the pastoral and missionary endeavours of the Church in the East. The whole Presbyterium being gathered together on that occasion, the following were brought out as the basic needs and requirements for a fruitful apostolate in the future.

- a) That the diocese as a whole make an option in favour of a new World Vision of God and man, Church and the world, life and history, in keeping with the teachings of the Second Vatican Council.
- b) That there be racial harmony in the diocese among all sections of the people.
- c) That we make an analysis of the socio-economic, political, religio-cultural situation of the diocese in order to bring about justice and equity.
- d) That there be a comprehensive plan of work for the diocese.
- e) That we build up communities of people, starting with us priests.

Encouraged and inspired by the thought provoking discussions and reflexions, the Presbyterium also made a statement of policy for the whole diocese:

“This diocese of Trincomalee-Batticaloa, basing itself on the teachings of Vatican II, opts for a New World Vision of God and Man, World and Church, History and Life, in order to be the sign and instrument on Inter-personal relation and fellowship among men and between God and Men, so that it becomes a means of God's actual revelation and sign of the Kingdom, the Good News of which was preached by Jesus Christ. This end is achieved by building up communities of men, bearing witness to Jesus Christ, in loving service to the world, with a preferential option for the poor and the oppressed, manifested in the very life-style of its members”.

Following the statement of policy, some lines of actions were proposed and an Implementation Committee elected by the Presbyterium and approved by the Bishop was entrusted with the task of executing the propositions. Later the Implementation Committee published a consolidated report of the Retreat-cum-Seminar and earnestly began the task entrusted to it by the Presbyterium. Alas just as the Implementation Committee was beginning its work with some seminars and discussions in Batticaloa and Trincomalee, news was received in December 1982, that Bishop Anthony had submitted his resignation on the grounds of ill health and that the Holy See has accepted it and the process has been set in motion for the nomination of a successor. With this jpiece of news the whole programme was shelved.

It was about this time that the programme of Lay Women Pastoral Assistants was inaugurated in the diocese by the Diocesan Commission for Religious Education. The origin and evolution of this project emerged as part of the thrust given by Bishop Antony earlier with his insistence on Evangelization and by the Retreat-cum-Seminar. It was an attempt to involve the women laity in the pastoral and missionary task of the Church, especially in the far flung rural areas of the diocese, where we have had neither priests nor religious brothers or sisters. Bishop Antony was the Chief Guest at the inauguration, and blessed all those who had voluntarily come forward to undergo a six months residential training programme and thereafter work for the Church. At the end of their training, the first batch of 5 young girls made their pledge before

Bishop Antony, priests, sisters and people at Aithiyamalai Church, and were sent to Vakara, where they occupied the former convent building of the Franciscan Sisters and began earnestly their work of being a leaven in the dough in an around Vakara. Rev. Sr. Laurelia, A.C. played a major role as their Guide and Trainer.

With this the chapter, the history of Bishop Leo Rajendram Antony in the diocese of Trincomalee-Batticaloa came to a close and a new chapter opened with his successor, Bishop Joseph Kingsley Swampillai.

The Diocese under Bishop Joseph Kingsley Swampillai

Father Joseph Kingsley Swampillai, the secretary to the Bishop of Jaffna and Sri Lanka's meeting National Director of the Pontifical Mission Aid Societies, was nominated by the Holy See on 7th. April 1983, to succeed Bishop L. R. Antony, as Bishop of Trincomalee-Batticaloa.

He was consecrated in Rome by Cardinal Rossi on 7th. May and installed at Batticaloa on the 7th. June 1983. Just as Bishop Kingsley took charge of our diocese, there broke out the ethnic violence in great intensity unseen before, in July 1983. From then on his period of stewardship in the Eastern Coast is marked by the ethnic crisis and racial violence in an unprecedented scale, thus bringing in many hardships to people and constrains on the pastoral ministry. Many years were spent under heavy strain filled with tension, extra judicial killings, suicidal attacks, disappearances, displacements, and full scale civil war. Nevertheless, many an effort has been made to revamp the spiritual renewal of the people, amidst mounting hostilities and unfavorable political conditions.

Subsequent to the racial riot in 1983, the Minor Seminary in Trincomalee as shifted to Batticaloa for purposes of security and better care, so that candidates to the priesthood could be prepared without interruption under the close supervision of the Bishop himself. Already Bishop L. R. Antony had earlier felt this need of shifting the Minor Seminary to Batticaloa, most of the seminarians were from Batticaloa than from Trincomalee. But on account of the opposition then from the Fathers of Trincomalee district, he did not press the matter any further. But after the racial riots, it became a necessity in order to assure sufficient security to the

seminarians, and so the new Bishop made the move of shifting the Minor Seminary to Batticaloa, as his first act, and removed Fr. Dominic Saminathan from Aithiyamalai and appointed him Director of the Minor Seminary. Within a short time, the number of seminarians went up from 13 to 42. The former Minor Seminary building in Trincomalee was converted into a Pastoral Centre and Retreat House.

Soon after Bishop Kingsley took over the diocese, he held a meeting with all the Fathers of the Presbyterium. In preparation for this meeting he requested Fr. Saminathan the Diocesan Director of the Catechetics, to prepare a working paper with some suggestions for the future apostolic activities. Accordingly, Fr. Saminathan prepared a working paper, giving the theological basis for the apostolate in the post Vatican II era, with enough openings for apostolic activities. The Bishop concurred with the Presbyterium on that document, and initiated a process of training and preparing Priests and Laity for the task ahead.

Accordingly, he instituted a Board of Higher Education for Priests under the chairpersonship of the Vicar General Fr. Joseph de Koning and Fr. Saminathan as Secretary, and other members were elected and nominated. This Board in its meetings recommended after serious considerations of priests and the need of the diocese, many priests at regular intervals for higher educations, and also obtained the necessary funds for such higher education and formation.

Thus for many years a good number of priests were sent abroad for updating and various special studies as the diocese needed. After some years, this Board was discontinued and the Consultors took up the same task.

Convinced of the need of an enlightened and fully committed laity, Bishop Kingsley encouraged and promoted deeper training and wider involvement of the laity in the task of the Church. Many lay people were sent to India for renewal courses and updating seminars, along with priests. The Lay Women Pastoral Assistants Programme, started during the time of Bishop Antony was given further impetus and encouragement by the new Bishop. As a result a number of new units were trained and posted at Kokkadicholai, Aithiyamalai, Aligambay, Kaluvankernie, and Pachchanoor (Iruthayapuram) in Muthur Parish. The training centre was shifted

from Aithiyamalai to Batticaloa town in order to provide better facilities.

In the Catechetical field a Sinhala Stream was inaugurated in order to provide training for the Sinhala speaking Catechists.

The diocesan Catechetical Centre organized a three day Bible Exhibition at St. Michael's College, Batticaloa, involving many priests, brothers, sisters, schools and teachers in order to encourage interest in the Bible. This was in 1984. It later seemed to have created further reading and study of the Bible. For following the exhibition greater demands were made for copies of the Bible and the New Testament. And so the Catechetical Centre organized a programme of selling Sinhala and Tamil Bibles at reduced prices. Some poor children who could not afford to buy even at that reduced level, were given free Bibles too.

In 1985 the golden jubilee of Fr. Henry Ponniah, the first Director of Catechetics. He was the first diocesan priest ever to have lived at that time to see the 50th. year of priestly ordination. On this occasion a Vocation Exhibition was organized at Batticaloa with a view to get the Catholic community interested in promoting vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life. As Father Henry was the first diocesan Director of Catechetics, the Office of Religious Education published a small catechetical book in his honour, 'Arul Valzhi Selvoam' (அருள் வழி செல்வோம்) i.e. Let us walk in the path of Grace. It was a sort of teacher's guide for those who teach catechism, containing model lessons. Subsequently a second and a third volume too were published with still more model lessons.

As the diocese was far behind in literacy and education, when compared to the rest of the Island, on the suggestion of Bishop Kingsley, the Catechetical Centre, initiated a programme of supplying volunteer teachers to the remote rural areas to teach in schools, in close cooperation with the department of Education. They were paid monthly allowances incentive remuneration by the Catechetical Centre. Some of these volunteer teachers were later absorbed into the teaching profession as permanent teachers. The Catholic Teachers Union of Batticaloa also provided these volunteer teachers a training course to enhance their teaching performance.

Keeping to his motto of 'service of faith and fellowship', the Bishop converted the monthly news bulletin of the Batticaloa District Fathers, BAT NEWS, into a diocesan organ of information and exchange of news and views under the title 'INTER NOS'.

Over the years, I could see various Institutional Developments slowly but steadily taking place in the diocese. The Cyclone that hit the diocese in 1978, became the occasion for laying the foundation for a strong social Institution. And so was born EHED – Eastern Human Economic Development. But it was after the coming of Bishop Kingsley, that this organization was split into two separate and independent institutions, one for Trincomalee District, and another for Batticaloa-Amparai Civil Administrative Districts, each unit being represented at the National Organization, SEDEC, Colombo, by their respective Directors. This bifurcation made the Church involve more and more into Social developments in a big way.

The second major Institutional Development that took place was in Catechetics. Actually this was one of the major concerns of the Church at all times, and a priest had been set apart as Director of Catechetics already from the time of Bishop Glennie. Nevertheless, it was after the coming of Bishop Kingsley that a Centre worthy of the name became a reality with a new block having different departments such as Catechetics, Liturgy, Bible Apostolate, the publication of a Newspaper 'Vettappu' and other allied activities, including general school education as such.

The organization of the Communication Centre with its own separate block and recording room became a reality during the time of Bishop Kingsley. Before his coming, we had only a small one man-institution. The publication of 'Thondan' monthly magazine was part of the Catechetical Apostolate. But the present set up as we have today, took place on the encouragement and support given by Bishop Kingsley, it must be admitted, and Thondan was transferred to the Communication Centre.

Even the Minor Seminary as an Institution got a big boost under Bishop Kingsley. It was Bishop Glennie, who first instituted the St. Joseph's Minor Seminary way back in 1948. It was then located in the old St. Augustine's Catholic Teachers' Training College, in the building complex that existed in the same place where today we have Caritas-Ehed,

Charles' Hall and the Catechetical Centre. Later Bishop Glennie moved it to Trincomalee, because many of the Fathers then felt that Trincomalee was being neglected without any institutional developments. But Bishop L.R. Antony wanted to shift it to Batticaloa at one time, but there was opposition from priests in the Trinco district then, and so he did not do so. But Bishop Kingsley seeing the urgent need of shifting it to Batticaloa, made the move, and so we have the present St. Joseph's Minor Seminary, in Batticaloa. Besides he also encouraged the Director of the Minor Seminary to reconstruct the existing buildings and put up new buildings to provide spacious accommodation for still more students at the Minor Seminary.

Subsequently, the former Minor Seminary building complex in Trincomalee was converted by Bishop Kingsley into a Pastoral Centre, supporting various activities for the whole diocese.

The organization of a Home for Elders in Trincomalee was also undertaken by Bishop Kingsley, and it was a reality for sometime in Trincomalee, similar to the one in Batticaloa. Later on, Bishop Kingsley invited the Sisters of Mother Theresa of Kolkotha, formerly known as Calcutta in India and succeeded in getting them into the diocese. These Sisters settled in Trincomalee, and organized a Home for all neglected poor people and does a wonderful service in the diocese, and the Home for the Elderly ceased to exist. Anyhow, the Bishop did not give up his idea of a separate Home for the Elderly in Trincomalee, and so with the coming of the Holy Cross Sisters to Trincomalee, once more a Home for the Elders was founded at Uppuveli, with its own Institutional arrangements.

From the time the diocese was created in 1893, the diocesan Procurator was a one-man institution with a clerk, who also took care of the schools of diocese. After the schools were taken over by the Government, this institution continued to take care of the diocesan finance. But the Procurator was also the Vicar General. It was Bishop Glennie, who bifurcated these two institutions, making the Vicar General a separate Institution and Procurator another separate institution. This separation was done, when Fr. B. Deogupillai was made auxiliary Bishop of Trincomalee-Batticaloa in 1968. Msgr. Jerome d'Sa continued to be the Procurator and Bishop Deogupillai was made the Vicar General. Later Bishop L.R. Antony, made the diocesan procurator into Procurator General. But was under

Bishop Kingsley, that the Procurator General was transformed into its present organizational arrangements with the present new block.

Ecumenical activities had been a part of the Church's apostolate for a long time. Already Bishop Glennie initiated the process of cordial contacts with other mainline Christians in the diocese. After the Second Vatican Council ecumenism was given a boost in the diocese and a priest was appointed for the task. But it was only under Bishop Kingsley that Ecumenism and Inter-Religious Dialogue became a separate Institution having its own Office with specified and enlarged pastoral activities.

Asipa Movement - A creation of Bishop Kingsley in recent time with its own office, staff and Director is another structural organization in the pastoral mission of the Church.

These are some of salient Institutional Developments that have taken place during the past 25 years, under the leadership and encouragements of Bishop Kingsley, for which we give thanks to God today.

CONSTRUCTION OF NEW CHURCHES

One of the healthy signs of expansion of a diocese and increase of Catholic population is the establishment of new church buildings in a given period. And Bishop Kingsley's period is no exception to this usual phenomenon. As the number of Catholics began to increase, and as people began to settle down in new hitherto unpopulated area there had arisen a need to put up new churches in order to assist these new Catholic communities. And when priests approached Bishop Kingsley for construction of new churches, he always gave a patient hearing, encouragement and financial assistances. Thus about 15 new Churches have been constructed during these 25 years. Some of these are to replace the old dilapidated buildings and others new foundations for new communities.

Thus we have the Church of Our Lady of Lourdes at Palayuthu, Trincomalee. Palayuthu from its very inception had been a shrine and place a pilgrimage, under the care of St. Mary's Cathedral for some time and later under the care of Sinnakade Parish. Priest never resided there, but visited the place regularly. Later on people began to clear the jungle shrubs in and around Palayuthu and settled down in large

numbers. In order to care for the spiritual needs of the Catholics who settled in Palayuthu, there was a need for a priest to stay on in Palayuthu. But there was no Rectory for the priest to live. But Eucharist was celebrated at the Shrine Grotto on clear days. But whenever it rained, Mass was celebrated in the Pilgrim's shed. Later this shed itself became the Church for the regular celebration of the Eucharist.

During the time, when Fr. Theophilus Ragel was Parish Priest, an adjoining land was acquired for the construction of a new and spacious Church for the growing Catholic population at Palayuthu. But the actual construction of the Church was undertaken only with the encouragement and financial assistances given by Bishop Kingsley. The present Parish Church at Palayuthu, completed and blessed by Bishop Kingsley, and now Palayuthu is a fully grown vibrant Parish in the Trincomalee district.

In similar manner the following Churches were also constructed during the past 25 years in the Trincomalee district :

1. Our Lady of Velankanni at Sambaltheevu.
2. St. Anthony's at Anpuvazhipuram.

In the Batticaloa-Kalmunai deaneries, the following Churches were constructed :

1. Church of Our Lady of Lanka, Thannamunai Colony.
2. Venerable Joseph Vaz Church, at Mylambaveli Colony.
3. Child Jesus Church at Palameenmadu, Batticaloa.
4. Our Lady of Velankanni, Kallady, Batticaloa.
5. Our Lady of Fatima, at Ollikulam, Batticaloa.
6. Church of St. Anthony, at Kalkudah, Batticaloa.
7. Church of St. Paul, at Nellikadu, Aithiyamalai.
8. Child Jesus Church, at Kannan Kiramam, Valaichenai.
9. Child Jesus Church at Karaitive, Kalmunai.
10. Child Jesus Church at Sankamankandi, Thirukkivil.
11. St. Anthony's Church, at Pandiruppu, Kalmunai.
12. Church of Our Lady of All Nations, Panichaiyadi.

Another construction of Church under Bishop Kingsley was that of Our Lady of Presentation at Thandavanveli, Batticaloa. This is the biggest and largest spacious most Church in the whole of the diocese. It was completed just two years ago. The present Bishop of Batticaloa, Rt. Rev. Dr. Ponniah Joseph was the one who initiated the construction and completed it, when he was Parish Priest of Thandavanveli, Batticaloa. Thandavanveli Parish is historically connected very much with Venerable Fr. Joseph Vaz. It is there that the first Catholic Church was constructed in Batticaloa 300 years ago. Originally it had born the name of Our Lady of Presentation, and later it was given the name of Our Lady of Sorrows, but with the construction of this new edifice, it was re-named once again Our Lady of Presentation.

CONSTRUCTION OF NEW PRESBYTERIES

With the increase of new, young diocesan priests there always comes moments when existing parishes and administrations are divided and made into separate ecclesiastical institutions to be administered separately, under another Parish Priest or Administrator. This requires residential facilities and rectories to be constructed by the side of Churches in various parts of the diocese. And Bishop Kingsley did not spare the energy and financial resources to erect new Rectories.

Thus a new Rectory was constructed at Pottuvil, by the side of St. Anthony's Church. Originally it was meant for the one and only married deacon, late Mr. Antony to reside and work. Now it is available for a priest to reside and work at Pottuvil.

Another new Rectory now completed is at Orr's Hill, Trincomalee, behind the Church of Child Jesus. Presently the Parish Priest resides at the Bishop's House, Trincomalee.

The other Presbytery partly completed is at Aligambay. The Ground Floor of this Presbytery is completed. The Parish Priest Fr. Nithithasan spared no effort in bringing this edifice to completion. Now it is being occupied by the Parish Priest.

Another simple rectory constructed is that of Kurukkalmadam. It is a simple one, right behind the Church of St. Francis of Assisi at Kurukkalmadam.

The latest rectory constructed under the leadership of Bishop Kingsley is the one at Valaichenai. It is a completely new one in a new location, behind the Church. Earlier one was attached to the Church. Now that has been knocked down to provide more space for the new Church that is being constructed.

CONSTRUCTION & ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW CONVENTS

Religious Institutions, especially religious institutions of Sisters is always a welcome aspect in the apostolate of the Church. Through their very presence, often Sisters of different religious congregations, become sources of inspiration to people and bear lasting testimony to the message of Jesus Christ to the world. The religious Sisters often establish schools or attach themselves to nearby schools, and this often tend to give a better education and moral formation not only to Catholics, but to all students, and to all the girls in a parish. Thus the Sisters in a place become an asset in the ministry of the Church. And the Bishops are the happiest, if they can get down a religious congregation of Sisters into their dioceses. And Bishop Kingsley was always keen to bring in new Religious Sisters into the diocese of Trincomalee-Batticaloa, specially to places in remote and uncared for areas within the diocese.

Thus we see the Charity Sisters in Nilaveli, Holy Cross Sisters at Uppuveli, Holy Family Sisters at Palayuthu and Missionary Sisters of Venerable Mother Theresa at Kappalthurai in the Trincomalee district. We see Holy Family Sisters at Sathurukondan, and Jayanthipuram, Apostolic Carmel Sisters at Sorikalmunai and Akkaraipattu. Holy Cross Sisters in Batticaloa to serve Siloam Hospital and the Eastern University.

THE VILLAGE OF HOPE

It must be admitted that Bishop Kingsley has had a hand in the establishment and running of the Village of Hope, that is a source of inspiration and strength for those who have been affected by the ravages of the war and the Tsunami. Many children who had lost everything and otherwise would be on the street begging for their daily bread find a haven of peace and tranquility in this place. Under the guidance of the Holy Cross Sisters single mothers also find a home with many children in their care. It is a new venture unlike any other in the diocese.

Introduction of the Oblates into the diocese

Originally the East of Sri Lanka was part of the diocese of Jaffna, and as such, it was administered by the Oblates of Jaffna for almost 50 years, until the new diocese of Trincomalee was created in 1893 and handed over to the Jesuits of Champagne Province. When the Jesuits took over the diocese of Trincomalee the Oblates left the diocese and went back to Jaffna. It was Bishop L. R. Antony, who as Ordinary of the diocese initiated the process of bringing back the Oblates again into the diocese for Pastoral Ministry. The first place they were offered by Bishop L. R. Antony was Palayuthu.

Bishop Kingsley continued this initiative of Bishop L. R. Antony and offered also the Oblates of Colombo Province to work in the diocese. They were offered also Nilaveli Parish for pastoral Ministry. Later Bishop Kingsley was instrumental in introducing the Oblates into St. Joseph's College, Trincomalee, for teaching ministry. This culminated in one of the Oblates becoming the Principal of the College, and in establishing a House for the Oblate Fathers in Trincomalee. Now there are three Oblate Fathers teaching at St. Joseph's College, Trincomalee, where once the Jesuit Fathers reigned supreme. In fact, it was the Jesuit Fathers who constructed the present St. Joseph's College, at Trincomalee. Now we have Oblate Fathers from the Colombo Province as well as Jaffna working in the Trincomalee district, thanks to Bishop Kingsley.

Introduction of the Somascan Fathers and Sisters in Batticaloa

The introduction of the Somascan Fathers and Sisters into the diocese is another important action for which we need to be grateful to Bishop Kingsley. They have well established themselves in Thannamunai with all the necessary infra structure developments and are doing a yeoman service to the people around.

WELFARE & CARE OF CHILDREN

Opening up of Homes for Children – Girls and Boys

The past years have been years of destruction and death for the people of the East in Sri Lanka, on account of the ongoing civil ethnic conflict. And this has brought about a situation wherein plenty of children have experienced the loss of their parents and their homes. Many have become orphans,

destitute, homeless and deprived of normal education and care. Hence there was an acute shortage of homes to care for such children irrespective of caste, creed and ethnicity. It is here that Bishop Kingsley manifested his concern as leader of the Catholic Church in the East. To his credit, plenty of homes for children, both girls and boys have been opened up in many parts of the diocese to care for such children manifesting the concern, mercy and love of the Church.

Construction of Schools for Children

One other aspect of Bishop Kingsley's interest and concern towards children in the diocese is the assistance afforded towards opening up and building schools for the education of children of all walks of life, irrespective of their religious affiliation. He went out of the way to provide lands and at times financial assistances in the construction and reconstruction of schools for the education of children. In some instances, even teachers were provided to some schools by paying for them, in order to raise the educational standards of the future generation of the East.

DIOCESAN & PARISH PASTORAL COUNCILS

Pastoral Councils is one of the post-Vatican II institutions that was brought into existence as an efficient way of involving the laity in the Mission and Ministry of the Church. But in our diocese this institution for the Laity, has been in existence even before the Vatican II Council. It was then called Parish Council at the parish level and Diocesan Council of the Laity (T.D.U. / T.B.D.U) at the level of the diocese, with their own respective constitutional arrangements officially sanctioned and approved by the Bishop of the diocese. Even as a young boy I have witnessed these institutions working actively and with interest throughout the diocese, at the parish level as well as at the diocesan level. Priests and people took great interest in the apostolic activities of these institutions. In fact, this institution was unique in the whole of Sri Lanka for almost 50 years before the Vatican II Council.

But after the Vatican II Council this institution was transformed into the Parish Pastoral Council with the Parish Priest as its Ex-Officio President, and at the diocesan Level, the Diocesan Pastoral Council with the Bishop of the diocese as its Ex-Officio President. Bishop Glennie and Bishop Antony have fostered this movement during their tenure of office

in the diocese, in order to encourage the participation of the laity in the Mission and Ministry of the Church.

And Bishop Kingsley continued to encourage this movement in such a way that today it has become an umbrella organization of the Catholic Church in the East, encompassing all institutions of the Catholic Church, for a better and coordinated pastoral ministry. The Annual General Meeting of this Diocesan Pastoral Council has become a major event in the life of the Church today, thanks to the efforts and encouragement of Bishop Kingsley.

One new aspect of this institution is the Organization of the District Pastoral Council, in the three regions of Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Kalmunai, (R.P.C) thanks to the efforts of Bishop Kingsley. It is a sort of coordinating organization under the leadership of the Vicars Forane of the respective districts.

MAN POWER DEVELOPMENT

Bishop Kingsley was interested in updating the priests in their pastoral practices by sending them for renewal exercises and pastoral conferences and short term intensive courses within and without Sri Lanka. I was personally involved in this exercise of sending priests for short term renewal programmes, for few years. Hence I can vouch that Bishop Kingsley was genuinely interested and encouraged priests to be better equipped in order to make the pastoral ministry more fruitful. Practically every priest was afforded an opportunity for pastoral updating.

Higher education of priests

This was another area, where Bishop Kingsley took interest, to see that priests at regular intervals are sent to Rome for Higher Education. He made it a point that every year someone is provided an opportunity to go to Rome for two years for purposes of study and qualify himself, in order to enhance his pastoral ministry back in the diocese. Even those who were somewhat old in age, were afforded opportunities if not to Rome, because Rome has its own age limits, to other places in Europe for higher education.

Formation of the Laity

This updating and pastoral renewals, were not restricted only to priests. But Bishop Kingsley also made it a point to see that the laity too were provided opportunities. A good number of lay people, who were involved in the pastorate, were sent to various renewal sessions within Sri Lanka, as well as to India Bangalore and Tamil Nadu. Renewal and updating of Catechists was another aspect of this laity formation, in which Bishop Kingsley showed keen interest and afforded opportunities.

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Lay Women Pastoral Assistants

This programme was started under Bishop L.R. Antony, as part of the Catechetical Apostolate, to care for those places where there were no priests or others to look after and make the Church present. Bishop Kingsley saw the meaningfulness of this venture and encouraged it and continued this new apostolate. Houses for these groups of dedicated Girls were started in many parts of the diocese, with their training centre in Batticaloa.

Through this programme the Church was made present in the remote places and gestures of good will were started with people of different religious beliefs. Unfortunately, on account of the civil war that erupted in the East, and due to the insecurity situation, this was discontinued after some time. But many of these girls also became nuns in various religious congregations and are doing good work all over, not only in Sri Lanka, but also in other parts of the world.

Consolidation of the Catholic Charismatic Movement

The Catholic Charismatic Movement in the diocese began to take roots during the time of Bishop L.R. Antony. It was then that the Diocesan Director of the Catechetical Centre brought in Fr. Valdaris and his team from Tamil Nadu to the diocese to preach and perform healing services in various parts of the diocese. Fr. Valdaris visited our diocese about three times, and preached and introduced the Charismatic Movement in the diocese in Trincomalee, Batticaloa districts. It was after this initial thrust, that the Catholic Charismatic Movement began to attract many priests from within the diocese. Until then it was left to the personal

initiatives of individual priests.

With the coming of Bishop Kingsley as Local Ordinary of the diocese, this movement was given official recognition and priests were appointed to streamline and coordinate this apostolate. Now this is part and parcel of the diocesan institutional structure. Many of the young priests are involved in promoting this aspect of spiritual renovation of the life of the people.

Lay Married Deacon

It was during Bishop Kingsley's period, that the first Married Deacon was prepared and ordained in the diocese to work among the outstations. A Catechist, Mr. Antony by name, was the First Married Deacon ever to have been ordained in Sri Lanka. He worked at Pottuvil till he died of a heart attack, and brought back many fallen away Catholics and rectified almost 20 marriages. I come to understand that Bishop Kingsley had been under pressure from the Sri Lanka Bishops' Conference for this bold venture, and so was not continued thereafter.

Lay Ministers of the Eucharist

Another praiseworthy venture was the introduction of officially sanctioned and trained Lay Ministers of the Eucharist. At the beginning this programme did not get the approval of many of the Catholics. But over the years, there is a change of mind and heart, and so lay people are being trained and commissioned to distribute Holy Communion and take the lord to the sick in their homes. Even now some are being trained.

Organization of the Small Christian Communities

Resulting from the Second Vatican Council, the Basic Christian Communities programme evolved in many parts of the world as a form of spiritual renewal of the laity. The Church recognized this movement and supported its expansion. The Asian Bishops' Conference officially made this movement as a valid and necessary form of Apostolate in the Asian Church context and called it ASIPA, i.e. Asian Integrated Pastoral Approach. As this movement was found to be very useful and akin to the Christian Communities of the Ancient Church, all the Bishops were encouraged to form such small communities in order to renew the life of the people.

At one time, Bishop Kingsley was the Bishop in-

charge of promoting this movement in Sri Lanka. As such he wanted his own diocese to become a model for other Bishops and other people in Sri Lanka.

And so he spared no energy in promoting this movement at the diocesan, and even appointed a priest with a separate office to spear-head this movement throughout the diocese. Many priests and even lay people have been sent to various institutes and trained in the Asipa programme in order to make this movement a reality in every parish.

Deepening of Biblical Education among Priests and Laity

The Bible apostolate is another important aspect of Bishop Kingsley's efforts towards spiritual renewal of the life of priests and people in the diocese. Priests were encouraged to undertake special studies on Holy Scriptures and sent to do higher studies on the Bible. Even lay people and Catechists were provided with opportunities to study the Bible in depth in Indian Biblical Institutes.

Regular Bible Seminars and Workshops were organized in many parts of the diocese for the laity, and they were all provided with a copy of the entire Bible in Tamil as well as in Sinhala freely. This apostolate still continues and people are slowly learning the message of the Bible and beginning to base their spirituality on the teaching of the Holy Scriptures.

Ecumenical & Inter Religious Peace Development.

The last 25 years have seen a renewed interest in the Ecumenical Movement in the diocese, wherein all the different Mainline Christian Churches have been brought together into brotherhood and friendship, as believers in Jesus Christ. Attempts have been made in breaking down the barriers of suspicions that kept each other away from one another. There is a spirit of understanding and acceptance prevalent among the various Christian denominations now which would go a long way in bringing about reconciliation among Christians, so that a united bearing witness to the Person and Message of Jesus Christ in this part of the World may become reality to be reckoned with. Now Batticaloa has an institutionally established Ecumenical Unit in a functioning state.

The relationship with other Religions and religious leaders also has improved very much during the past 25 years. The Hindus, Muslims and Christians, together with the Buddhist Leaders, in the diocese have come together and voiced their opinions unitedly towards Peace and Harmony throughout the diocese and the country at large as and when occasions demanded.

An institution, called Batticaloa Inter Religious Association for Peace has spearheaded this movement of religious leaders under the leadership of Bishop Kingsley, for Peace, and concern for people as people, in times of difficulties. This association has received the appreciation of all people and Governmental and Non Governmental Institutions, for the united stand on issues that touch the lives of the people in the East and the country at large. Men and women of International Organizations that come to the East always make it a point to meet the members of this institution to obtain first hand information on issues that concern and affect the lives of the people in the east.

Such an institutional organization comes as a crowning conclusion to the years of hard work put in by the Catholic Church under the leadership of Bishop Kingsley, to manifest the interest of the Church towards people as a whole.

A Son of the soil as Bishop of Batticaloa.

And the crowning glory of the ministry of Bishop Kingsley in the East is not only the election of Rt. Rev. Dr. Ponniah Joseph, as Auxiliary Bishop of Trincomalee-Batticaloa, but the creation of the new diocese of Batticaloa, and the appointment of Bishop Ponniah as the Local Ordinary of the new diocese. We are very grateful to Bishop Kingsley for this final crowning action, manifesting his dedication to the creation of a Local Church in the East. He will be remembered with joy and gratitude by the people of the Eastern Seaboard, as the man who really made the Eastern Catholic Church stand on its own leg.

LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE

And now the new Bishop of the new diocese of Batticaloa is being installed in Batticaloa as a crowning ministerial action of Bishop Kingsley. Yet feel that the mission and ministry of Bishop Kingsley is not over as yet. He has one more and very important ministry to perform. It is the appointment of a son of the soil as Bishop of the diocese of Trincomalee. This we expect and hope that it will be effected soon.

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Jesuits in Batticaloa and Trincomalee

Among the various ministries that the Jesuits are involved in the Dioceses of Batticaloa and Trincomalee, the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius and the Education ministry may be mentioned as promising areas of continued activity by the Jesuits.

The ministry of the Spiritual Exercises will continue to be a main apostolate of the Jesuits in these Dioceses. To be a Jesuit is to be a director of retreats. It is part and parcel of the very charism of being a Jesuit. After the change of life at Loyola and the conversion at Manresa, St. Ignatius had a profound experience of the Holy Trinity which is the foundation of the Ignatian Spirituality and which experience he was anxious to share with everyone that he came across in life. He believed that the deep spiritual experience he received in Manresa is an experience that every person can receive if the person is willing to go through the discipline of prayer in faith. Ignatius had in his possession the detailed notes on how God came to him and how he responded to that grace. He also noted the inner movements that he experienced as he went through the exercises of prayer and how these movements, depending on their nature, either led him closer to God or away from him. These notes, which he eventually collected and edited, became the "Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola."

The Manresa retreat house in Batticaloa will continue to give this transformative experience to people who come to this centre, by silent meditation, informative seminars and workshops.

Another ministry in the Jesuit charism is the ministry of education. This will also continue as an important form of Jesuit apostolate. Jesuits

have been involved in education from the beginnings, almost by accident. Responding to the crisis of the time of founding in Europe, they discovered that the best response was to train youth in faith and leadership, imbue them with values that transcend the goals of money, fame and success, so that they are concerned about society and the world we live in.

Across the globe in India, St. Francis Xavier founded a College in Goa to respond to a different historical context. Hence we find that the Jesuits who came to the island of Ceylon (Sri Lanka) in the 16th and again in the 19th century founded schools to educate youth.

Although the schools were handed over in 1970, the Jesuits have tried to maintain links with the former schools. Closer links in academic and administrative activities are also being explored. Academies were established in sections of the schools not taken over by the Government to teach English and Computer Science and the Eastern Technical Institute to train students in technical education. The Jesuit policy is to upgrade the Academies and the Technical Institute to tertiary level educational institutions. Since there are no Jesuit universities in Sri Lanka individual Jesuits have served and will continue to serve as Academics, Administrators and Consultants in the universities of Sri Lanka.

The ministry of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius and the ministry of Education will continue to be the main apostolates of the Jesuits in the two Dioceses of Batticaloa and Trincomalee.

Rev. Prof. G. F. Rajendram, S.J.

Former Vice-Chancellor