

Mascarenhas, Mira.

2002 (1989).

The Church in eighteenth Century Goa.

In:

Souza de, Teotonio R. (ed.), Essays in Goan History. Pp. 81-101.

Concept Publishing House. A/115-116, Commercial Block, Mohan Garden,
New Delhi 110059.

THE CHURCH IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY GOA

Mira Mascarenhas

Introduction

It is commonly believed that Goan Church history was really made only in the 16th century. Highlights of wonder and tragedy certainly filled that age. But "for us who live in a world which worships the pattern of a free church in a free state"¹ it is important to know that the foundations of today's "free church" of Goa were actually laid in the 18th century.

The 18th century was a century of transition, a period when medieval ideologies gradually gave way to modern ones. Dramatic events hastened this gradual process to radically mould the old outlook, which, basically identified the religion of the subjects with that of the ruler. Ashoka had taken the path of organized persuasion; certain Muslim rulers used violence and sword. The Portuguese in Goa followed a middle path of coercive measures and discriminatory legislation against those of other faiths. As a result of changed thinking in the 18th century, the official policy took a positive turn towards religious tolerance such as the one that had made the Portuguese originally welcome to the local Hindu population in 1510 and that marked the beginning of our basic freedoms today.

If we analyse the factors chiefly responsible for this change of ideology and attitude, we find that some were purely political, some social or economic, some cultural, and only a few strictly religious. Events like the acquisition of the "new conquests" of Goa were purely political, but even the expulsion of the Jesuits and the abolition of the Inquisition were politically motivated.

The emergence of a capable and confident indigenous clergy was strongly influenced by the socio-economic context of the time, as well as by the enlightened ideas blowing in from the West. Education was freed from the clerical moulds towards the end of the 18th century, and culturally speaking, we may say that Goan craftsmen came of age in this "last great age of Goan art".² It is sufficient to remember that most of the outstanding churches and chapels standing today in Goa were either built or rebuilt or completed in the 18th century or very close to it. In short, the 18th century is a landmark in Goa's religious history, and it well worth being looked into.

Structures

In all Portuguese territories the Roman Catholicism was the official religion, and since the latter half of the 16th century the open practice of other religions had come under increasing restrictions in Goa, which in 1700 A. D. comprised the "old conquests" of Tisvadi, Salcete and Bardez.³ The Church in Goa was controlled by the Church and the State, the former being represented by the Archbishop and the latter by the viceroy or governor. Both were chosen by the crown of Portugal, the choice of the Archbishop being merely ratified by the Pope. This was a privilege conferred on Portuguese sovereigns two centuries earlier, in recognition of the yeoman service rendered by Portugal to expansion of Christianity. In addition the tithes due to the papal treasury (a 10% tax on all produce of Christian lands) were turned over to the Portuguese crown, to be spent on missionary work and on the upkeep of Christian clergy and institutions.⁴ This meant that, through the royal purse-strings the crown and its viceroys exercised a definite control over the church and every religious institution in the Portuguese dominions.

The Archbishop was accorded a protocolar rank second only to

the viceroy's, and like the latter, he lived at Panelim, the elite capital city's suburb. His see was at the Cathedral in the city of old Goa, and from there he governed the far-flung archdiocese that stretched from Africa to Japan, including parishes and mission stations in territories outside Portuguese control.⁵ He also wielded considerable political power whenever he took over the reins of the secular government from an outgoing or absentee governor. He decided all clerical appointments, and his religious decrees affected the social and moral lives of thousands. During the course of the 18th century Goa had eight archbishops, and they took over the secular government also eight times in all.

The clergy was divided into two main bodies: The "secular" and the "regular". The secular priests lived singly or in groups, each on his own stipend or private income, except for higher-ranking dignitaries of the Cathedral Chapter who were mainly Goans in the 18th century. The regular clergy belonged to the monastic communities, known as religious orders or congregations. These shared a common life and income, and had strict rules to observe. Such were the great mendicant, preaching and teaching Orders: The Franciscans, Dominicans, Augustinians, Jesuits, Carmelites, Theatines, and Oratorians. Their huge convents in the city of Goa were centres of learning and training, from where members were sent out to man colleges, parishes, and mission stations all over the Portuguese *Estado da India*. In Goa proper, the Franciscans were running 24 parishes in Bardez, besides a couple of colleges and hospices. The Jesuits were in charge of about 60 parishes in Salcete, the famous St. Paul's "university" in Old Goa, the royal hospital and other institutions. The Dominicans and the Augustinians had colleges and parishes in Ilhas (Tisvadi). There was an Augustinian nunnery called Santa Monica, the only one in the archdiocese, and not far from it, there was a monastery of hospitaller lay Brothers. The all-Italian Carmelites and Theatines dwindled in numbers and favour with the government as they did not show willingness to take the required oath of loyalty to the Portuguese crown.⁷

All the regular clergy was European or Eurasian at the beginning of the 18th century and full-blooded Goans were not yet accepted in their ranks. As a result, a group of Goan priests decided to organize themselves into a religious congregation. They came to be known as

Oratorians and they did a splendid job in Ceylon where, after the Dutch conquest, the Catholics became victims of Calvinist and Buddhist persecutions. At the opening of the century Fr. Joseph Vaz, a daring pioneer of this missionary group, had already gained legendary fame for holiness, charity and inspiring service of the Church. He died there in 1711.⁸

By this time the bulk of Goa's population had converted to Christianity. According to a report of the viceroy in 1707 there were about 100,000 Christians to 3000 Hindus in Salcete, and a roughly similar proportion in the other two talukas of Bardez and Tisvadi.⁹ Most Hindus who had not become Christians had migrated to the mainland areas of Ponda, Bicholim, or Zambaulim, or still further afield. Only in the market city of Goa there was a majority of non-Christians, and many of these came from diverse and distant places and countries. According to a letter from a judge to the crown of Portugal in 1704 there were 30-40,000 non-Christians in the city of Goa.¹⁰ Although the earlier figures of the viceroy were inaccurate in the light of subsequent census figures, there is no doubt that members of the Church formed the vast majority of the population in the countryside. A parish census in 1719 gives 67,252 as total number of Christians.¹¹ It was probably not exhaustive, since the State census of 1750 lists 169,696 native Christians and 1,370 whites, as compared to 23,355 Hindus and 2,953 Muslims in a total population of 201,814.¹²

Christian Life

After conversion Goan Christians were expected to make a clean break with their Hindu past. Not only were the personal names changed, but food habits, social customs, and even dress had to conform to the way of living of the European Christians. Naturally, this was no easy task. We get to know about how the 18th century Goan Christians lived from the various Church decrees and prohibitions issued during this and earlier periods. An edict of the Inquisition in 1736, for instance, draws a detailed picture of practices which the Christians had to shun,¹³ so as not to be confused with Hindu neighbours and their socio-religious customs. But since habits die hard, many ancestral customs that were not directly connected with Hindu worship still live on.

Several episcopal decrees were prompted by the age-old custom of child marriages and arranged marriages. Archbishop Santa Catarina (1784-1812) condemned the practice of getting 12-year-old girls married "before they were capable of evaluating the duties of marriage". He also condemned ostentatious and financially ruinous marriage celebrations, and marriages forced by parents on youngsters who scarcely knew their intended partners.¹⁴ One decree ruled that the bride's face should be unveiled and clearly seen at the wedding ceremony and that her responses to the vital questions thereat be audible.¹⁵

Hindu superstitions connected with birth, death and marriage obviously persisted. Religious legislation warned against the belief that demons sought to enter the home on the 6th day after a child's birth, and should be kept away with all-night feasting and fireworks, the child being protected by a black wrap and a smoke-screen! Women were reprovved for not going to church for 40 days "in manner of the Jews" after giving birth to a child. Loud lamentations and melodramatic scenes attended the presence of a corpse in a home. One superstition held that the administration of the last sacraments was a signal for the devil to enter and begin his last fight for the departing soul. As a result there was a very real fear of calling for a priest to administer the last rites.¹⁶

Several old Hindu practices were enhanced in their Christianized version. Thus, the place of honour given to the Hindu household deity was now given to the *oratorio*. The votive flame now burned before a crucifix or images of Christian saints. The *tulsi* plant pedestal gave way to the cross in front of a Christian home, and Christian prayers now accompanied such pre-marriage customs as ritual sweet-making or the coconut-juice bath. In the village *novem* (Konkani expression for the annual harvest procession), a Christian, instead of a Hindu priest, now carried on the traditional practice of blessing the first sheaves of paddy.¹⁷

Processions and feast days were very popular with the people, who were inclined to turn them into veritable *melas*. They were warned not to make the public spectacles of penance or dramatic performances of Lent and Christmastide into garish displays. Vending booths in the vicinity of the churches, as well as rowdy entertain-

ments of *olly* and *zaqor* were banned time and again, with the threat of deterrent action against the whole village.¹⁸ Interdicts and fines, however, have not fully succeeded in rooting out these practices.¹⁹

It is common fact that the wealthy and landed gentry has always tried to extend its influence over the Church. We come across injunctions against the celebration of baptisms in homes instead of in the church, against long funeral orations inside the church, and against additional display of liturgical paraphernalia at christenings and weddings of the influential laymen.²⁰ Bridal couples even went to the extent of announcing their arrival at, or departure from, their parishes with the pealing of church bells, a privilege that was reserved to archbishops and viceroys!²¹

The parish priest was instructed to teach his flock sound Christian doctrine and morals regularly. He was also expected to encourage heads of families to repeat the traditional catechism lessons in song, a practice inherited from the time of St. Francis Xavier. The vicar was also enjoined to take an annual census of his parishioners, verifying numbers by personal visits to the families under his spiritual care. He was to see that there was silence and decorum in and around the church premises, and scrupulously observe the royal decree banning the unhealthy practice of burials inside the church building. For this purpose, airy cemeteries were ordered to be built on village hill-sides and isolated places.²²

An important function of the parish priest was the running of the parish school. Though theoretically open to all the local Christian lads, it was frequented mostly by the sons of the Brahmin or land-owning families. The caste traditions continued after conversion, specially in the choice of professions and marriage partners. The boys were taught the "Three R's", and given quite a sound training in the basic harmony and singing of western music, as well as musical instruments like the violin and organ. This enabled them to take part in liturgical services, but also to earn livelihood.²³

Girls were not admitted into the schools, but were often tutored at home. Although the position of women was considerably upgraded in society by the Christian concept of monogamy, by property laws that benefited the women converts, and by positive en-

couragement given to young widows to re-marry,²⁵ their place was still strictly in the home. After two and half centuries of Christianity, Europeans could still remark that "though all-powerful in the home, women are openly disparaged by their husbands -- a remnant of the Hindu tradition".²⁶

Maintenance and repairs of the church buildings were, as in Hindu times, carried out by the village communities, known as *comunidades* to the Portuguese. The State aided major works, and also paid stipends to the priests, often from taxes levied on the same *comunidades*.²⁷ The administrative boards of the latter usually sat in the church premises, a practice handed down from the temple times, and along with committees of *confrarias* (pious confraternities) and *fabricas* (administrators of the church property) often made such a nuisance of themselves that vicars were repeatedly urged to stop all the meetings on church premises.²⁸ However, the practice carries on to this day.

Official Religious Policy

Several laws were in existence favouring conversion to Christianity, and discriminating against the practice of other religions.²⁹ These were periodically re-enacted, changed or abolished by the crown in Lisbon on recommendation of the viceroy, archbishop or important religious entities. Prominent in the latter category were the Jesuits, zealous promoters of faith, and the court of the Inquisition, dreaded custodian of the same. By the 18th century, for instance, no non-Catholic place of public worship was allowed. Those temples that had not been officially destroyed had fallen prey to time and weather conditions, since they could not be repaired. Goan Hindus and Muslims prayed in their homes, performed what rites they could without fanfare, or else attended ceremonies in the temples beyond the boundaries of the "old conquests".

In 1718 it had been decreed that orphaned children of non-Christian parents could be legally claimed for baptism or religious instruction in the Catholic faith by the *Pai dos Christãos* (= Father of the Christians) who was in charge of an institution called the *caza dos catechumenos*. The relatives who spirited such children away to the mainland were fined or punished. The decree was renewed in

1754. Three years later another law reversed an earlier liberal interpretation on the subject of taking away illegitimate children from non-Christian mothers and baptising them as Christians.³⁰

In practice, however, these laws were scarcely obeyed. A tolerant attitude had already begun to creep into official policy in the 17th century, when viceroys and officials were covertly representing to the crown that religious discrimination was having an adverse effect on the commerce and general prosperity of Goa, since Hindus constituted the business community of Goa. In fact, it became the fashion to impute the decline of the whole Eastern empire of the Portuguese to this, though there were several other far more important causes for the decline.³¹

Indeed, we find the *pay dos christãos* regularly complaining to the king in the 18th century that officials were not carrying out the regal decrees meant to defend and care for new converts.³² In 1735 he imputed the slow pace of Christianization to the great freedom and esteem which the Hindus enjoyed in the State, and to the general slack in observing laws and charters in favour of Christians. Years before, in 1712, another *pay* had described the contemporary scene in detail. Not only was he not consulted before public offices were given away to Hindus -- thereby depriving many a deserving convert -- but Hindus were allowed to live in Catholic Goa with privileges. They used money earned here to build and renew temples on the mainland, coming and going as they pleased. They enjoyed the honours of the palanquin, umbrella and horse-riding, which other rulers reserved only to a privileged few. They had obtained permission to bring their *bottos* (priests) and dancing girls into Goa for the celebration of marriages, and even took their dying (lest they should ask for baptism in their last hours) across to the mainland, where they had no home, doctor or hospital. They were adept at hiding children who had to be turned over to him for instruction, and for getting favourable interpretations from the authorities regarding property and other laws. Finally, they treated relatives or acquaintances who had been converted so insultingly and badly that even the stoutest of heart would be deterred from taking that step.³³

Goan Hindus were also quick to send formal protests to the Portuguese crown against their disabilities or any unjust treatment by an official.³⁴ It is significant that the Inquisition Edict of 1736 sought to

counteract the tolerant tendencies evident in every section of society by tightening control over the social, rather than the religious habits of the Christians, since they provided the basis for ethnic identification and friendly co-existence between the two major religious communities in Goa.³⁵

The first bold step towards a liberalisation of the official religious policy were taken by viceroy Alva (1754-56) and Ega (1758-65) when they tried to consolidate territorial gains outside the "old conquest". Pernem and Bicholim-Sanquelim had been reluctantly ceded by the Bhosles of Sawantwadi in 1754;³⁶ Ponda and Zambaulim were militarily wrested in 1763; Canacona was brought in by the raja of Sunda when he was under attack of Hyder Ali and sought refuge under the Portuguese in Goa in 1764.³⁷ Thereafter, the boundaries shifted more than once, but by the end of the century the "new conquests" had more than doubled Goa's original land extent. By cleverly treating the predominantly Hindu "new conquests" as if they were outside the pale of Christian Goa, these viceroys were able to promulgate decrees permitting their new subjects "the preservation of their temples, ministers, Brahmins, rites and customs".³⁸ Furthermore, this permission was offered as inducement to all Desais and Ranes who would voluntarily come forward to swear fidelity to the State.³⁹

Governor de Melo (1768-74) went a step further, when he pleaded with Lisbon that non-Christians in Christian Daman be allowed to practice their faiths, just as their counterparts in Diu had been allowed to do.⁴⁰ His plea was granted. Obviously, the winds of change were blowing.

Much of this new boldness on the part of the Goa government authorities was due to the backing of the prime minister in Lisbon. This man, known as Marquis of Pombal, was a strange mixture of ruthless, dictatorial and liberal ways. He had been governing the Portuguese dominions under king Joseph I since 1750, and he did far more than any of his lieutenants in Goa could have dreamt of doing to change the official religious policy when he destroyed both the Jesuits and the Inquisition, the twin pillars of that policy in the Portuguese empire.⁴¹

The Expulsion of the Jesuits

The nobility and the Jesuits had enjoyed unlimited influence over the Portuguese royal court and the realm for generations. Both had snapped their fingers contemptuously at "upstart" Pombal's attempts to create a "new" Portugal. With hatred mounting in his heart, the king's minister bided his time. An attempted regicide in 1758 was his opportunity to strike. Leading noble families were accused and exterminated. The Jesuits were also accused, and by March 1759 royal decrees had expelled the whole "Society of Jesus" from the Portuguese dominions.⁴²

The bombshell fell on Goa in September that year when the ships from the metropolis arrived. Within a day all institutions belonging to the Jesuits were surrounded by troops, and every Jesuit was under arrest.⁴³ Soon they were shut up in monasteries of the other religious Orders, and with the return sailing they were shipped off to Lisbon gaols. All Jesuit estates, rents, grants and other property were confiscated and declared crown property.⁴⁴ It was a busy time for both viceroy and archbishop, because the vacancies left by the Jesuits had to be filled. Missionaries had to be appointed from other religious Orders to substitute them in parishes and mission stations all over the Portuguese India. Needless to say, Jesuits outside Goa ignored the call to return and submit tamely to arrest warrant, and since they were held in high esteem by their Christian flocks, it was difficult to capture them even in the Portuguese fort settlements. Besides, the raw substitutes sent were no match for the well-trained Jesuits, who always studied the culture and learnt the vernaculars of the districts where they exercised their apostolate.⁴⁵

Replacing Jesuit teachers and professors in their educational institutions was also just a difficult task. After several trials, it was found that the only ones who could do the work somewhat satisfactorily were the Oratorians, the congregation of the Goan priests.⁴⁶ But perhaps the greatest headache caused to the State by the expulsion order was an appreciable fall in commercial activity. All over the world the Jesuits had invested their vast resources to the maximum advantage, and it was "difficult to find some branch of economic activity in Portuguese Asia where they were not directly or indirectly involved", particularly shipping, building, trade and

finance. They were also the trusted custodians of Crown funds, managers of Goa's royal hospital, and responsible for the upkeep of fortifications and minting of coins at some places. Their landholdings had long been the subject of complaint by envious officials, but their defence was that far-flung missionary efforts could not be supported by crusading zeal alone.⁴⁷ The fact remained that the Jesuits' business acumen, educational excellence and missionary success found very poor successors when Jesuit concerns were taken over by the Church and State.⁴⁸

The abolition of the Inquisition

When Pombal destroyed the Jesuits, he won for himself a host of voluble enemies and critics. But when he suppressed the Inquisition in 1774 everyone applauded. Both steps had been utterly unexpected. Both were effected with such dramatic speed and efficiency that the Christian world gasped in disbelief. But this time there was public relief and rejoicing.

Although it has been shown that every practice of the Inquisition commonly objected to had already figured in the Indian *dharma-shastras* and in Roman law,⁴⁹ it is certain that average person greatly feared the Inquisition. Much of the dread was due to the ominous silence which surrounded its working methods, its trials, and daily treatment of the prisoners. There were vaguely whispered horrors and the frightening sights periodically provided by the *autos da fé*, at which the accused were either acquitted or publicly condemned and tortured. Various punishments were meted out to the public sinners, heretics, apostates and blasphemers among the Catholics, for whom this court functioned, but the greatest was the burning of the "impenitent" at the stake.⁵⁰ During the 71 *autos da fé* held in Goa from 1600 to 1773 (practically during the entire life of the Inquisition in Goa) 121 out of 4046 men and women sentenced received this supreme punishment. Of these 121, 64 were already dead, so that only their bones and effigies were burnt at the stake.⁵¹ Nevertheless, the Inquisition's potential for high-handed justice was very real, since any enemy could turn into a deadly informer under its protective veil of secrecy. Even non-Catholics could be denounced as preventing Catholics from practising their religion, or perverting them with evil practices and rituals. No wonder friend and

foe alike praised Pombal for the abolition of this dreaded institution. When revived for a time after Pombal's downfall, it was a ghost of its former self, shorn of all its former power. It was suppressed for good in 1812.

The extinction of the Inquisition in Goa was formally decreed by the Cardinal Inquisitor-general and king in Lisbon. The decrees were executed by the chief justice of Goa in October 1774. Its 37 prisoners were released and 14 boxes of archived papers sent to Lisbon. These were ultimately destroyed in the final extinction of the "Holy Office". The State revenue department picked up a sizable amount in cash and securities of precious metals and stones, as well as immovable property. The three inquisitors and official clerk were retired with pensions.⁵³

Indianisation of the Clergy

Whether or not Pombal expelled the Jesuits and abolished the Inquisition because he "could stomach no tyranny but his own",⁵⁴ he certainly contributed two landmarks to Goan Church History. They paved the way for an enlightened official religious policy in the coming centuries. A more significant achievement, however, concerned the Goan Catholic clergy. For more than a century and a half before his coming into power as Prime Minister, the native priests of Goa had been quietly proving their worth and efficiency in the parishes and missions assigned to them to work in. However, though the European religious hierarchy leaned heavily on them for language and manpower, they were loath to acknowledge them as their equals. As we mentioned already none of the Regulars admitted a pure native into their ranks. The cathedral chapter, vicarships and professorships in Goa were filled by Europeans, no matter how incompetent in comparison with Goans. Outside Goa, however, the Papal Congregation for the propagation of faith (better known as *propaganda fide*) was enthusiastic about the work of Goan priests. It had already appointed three Goan bishops in the 17th century to run dioceses in other parts of India. Goan intelligentsia was quick to resent the injustice, but could do nothing against the established order, where ignorant soldiers and dubious Eurasians were preferred to capable Goans.

That situation is best seen in the accounts of happenings in various convents and missions during this century. Frankly speaking, the exclusively European religious orders were in a sad state of disorder. Letters from viceroys and archbishops to the crown abound in complaints. The greed of the Dominican missionaries for ivory and gold in Africa or spices and sandalwood in Timor and Solor; the scandalous power-struggles of Augustinians in Bengal; extortionist and lax Franciscans in Bardez parishes; the business empire of the Jesuits.⁵⁶ The latter, however, were consistently praised for their work and dedication to duty, as were also the Goan Oratorians who did not have a fraction of the finances available to the Jesuits to support their self-sacrificing and pioneering work in Kanara and Ceylon.⁵⁷

Then came Pombal's historic decrees of 1761 and 1763, commonplace to the modern mind but most enlightened for that age. And when he issued his Instructions in 1774 to the new viceroy and archbishop,⁵⁸ they were a charter of human rights to the Goans. Long pent-up resentment began to find immediate and vigorous utterance, and the crushed hopes of decades began to blossom again. Already in 1766 the *camara geral* of the Bardez *comunidades* appealed against the innumerable outrages and injuries suffered by the people from the Franciscan Regulars who administered the 24 parishes of that province, and pointed out that the native clergy did the bulk of the the work of preaching, hearing of confessions and catechizing.⁵⁹ Though no friends of their, governor de Melo threw his weight in favour of the native clerics taking over the vicarships in question. The order was given by Pombal. A list of eligibles drawn in a petition of 1762 was instrumental in the appointment of the first native to the cathedral chapter, and a strongly-worded letter sent by the Goan clergy to the crown in 1771 was quoted in the famous 1774 Instructions.⁶⁰ Priests were henceforth to be selected for mission or parish posts on the sole criteria of learning and virtue, and without distinction of race.⁶¹

The local Theatines who had refused to admit natives into their ranks just as a few years before, in accordance with the accepted custom of other Orders, were the first to accept the Goan candidates. Soon they were reporting that "they are the most suitable for restoring the new missions and this has been amply proved in the kingdom

of Kanara and the island of Ceylon... (where) they annually multiply the number of the faithful, because of the ease and skill with which they master the language of any place in this part of the East".⁶² One by one, every religious Order in Goa began to receive Goan candidates. Parishes became theirs by right, not only where the Jesuits had been expelled and the Franciscans ousted, but all over the archdiocese and beyond. A matter-of-fact briefing of a new archbishop to Goa by the Lisbon Secretary of State in 1779 (following Pombal's downfall) pronounces the work of Goan priests as "fully and consistently satisfactory",⁶³ and several years later, a French historian comments on the "utter change for the better in the manners and morals" of Goan clergy,⁶⁴ both secular and regular, which, by the turn of the century, had become almost Indianised.

Padroado v/s Propaganda

A conflict of ecclesiastical jurisdictions plagued the Church of Goa all through the 18th century. Though not within the confines of the territory proper, it occasioned much bitterness and many unseemly disputes. Originally responsible for the problem was the limited geographical knowledge of the 15th and 16th centuries. When Portugal and Spain launched out on their epoch-making voyages, one eastwards and the other westwards, the Pope had blessed their missionary intentions by dividing the evangelical jurisdiction of the whole world between the two. Continents and oceans had yet to be charted. In 1534 the Portuguese king was given the right of royal patronage in the East, and successive papal briefs confirmed this right.⁶⁵ This meant that the crown could nominate all bishops, dignitaries and parish priests. In return it was bound to safeguard the Church interests and propagate the faith by supporting the clergy and religious institutions. Since all Catholics east of the Cape came under the dual control of Church and State, "mission and colonial expansion grew together", and defence of the "padroado" was almost a patriotic duty.⁶⁷

Things worked well as long as the resources of the Portuguese crown in men and money sufficed. But dwindling resources and an increasingly greater number of Christians and Christian institutions brought the *padroado* up against practical difficulties. Within a century, Rome had realized that it was impossible for so small a nation

to handle the colossal task of evangelizing the East. Therefore, it set about trying to rectify the initial error of judgement by setting up the *propaganda fide* in 1622.⁶⁸ The vicars apostolic of this Congregation were instructed "never to invade the rights and jurisdiction of the ordinary bishops, but only to supply when the prelates are impeded from exercising them, or have no means to supply for such a vast population in such vast areas."⁶⁹ Unhappily, no clear-cut agreement had first been worked out between Rome and Lisbon, since mutual consultations had ceased during the 60-year period of Spanish occupation of the Portuguese throne (1580-1640). The result was a conflict of jurisdictions, with the Portuguese king insisting on his "rights", and other colonial powers like the Dutch and the English making capital of the ensuing quarrels between bishops and priests appointed to the same posts.⁷⁰ Now, any priest leaving Goa for parish or mission work outside the territory was required to swear an oath that he would not accept "any usurpation of jurisdiction by the bishops of the *propaganda*, but rather the preservation of the privileges, exemptions and authority of the royal patronage... as confirmed and approved by the legally published and accepted Apostolic Ordinances".⁷¹ One can easily imagine the difficult situations such a person could find himself in. Matters came to a head in the succeeding century, and were sensibly resolved only in our century.⁷² In between the division of loyalties confused and dismayed all right-minded Catholics.

Education and Culture

As in other parts of the world, the Church of Goa was also in the vanguard of education, artistic and musical expression. We have described the little parish schools that made so many village lads literate from the 16th century onward. A Christian boy could also pursue secondary and higher education, if he could afford to live in the city of Goa or its suburbs. There were five colleges run by the religious Orders in the 18th century, namely the Dominican St. Aquinas College, the Franciscan St. Bonaventure College, the Augustinian Populo College, the Jesuit St. Rock's or New St. Paul's College, and the Oratorian college on *Boa Vista* hillock. There was also a grammar school attached to the Cathedral, meant mainly for the European and Eurasian students.⁷³

Degrees in Arts and Humanities, Philosophy and Theology were dispensed by these "universities", as three of these colleges styled themselves. The undergraduate course in Portuguese, Latin, Greek grammar, Logic and Rhetoric was followed by a three-year course for a Master's degree and another three-year course for a Lecturer's qualification in Scholastic Philosophy. Doctorates were also awarded, but these were usually referred to Lisbon or to Rome.⁷⁴ The syllabi of studies were thus moulded on those used by the great classical universities of medieval and contemporary Europe. The accent was religious, being primarily meant for the training of the candidates for priesthood. Both lay and secular interests took second place. Any layman aspiring to the teaching, medical or legal professions had first to take this University training at the colleges run by the religious.

After the expulsion of the Jesuits from Goa in 1759 the educational system lost its best teachers. But, though disastrous in many respects, their expulsion led to two major educational events in Goa: The foundation of the first diocesan seminary in ex-Jesuit Rachol,⁷⁵ and the introduction of Government-sponsored secular education in the form of primary, secondary and higher institutes of learning.⁷⁶

In the "college for native boys and clerics which His Majesty orders to be re-established in the city of Goa", Minister Pombal hoped to introduce a modern system of education patterned on the English public school model, with the introduction of sciences and mathematics, subjects that had not figured on the curriculum before.⁷⁷ Things soon slipped back into the old mould since priests were still the only teachers available. Nevertheless the college grew into Goa's first diocesan seminary, fully controlled by the archbishop, and not by any single religious Order. It is still functioning as the major seminary of the archdiocese at Rachol.⁷⁸

Similarly, in various secular primary and secondary schools that were set up together with different professional and scientific higher institutes, the monopoly passed out of the hands of the religious. But we can never forget the great debt we owe to these, and specially to the Jesuits. Had it not been for the latter's enlightened practice in studying grammatical and literary Konkani, for instance, the mother-tongue of the Goans may never have survived centuries of

official neglect and discouragement. The Jesuits were responsible for the first literary works and grammars printed in the Konkani language. Even in the 18th century, a Czech Jesuit named Karel Prikryl (in Goa from 1748 to 1761) and a Spanish Jesuit named Hervas y Pandure (1735-1809) were working on the language and have left important works.⁷⁹

Man has always given his artistic best to God who created his talents. The Church of Goa is rich in the cultural expressions of architecture, sculpture, painting, wood-carving and music. The West and the East have truly met in the cultural interplay and interaction of ideals as seen in the Christian churches of Goa. The classical lineage of Greece and Rome, the French Gothic, the Italian Renaissance and Mannerist styles came through Portugal to Goa. Much of the succeeding Baroque design and Roccoco decoration, however, are manifestly Indian, that is, Hindu and Islamic.

Building activity in the city of Goa had come to an end as the 17th century merged with the early 18th century.⁸⁰ But in the talukas of Bardez, Salcete and Tisvadi that activity was still alive, and continued right through the 18th century. In the churches of Calangute (1741), Socorro (1763) or Assagão (1775) we see obviously Indian faades. Little verandahs, false domes, octogonal towers, distinctive vaults, the tier-effect, horizontal bands and Indian motifs in wall and woodwork decoration show Indian expertise in handling the Baroque. Says an art critic: "It is an independent style and not a colonial variant of the Portuguese Baroque". In his opinion, two of the five masterpieces among Goa's churches are the "luminous" Our Lady of Piedade Church of Divar island (1700-24) and the "ornate" St. Stephen Church at Jua island (1759).⁸¹

Splendid crosses in this style of architecture adorn squares in front of major churches like Margão's Holy Spirit or St. Alexis at Curtorim, while many beautiful chapels like the one at Candolim belong to this century. The best existing examples of sculpture and painting of the time are also religious. The skill of the Indian craftsmen in sculpting, wood-carving and metal-work is evident in the altars, retables, and furniture of many a church in Goa, as for instance, the high Roccoco retable in Pomburpa's Madre de Deus church, and the many statutes of ivory or wood found everywhere.

Even in the field of painting, whose finest hour was in the previous century, we find notable examples in convents and churches of the old city of Goa. Goan craftsmen had certainly come of age by the 18th century.⁸²

Meanwhile, religious music had profoundly influenced the Christian artist's ethos. A blend of eastern melody and western harmony, which had already been finding expression since the 16th century, resulted in compositions of heart-warming fervour. The 18th century church records contain innumerable examples of these hymns, masses, *motets* that are unique to Goa and worth a thorough study and classification. Most of the composers remain unknown and unsung. Related musical styles had also penetrated the secular sphere to evolve the different branches of folk music which are characteristic of the Christian Goans today.⁸³

Summing Up

I have tried to examine the different facets of Church history in Goa during the 18th century in order to substantiate the claim that, although bereft of spectacular advances in Christianisation, it was a very important period from the point of view of modern principles and ideals in peaceful co-existence, self-government and true Christian evangelisation.

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Abbreviations used: HAG = Historical Archives of Goa,

MR = Monções do Reino
 D.D. = Sumario Cronologico de Decretos Diocesanos do Arcebispado de Goa, ed. M. J. S. de Albuquerque.
 DAG = Directory of the Archdiocese of Goa & Daman (1979)]

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