

Montfort Brothers of St. Gabriel

Montfortian Presence in India 1903-2003

Bro. Lawrence Joseph, s.g.

1. The initial period (1903-1946)

It was at the invitation of the French Foreign Missionaries that three French Brothers Denis, John Baptist de la Salle and Martin de Vertou arrived in Pondicherry, then a French Colony, on September 11, 1903. On the 14th they started teaching at the Petit Seminaire College, Pondicherry. Fr. Combes wanted to start an industrial school in Tindivanam, then a part of the British India. On January 6, 1904, Bro. John Baptist reached Tindivanam to start the Industrial School. Both Bros. Denis and John Baptist learned English and Tamil, while Bro. Martin learned English.

Bro. Denis, the Superior, began seriously considering the possibilities of recruiting Indians for the new mission. On November 17, 1904, Bro. General agreed to the opening of a Novitiate at Tindivanam and December 27, the first candidate, Arockiaswamy, who was to be the first Indian Brother under the name of Bro. Louis Mary, came to Tindivanam. He made his first profession in 1910. More Brothers from France joined the mission and some more from India joined the Novitiate.

Many attempts were made in vain to start another school. In 1917 Bro. Denis bought a property in Yercaud, a hill-station, and started Montfort Boarding School there. Bro. Eugene Mary became its Principal. In 1920, Bro. Denis was elected Assistant General and Bro. Claudien succeeded him as Director Principal of the District of India. The latter carried on with the novitiate; but in 1928, he died all of a sudden due to blood poisoning and that led to the closing down of the Tindivanam Novitiate. From that novitiate we have had 12 Brothers from Tamilnadu and 2 from Mangalore, and these Brothers contributed much to the growth of the our mission.

Bro. Eugene Mary became the third Director Principal and the novices from India were forced to go to Belgium for their novitiate and thus we have had two Brothers from Tamilnadu and one from Mangalore. In 1931, the Institute started its third school, St. Antony's High School, Coonoor and the following year as the fourth one, it took charge of All Saints High School, Hyderabad.

In 1939, Bro. John of God, a Brother from Tamilnadu, started recruiting candidates from Kerala and the new recruits continued their studies while staying in a Juniorate (Apostolic School) in Coonoor. As the Second World War started the Districts of Thailand and India started a common novitiate in Singapore in 1939. Because of the Japanese occupation of Singapore that novitiate had to be closedown in 1942; from that novitiate we have had four Brothers, of whom two are alive. During the War 13 French Brothers were asked to leave Thailand and they came to India and stayed on till 1945. With one such Brother, Bro. Michael, as Novice Master we started a Novitiate in Coonoor in 1942 and in 1952, it was transferred to Eachinkadu, in Yercaud and it is still functioning. In 1949, novices from Thailand and later on those from Malaysia-Singapore joined this novitiate.

This novitiate led to a wonderful growth of the mission with our starting or taking charge of many institutions all over the country.

2. The period of consolidation and expansion (1947-1975)

At the sudden demise of Bro. Eugene Mary on Dec. 24, 1946, Bro. Eleazar (Louis Bureau) succeeded him. In 1948, Indian Mission became a Province with Bro. Eleazar as its first Provincial Superior. In 1948, two Scholasticates were opened, one in Tindivanam and the other in Chennai, the former to do teachers' training programme and the latter to do university studies. The Province celebrated its Golden Jubilee in 1953 and early in 1954, three Indian Brothers were sent to Thailand as missionaries and later on some more were sent. New schools were started or the management of old ones accepted every year:

1. 1953: Little Flower High School, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh
2. 1954: San Thome Higher Sec. School, Mylapore, Chennai, Tamilnadu
3. 1954: Nirmala Higher Sec. School, Kolathur, Salem Dt., Tamilnadu
4. 1955: St. Charles Inter College, Sardhana, Meerut Dt., Uttar Pradesh
5. 1955: St. Paul's High School, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh
6. 1955: St. Gabriel's High School, Kazipet, Warangal Dt., Andhra Pradesh
7. 1955: St. Mark's Boys' Town, Jahanumah, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh
8. 1956: St. Joseph's Schools, Noatoli, Gumla Dt., Jharkhand
9. 1957: Little Flower Boys' Home, Pondur, Kancheepuram Dt. Tamilnadu
10. 1958: St. James Higher Sec. School, Palakurichi, Trichy Dt., Tamilnadu
11. 1958: St. Aloysius High School, Ranchi, Jharkhand
12. 1959: St. Gabriel's Senior Secondary School, Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh
13. 1959: Mahanagar Higher Secondary School, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh

In 1959, Bro. Eleazar was elected Vicar General of the Congregation and he left for France. During the tenure of the Provincials, who came after him, (Bro. John of the Cross 1969-65, Bro. Stephen 1965-68, Bro. Antony Francisco 1968-75) the same rhythm was kept up. Further in 1967, the Province was divided in Regions: South, Centre and North. A good number of schools were started during 1959-75:

1. 1961: St. John's Boys' Town, Manjampatty, Trichy Dt., Tamilnadu
2. 1961: St. Vianney's High School, Lachragarh, Jharkhand
3. 1962: St. Gabriel's Academy, Roorkee, Uttaranchal State
4. 1962: St. Louis Institute for the Deaf and Blind, Adyar, Chennai, Tamilnadu
5. 1963: St. Joseph's High School, Kothagudem, Andhra Pradesh
6. 1964: Montfort High School, Khammam, Andhra Pradesh
7. 1964: Montfort Juniorate, Palakurichi, Trichy Dt., Tamilnadu
8. 1964: Montfort Technical Institute, St. Thomas Mount, Chennai, Tamilnadu
9. 1965: St. Alphonsus High School, Nalgonda, Andhra Pradesh
10. 1966: St. Joseph's Higher Sec. School, Chengalpattu, Tamilnadu
11. 1966: St. John's High School, Nawatanr, Ranch Dt., Jharkhand
12. 1967: Vivek Vardhini High School, Mattampally, Nalgonda Dt., Andhra Pradesh
13. 1968: St. Joseph's High School, Kanke, Ranchi, Jharkhand
14. 1968: St. Gabriel House, Sitagarh, Hazaribag Dt., Jharkhand
15. 1969: St. John's Higher Sec. School, Gannavaram, Krishna Dt., Andhra Pradesh

16. 1969: Loyola Industrial School, and High School, Kurji, Patna, Bihar State
 17. 1970: Montfort Senior Sec. School, Ashok Vihar, Delhi
 18. 1973: St. Mathew's Public School, Patamata, Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh
 19. 1973: St. Francis Higher Sec. School, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh
 20. 1975: Campion Higher Sec. School, Trichy, Tamilnadu
- In 1975, the Indian Province was divided into Provinces of South India, Central India and North India.

3. The progress in the three Provinces (1975-1993)

The Province of South India had four Provincials: Bros. Anselm (1975-80), Lawrence Joseph (1980-89), Antony of Padua (1989-92) and Ignatius (1992-98). In 1975, the Province took over two schools in Mizoram and this was beginning of the future Province of North-East India. Further in 1973, Brothers were sent to Fiji as missionaries and they in 1976 started a technical school in Suva. More schools were added in Tamilnadu itself:

1. 1975: St. Paul's Hr. Sec. School, & St. Joseph's Press, Aizawl, Mizoram State
2. 1975: St. John's Hr. Sec. School, Kolasib, Mizoram State
3. 1976: St. Joseph's High School, Yercaud, Salem Dt., Tamilnadu
4. 1976: St. Antony's Higher School, Manjampatty, Trichy Dt., Tamilnadu
5. 1976: St. Stanislaus Teacher Training Institute, & Primary School, Sattur, Tamilnadu
6. 1976: Montfort Boys' Town & Technical School, Suva, Fiji Islands
7. 1978: St. Peter's Hr. Sec. School, Chhingchhip, Mizoram State
8. 1978: Montfort School, Royapuram, Chennai, Tamilnadu
9. 1979: St. Stanislaus High School, Sattur, Tamilnadu
10. 1979: St. Mary's Higher Sec. School, A.N. Mangalam, Salem Dt., Tamilnadu
11. 1979: Little Flower Higher Sec. School, Pondur, Kancheepuram Dt., Tamilnadu
12. 1981: Social Action Centre, A. Poruvai, Palakurichi, Trichy Dt., Tamilnadu
13. 1982: Montfort College, Indra Nagar, Bangalore, Karnataka State
14. 1983: Montfort Rehabilitation Centre, Pallavaram, Chennai, Tamilnadu
15. 1983: Montfort High School, Alandur, Chennai, Tamilnadu
16. 1983: R.C. Susai Higher Sec. School, Kalugumalai, Tamilnadu
17. 1983: Lourdu Annai Higher Sec. School, Kanakkankuppam, Tamilnadu
18. 1984: All Saints Higher Sec. School, Muttom, Kanniakumari Dt., Tamilnadu
19. 1985: Montfort School, & Technical Institute, Chabua, Dibrugarh, Assam State
20. 1987: Montfort School, Baghty, Nagaland State
21. 1987: Xavier College, Ba, Fiji Islands
22. 1988: Montfort Scholasticate, Trichy, Tamilnadu
23. 1990: St. Louis College for the Deaf, Adyar, Chennai, Tamilnadu
24. 1990: Montfort School, Champaknagar, Tripura State
- 1992: Montfort Centre for Education, Tura, Meghalaya State

In 1983, the Province of Central India sent Brothers to Tanzania as missionaries and that mission has now become the East African District. During the Provincialates of Bros. Vincent, Felix, Celestine, Mani Mekkunnel, and Thomas K.K. much expansion of the Province took place:

1. 1979: Snehanilayam, Suryapet, Nalgonda Dt., Andhra Pradesh
2. 1980: Montfort Technical Training Centre, Ballarpur, Chandrapur Dt., Maharashtra
3. 1981: St. Joseph's Home and High School, Calangute, Goa
4. 1982: Little Flower Junior College & Study House, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh
5. 1983: St. Gabriel's Training Institute, Uppal, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh
6. 1983: St. Thomas High School, Nuzvid, Krishna Dt., Andhra Pradesh
7. 1984: Girijana Seva Samastha, S. Gopalapuram, Srikakulam Dt., Andhra Pradesh
8. 1985: Montfort Secondary School, Rujewa, Mbeya Region, Tanzania
9. 1990: People's Initiative Network, Chaderghat, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh
10. 1990: Mwembeni Secondary School, Musoma, Tanzania.

In 1982, the Province of North India was divided into Delhi and Ranchi Regions and 1989 they became independent Provinces. During the Provincialates of Bro. Ambrose (1975-83) some institutions were started. In 1973, Bro. C.M. Joseph started the Pauta Project with an insertion like community working on people's development programme. During the Provincialate of Bro. C.M. Joseph (1983-89) much emphasis was given to rural development. The following missions were started during this period:

1. 1978: Montfort School Complex, Kansbahal, Sundergarh Dt., Orissa State
2. 1987: Montfort Vidhya Bhawan, Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh
3. 1987: St. Thomas Hostel, Khandwa, Madhya Pradesh.

4. The present situation (1993-2003)

After the sudden demise of Bro. Antony of Padua the Province of South India was divided into two Regions and in 1998 the Province was divided into three independent Provinces: Provinces of Yercaud, Trichy and Northeast India. Hence from 1998 onwards the Institute has six Provinces and there is a National Council to coordinate the Formation Programme as well as all common ventures.

4.1. The Province of Yercaud: As it was decided that some institutions in the Yercaud Province would be handed over to the Province of Trichy, a few institutions were started in Karnataka and Kerala. Bro. Mathew Panamthanath was the First Provincial and in 2001, he was succeeded by Bro. Thomas Kalathilkottil. The following institutions were started between 1993 and 2003:

1. 1994: Montfort Senior Sec. School, Anakkara, Idukki Dt., Kerala State
2. 1995: Montfort Community Development Society, Adyar, Chennai, Tamilnadu
3. 1996: Montfort Technical Institute, Savusavu, Fiji Islands
4. 1996: Montfort Technical Institute, Naku'alofa, Tonga
5. 1997: Montfort Matriculation School, Kolathur, Salem Dt., Tamilnadu
6. 1998: Institute of Holistic Psychological Counselling, Bangalore, Karnataka
7. 1998: Montfort School, Chinnakanal, Idukki Dt., Kerala State
8. 1998: Lake Montfort School, Virgo Nagar, Bangalore, Karnataka State
9. 1999: Montfort School for the Disabled, Belagola, Karnataka State
10. 1999: Montfort Preparatory School, A.N. Mangalam, Salem Dt., Tamilnadu
11. 2000: Good News Welfare Society, Kalghatgi, Karnataka State
12. 2000: GNWS Intermediate & Degree Colleges, Kalghatgi, Karnataka State

13. 2002: The Montfort Community School, Kombuthooki, Yercaud, Tamilnadu
14. 2002: Montfort Matriculation School, St. Thomas Mount, Chennai, Tamilnadu

4.2. The Province of Trichy: Trichy became a Region in 1993 and a Province in 1998. In 1998, Bro. Albert Selvaraj was appointed Provincial Superior. The following institutions were started between 1993 and 2003:

1. 1994: Montfort Matriculation Hr. Sec. School, Tindivanam, Tamilnadu
2. 1994: Montfort Matriculation Hr. Sec. School, Manjampatty, Trichy Dt., Tamilnadu
3. 1994: Montfort Matriculation Hr. Sec. School, Ariyalur, Tamilnadu
4. 1996: Montfort Preparatory School, Coonoor, Tamilnadu
5. 2003: Montfort Centenary Academy, Palayaseevaram, Tamilnadu

Further the Province has sent Brothers as missionaries to Madagascar, Papua New Guinea and Philippines.

4.3. The Province of Central India: From 1992-98, Bro. Thomas Reddy was the Provincial Superior and he was succeeded by Bro. Varghese Theckanath. The following institutions were started between 1993 and 2003:

1. 1993: Montfort Technical Training Centre, Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania
2. 1995: Montfort Higher Sec. School, Ballarpur, Chandrapur Dt., Maharashtra
3. 1996: Montfort Community Welfare Centre, Kusumkot, Amaravathi, Maharashtra
4. 1997: The Stephen's High School for the Deaf and Aphasic, Mumbai, Maharashtra
5. 1997: Montfort School, Garatola, Balaghat Dt., Madhya Pradesh
6. 1998: Montfort Vocational Training Centre, Corlim Goa
7. 2000: Montfort High School, Nagpur, Maharashtra
8. 2000: St. Gabriel's Novitiate, Morogoro, Tanzania
9. 2001: K.A. Montfort Institute for the Deaf, Shiridi, Maharashtra
10. 2001: Montfort School, S. Gopalapuram, Srikakulam Dt., Andhra Pradesh
11. 2003: Montfort Centenary School, Kuppam, Chittoor Dt., Andhra Pradesh

4.4. The Province of Delhi: Delhi became a Region in 1982 and a Province in 1989. Bro. Emmanuel was the first Provincial Superior. From 1992-98, Bro. Philip Thadathil was the Provincial and he was succeeded by Bro. Jose Thottiyil. In 2003, the Province charge of the Papua New Guinea Mission. The following institutions were started between 1993 and 2003:

1. 1993: Montfort School, Mandla, Madhya Pradesh
2. 1994: Montfort Senior Sec. School, Roorkee, Uttaranchal State
3. 1996: St. Montfort I.T.C., Khandwa, Madhya Pradesh
4. 1996: St. Montfort Hr. Sec. School, Banea, Surguja Dt., Chattisgarh State
5. 1997: St. Montfort School, Piplani, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh
6. 1998: Montfort Bhawan, Sardhana, Meerut Dt., Uttar Pradesh
7. 2001: Montfort School, & I.T.I. Ambikapur, Chattisgarh State
8. 2003: Montfort School, Thandla, Jhabua Dt., Madhya Pradesh
9. 2003: Montfort Boys' Town, Kiunga, Western Province, Papua New Guinea

4.5. The Province of Ranchi: Ranchi became a Region in 1982 and a Province in 1989. Bro. Sylvester Bara was the first Provincial Superior (1989-92); he was succeeded by Bro.

Paulose Mekkunnel (1992-98) and once again Bro. Sylvester became the Provincial. The following institutions were started between 1993 and 2003:

1. 1993: St. Gabriel School, Dhawaiya, Sitagarh, Hazaribag, Jharkhand
2. 1996: Cambridge School, Social Service Project, Cuttack, Orissa State
3. 1997: Montfort Vidya Deep, & School, Hathiagonda. Ranchi, Jharkhand
4. 1997: Montfort Literary Centre, Kurji, Patna, Bihar State
5. 1998: Montfort Technical Centre, Shatabdi Sadan, Hazaribag, Jharkhand
6. 2001: St. Gabriel's Community Development Project, Hazaribag, Jharkhand
7. 2002: Montfort Niketan, Baruipur, Kolkata, West Bengal State
8. 2002: Kharwagarha Development Project, Lachragarh, Via Bano, Jharkhand
9. 2003: Montfort Rural Community College, Noatoli, Gumla Dt., Jharkhand
10. 2003: Montfort Rural Community College, Lachragarh, Via Bano, Jharkhand

4.6. The Province of North-East India: The District of Northeast India was a part of the Yercaud Region and in 1998 it became a Province. Bro. Thomas Plathottam was its first Provincial Superior and he was succeeded by Bro. Jose Thekkedam. The following institutions were started between 1993 and 2003:

1. 1994: St. Montfort School, Guwahati, Assam State
2. 1997: Montfort Home, Shillong, Meghalaya State
3. 2001: St. Augustine's Middle School, Melhriat, Aizawl, Mizoram State
4. 2001: Montfort School, Bolchugre, Tura, Meghalaya State
5. 2002: Montfort School, Jongalapara, Meghalaya State

5. Conclusion

These one hundred years (1903-2003), the number of Brothers and institutions has increased rather steadily. There were difficulties to be overcome and failures to be accepted. Still one can say that by God's grace the Mission has been extended a lot and we are grateful to God for His blessings. Many Brothers, living and dead, worked hard for the development of the mission in favour of the youth, the poor and the handicapped. 98 have gone for their eternal reward. We salute them all. At the end of 2003, there are 520 Brothers involved in over 150 educational and social welfare institutions. It is heartening to note that we have been able to start Missions abroad and to send Brothers to foreign Provinces. We are grateful to Church and Government authorities, teachers and collaborators, students and benefactors. We hope and pray that we keep up the spirit and dynamism of St. Louis Mary de Montfort, our Founder and of our Pioneers.

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