

Short History of Indian Provinces

The institute of the Montfort Brothers of St. Gabriel

THE INDIAN PROVINCES

The National Council

The history of the Institute goes back to St. Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort, who was born at Montfort in France on Jan. 31, 1673. He was ordained a priest on June 05, 1700. As a priest he was a preacher and a missionary. He preached a large number of missions in the diocese of Poitiers, Nantes, Luçon and La Rochelle. Blessed Marie Louise of Jesus was the first disciple to follow him. Along with her he founded a congregation of nuns, known as the Daughters of Wisdom. A number of Brothers followed him and he founded the Community of the Holy Spirit. He was keen to have a small and poor band of good priests to do mission work under the banner of the Blessed Virgin.

St. Louis started two or three schools, especially the one at La Rochelle. Brothers taught in the Boys' School while Sisters in the Girls' School. He wrote two Rules, one for the Company of Mary for Priests and brothers and the other for the Daughters of wisdom. He and his four Brothers pronounced their religious vows on June 09, 1715 and two Sisters pronounced theirs on Aug. 22, 1715. Towards the end of his life, Frs. René Mulot and Adrian Vatel joined him. Unfortunately, before he could establish his institutes well, he died rather young and unexpectedly on April 28, 1716 at St. Laurent-sur-Sèvre. He was buried in front of the altar of Our Lady in the parish church. He was canonized on July 20, 1947.

On June 20, 1720, Sr. Marie Louise reached St. Laurent and started her first convent there. On June 29, 1722, Fathers and Brothers came to settle down in St. Laurent. After a retreat, Fr. Mulot was elected Superior General. All except two, made their vows in his hands, as per the Rule. Bro. Joseau too made his vows and from 1722-1759, he looked after the parish school for boys. In 1722, there were five priests and four Brothers.

In 1728, Fr. Mulot rewrote the Rule of 1713. He mainly suppressed from its articles precluding the education of the youth, since this was the apostolate of the Brothers. The Fathers carried preaching missions in the Montfortian tradition. In 1749, Fr. Mulot died suddenly while preaching a mission. Fr. Charles Besnard was the General from 1755-1788. Sr. Marie Louise after establishing a number convents died on April 28, 1759, exactly 43 years after Montfort. In 1789, the French Revolution broke out and 4 priests, 6 Brothers and 34 Sisters were killed.

On Jan. 17, 1821, Fr. Gabriel Deshayes was elected Superior General of the Montfortian Congregations. In September 1821, Fr. Deshayes came to stay at St. Laurent. When he came, there were only four Brothers of whom one was Bro. Elie, who looked after the parish school. He recruited many young men and started a novitiate for Brothers. In 1823, he wrote a Directory for the Brothers. As legal approval for teaching in schools was obligatory, he got an official

recognition from the government as the Institute of the Brothers of the Holy Spirit and Brothers were allowed to teach in five Provinces. On Sept.22, 1824, 42 Brothers made their annual vows.

On October 16, 1835, teaching Brothers (with a few doing manual work) numbering 33 came to stay in Supiot House. One priest made the suggestion that the house could better be called St. Gabriel's House and Fr. Deshayes accepted the suggestion. In 1835, there were Brothers, novices and postulants put together 132, 57 of whom continued to stay in the Holy Spirit House while 75 were attached to St. Gabriel's House, i.e., 33 of them had their residence there and 42 were teaching in various schools. Fr. Deshayes appointed Bro. Augustin Director of this house under his own authority and Bro. Simeon Asst. Director.

In 1834, Fr. Deshayes started writing another Rule. He worked on it for three years. He mentioned in it that the Fr. General would also be the General for the Brothers. Augustin protested and at his insistence, Fr. Deshayes changed the rule as "The Brothers choose from their own number a Superior who is to govern the Congregation." He signed the Rule on January 7, 1837 and it was approved on April 9, 1838 by the Bishop of Lucon (St. Laurent had become part of the diocese of Lucon).

Fr. Deshayes altogether started 76 schools and out those 29 were given up during his life time itself. In 1838, he founded St. Gabriel's Boarding School in St. Laurent. One of the greatest achievements of his was the founding of schools for the deaf and schools for the blind. Thus La Chartreuse, Rouille, Orleans and Lille were centers for the handicapped children started by him. After a full life of missionary activities and after contributing much to the Montfortian Congregations, Fr. Deshayes died on 28 Dec. 1841. He was buried in the Daughters of Wisdom cemetery, actually the 14th Station of the Way of the Cross.

After Fr. Deshayes' death, Bro. Augustin brought out the Rule which was kept as a secret. The First General Assembly of the Brothers took place in September 1842 and on 21 September 1842, Bro. Augustin was elected Superior General. His Assistants were Bros. Simeon and Abel. The Institute was called the Institute of the Brothers of the Holy Spirit. The third General Assembly of the Brothers met and on Sept. 08, 1852, Bro. Simeon was elected Superior General. In 1849, Bro. Augustin had applied to the Government for approval of the Institute for the whole of France under the name of Brothers of St. Gabriel. Bro. Simeon and his Council wanted to keep the old name, Brothers of the Holy Spirit. Bro. Simeon wanted to write to the government to make this correction in the application. Bro. Augustin opposed the move. Finally for fear of split, Bro. Simeon did not write to the government and on 3rd March 1853, the Institute was approved as Brothers of St. Gabriel. This change in name became permanent.

In 1887, the Institute had 100 communities and it was divided into four Provinces: West, Centre, South and North, all in France. On 15 September 1888, six Brothers under the leadership of Bro. Louis Bertrand left for Canada to start a mission there and on 25th September, they arrived at Montreal. They took charge of St. Francis Xavier Orphanage.

On April 15, 1898, Bro. Martial was elected Superior General. The Republicans wanted to remove the control of schools from the clergy in order to reduce the influence of the Church. The law of July 7, 1904 forbade education of any type by congregations. In 1908, confiscation of land and property of seminaries, bishoprics, etc. took place. Our 13th General Chapter decided upon passive resistance: every Brother in France (i.e., nearly 1,000 out of 1,089) would be given

a letter of secularization, declaring him free of his vows in order to protect him from legal action and yet all the Brothers were expected to stay, if possible, at their posts and carry on the task of Christian education. All the scholastics, novices, postulants and juniors were sent home.

The above mentioned anti-clerical laws made the institute look for mission outside France. On September 11, 1903, three Brothers arrived in Pondicherry. Two of them started teaching in the Petit Seminaire School, while the third one left for Tindivanam and started an industrial school there in January 1904. On July 31, 1903, the General Administration was shifted from St. Laurent to Peruwelz in Belgium.

Bro. Denis. Director Principal (1903-20)

On Aug. 23, 1903, Bros. Denis, John Baptist de la Salle and Martin de Vertou set sail from Marseilles for Pondicherry. On September 11, 1903, they landed in Pondicherry. On September 14, Brothers began to teach in Petit Seminaire High School.

On January 6, 1904, Bro. John Baptist came to Tindivanam. He constructed a simple thatched roof shed. It was there that he gave his first lesson in carpentry and smithy. On August 15, 1904, a new work-shop was constructed and this was the beginning of St. Joseph's Industrial School, Tindivanam.

On December 10, 1906, Bro. Denis left Pondicherry and came to Tindivanam to start a novitiate for Indian candidates. On Dec. 21, 1908, the novices, three in number, occupied the newly built novitiate house. Feb. 3, 1910, was a red letter for the Brothers of St. Gabriel in India, as on that day, Bro. Louis Mary, the first Indian Brother, made his First Profession.

From 1914 onwards, St. Ann's Primary School, Tindivanam belonged to the Brothers. From 1906-09, Brothers worked in St. Joseph's School, Ootacamund and then from January 1910 to December 1924 at St. Joseph's European High School, Bangalore.

Montfort School, Yercaud

Bro. Denis, On July 27, 1916, Bro. Denis bought a property in Yercaud in Salem District of Tamilnadu and started Montfort School, Yercaud on June 01, 1917. The same year, Brothers took charge of St. Joseph's Tamil Medium Primary School, Yercaud. On April 3, 1920, Bro. Denis was elected Assistant General and on June 13, 1920, Bro. Denis left Tindivanam for Europe.

Bro. Claudian. Director Principal (1920-28)

On July 28, 1920, Bro. Claudian was appointed Director Principal. On Dec. 17, 1921, he left for Tindivanam. In 1922, Bro. Claudian accepted to be the Headmaster and Manager of the R.C. Training School, Tindivanam.

R.C. Teachers' Training School. Tindi

On Jan. 31, 1922, the Teachers' Training School at Tindivanam was reopened under the care of Fr. Gavan Duffy. Bro. Claudian was the Director of this school and he was assisted by Bro. Montfort. This Training School for Higher Grade teachers was officially recognized by

government on Feb. 25, 1922. Bro. Claudian, who has just been recognized as a Collegiate Trained Teacher by the University of Madras, became its first Headmaster. In 1928, when Bro. Claudian died most unexpectedly, he could not be replaced at the Teachers' Training School. Further, the Novitiate too was closed down.

St. Joseph's Industrial School and Orphanage, Gunadala, Vijayawada (1926-33)

At the invitation from the Bishop of Hyderabad, we took charge of St. Joseph's Industrial School and Orphanage at Gunadala on Jan. 15, 1926. In 1933, the diocese received some Italian Brothers from the Foreign Mission of Milan. As the Bishop had Brothers, he asked us to withdraw and hence on Dec. 10, 1933, we withdrew from the institution.

St. Gabriel's High School, Madras (1926-29)

On April 26, 1926, we took charge of St. Gabriel's High School, Madras. In 1929, Salesians took charge of Madras Diocese from the Mill Hill Fathers and the former decided to run school by themselves. Hence in April 1929, we withdrew from the school.

St. Francis Xavier's Industrial School and Orphanage, Thanjavur (1928-31)

At the invitation of the Bishop of Mylapore, we took charge of the above mentioned institution in January 1928. In December 1931, we withdrew from the institution as the diocese wanted to run it.

Bro. Claudan's death

On May 17, 1928, Bro. Claudian expired most unexpectedly in a hospital in Pondicherry. He died due to blood poisoning caused by scratching a pimple.

Bro. Eugene Mary. Director Principal (1928-46)

On July 1928, Bro. Eugene Mary was appointed Director Principal. His Councillors were Bros. John Baptist and Victrice. On Dec. 22, 1928, the District celebrated its Silver Jubilee. From 1928-31, candidates were sent to Belgium for their novitiate. The District celebrated its Silver Jubilee on Dec. 22, 1928.

St. Antony's High School and Elementary School, Coonoor

At the invitation of the Bishop of Coimbatore, on June 1, 1931, we took charge of St. Antony's High School and Elementary School, Coonoor. Towards the end of 1937, Coimbatore Mission bought a part of Coonoor Club in order to house the high school. After bringing about necessary transformations and changes the high school was shifted to the new site.

Little Flower High School, and St. Theresa's Industrial School, Salem (1932-35)

On Jan. 18, 1932, we took charge of the above mentioned institutions. On Dec. 20, 1935, we withdrew from these institutions as the Bishop of Salem wanted to sell the high school to the Jesuits.

All Saints' High School, Hyderabad

At the invitation of Bishop Vismara of Hyderabad, in June 1932, we took charge of All Saints' High School, Hyderabad.

Honey Rock Estate, Manjakuttai, Yercaud

In 1935, the District bought the Honey Rock Estate in Yercaud.

St. Patrick's High School, Secunderabad (1936-58)

On Jan. 5, 1936, the District took charge of St. Patrick's High School, Secunderabad. In 1958, we gave it back to diocese.

Vocation Promotion in Kerala

In April, 1939, Bro. John of God started vocation in Kerala. By the end of the tour, Bro. John selected 11 young men, of whom some had passed the high school, and brought them to Coonoor. Every year Bro. John did vocation promotion in Kerala.

St. Gabriel's Juniorate, Coonoor (1939-64)

From 1934-41, Bro. Amance was the Superior and Headmaster of St. Antony's High School, Coonoor. He was keen on vocation promotion and he cooperated well in starting a Juniorate at Coonoor. St. Gabriel's Juniorate, Coonoor was opened on June 1, 1939 under the direction of Bro. Amance. In 1964, it was transferred to Palakurichi.

The Singapore Novitiate (1938-43)

On Aug. 15, 1938, a novitiate was inaugurated at Bukit Timah, Singapore with Bro. Gerard Majella as Master of Novices. Candidates from India and Thailand made their novitiate here. On April 28, 1941, Bros. Bernard Mary, John of the Cross and William pronounced their First Vows and on Aug. 28, 1941, Bros. Augustinus Mary and Denis Mary took theirs. On Feb. 15, 1942, the Japanese invaded and occupied Singapore. From the novitiate, the Novice Master, a novice from Thailand and novice George Mary were taken as prisoners and were sent to the ill-famed concentration camp of Bahau, in a jungle in Malaya. The novices continued their novitiate. Bro. George Mary made his First Vows on Feb. 28, 1943. He continued to stay in the camp till October 1945, and then he returned to India.

St. Joseph's High School, Ooty (1942-58)

At the invitation from the Bishop of Mysore, the District accepted the management of St. Joseph's High School, Ooty on June 1, 1942 on an agreement. In 1958, we gave it back to the Diocese as it was not for renewing the agreement.

Sacred Heart Novitiate, Coonoor (1942-52)

A chapel was blessed on April 28, 1942 by the Bishop of Mysore. Bro. Michael was appointed Novice Master. In June 1942, one postulant joined the novitiate. The novitiate building was completed by September. On September 29, 1942, the novitiate was officially inaugurated with the vestition of the postulant and he took the name of Bro. Gabriel Mary. On Sept. 29, 1943,

novice Gabriel Mary took his First Vows. The novitiate worked well till 1952, when it was shifted to Eachinkadu, Yercaud.

St. Antony's Training School, Coonoor (1944-48)

In 1943, the Director of Public Instruction, Madras granted us permission to start a training school in Coonoor. It was meant for Brothers and the medium of instruction was English. It received no grant from government. This Training School was inaugurated on June 12, 1944 and it had 7 young Brothers as students. In 1948, as our Brothers could be trained in Tindivanam, this training school was closed down.

Death of Bro. Eugene Mary

Bro. Eugene Mary participated in the General Chapter, which opened on Dec. 23, 1946 at Bagneux near Paris. On Dec. 24th morning, Bro. Eugene was found dead in bed; he must have died a short time before. This news was a great shock to all the Brothers in India.

Bro. Eleazar (Louis Bureau), Director Principal (1947-48) & Provincial Superior (1948-59)

The twelve years, i.e., from 1947-59, proved to be a period of stabilization and expansion. The expansion was very remarkable especially to U.P., M.P. and Jharkhand.

1952: Transfer of the Novitiate from Coonoor to Yercaud

1953: Little Flower High School, Hyderabad

1954: San Thome High School, Mylapore

1954: Nirmala High School, Kolathur, Salem District

1955: St. Paul's High School, Hyderabad

1955: St. Mark's Boys' Town, Hyderabad

1955: St. Gabriel's High School, Kazipet

1955: St. Charles Inter College, Sardhana, Meerut, U.P..

1955: St. Joseph' High School, Noatoli, Jharkhand

1957: Little Flower Middle School, Pondur, Kancheepuram District

1957: St. Aloysius High School, Ranchi

1958: St. James High School, Palakurichi, Trichy District

1959: St. Gabriel's High School, Jabalpur

1959: Mahanagar High School, Lucknow

Missions in Sri Lanka and Iraq were started; but they had to be given with a few years.

Bro. John of the Cross, Provincial Superior (1959-65)

During this period also expansion took place.

1961: St. John's Boys' Town, Manaparai, Trichy District

1961: St. Vianney's High School, Lacragarh, Jharkhand

1962: St. Louis Institute for the Deaf and the Blind, Adyar

1962: St. Gabriel's Academy, Roorkee, Uttaranchal

1964: Montfort Technical Institute, Alandur, Chennai

1964: Montfort School, Khammam, Andhra Pradesh

1964: R.S.K. Higher Secondary school, Trichy

1965: St. Joseph's High School, Rudrampur, Andhra Pradesh

1965: St. Alphnsus High School, Naklgonda, Andhra Pradesh
1965: St. John's High School, Nawatanr, Jharkhand

Bro. Stephen, Provincial Superior (1965-68)

In 1967, the Province of India was divided into Regions of South India, Central India and North India. These Regions developed themselves during the years that followed.

1966: St Joseph's High School, Chengalpattu

1967: Vivek Vardhini High School, Mattampalli, Andhra Pradesh

1967: St. Gabriel's Novitiate, sitagarha, Hazaribagh, Jharkhand

1968: St. Joseph's High School, Kanke, Ranchi

Bro. Antony Francisco, Provincial Superior (1968-75)

During these years all the three Regions expanded very much and on June 01, 1975, they became independent Provinces. The General Administration decided that Bro. Antony Francisco, who was the Provincial of India, should continue to be the Provincial in India and also as the National Chairman. Hence Bro. Antony Francisco became the first National Chairman.

1. Bro. Antony Francisco, Provincial in India & National Chairman: (1975-76)

On Aug. 31, 1975, a National Council decided to sell Navajivan and then to buy a plot of land in Bangalore itself.

On Jan. 8, 1976, the Superior General, Asst. General, Provincial in India, the 3 Provincials of India, and the Provincials of Thailand and Malaysia and Singapore met in Bangalore and decided to have a preparatory formation before the final vows and to have common renewal sessions as part of the continued formation.

The General Chapter was held in Rome from Dec. 19, 1976 to Jan. 8, 1977 and Bro. Antony Francisco was elected Vicar General.

2. Bro. Anselm, Provincial of South India, National Chairman (1977-78)

The National Council Meeting held on June 18, 1977 at St. Louis Villa, Yercaud decided that the 6th year formation could start in June 1979.

The Formation and Vocation Promotion Personnel along with the Superior General, Vicar General and the three Provincial Superiors met on Jan. 4, 1978 at Eachinkadu. The meeting looked into all the stages of formation.

3. Bro. Felix, Provincial of Central India, National Chairman (1978-79)

Platinum Jubilee Celebrations:

On Jan. 7, 1979, the Brothers celebrated the Platinum Jubilee of Brothers' arrival in India. The celebrations took place at Tindivanam and they started with the concelebrated Pontifical High Mass. Archbishop Selvanather of Pondicherry was the main celebrant. Archbishop Arulappa of Madras, and Bishops Michel Augustine of Madras, Thomas Fernando of Trichy, Arockiasamy of Kottar and Denzil D'Souza of Silchar and a large number of priests joined in the concelebration.

Our Superior General and all the members of the Central Administration and all the Provincial and Regional Superiors attended the celebrations. Bros. Henry Joseph, Amance, Marcel, and

Philibert, who had worked in India, were also present. Some 200 Brothers from all over India were present. Teachers from a number of schools, some students from certain institutions, including a group from St. Paul's, Aizawl were present. A large number of Sisters, and friends came for the celebration. Archbishop Selvanather preached a very apt homily.

The Council of the Institute at Yercaud:

On Jan. 10, 10th, the Council of the Institute started with the Holy Eucharist in St. Louis Villa Chapel at 9.00 a.m. The sessions started in the Mayfield building of Montfort School, Yercaud. On the 20th, the Council of the Institute got over at 4.30 p.m. with a vote of thanks by the Vicar General.

4. Bro. Ambrose, Provincial of North India, National Chairman (1979-83)

On May 23, 1980, a five acre plot of land on the Old Madras Road, in Indranagar, Bangalore, was bought from the Good Shepherd Sisters. Bro. Felix and Bro. Mani Mekkunnel, the Director at CRI Brothers' Institute worked a lot to acquire this land. This land was meant for the Sixth Year Formation House.

In April, and May 1980, the formators had a Session and pilgrimage in Europe. Bro. Vicar was in charge of them. In June 1980, Bro. Herbert was asked to look after the construction in the newly bought land in Bangalore. The National Council decided to have one year of training before the novitiate and thus in 1981, Eachinkadu became a Pre-Novitiate and Bro. P.T. Joseph was appointed its Director. On April 28, 1982, the Province of North India was divided into two Regions: Delhi and Ranchi. The 6th year formation programme started in July 1982.

5. Bro. Celestine, Provincial of Central India, National Chairman (1983-86)

In June 1983, Eachinkadu once again became a Novitiate and Bro. Ambrose was appointed Novice Master. The Pre-Novitiate programme was conducted at St. Gabriel's Training Institute, Uppal, Hyderabad. Bro. P.T. Joseph, continued to be the Director.

From Dec. 24-31, 1983, a Seminar for Junior Brothers of the three Provinces was conducted at Adyar, Madras. The Provincials too were present and a National Council Meeting took place there on Jan. 1, 1984.

The Junior Brothers' Seminar was held at Jeevan Jyothi, Hyderabad in January 1985.

A National Conference on Formation:

A National Conference on Formation was held at Jeevan Jyothi, Hyderabad from Dec. 28, 1985 to Jan. 2, 1986. This was preceded by a Survey on our Formation in India. The results were made available to all the 34 participants. Rev. Bros. Superior General, Vicar General and Bro. Guy St. Onge, Asst. General in charge of Formation, all the Provincial Administrations, all Formators and Vocation Promoters participated in it. The Seminar discussed our formation programme and prepared a Final Statement to help all involved in formation. A Seminar for the Junior Brothers of the three Provinces was held at Montfort School, Yercaud from May 21-28, 1986. 77 Junior Brothers participated in it and Bro. Ignatius was in charge.

6. Bro. Lawrence Joseph, Provincial of South India, National Chairman (1986-89)

In June 1986, Bro. Abraham Puthenpurayil became the Novice Master at Eachinkadu and Bro. Thomas Kizhakkekara replaced Bro. Paulose Mekkunnel as the Master of Novices at Sitagarha. On Dec. 13 & 14, 1986, a National Council Meeting was held at Patamata and Bros. Abraham Puthenpurayil and Jacob Mathalikunnel also attended this meeting and the meeting looked into

the formation programme and decided to revise the Formation Syllabus. In June 1987, Bro. John Berchmans was appointed director of the Pre-Novitiate at Uppal. In June 1987, Bro. Ignatius left for Louvain for higher studies and Bro. Jacob Ezhanikatt was appointed director for the 6th year formation. In 1987, a new Syllabus of Formation was prepared.

On March 18, 1988, a Seminar started at Jharsuguda for the Senior Brothers, who were to make pilgrimage on the footsteps of St. Montfort. A number of Brothers including the Vicar animated the group.

The General Chapter took place in Rome from Dec. 19, 1988 to Jan. 6, 1989. Bro. Jean Friant was elected Superior General, Bro. Lawrence Joseph, Vicar General and Jacob Ezhanikatt Asst. General.

In June 1989, the Regions of Delhi and Ranchi became independent Provinces.

7. Bro. Mani Mekkunnel, Provincial of Central India, National Chairman (1989-92)

In June 1989, Bro. Dominic Savio was appointed director of the 6th year formation and Bro. C.A. James of the Pre-Novitiate at Uppal.

A National Council Meeting was held on Aug. 12, 13, 1989 at Montfort Bhavan, Hyderabad.

A National Council Meeting was held on Jan. 3 & 4, 1990 at Bhopal. It decided to reorganize the formation programme from 1992, for those preparing for the final vows. It appointed Bro. C.A. James as Novice Master at Sitagarha. Bro. Paul Raj was appointed Director of the Pre-Novitiate at Uppal.

In September and October 1990, Bros. Superior General, Vicar General and Louis Bauvineau, the one in charge of Information in Rome, visited the Indian Provinces and the former two attended the Provincial Chapters.

A National Council Meeting was held from Oct. 8-10, 1990, at the CBCI Centre, New Delhi. The Provincials of Thailand and Malaysia-Singapore also attended this meeting. Bro. General spoke about the request for formation personnel for Madagascar. Bro. Louis Bauvineau spoke about the Magazine and News Bulletin from the General House and requested the Provinces to appoint a Brother in each Province, who could send news regularly to Rome.

There was a National Council Meeting on Feb. 27, 1991 at Montfort College Bangalore. Bro. Paulose Mekkunnel was appointed director of the 6th year formation, Bro. Jacob Mathalikunnel was appointed Master of Novices at Eachinkadu and Bro. M.A. Thomas as Vocation Director at Muringoor.

Montfort Vocation Centre, Muringoor: In 1990, some land with a house was bought at Muringoor in Ernakulam diocese in Kerala, in order to serve as a house for vocation Promotion for all the Indian Provinces. In 1991, a community was formed there with Bro. M.A. Thomas as Superior.

The Local Superiors' Meet at Kazipet:

It took place at Kazipet from Dec. 23-28, 1991. It was a gathering of Brothers and the meet was well organized by Bros. Mani and Antony of Padua. Bros. Vicar General and Bursar General also attended the meeting and presented papers. The meeting was organized so that the local superiors could enrich themselves by their collective wisdom, to have a common vision and purpose, to evaluate the leadership so far and to plan out for the future. There were input sessions, group discussion and plenary sessions. The Meet concluded with a bold Statement on common programme, setting up of Educational Research Centre, integral development of rural and tribal areas, introduction of guidance in schools, proper response to national calamities and on a Centenary decade for a meaningful celebration of Centenary in India.

On the footsteps of St. Montfort:

In April 1992, Brothers, who were selected to go on the footsteps of Montfort, had a Seminar on Montfort at CRI Institute, Bangalore. Then they left for France to go on a pilgrimage to Lourdes and to the places connected with St. Montfort. Then they went on a pilgrimage to Holy Land in May and wound up with a Session at the General House from May 26 to June 7, 1992.

8. Bro. Paulose Mekkunnel, Provincial of Ranchi, National Chairman (1992-95)

A National Council Meeting was held at St. Louis Villa, Yercaud on June 2 & 3, 1992. It appointed Bro. Abraham Puthenpurayil Novice Master at Sitagarha, Bro. Sleeva Reddy Director of the Pre-Novitiate, Uppal, Bro. Felix – Montfort Vocation Centre, Muringoor and Bro. Dominic Savio Director, Montfort Spirituality Centre, Bangalore. A Committee consisting of Bro. Dominic Savio (Convener), Mani Mekkunnel, Ignatius M and T.A. Joseph was formed to revise the syllabus for the Formation Programme.

Golden Jubilee of the Novitiate: In September 1992, the Novitiate at Eachinkadu celebrated its Golden Jubilee.

Institute Conference on Formation: The Conference was held at Montfort College, Bangalore from Feb. 20-28, 1993. Formators from all the Provinces participated in it. Before the Conference the Formators from abroad visited a number of communities in India. They even visited Kerala. Bro. Lawrence Joseph, the Vicar General and Bro. Jacob Ezhanikatt, the Asst. General of Formation took active part in this conference. The Archbishop of Bangalore inaugurated it and Bros. Mani Mekkunnel and Dominic Savio were directly in charge of it. The Conference had input Sessions and discussions in general assembly.

In May 1993, the Province of South India was divided into Regions of Trichy and Yercaud. From 1993, South had both the Regional Superiors on the National Council. As it was the biggest Province, the representation from the other Provinces was not increased. A National Council Meeting was held on Feb. 28 and Mar. 01, 1993 at Montfort College, Bangalore. It appointed Bro. M.P. Antony as Novice Master at Sitagarha. Bro. Paulose submitted a report about his visit to Madagascar along with Superior General, Vicar General and the Provincial of France, to study the possibility of sending Indian Brothers to our mission there. The Regional Superior of Trichy was asked to follow it up.

In 1993, Bro. Felix was transferred from Muringoor and Bro. Joseph John replaced him. In June 1994, Bro. Lambert was appointed Novice Master at Sitagarha. and Bro. P.T. Sebastian was appointed director of the Pre-novitiate at Uppal. Bro. Mathew Panathanath replaced Bro. Dominic at Montfort College, Bangalore. As he had done his Ph. D. in Counselling, he started a diploma course in holistic Counselling. The Brothers, who were preparing themselves for their Final Vows joined this programme.

In October 1993, six Provincials from abroad and the Secretary General visited the Indian Provinces, before leaving for the Institute Council Meeting in Bangkok.

Montfort Arul Udayam, Manaparai: As in June 1994, there were many candidates for the Pre-Postulancy programme, an additional centre, known as Montfort Arul Udayam, was started at Manaparai. Bro. Paulraj was appointed Director and Bro. Mariannan, Socius. This Centre was in existence from 1994-97.

The General Chapter: The General Chapter was held in Rome from Dec. 19. 1994 to Jan. 7, 1995. Bro. Jean Friant was re-elected Superior General, Bro. Mani Mekkunnel was elected Vicar General and Bro. Jacob Ezhanikatt was re-elected Asst. General.

9. Bro. Ignatius Mullooparampil, Provincial of S. India, National Chairman (1995-98)

A National Council Meeting was held on May 25, 1995 at St. Louis Villa, Yercaud. It appointed Bro. Lawrence Joseph Novice Master at Eachinkadu and Bro. Mathew Panathanath director at Montfort College, Bangalore. Bro. Mathew started the Sampurna Course in Counselling in which those preparing for final vows also joined. (From June 1997 onwards, Montfort College was no more used as a place for those preparing for final vows.)

A National Council Meeting was held at Vijayawada on 4-6 January 1996. A National Commission on Formation was constituted with the following Brothers: Ignatius (chairman), Paulose Mekkunnel, Philip Thadathil, Paulraj, and Freddy.

A new Novitiate on an experimental basis was started at **Chakai in 1996**, with Bro. C.M. Joseph as Novice Master. It was started with the idea of forming the novices in the context of a rural development mission. Only two Novices made the Novitiate here and in 1998, the Novitiate was closed down after their profession.

The Restructured Formation Programme: A National Council Meeting was held on August 20 & 21, 1996 at Montfort Bhavan, Hyderabad. It accepted a new restructured programme of formation:

1. Come and see programme, 1 year or more
2. Pre-postulancy, 1 year
3. Novitiate, 2 years
4. Graduation/equivalent study, 2-3 years
5. Apostolic community experience, 1-2 years
6. B.Th./B.RS, 3 years
7. Final Vows preparation, 2-3 months, during summer holidays.

It was decided to recast the novitiate syllabus from June 1997. This work was entrusted to a team consisting of Bros. Paulose Mekkunnel (chairman & convener), Lawrence Joseph, Lambert, Freddy Castellino, B.A. Kurian and Paulraj. The meeting decided to organize an inter-congregational Montfort Congress from Dec. 28, 1997 to Jan. 2, 1998 at NBCLC, Bangalore to mark the 50th Anniversary of St. Montfort's canonization.

A Junior Brothers' Seminar was conducted from Sept. 24 - Oct. 2, 1996 at Montfort Vidhya Bhavan, Jabalpur. Bros. Paulraj and Freddie were in charge of it.

The biennial meeting of 'LEAP' (liberative education action programme) of Brothers in direct social action in different Provinces, was organized by the 'Social Action Commission' of Trichy Region at A. Poruvai from Jan. 31 to Feb. 7, 1997.

The Golden Jubilee of St. Montfort's Canonization: A Seminar on Montfort was conducted at Divya Deepthi Bhavan, Kazipet from Oct. 24-27, 1997 as part of the Golden Jubilee celebrations connected with St. Montfort's Canonization. It was attended by members of the three Montfortian

Congregations and they presented a number of papers on Montfort. From Dec. 28, 1997 to Jan 2, 1998, a Montfort Indian Congress was held at NBCLC, Bangalore and it was attended by nearly 250 members from the 3 Montfortian Congregations from India, Thailand, Malaysia-Singapore and Papua New Guinea. The Superior General of the D.W. participated in it and the Vicar General of the Brothers too was present. Bro. Georges Croteau, sg, Fr. Hermann Josef Jünemann smm, and Sr. Ann dw were the resource persons from outside. Fr. Amaldoss, sj, Fr. Jacob Theckanathu and Bro. Mani Mekkunel were the ones from India. There were input sessions, workshops, and plenary sessions. On Jan. 1, in the evening there was a grand procession followed by Holy Eucharist in the parish and a musical performance by St. Louis Orchestra. The Congress was well conducted and it was very instructive as well as experiential. It got over by 2.00 p.m. on Jan. 2, 1998.

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During the National Council Meeting held at Kazipet on March 14-15, 1998, it was decided to frame statutes to define clearly the role, functions and authority of the National Council. Bros. Lawrence Joseph, and Ignatius were asked to prepare a draft. In March-April, 1998, there was a Seminar in Kazipet for Brothers selected to go on the Footsteps of St. Montfort. Bro. T.A. Joseph organized it very well.

On April 28, 1998, the Province of South was divided into three independent Provinces: Trichy, Yercaud and North East India. A National Council Meeting was held on June 2 & 3, 1998 at Montfort College, Bangalore. It decided to start a new Novitiate at Uppal and to transfer the Pre-Postulancy Programme to Jabalpur. It made the following new appointments: Bro. Paulraj, Novice Master at Uppal Novitiate and Bro. B.A. Kurian Novice Master at Sitagarha Novitiate.

10. Bro. Jose Thottivil, Provincial of Delhi, National Chairman (1998-2001)

In June 1998, as the number of Postulants was big, it was decided to convert St. Gabriel's Training Institute, Uppal, Hyderabad into a Novitiate and Bro. Paulraj was appointed Master of Novices. Consequently the Pre-Novitiate was transferred to Jabalpur and Bro. P.J. Abraham continued to be its Director. In June 1998, Bro. B.A. Kurian became the Novice Master at Sitagarha.

In December, 1998, the National Council organized a Seminar at Kazipet for all the Formators. Fr. Samuel Rayan, s.j., was the main Resource person. It was a very useful Seminar. There was a Junior Brothers' Meet at Gannavaram after Christmas. Bro. K.J. George, director of M.E.I., organized on Feb. 6 & 7, 1999, at St. Thomas Mount a Seminar for all the Education Commission members from the different Provinces.

A National Council Meeting was held on Feb. 12 & 13, 1999 in Bhopal. It decided to close down the Novitiate at Uppal, Hyderabad as there was pollution of air and water because of industries and to transfer the Novices to Eachinkadu. Eachinkadu was also to receive the Postulants in June. Bro. Paulraj was appointed Novice Master. It appointed Bro. K.M. Mathew as Director at Jabalpur. It appointed the Provincial Bursar of Yercaud Province as the National Bursar.

On May 26 & 27, 1999, the Syllabus Committee met in St. Louis Villa, Yercaud to finalize the Syllabus for our Formation Houses. During the National Council Meeting held at Trichy on Aug. 14-15, 1999, the draft of the Statutes of the National Council was studied and finalized.

A National Council Meeting was held in January 2000 in Hyderabad. It appointed Bro. Cyriac Francis as Novice Master at Sitagarha, replacing Bro. Kurian, who was transferred to Eachinkadu as Socius. It appointed Bro. T.V. Joseph as Manager and Superior at Honey Rock Estate and Bro. Herbert as Bursar. It decided to make available to the Province of Yercaud 1.8 acres of Montfort College, Bangalore to put up building for the Counselling Courses.

A National Conference of the Brothers in charge of the ongoing formation was held in Hyderabad on Feb. 3 & 4, 2000. Bro. Lambert was appointed National Coordinator for the ongoing formation of Senior Brothers.

General Chapter: It was held in April 2000, Bro. Rene Delorme was elected Superior General, Bro. Paulose Mekkunnel as Vicar General and Bro. Sirichai Fonseka as one of the Asst. Generals.

In June 2000, Bro. Cyriac Francis became Novice Master at Sitagarha. In 2000, a novitiate was started at Morogoro in Tanzania with Bro. C.A. James as the Master of Novices.

On Sept. 25, 2000, the Montfortian Congregations in India organized a half-day programme at Maria Bhavan, Bangalore to promote the cause of St. Montfort to be declared as Doctor of the Church. A number of Archbishops and Bishops including His Eminence Card. Varkey Vidayathil, Theologians, Major Superiors including the Superior General of the Montfort Fathers and Lay People participated in it. The key-note address was given by the Archbishop of Bangalore and 3 Papers were presented. The Archbishop of Agra presided over the celebrated Holy Eucharist. An appeal signed by all present was sent to the Holy Father.

11. Bro. Albert Selvaraj, Provincial of Trichy, National Chairman (2001-04)

On July 28 & 29, 2001, a National Council Meeting was held at Eachinkadu. It looked into matters connected with the Centenary Celebrations to mark the arrival of Brothers in India. The National Council organized a Seminar for Formators in Hyderabad on the theme of "Montfortian Missionary Dynamism for a Just Society towards the Kingdom". A similar Seminar was held at Jeevan Jyothi, Hyderabad from Dec. 27-31, 2001 for all the members of the Provincial Administrations. Bros. Varghese Theckenath, Mani Mekkunnel, T.A. Joseph and Lambert were the organizers of these Seminars and they did a good job.

In June 2002, Bro. Sebastian Olickal was appointed Manager of Honey Rock Estate. A National Council Meeting was held on Sept. 9 & 10, 2002 in DMI Seminar Centre, Chennai. Bro. General and Bro. Sirichai Fonseka, Asst. General, also attended this meeting. The General spoke on the theme of Partnership and Solidarity with the poor. He requested the Council to pay great attention to the ongoing formation of the Brothers. It decided that being the Centenary Year, the Perpetual Profession for all would take place at Yercaud.

During November 2002, the Provincials from Europe, Africa and Canada paid a visit to the Indian Provinces on their way to Malaysia for Institute Council Meeting which took place from Nov. 17 to Dec. 1, 2002.

A National Council Meeting was held in Delhi on Feb. 22 & 23, 2003. It decided upon the following appointments: Bro. Lambert Novice Master at Eachinkadu, Bro. Mani Mekkunnel National Secretary for Justice & Peace and Bro. P.C. Thomas National Secretary for Education.

It decided to have the concluding celebration of the Centenary year in Chennai in December 2003.

Montfortian Renewal Session: 23 Brothers from all the Indian Provinces attended a Montfortian Session in Bangalore from March 22 to April 12, 2003. Bro. T.A. Joseph organized it well. Then the group left for France to go on a pilgrimage to the places connected with St. Montfort. Then they participated in the Montfortian Pilgrimage to Lourdes.

On Aug. 9 & 10, 2003, a National Council Meeting was held in Cuttack. It looked into the National level Concluding celebrations of the Centenary Year. It decided to have National Centenary Montfort Games in Hyderabad, A National Convention of Brothers on Dec. 28 & 29 at Poonamallee and a Religious and Civic Public Function in San Thome School, Chennai on Dec. 30, 2003. The Council appointed Bro. M.P. Antony as the National Council Bursar in the place of Bro. Lawrence Joseph, who expressed his difficulty to continue.

National level Inauguration of the Centenary Year

The National Level Inauguration of the Centenary celebrations took place on Sept. 11, 2002 at Tindivanam. It began with a Thanksgiving Holy Eucharist presided over by His Eminence Simon Cardinal Lourdasamy. Then Rev. Bro. Rene Delorme, Superior General, inaugurated the Centenary Memorial, and Rev. Bro. Paulose Mekkunnel, Vicar General, unveiled the Busts of the Three Pioneers. After that there was a function during which the Cardinal, the Superior General, the Bishop of Trichy, the Asst. General Rev. Bro. Sirichai, spoke and congratulated the Brothers for successfully completing one hundred years. A number of Brothers were honoured. Everything came to a close with a cultural programme and a dinner party. The function was attended by a large number of Brothers from all the Provinces of India and by a few Brothers from the Provinces of Thailand and Malaysia-Singapore.

Inter-Provincial National Centenary Montfort Sports and Games were held at Boys' Town, Hyderabad from 1-3 Dec. 2003. The closing ceremony was held at Lal Bahadur Stadium Hyderabad in the evening of Dec. 3, 2003, Chief Guest being Sri Bandaru Dattatraya – Hon'ble Minister for Urban Development and Poverty Alleviation, A.P., President being Most Rev. Marampudi Joji – Archbishop of Hyderabad, and Guest of Honour being Sri P. Ramulu – Hon'ble Minister for Sports & Youth Services, A.P.

The National level Concluding celebrations

The Concluding celebrations started with the National Centenary Conference held on Dec. 28 & 29, 2003 at Sacred Heart Seminary, Poonamallee, Chennai-56. It was attended by nearly 200 Brothers from India. Rev. René Delorme (Superior General), Bro. Paulose Mekkunnel (Vicar General), Bro. Sirichai Fonseka (Asst. General), Bro. Sakda Kitcharoen (Provincial of Thailand), Bro. Dominic Yeo-Koh (Provincial of Malaysia-Singapore), Bro. Jean Pierre Calvez (District Superior of Madagascar), Bros. Cyril, Philip Neri, and K.T. John (Indian Missionaries belonging to Thai Province), Fr. Peter Mascrenus (Regional Superior of the Montfort Fathers in India), Sr. Jeanne (Regional Superior of Daughters of Wisdom in India), and others participated in this Conference. There were input as well as General assembly Sessions.

On Dec. 30, 2003, the Thanksgiving Celebration was at 10.00 a.m. in Montfort Indoor Auditorium, San Thome Hr. Sec. School, Chennai. It was presided over by His Eminence Ivan Cardinal Dias, Archbishop of Mumbai, and it was concelebrated by Archbishops of Chennai and

Madurai and Bishops of Salem, Trichy, Kumbakonam, and the Auxiliary Bishop of Chennai and many priests. Along with the Brothers there was a large gathering of Sisters, teachers, friends, students, parents and well-wishers.

The Eucharistic celebration was followed by a felicitation function during which the Cardinal and the Bishops were honoured. A number of Bishops fondly recalled their association with the Brothers. The Cardinal as well as the Archbishops and Bishops felicitated the Brothers and thanked them for their contribution to the growth of the Church.

The Civic Function was held in the evening at San Thome School. Rev. Bro. Superior General presided over the function. Mr. Thirunavukkarasar, Hon'ble Union Minister for Communications was the Chief Guest. The Guests of honour were the Vicar General of the Congregation and H.E. Bishop Singaroyan of Salem. Many former students of ours were also on the stage to felicitate the Brothers: Justice Kannadasan – High Court Judge, Thiru Kumaran – the Managing Editor of Dinakaran, Thiru Unni Krishnan – playback singer, Mr. Venkat – Pro-Chancellor of Ramachandra University, Chennai. The Directors of Education from the Education Department, Tamilnadu, were also present. The Minister appreciated the Montfort Brothers for the hundred years of educational service they rendered to India. He also released the Centenary Souvenir. A Book of Statistics was also released. The function came to a close with a cultural programme presented by our students from the different parts of the country. After the function there was a dinner party for all.

12. Bro. Thomas Kalathilkottil, Provincial of Yercaud, National Chairman (2004-07)

Towards the end of the year a National Seminar on Education was conducted in CRI Institute, Bangalore and it was attended by Principals and Vice Principals from all the Indian Provinces. From Feb. 23-25, 2005, a MCRM (Montfort Child Rights Movement) Seminar was organized in Hyderabad under the auspices of the Gabrielite Secretariat for Justice and Peace. Rome. The focus of the seminar was on Child Rights in the back drop of the U.N. Convention. 76 Brothers and 37 Children represented all the six Provinces.

During 2005-06, the main building in Eachinkadu Novitiate was under reconstruction. The postulants, who were to join the Eachinkadu Novitiate, were sent to Sitagarha. The 30th General Chapter was held in Rome from Dec. 19, 2005 – Jan. 7, 2006. Bro. Rene Delorme was re-elected Superior General and Bros. Jose Thottiyil, John Kallarackal, Robert Thiaw and Georges Le Vern were elected General Assistants.

On Feb. 10, 2006, National Vocation Promoters Meeting was held at Villa Montfort, Trichy and it was attended by nearly 20 Brothers. On Aug. 11, 2006, there was a Formators' Meet in Ranchi. On the following two days National Council Meeting was held there. The following decisions were taken: 1. to establish a Montfortian Spirituality Centre at Montfort College, Bangalore, Bro. Paulose Mekkunnel being its Director 2. to establish Montfortian Secretariat for Justice and Peace, Bro. Mathew Kuplicat being the National Secretary and 3. to sell the Muringoor property.

On March 25, 2007, Province of Central India was bifurcated into Provinces of Hyderabad and Pune. Pune Province established its Head Quarters in Kazipet. Thus the number of Provinces in India reached seven.

13. Bro. K.M. Joseph, Provincial of Hyderabad, National Chairman (2007-10)

The initial period of the Montfortian pilgrimage was organized during April-May 2008 and the participants appreciated the service rendered by Bro. Paul Raj.

A National Council meeting was held at Don Bosco Sadan, Delhi on Feb. 23 & 24, 2008. It appointed Bro. J. Arockiaraj as Novice Master at Eachinkadu and Bro. Lambert at Sitagarha. It decided to print a Montfortian Prayer Book.

An International meeting of ‘The Gabrielite Solidarity for Justice and Peace’ was held in Montfort College, Bangalore from July 14-19, 2008. The participants were Provincial Superiors of Asian Provinces, Conveners of JPIC commission of all the provinces and members of the Central Administration. Bro. Dominic Kiong, Secretary of GSJP, was the main organizer. The purpose of the meeting was to share and plan out to make justice and peace a worthwhile mission of the Institute. The resource persons were Bro. Paulose Mekkunnel, Fr. Thomas Punnapadam sdb, Dr. M.S. Thimmappa, and Bro. C.M. Joseph. The group evolved an Action Plan for 2008-2012.

A National Council Meeting was held at St. Mark’s Boys’ Town, Hyderabad on Aug. 9 & 10, 2008. The National Council Secretariat started functioning from June 2008 in Bangalore under the able guidance of Bro. C.M. Joseph. Bro. C.M. Joseph was appointed National Secretary as well as National Bursar.

Montfort Spirituality Centre, Bangalore organized s Seminar for Brothers aged between 55 and 70. The Seminar was organized by Bro. Paulose.

An International Montfortian Education Workshop for Asian Provinces

It was organized in CRI House, Delhi from Nov. 26-29, 2008 under the guidance of Bro. John Kallarackal, Asst. General. Provincial Superiors and Conveners of the Education Commissions of the Provinces participated in it. It was animated by Bro. Paulose Mekkunnel and the resource persons were Fr. Kuriala Chittakulam sdb, Fr. Tom Kunnunkal sj, and Bro. Mani Mekkunnel sg. The purpose of the workshop was to prepare an Education Policy for the Institute.

A National Council meeting was held at Guwahat on Feb. 27 & 28, 2009. It appointed Bro. Amal Raj as Director of the Pre-Novitiate at Jabalpur and Bro. Sebastian Kavukat as Manger of Honey Rock estate, Yercaud.

The Montfort Social Institute started functioning from June 2009 in St. Gabriel’s Training Institute, Ramandapur, Hyderabad. Bro. Varghese Theckanath was appointed Director. The MSI was formally inaugurated on Aug. 6, 2009, in the presence of Rev. Bro. Rene Delorme, Superior General, and Rt. Rev. Marampudi Joji, Archbishop of Hyderabad.

A Seminar for the members of the Commission for Technical and Special Education was organized in Boys’ Town, Hyderabad on Nov. 28 & 29, 2009. A National Conference on Montfortian Education was held at Boys Town, Hyderabad on Dec. 28 & 29, 2009. National Seminar for Junior Brothers was held at St. John’s Hr. Sec. School, Gannavaram from Dec. 31, 2009 to Jan. 02, 2010. Fifty three Junior Brothers participated in it. Bro. Paulose Mekkunnel spoke about the role of Religious Brotherhood in the world, Bro. Mani Mekkunnel on the challenges of religious life, Bro. Varghese Mandapathil on trust, understanding, love and communication, etc. and Bro. Varghese Theckanath on religious life in the midst of globalization. Bro. B.A. Kurian organized the Seminar well.

Yet another meeting was held at Montfort Home, Kazipet on Feb. 20 & 21, 2010. It appointed Bro. T.T. Mathew Novice Master at Sitagarha. It decided that a total of 31 Brothers could participate in the Montfortian Pilgrimage 2011.

14. Bro. B.A. Kurian, Provincial of North East India, National Chairman (2010-13)

Bro. Kurian was the National Chairman. From 2010 to 2013. He was succeeded by Bro. Franky Noronha.

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