

**RELATIONS BETWEEN THE FIRST CATHOLIC MISSIONARIES
AND THE PEOPLE OF SWAZILAND (1914-1955)**

by

CLEMENT JOHANE LANGA

submitted in accordance with the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF THEOLOGY

in the subject

CHURCH HISTORY

at the

U N I V E R S I T Y O F S O U T H A F R I C A

PROMOTER: PROFESSOR LIZO D JAFTA

MARCH 2001

T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S

i.

PAGES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vi
ABSTRACT	vii
INTRODUCTION	1

Chapter One

THE BEGINNINGS IN SWAZILAND	6
A. THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND EVANGELIZATION IN SWAZILAND	6
(i) Biblical point of view	6
(ii) Socio-economic situation	9
(iii) Evangelization in Swaziland	10
(iv) Swaziland 1800 - 1913	12
B. PRE- PREFECTURE APOSTOLIC	14
(i) In search of mission territory	14
(ii) First missionaries	16
(iii) A friar abandons the mission	19
(iv) Catholic Priests arrive in Swaziland	20
(v) First Church building in Swaziland	22
(vi) Mission faces challenges	23
a. Financial crisis 1914	23
b. Mayr murdered 1914	25
(vii) Revival of the missions	26
a. Early correspondence 1914	26
b. Santissima Annunziata, the benefactor	26
(viii) Transcending cultural barriers and the growth of the Church	27
(ix) Arrival of new missionaries	30
(x) Election of the Provincial and its repercussion in Swaziland	35
Summary	37

Chapter Two

THE GROWTH OF THE CHURCH	41
A. PREFECTURE APOSTOLIC 1923-1931	41
(i) The erection of the Prefecture Apostolic	41
(ii) First Overseas' Missionary Campaign	42
(iii) The influence of the Pontificate of Pius XI	45
(iv) Personnel	46
(v) Acquiring more land	47
(vi) First local vocations	48
B. GEOGRAPHICAL EXPANSION	49
(i) Florence Mission	49
(ii) Good Shepherd Mission	51
(iii) St. Philip's Mission	52
(iv) St. Peregrine's Mission	53
(v) St. Mary's Mission	54
C. IMPORTANT VISITORS	55
(i) Apostolic Delegate	55
(ii) Titular Bishop of Sebastopoli	56
D. THE BEGINNING OF CRISIS	59

(i)	Nyakeni School	59
(ii)	Madonna di Monte Berico, a project that failed	60
(ii)	The Controversy of the Office of the Procurator	62
(iv)	Migliorini becomes Local Religious Superior	63
(v)	Projects under Bellezze 1931	65
E. SCHISM IN THE PREFECTURE		66
(i)	Weakness of the Prefect Apostolic	67
(ii)	The Relations between the Missionaries	69
H. THE CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE SITUATION		73

Chapter Three

THE REALITY OF THE CHURCH IN SWAZILAND		77
A. THE DARK AGES OF THE CHURCH IN SWAZILAND 1928 - 1935		77
(i)	Events leading to the crisis	77
	a. Schools	77
	b. Finances	77
(ii)	Measures taken to avert the danger	79
	a. Fund-raising for missions	79
	b. Development	81
	c. School of the Dominican Sisters	82
	d. Farms	83
	e. Visit by the prior General of the Order	83
(iii)	Fr. Romauldo Migliorini, a leader	86
(iv)	Acrimony and its consequences	89
	a. Dedication of Florence Mission	89
	b. Mons. Peregrine Bellezze resigns	90
	c. Romauldo Migliorini become Prefect Apostolic	93
	d. Mucciarini's concern for missionary work	95
	e. Encouraging news from the Tuscan Province	97
	f. Crisis	100
	g. Consequences of Bellezze's resignation	103
(v)	Spiritual and material revival	104
	a. Sacred Heart	104
	b. Third Order	105
	c. Servite Sisters of Swaziland	105
	d. Project of the Servite Sisters of Pistoia	105

Chapter Four

RENEWED ZEAL FOR MISSIONARY WORK		107
B. RENEWED ZEAL FOR MISSIONARY WORK		107
(i)	Meeting of Christian schools	108
(ii)	Visits	108
	a. Father General and Mother General	108
	b. First African Priest	110
(iii)	Fr. Giacinto Striolo: a missionary to the South	111
	a. Apostolate at Hlatikhulu	112
	b. Relations with people	113
	c. Building a church	114
	d. Promotion of Catholic Culture	115
	e. First Canonical Visitation	116

(iv)	Growth of the mission	117
	a. Heidelberg	118
	b. Sulphur Springs	120
(v)	Challenges	122
	a. Typhoid epidemic	123
	b. Temporary withdrawal of Fr. Remigio Mucciarini	123
	c. The Treatment of lay brothers and the ordeal of Bro. Giovanni Ponti	123
(vi)	New hope	129

Chapter Five

	THE VICARIATE APOSTOLIC OF SWAZILAND	133
A.	ARRIVAL OF FRIARS AND THE VISIT BY THE GENERAL OF THE ORDER OF THE SERVANTS OF MARY	133
B.	CONSTANTINO BARNESCHI, FIRST BISHOP OF SWAZILAND	134
(i)	The election and the consecration of Mons. Constantino Barneschi	139
(ii)	Election of Fr. Rizzi	141
(iii)	Re-organising the Vicariate Apostolic	143
(iv)	Fr. Mucciarini appointed Administrator	144
(v)	Education	145
C.	THE INGWAVUMA ENTERPRISE	147
D.	THE CHAPTER	156
E.	THE SCRAMBLE FOR SWAZILAND	156
(i)	By lay groups	158
(ii)	By friars	161
	a. Filippo Tessari	161

Chapter Six

	THE LAST YEARS OF THE VICARIATE APOSTOLIC	163
A.	FR. FEDERICO ALIBONI AND THE INSTITUTION OF THE SECRETARIAT FOR THE MISSIONS	163
(i)	Fund-raising for missions	164
(ii)	Difficulties	168
	a. Deaths	169
	b. Misunderstanding between the secretaries	170
	c. Lost goods	171
	d. Language	172
B.	MALARIA	176
C.	MEETING OF BENEFACTORS IN ROME	177
D.	PROVINCIALISM	178
E.	A BLESSING IN DISGUISE	181
(i)	Finances	181
(ii)	Jurisdictional change	183
(iv)	Physical Structures	185
(v)	Hluti	188
F.	PROGRESS	189
(i)	Education	189
(ii)	Annual retreat	190
(iii)	Corpus Christi	190

(iv)	Visit by the Apostolic Delegate	191
------	---	-----

Chapter Seven

DIOCESE OF BREMERSDORP	193
----------------------------------	-----

A. PROBLEMS	198
(i) Insanity	198
(ii) Battle over Sulphur Springs	204
(iii) Infidelity to Vows	204
B. HOPE	207
(i) Prospect of having Salesians	207
(ii) A local candidate goes to Italy	209
(iii) Overseas' help	211
C. FINANCES	214
D. OUTSTANDING PERSONALITIES IN THE EARLY 1950's	215
(i) Antonio Monaco	216
(ii) Justina Tsoku	220

Chapter Eight

THE FIRST YEARS OF THE DIOCESE 1952 - 1953	227
--	-----

A. THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN 1952	227
(i) Achievements	227
a. Hospital	227
b. College and Schools	234
c. Congress	236
d. Re-election of Fr. Luigi Ruggeri	236
e. Annual retreat	237
f. Fr. Menchini	238
(ii) A glance at difficulties faced by missionaries	240
a. Lack of money	243
b. Lack of Priests	244
c. The question of Camillo's successor now arose	249
d. A fugitive priest, Logli	250
(iii) Soil and water conservation	253
B. THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN 1953	254
(i) Salesians	254
(ii) Trips abroad	256
(iii) Local art	262
(iv) Donations	262
(v) Setbacks	263
a. Provincialism	263
b. Friar sent to Ingwavuma	263
c. Sickness	265
d. Deportation	266
(vi) Fund-raising	266

Chapter Nine

JUBILEE OF CATHOLICISM IN SWAZILAND 1954	270
--	-----

A. AN HISTORIC VISIT BY THE GENERAL AND THE PROVINCIAL	271
B. JUBILEE BLESSINGS	274
(i) Health centre at Lobamba and Luve	277
(ii) Awakening of spirituality	280
(iii) Self-sufficient Church	281
a. Cynicism	281
b. Highly centralised Church	282
(iv) Education	282
(v) Hope dawns at Siteki	285
(vi) Sulphur Springs	289
(vii) St. Philip's mission, no-longer in the precipice of poverty	292

Chapter Ten

THE FOURTH YEAR OF THE DIOCESE 1955	296
A. THE GREAT RESTRUCTURING	296
(i) First African Priest	302
(ii) Buildings	304
(iii) Doctor sacked	306
(iv) Silver Jubilee of Fr. Galandi	308
B. IMPORTANT VISITOR	310
CONCLUSION	313
SOURCES	317
APPENDIX	336

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe an enormous debt of gratitude to Professor Lizo Jafta at the University of South Africa, in Pretoria for having helped me bring this research to completion. He is an indefatigable scholar, whose advice has been invaluable in this research.

I am grateful to the former prior provincial of the Tuscan Province, Fr. Luigi De Vittorio and the former secretary of the missions of the Tuscan Province, Fr. Federico Aliboni for having made it possible for me to travel to Italy in 1997 for research.

The staff at the Biblioteca della Propaganda Fide, Marianum Pontifical Faculty in Rome were very helpful in my research. With the help of Dr. Odir Dias, Fr. Silvano Danieli, Fr. Corrado Boriosi and Fr. Eugenio Casalini I was able to consult very important documents in the archives of the Order of the Servants of Mary in the cities of Rome and Florence, respectively.

Research in the archives of the Servite Vicariates of Swaziland and Zululand has produced much new evidence of the early missionaries; I owe a particular debt to Frs. Alphonse Mooney and Angelo Ciccone for having allowed me access to the archives of their respective vicariates.

Fr. Franco Azzalli was also of inestimable assistance in driving me around Turin, Italy, where I caught a glimpse of some of the places where zealous missionaries of the Order of the Servants of Mary were born.

Sisters belonging to the congregation of the Servite Sisters of Pistoia have indeed played a major role in this research: the prioress at Hluti, Sr. Pierina and the local superior Sr. Teresita Schiavoni made it possible for me to read some of the documents that helped me to understand the development of the Catholic Church in the southern part of Swaziland. I enjoyed long conversations with Sr. Claudia Gonfiatini of the Congregation of the Servite Sisters of Pistoia who knew the first missionaries. It is a great sorrow that this wonderful person did not live long to see this research finished.

Much of the history of the Roman Catholic Church in Swaziland is conjoined with the history of the Order of the Servants of Mary. Explanations for the historiographical emphasis of this study are plentiful: the Order of the Servants of Mary was the first Catholic missionary group that worked amongst the people of Swaziland and most of the missionaries who had worked in Swaziland, both female and male, belonged to the Order of the Servants of Mary.

Although Swaziland was explored by Europeans as early as the nineteenth century, the country's geographical configuration and the fact that it was a British Protectorate have kept Swaziland in the isolated back room of African studies. Consequently, the work done by the first Catholic missionaries has attracted little academic interest. This is why very little is known about the pre-Christian Swaziland.

The first Christian missionaries in Swaziland were Methodists who arrived in the country in 1844. When Catholics arrived in the country sixty six years later they understood the Church as *Mater et magistra* (mother and teacher) forty years before the encyclical, *Mater et Magistra*. Their understanding can be deduced from the way they carried out the work of evangelization. The concept of *Mater et Magistra* caused them to have a paternalistic mentality which kindled in them an exaggerated zeal for souls. The lack of educational institutions in the country made them feel obliged to provide education to the local people. Those educative institutions later became vehicles for propagating Catholicism, which was mingled with European cultures, largely Italian and German. Religious and cultural pluralism, which had been condemned in principle by the homogeneous structure of the Swazi society, became popular in Swaziland under the auspices of the educative institutions established by the Church.

¹. *Mater et Magistra* is an encyclical which deals with human rights, economic development, political and justice and peace issues. It emphasises the fact that the social teachings of the Church are based on the dignity of an individual.

I declare that RELATIONS BETWEEN THE FIRST CATHOLIC MISSIONARIES AND THE PEOPLE OF SWAZILAND (1914-1955) is my own work and all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete reference.

By: Clement Johane Langa

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'CJL', written in a cursive style.

INTRODUCTION

The object of this research is to provide a comprehensive survey of the history of the Roman Catholic Church in Swaziland. Our research will help us to understand the events that shaped the Catholic Church from 1914 to 1955. Research in this vast field of study is necessary. The quest for identity that characterizes the local Church in recent years, has made the study of its history a priority.

Inculturation and a genuine reconciliation between the African and the European Catholic clergy would be a reality if the Catholic Church in Swaziland knew its history.

In her forty one years of existence, the Catholic Church in Swaziland has developed into a diocese with its own bishop and a cathedral. Catholic church buildings, schools and health centres have become conspicuous throughout the country. Some of the huge Catholic institutions, such as Good Shepherd hospital and the Salesian school, have become beacons that attracted many people into the Church owing to the service they were rendering to the public.

Despite the zeal for missionary work, conflicts between missionaries became inevitable towards the end of the 1920's. Those conflicts plunged the Catholic Church in Swaziland into its "Dark Ages". It was indeed a very painful moment for the Church. The root cause of the conflicts will be examined thoroughly in our discussion. A special tribute will be paid to some of the outstanding missionaries who worked in Swaziland, especially during the period when the hierarchy of the Church was experiencing turbulence.

The history of the Catholic Church in Swaziland begins with a sad episode, that is, the murder of the first Catholic priest. The death of the priest never discouraged Catholic missionaries from spreading the Gospel in Swaziland. Ironically, the blood of the priest is believed to have brought blessings to the Church.

The birth of the Congregation of the Servite Sisters of Swaziland in less than two

decades after the arrival of the Servite Sisters of Pistoia showed that the local people were ready to embrace religious life. This study will monitor the growth of the Congregation of the Servite Sisters of Swaziland and the struggles it faced during the first years of its existence.

Some practices such as polygamy and *lobola* (bride price) did pose some obstacles to those who wanted to receive the Sacrament of Baptism and to young women who wanted to become religious, respectively. It would be interesting to find out in our discussion how Catholic missionaries addressed the above issues. We shall have much to say about the apostolic work done by the Servite Sisters of Pistoia and other women's religious congregations in the country.

During the course of our discussion, we will learn about the vanguard arrival in Swaziland of the Salesians and other missionary congregations and the hearty welcome they received from the Swazi nation. These missionaries endeavoured to eradicate illiteracy amongst the Swazi people.

Finally, in writing about the relations that existed between the first Catholic missionaries and the people of Swaziland, I have allowed myself the luxury of focusing on points that shed some light on the reality of the Church as such. I have tried to avoid the temptation to idealize, and I hope that a reasonably clear picture of the Roman Catholic Church in Swaziland emerges.

METHOD USED

Most unfortunately, historians have not shown interest in the history of the Roman Catholic Church in Swaziland. The Catholic Church has been in existence in Swaziland for more than eight decades. Due to the fact that no history of the Catholic Church in Swaziland has been published, I had to rely on Primary sources: both oral and written.

1. Primary sources:

a. Oral:

In order to collect pieces of information, in 1997, I made several trips within Italy, South Africa and Swaziland to interview missionaries who had worked mostly in Swaziland and those who had had direct contact with the first Catholic missionaries who worked in Swaziland. In 1996, I visited Claudia Gonfiantini at the Our Lady of Sorrows convent, Hluti. She was completely bedridden and could only arise from bed with great difficulty. Yet despite her age, she had a very good memory and could recall vividly the experiences she had when she first arrived in Swaziland in 1922.

About 60% of the interviews were in Italian, 35% in English and 5% in Zulu languages. It was indeed a wonderful experience listening to old missionaries recalling the past, which they often romanticise. The problem I encountered with the above method of research was that some of the dates and other minor details needed to be verified. The method of criticising the sources has helped me to purge all information given by the interviewee from all influence of cultural bias, since I was dealing with people over a wide range of the cultural spectrum. I was aware that some of the people I interviewed might not have been honest; as a matter of fact some of the material given by the interviewee has been left out in this research.

b. Written:

Hundreds and hundreds of letters written by missionaries between 1913 and 1955 have been consulted in this research. About 84% were written in Italian, 12% in English, 2% in Zulu, 1% in Latin and 0.8% in French and 0.2 in German languages. These letters

were written mostly by missionaries working in Swaziland and South Africa and are kept in the archives of the friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary in the Italian cities of Rome, Florence, Turin and Marina di Carrara. There may be other letters in other cities of Italy such as Bologna, Vicenza and Perugia.

Perhaps one of the best experiences I had with this kind of research was the permission I obtained from the Vatican officials to consult documents that are kept in the archives of the Congregation of the Evangelization of Peoples in Piazza Spagna, Rome. A difficulty I experienced with the above research was that I could not travel to Austria to collect some of the letters which were written by the missionaries who came Austria. These letters were written in German and Hungarian language.

Finally, prominence has been given to the memoirs written by some of the missionaries, which have proved fascinating. They provide insight into the lives and the aspirations of these missionaries. The memoirs throw light on some of the aspects of the life of the Catholic Church in Swaziland.

In this research, I have scrupulously examined some of the information given by these memoirs. As a result, exaggerations and other elements that risk giving imperfect information have been virtually excluded.

2. Secondary sources:

Old missionary magazines and old newspapers have helped me to uncover many long forgotten traces of some of the aspects of the Catholic Church in Swaziland. In addition, a number of missionaries have generously shared newspapers published in the period preceding the Second World War, reporting religious ceremonies celebrated in

Swaziland by the Catholic Church. Sifting this mass of documentation has to a large extent helped in correcting dates, wherever it was necessary, for the research is based on primary sources.

The chief requirement in research of this kind therefore, is to arrange and evaluate facts in due order and proportion. It is interesting to note that in the eyes of the lay people, the Catholic Church appeared well organised, prosperous, disciplined and spiritual; our research will help us understand its "*terra incognita*" (unknown or in this context hidden territory).

Chapter One

THE BEGINNINGS IN SWAZILAND

A. THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND EVANGELIZATION

(i) Biblical point of view

The Acts of the Apostles was the first book of missionary adventure. Supposedly written by St. Luke, it tells how St. Paul preached the Gospel to the communities of Corinth, Ephesus, Galatia, Philippi and eventually of Rome. The remarkable thing about Paul is the way in which he developed his understanding of the Christian Gospel and the way in which he grappled with the essential problem of the early days of the Christian Church. Without the missionary work of Paul, the Church might have remained a small Jewish sect.

Following the example of Paul, Catholic missionaries have travelled all over the world to tell people that the long promised Jewish messiah has come in Jesus, and he is the universal Messiah (*Acts 13:46-47*). The communities of the disciples of Jesus in Galilee were the first to receive the Good News of the risen Lord. Within a short period of time, the news spread to the region of the Samaritans. After a certain period of time, one of the towns of Syria, Antioch which had become an important Christian centre, took the lead in the evangelization of the pagan lands (*Acts 13:1-3*). The Mediterranean basin which was destined to become an important centre of Christianity was one of the places which were evangelised during the Apostolic age.

According to the teachings of the Catholic Church, announcing the Good News is

at the heart of evangelization. Christ, who announced the Kingdom of God, is considered to be the first evangelizer. In her book, Maria Santoro argues that there are two essential characteristics of evangelization, namely: witness, and celebration. Witness to the Word implies living a simple life according to the gospel values. Announcing the mystery of Christian faith makes Christ to be known and acknowledged as the Messiah because of his death and resurrection. Finally, evangelization reaches its highest point of culmination with the celebration of the Sacraments. Evangelization is therefore essential in the mission of the Catholic Church.

When we look at the history of the Church we observe that over centuries, different cultures have had an impact on evangelization. In the very beginning of Christianity, Jewish, Hellenic and Roman cultures had a profound influence on the way the Good News was interpreted, preached and lived. Centuries later, Medieval, Humanist, and Modernist cultures shaped the way in which the *kerigma*, which is an essential Christian dogma, was presented. If the Church had adhered to the way of preaching the Good News of the first century A.D then it would have been difficult to present Christ to Medieval or Humanist human beings.

It would be absurd to neglect culture when dealing with the phenomenon of evangelization. In fact, the Sacred Scripture gives us examples of a controversy caused by neglecting some aspects of the culture of the people to be evangelized. In his writings, St. Luke the evangelist gives a vivid description of the ecclesial situation in the Palestine

². Paolo VI, 8 dicembre, 1975, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (esortazione apostolica) n4 7.

³. Santoro Maria, *La Catechesi Come Atto Ecclesiale*, (Rome: Edizioni Borla), 1989, p. 32-33.

which led to acrimony between Jewish Christians and Christians converted from Paganism, and it paved a way for the Council of Jerusalem (*Acts 11: 1-18*). When looking deeply into the matter we find that Christians have continually been faced with the question whether cultural or religious identity were necessary or even acceptable. In the First century, circumcision was regarded as the essential form of belonging to the covenant, that is the covenant with God, mainly by Jews. If the early Church had not overcome that controversy, missionary work would have been hampered.

In our discussion we will find that those missionaries who had a knack of dealing with issues pertaining to the culture of the people with extreme delicacy had greater success. For centuries, the Catholic Church had been urging its missionaries to present Christ to the people without destroying all the values of their culture. In the sixteenth century, a Catholic missionary became a Brahman while working in India: following the teaching and the example of the apostle Paul, he was willing to be like a Jew, «To the Jews I [Paul] made myself as a Jew, to win the Jews; to those under the Law as one under the Law, in order to win those under the Law; to those outside the Law as one outside the Law, though I am not outside the Law but under Christ's law, to win those outside Law». *I Corinthians 9:20.21*.

Some missionaries have identified themselves with national aspirations in their missionary endeavour, from the outset. These missionaries were seen as part and parcel of the imperial ambitions of their nations. The missionaries whose spirit was repelled by the close collaboration between the State and the Church knew that relations between the

⁴. Society of St. Paul, *The New Jerusalem Bible*, (Bombay: The Bombay Saint Paul Society), 1993.

two institutions could lead to the appalling outbreak of ethnic identity which is susceptible to the destruction and marginalization of rivals, as it has been witnessed, recently, in the Balkans. Those missionaries tried to promote the spirit of sympathetic treatment of local cultures as the Apostle Paul did. Perhaps this is a reason why inculturation in former Portuguese colonies where there was a preponderance of Portuguese missionaries has achieved considerable results, compared to former British colonies and Protectorates in Africa.

(ii) Socio-economic situation

Swaziland is one of the few countries in southern Africa to have received Christianity only in the nineteenth century. The countries which share borders with Swaziland had been evangelised centuries earlier. Perhaps one of the reasons for this tardy evangelization is the geographical position of the country and the lack of trade with the Europeans.

Colonial conquest has an impact on the Swazi society. Today's social imbalance, characterised by the stratification of social classes in Swaziland is one of the relics of colonialism. During the days of the scramble for Africa, inaugurated by the discovery of precious minerals in the region in the neighbouring State, South Africa, Whites who were in Swaziland wanted to procure people who would provide labour, as the need for manpower was rising. Strategies aimed at keeping the labour market replenished were introduced; these included taxation. Taxes were introduced in order to force the Swazis

to sell their labour. This practice led to the growth of migrant labour: people left their homesteads for factories or mines, especially in South Africa, to look for jobs. This movement of people had dire consequences for the structure of the traditional African society, as Swazi men were becoming increasingly conspicuous at industrial centres.

Underdevelopment and dependency inevitably became by-products of this migration. The traditional African family structure was also weakened. With its philosophy of *uBuntu*, traditional African religion tried to deter the European culture from encroaching on the Swazi society by teaching Swazis their cultural values. The religion of the colonial masters, Christianity, became instrumental in making Swazis change their culture and world view. At the end of the day Swazis found themselves accepting all that they were taught without question. Paradoxically, Christianity, was incarnated into the hearts of Swazis in a very short period of time, and Swazis became very zealous about their "new" religion as if it had been handed to them by their ancestors.

(ii) Evangelization of Swaziland

King Sobhuza I of Swaziland, commonly known as Somhlolo, had told his people about the vision he had of "white-skinned men" who were to bring a *umculo* (scroll) and a *indilinga* (round metal/money) to the country. He advised his subjects to welcome these strangers and choose the scroll instead of the money. His successor, King Mswati, who had heard the story about the vision sent Majumba Mndzebele and Mnkankoni Kunene to invite the White men whom he had heard were preaching from the scroll. Rev. James Allison and Rev. Giddy of the Methodist Church accepted the invitation and came to Swaziland in 1844, establishing the first Christian mission station at Mahamba in the southern part of Swaziland. The missionaries were granted permission by the King to

spread Christianity in the nation. Two years later, the two missionaries were forced to flee the country, apparently after having persuaded Swazi people to abandon all their religious customs. Many converts fled with them.

In September 1881, Rev. Owen Watkins of the Methodist Church came to Swaziland to find out whether it was possible to continue the work that had been abandoned by Rev. James Allison and his companions. Then in 1892 Rev. Daniel Msimangu who had fled with Rev. James Allison, was at that time a minister, opened a mission at Mahamba.

In 1872 the Church of England which had missions in South Africa near the border of Swaziland entered Swaziland and began the work of the spreading of the Gospel in Swaziland. The Berlin Society was brought into Swaziland by two African Evangelists in 1887, who started working near Mbabane, while the South African General Mission (S.A.G.M) led by Dudley Kidd brought the Gospel in 1890.

Rev. William Dawson, belonging to the Scandinavian Alliance Mission (S.A.M), started working in the southern part of Swaziland. Lutherans who had had talks with King Mswati in 1860 came to Swaziland in 1901. They started working at Embekelweni and in 1910 a missionary station was built by them at Motjane. In the southern part of Swaziland at Makhosini Rev. Mkone of the A.M.E Church started preaching. In October 1910, Brother L. Schelzenback of the Nazarene Mission arrived at Mankayane, and in December of the same year he established himself at Peniel near Pigg's Peak. Subsequently, his Church spread to urban areas such as Bremersdorp and Mbabane.

Prince Mboko gave a welcome to the Christian Catholic and Apostolic Holy Spirit Church of Zion who had arrived at Kwaluseni in 1913. We need to mention the fact that

unlike other Churches, the Christian Catholic and Apostolic Holy Spirit Church of Zion was the first Church to be brought by an African pioneer missionary, Rev. Daniel Nkonyane, into Swaziland. Later on, he was assisted by Rev. R. Mavimbela, the first Swazi minister, in his apostolate. Their mission spread rapidly and as a result a well known station was established at Gilgal. The Roman Catholic Church arrived in the country in 1914. The Second World War broke out in that year and other Christian Churches stopped arriving in the country. In 1920 Pastor J.C. Rogers brought the Seventh Day Adventist Church into Swaziland. Pastor J.C. Rogers was helped by a Swazi who had been converted at Ermelo in 1918 into the Seventh Adventist Church, Mr. Joseph Hlubi acquired a piece of land on which a mission school was built

(iv) Swaziland 1800 - 1913

Swaziland has been a British Protectorate since the close of the Boer War in the early twentieth century. The Swazi nation was formed after the arrival of the Dlamini in Swaziland. On the west and on the east it is bounded by the Mpumalanga province of the Republic of South Africa; on the south and on the east is bounded by the provinces of KwaZulu-Natal and Maputo of the Republics of South Africa and Mozambique, respectively. The total area of Swaziland is 17,366 square kilometres.

Many years before the arrival of the Swazis, a tribe closely allied to the Sotho inhabited the upper part of the country. Bushmen paintings which were discovered in some caves revealed that prior to the arrival of the ruling clan, the Dlamini and the other clans, especially in the eighteenth century, bushmen were living in Swaziland.

⁵. D.T. Matebese, *Missionary enterprise and influence in Swaziland*, In A.B.T Byaruhanga-Akiki, *Religion in Swaziland Volume One*, The University of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland, Kwaluseni, 1975, p. 137-142.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the Transvaal Republic took over Swaziland. At the end of the Second Boer War (1899 - 1902), Swazis requested Britain to assume full control of Swaziland. Britain did not hesitate to take over Swaziland. As a result, a Resident Magistrate was appointed to administer Swaziland and as a result Swaziland became a British Protectorate, and Mbabane became the new capital.

When Swaziland was under the administration of the Transvaal Republic, Bremersdorp (now Manzini) was the capital. The town was named after one of the earliest businessmen, Mr. Carl Bremer who had a trading store in the town, hence the name "Bremersdorp"; the Swazi name of the place was *Kwa Manzini*.

Prior to the arrival of the first Catholic missionaries there were few people living around the area where the houses of the mission were to be built. Most of the people living in the area had large herds of cattle and practised subsistence farming. Since in those days wealth was measured by the number of cattle, goats, sheep, etc which one had, we could say that there was a certain amount of prosperity in the homesteads. In those days, there was virtually no urban immigration to South Africa. In 1911 the total population of Swaziland was twenty one thousand and eight hundred and seventy six people. Only about 1.5% of the total population was living in the two big towns of Swaziland⁶.

⁶. Microform, *Census on 3 May 1921 census including; population, agriculture, livestock*, (Pretoria: Government Pastime and Statuary Office), 1922

B. PRE-PREFECTURE APOSTOLIC (1914 - 1923)

(i) In search of mission territory

During the General Chapter of the Order of the Servants of Mary held in 1895 friars spoke about the importance of carrying the Gospel to the parts of the world where it had never been preached. At the General Chapter of 1902 the same desire was expressed by the friars.

A group of young students of the Order of the Servants of Mary, studying in Rome, approached the Prior general of the Order, Fr. Giuseppe Lucchesi, and expressed their willingness to go to the missions. Peregrine Bellezze was amongst those students who approached Fr. Giuseppe Lucchesi. In 1912, while some of the students were at the Sette Santi Fondatori priory in Florence, Italy, Fr. Giuseppe Lucchesi reminded them of the letter they had written years previously, expressing their desire to go to the missions. He asked them whether they were still willing to go to the missions and they told him that this was still the case. The place where the Order was thinking of opening a mission was in one of the remotest regions of Brazil. Cappucini missionaries had been sent to that area but after some time they abandoned the place and went to Sao Paolo. Peregrine Bellezze was to go to Brazil together with other two priests and a lay religious brother.

After a certain period of time had elapsed, the idea of sending friars to Brazil was abandoned. The Order feared losing friars there since the environment was considered to be very hostile to missionaries. A member of the Pio Sodalizio di S. Pietro Claver suggested that the Prior general of the Order of the Servants of Mary, Fr. Giuseppe Lucchesi, send friars to the abandoned parts of Africa. The procurator general of the

Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate told Fr. Giuseppe Lucchesi to discuss with the Vicar Apostolic of Basotholand (now Lesotho), Mons. Lemiuz who was eager to make available two of his missions which had already been opened in Lesotho. At the same time Mons. Lemiuz spoke of the dangers and problems that would result in future after the handing over of those missions. Afterwards Fr. Giuseppe Lucchesi met the Vicar Apostolic of Natal, Mons. Delalle. Mons. Delalle had been told by his counterpart, Mons. Lemuis of Basotholand, that Fr. Giuseppe Lucchesi was looking for a place in Africa to begin missionary activity. Mons. Delalle wanted Swaziland to be evangelised and his dream was to see Swaziland becoming a prefecture apostolic during his lifetime. Mons. Delalle agreed that Swaziland should be given to the Order of the Servants of Mary.

The contract between the Order of the Servants of Mary and the Vicariate Apostolic of Natal was sent to Durban, South Africa, so that it could be examined thoroughly by the counsellors of the Apostolic Vicariate of Natal.

The first missionaries who were to be sent to Swaziland were to learn the Zulu language in the Natal province, South Africa, in preparation for their missionary work. Fr. Giuseppe Lucchesi wanted to send Fr. Peregrine Bellezze to Swaziland and tried to speed up the process since his term of office was expiring six months later. Some of his counsellors were not in favour of him opening a mission in Swaziland since the end of his term of office was approaching. They thought that it would be better to wait until the new Prior general of the Order of the Servants of Mary had been elected. On the other hand Fr. Giuseppe Lucchesi thought that if the Order of the Servants of Mary waited for the new Prior general they risked not opening the mission. It seems as if Fr. Giuseppe Lucchesi was right because when the new Prior general of the Order of the Servants of

Mary, Fr. Alexis Lepicier was sworn into the office in 1914 Europe was fighting the First World War, and it would have been very difficult for him to think of opening a mission in Swaziland.

(ii) First missionaries 1913

Fr. Giovacchio Rossetto, a member of the Tuscan province, *de familia Santissima Santissima Annunziata* who had been suspended from hearing confessions by Rome for a period of two years was sent to England to learn the English language so that he could go to Swaziland together with Fr. Peregrine Bellezze. It is important to mention the fact that Fr. Giovacchio Rossetto had never expressed the desire for missionary work. The outgoing Prior general of the Order, Fr. Giuseppe Lucchesi, decided to send him to the missions so that he could regain the inner peace which had been disturbed by the suspension. Fr. Peregrine Bellezze went to Rome to prepare for his departure to the missions. While he was in Rome he attended a basic course on medicine at the Fate Bene ai Fratelli Hospital in the Tiber Island, Rome. Fr. Giuseppe Lucchesi told Fr. Peregrine Bellezze that he would go to Swaziland with Fr. Giovacchio Rossetto, and that Fr. Peregrine Bellezze would become the prior. Fr. Peregrine Bellezze then left Rome for London to learn English. In London he met his future companion, Fr. Giovacchio Rosseto. After finishing their course they visited their friends in Italy and returned to England in 1913. In Southampton, England they took a German ship to Durban, South Africa.

The missionaries who were in Durban knew of their coming since Fr. Francis Mayr had received a letter notifying him about the arrival of the priests. Fr. Francis Mayr was proficient in Zulu and had mission work at Howick, Mariannahill and also in the southern

part of Zimbabwe, also translated some texts into Zulu, which are part of the collection made by Fr. Angelo Ciccone and which is being kept at St. Joseph's mission in Swaziland.

The total population of inhabitants of Mbabane was less than five hundred in 1914. In 1911 it had been two hundred and eight.⁷ When the missionaries arrived in Durban they were transferred to the Immanuel Cathedral in a rickshaw which was pulled by an African. At the Immanuel Cathedral they were warmly welcomed by a French Oblate priest. After having spent a week in Durban they went to Oakford where they found a big mission belonging to the Dominican Sisters.

At Oakford they spent three months perfecting their English; their teacher was a young priest who was living at Oakford as well. While at Oakford, they also became acquainted with Fr. Buyant, a famous Zulu linguist; as a result the missionaries learnt some Zulu, which they had to grasp quickly since they were expected to begin their missionary activity in November 1913. Unfortunately, it seemed as if they would not be able to make it due to the fact that the successor to Fr. Giuseppe Lucchesi, Fr. Alexis Lepicier, showed no interest in opening the mission in Swaziland. Frs. Giovacchio Rossetto and Peregrine Bellezze became anxious about their mission in Swaziland as the new Prior general was not communicating with them. The situation was so bleak that they even thought of abandoning their mission to Swaziland.

Seeing their frustration, an Oblate priest who was living with them suggested that they go to Barberton, a little town in the Mpumalanga province which is near the South African border with Swaziland, and stay there until such time that they would be in a

⁷. Microform, Swaziland census 3 May 1921. Census including; population, agriculture, livestock. Pretoria: Government Pastime and Statuary Office 1922.

position to go to Swaziland. This idea was welcomed by Fr. Peregrine Bellezze with great enthusiasm. When Fr. Francis Mayr was briefed about the Barberton proposal he accepted it and he suggested that it would be an excellent idea to ask for permission from the Apostolic Administrator of the Transvaal, Fr. Charles Cor. Fr. Charles Cor took the matter to the Vicar Apostolic of the Transvaal who on 23 August, 1913 gave permission to Fr. Peregrine Bellezze and Giovacchio Rosseto to go to Barberton.

Since the mission to Swaziland was directly under the Prior general of the Order of the Servants of Mary, the missionaries belonging to the Order of the Servants of Mary wrote a letter to Fr. Alexis Lepicier notifying him about the offer they had received to go and stay in Barberton and stating that they were asking for his official permission before they would set out for Barberton. Fr. Alexis Lepicier wrote to them informing them that he had given the juridical responsibility to the Tyrolese Province of the Order of the Servants Mary to look after the foundation of Swaziland, since there was no Italian province which was willing to take responsibility. He also told them that Fr. Arimath Gralt and Bro. Simon Oberleitner of the Tyrolese province would soon be joining them and Fr. Arimath Gralt was to become the prior. Therefore, the two missionaries had to ask for permission from the Prior provincial of the Tyrolese Province, since the mission of Swaziland had ceased to be under the jurisdiction of the prior general of the Order of the Servants of Mary. Though the news about the coming of two more friars was received with joy by the two missionaries, there were questions raised concerning the lack of rooms that could accommodate four friars at Oakford. It became apparent that at least two friars would have to leave Oakford.

On 8 September, 1913 Fr. Arimath Gralt and Bro. Simon Oberleitner arrived in

Durban. Since Fr. Arimath Galt did not know English very well he communicated with the other priests in Latin, the then *lingua franca* of the Catholic Church. Due to the shortage of rooms, Fr. Peregrine Bellezze and Fr. Giovacchio Rossetto left Oakford for Barberton via Johannesburg and were accompanied to Barberton by Fr. McCathy, who was stationed at Lydenburg and had been serving Barberton's Catholics.

At Barberton they met Mr. Bonini, an Italian migrant who had a Coloured wife who was not a Catholic, and two children. The priests' food was cooked by Mrs. Bonini at the request of her husband. Towards the end of November, 1913, Fr. Arimath Galt visited the two priests who were at Barberton after he had received an order from the Prior general of the Order of the Servants of Mary that all the friars should stay together.

In South Africa Fr. Francis Mayr was famous for his missionary spirit and his dedication to pastoral work. In fact he had spent most of his time working amongst the Zulu people. He had been a companion of Mons. Fleischer of Mariannahill. St. Paul's mission in Pietermaritzburg is amongst the missions which were begun by Fr. Francis Mayr. The Tyrolese fathers in Austria had formed an association which was entrusted with the responsibility of raising funds for the future missions of the Order in Swaziland. This association developed rapidly: it received support from many people. Unfortunately, the First World War, which began the following year, jeopardised the activity of the association.

(iii) A friar abandons the mission

Fr. Giovacchio Rossetto loved gardening and would spend most of his time looking after vegetables and flowers. One day while working in the garden a poisonous

plant pierced his right hand and a medical doctor suggested that he should have an operation. Meanwhile at Oakford there was only Fr. Arimath Galt remaining, since Bro. Simon Oberleitner was at Mariannahill.

A message was sent to Fr. Giovacchio Rossetto that he should go back to Italy due to health reasons. When he left Barberton for Italy he said to Fr. Peregrine Bellezze: «Si vede che l'Africa no e' fatta per me» (One can see that Africa was not meant for me)

(iv) Catholic Priests arrive in Swaziland

Fr. Francis Mayr wrote a letter to Frs. Arimath Galt and Peregrine Bellezze telling them about his arrival in South Africa and their proposed journey to Swaziland where they were to begin a mission. The priests agreed to meet at Breyten, a small town near Ermelo, South Africa; from Breyten they were to go to Swaziland in January, 1914.

Fr. Francis Mayr and Fr. Arimath Galt left Breyton for Mbabane, Swaziland in a mule-drawn cart. The two priests who arrived in Mbabane in January 1914 received a warm welcome from the Catholics, who had been isolated in Swaziland. Amongst the illustrious persons they met there were Mr. Frazer, a Scottish Catholic, and Mrs. Miller, whose husband was well known in Swaziland.

The two missionaries went to the government offices to ask for a place where they could build a mission. The Commissioner was not a Catholic and before he would give them a piece of land he wanted to know whether they were Jesuits; if they were Jesuits they would not have been given a piece of land. As is well known, the Jesuits are a Catholic religious Order founded by Ignatius Loyola in 1534. After the Council of Trent (1545 - 1563) the Order became the spearhead of the Counter-Reformation movement

⁸. Peregrine Bellezze, first notebook of the "*Memorie della missione*", 1934.

which fought against any influence stemming from the Protestant Reformation.

The first Catholic mission in Swaziland, which was dedicated to Mater Dolorosa, was opened in Mbabane on the land which had been given to the mission by the Commissioner in January 1914. In mid March, 1914, Fr. Peregrine Bellezze, who had remained at Barberton, arrived in Mbabane. When Bro. Simon Oberleitner joined them at a later stage there were four missionaries in the community at Mbabane.

Bremersdorp's population at the time could not have exceeded two hundred people. St. Joseph's mission is the name of the second Catholic mission opened in Swaziland by Fr. Francis Mayr at Mzimpofu on a piece of land which had been given by the government in 1914.

A local Anglican minister was pleased with that offer since he wanted Catholic missionaries to concentrate their activity on teaching Africans while Anglicans taught Whites. Accompanied by an African on 4 May, 1914 Fr. Francis Mayr went to Mzimpofu. On his way to Mzimpofu he stopped at Bremersdorp where he met the local Magistrate, Dr. Perkins, to discuss the opening of a mission at Mzimpofu. When he arrived at Mzimpofu he was impressed by the size of the land. Since he had no place to sleep, he spent some days in the home of an African.

Fr. Francis Mayr was so humble that everybody appreciated his company. Chief Malindza and his subjects knew him as well. St. Joseph's mission was then opened on the 27th of May, 1914 and Bro. Simon Oberleitner was transferred from Mater Dolorosa mission to St. Joseph's mission. At St. Joseph's mission Fr. Francis Mayr spent his precious time teaching religion and erecting huts; for the latter activity he was helped by three Africans. He also wrote letters to German banks asking for donations so that he

could develop the mission. Unfortunately, he did not receive any. Amongst the huts he erected, there was a very special one where the Blessed Sacrament was kept. The other huts were used as the dining room and bedroom. The mission had an orchard and large fields. Bro. Simon Oberleitner was in charge of farming but the humble Fr. Francis Mayr did not hesitate to help in the fields.

Fr. Peregrine Bellezze, who was living in Mbabane, spent hours and hours studying the Zulu language. The rumour that he was going to be sent to Colombia did not discourage him from studying the language. In May 1914 news about a large missionary territory in Colombia which had been offered to the Order of the Servants of Mary began circulating. The Picen Province of the Order of the Servants of Mary was supposed to send friars to Colombia. After a decision which was taken at the provincial chapter, a letter was sent to Fr. Peregrine Bellezze informing him that he had to suspend his missionary activity in Swaziland and go to Colombia⁹. Prior to this he had received a letter of Obedience from the Prior general of the Order of the Servants of Mary, Fr. Alexis Lepicier who was visiting London, informing him about the decision of the Picen Provincial Chapter to send him to Colombia¹⁰. At that time Europe was at war.

(v) First church building in Swaziland

While Fr. Peregrine Bellezze dedicated his time to the study of the language, Fr. Arimath Gralt spent his time in ministry and in the building of the church. The church which was begun while Fr. Francis Mayr was in Mbabane was built by a friend of Fr.

⁹. Amedeo Brugnoli, *letter to Fr. Peregrine Bellezze*, Bologna, Italy, 8 September, 1914.

¹⁰. Alexis Lepicier, *letter of Obedience to Fr. Peregrine Bellezze*, London, England, 23 June, 1914.

Francis Mayr, a German speaking former religious brother at Mariannahill. In September, 1914 the building of the church was almost complete, and it became the first church of the Catholic Church in Swaziland. The church building would have been completed by September 1915 if the missionaries had had enough money to pay for the roofing but owing to the lack of funds, the opening of the first church had to be postponed¹¹

Due to the high level of illiteracy amongst adults, the priests in Mbabane and at Mzimpofo used to organise evening classes for workers. Mater Dolorosa mission was famous for evening classes which were offered to the Africans who were working for the Whites in Mbabane.

(vi) New mission faces challenges

a. Financial crisis 1914: Mater Dolorosa and St. Joseph's missions started accumulating debts five months after their opening. It was unusual in those days for a mission to accumulate debts and the reason for this problem was that much building was going on in the two missions, and most of the building projects were not well budgeted for. The schools were consuming the budgets in such a way that in October 1914 Fr. Arimath Gralt could not pay the workers' salaries at Mater Dolorosa.

At St. Joseph's the situation was worse: much money was owed to the shop owner at Bremersdorp. If those debts were not paid, the friars at St. Joseph's would not have food to eat for a number of days. Owing to the First World War it was difficult for the friars to receive much financial support from the Tyrolese province which was directly responsible for the maintenance of the friars and the running of the missions in

¹¹. Peregrine Bellezze, *lettera al Priore Provinvinciale della Provincia Toscana, Mzimpofo*, 18 September, 1915.

Swaziland.

In his letter dated 25 December, 1914 addressed to the Prio provincial of the Tuscan Province, Fr. Peregrine Bellezze gave a description of the economic situation of the newly opened mission in Swaziland. The missionaries were in desperate need of cash so that they could be faithful to their charism of proclaiming the Word of God. It is, however, important to mention that amongst the missionaries who were in Swaziland in those days there was a great deal of cooperation marked by a spirit of solidarity. In fact, Fr. Peregrine Bellezze knew that in a few months time he would have to leave Swaziland for Colombia but he did not stop asking for money on behalf of the mission in Swaziland. In particular, he needed money to buy a herd of cattle for transport and for ploughing. In the same letter he told the Prior provincial of the Tuscan Province that he had written a letter to the prior of Santissima Annunziata in Florence, Italy soliciting funds.

On 29 March 1915 Fr. Peregrine Bellezze wrote a letter to the Prior provincial acknowledging the money he had received from the Priory of Santissima Annunziata. In that letter one could see the joy of Fr. Peregrine Bellezze and Fr. Arimath Galt at having secured money from Italy, especially during the First World War when it was not easy to get support from Europe. They all knew about the consequences the war could have on the economy if it continued for a couple of years; in fact, Fr. Peregrine Bellezze wrote: «*Certo che se la guerra dovesse durare a lungo, e non si dovessero ricevere altri socorsi*»¹³. It was obvious that overseas funds would soon stop reaching Swaziland, and

¹². Peregrine Bellezze, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Mzimpofo, 25 December, 1914.

¹³. Peregrine Bellezze, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Mzimpofo, 29 March, 1915.

the missionaries were getting prepared to face the imminent economic hardship. Buying land and cattle was seen as the best way to prepare for their uncertain future.

The feared news embargo between Europe and Swaziland did not materialise; as a result the friars could communicate quite easily between Europe and Swaziland. Those who were in Europe could follow developments in the newly founded mission of Swaziland. During that turbulent period of the history of humankind hundreds and hundreds of articles and photographs on Swaziland were sent to Europe.

b. Mayr murdered 1914: Every month the missionaries would hold a chapter on a rotational basis: that is if the previous meeting was at Mater Dolorosa the next one would be at St. Joseph's. In October 1914 it was the turn of Fr. Francis Mayr to go to Mater Dolorosa to attend a chapter. So he set off in a mule-drawn cart to Mbabane, where he was to spend three days with the priests.

On the last day of his stay in Mbabane he prepared himself to return to St. Joseph's mission. On 15 October, 1914, he confessed his sins, celebrated Holy Mass at Mater Dolorosa's mission and left for St. Joseph's mission. On his way he was stabbed and died. One of the missionaries had told Fr. Francis Mayr that it would be much safer for him to be accompanied by an African when travelling or always to carry a revolver. Since he trusted the people, he did not want to be accompanied nor to carry a revolver.

Fr. Francis Mayr was buried at St. Joseph's mission, about three hundred metres from the huts which were erected by him. All the three friars and the German that built the Mater Dolorosa church, as well as some other Christians were present at the funeral of the first priest that died in Swaziland. A requiem Mass was celebrated in Mbabane and a large number of White Catholics and Protestants attended it. Fr. Peregrine Bellezze

preached at this Mass.

After the tragic death of Fr. Francis Mayr in October 1914, the Catholic priests in Swaziland numbered only two, who were not very proficient in the local language. Most missionaries felt that there was a great need for priests to come and continue the work begun by Fr. Francis Mayr, especially at St. Joseph's mission.

(vii) Revival of the missions:

a. Early correspondence 1914: When the first missionaries arrived in Swaziland the Prior general of the Order of the Servants of Mary was Fr. Alexis Lepicier, who later became a cardinal in the Church. He was greatly interested in missionary work and used to visit the newly opened communities of the Order throughout Europe. When he was in Scotland in July 1914 he wrote an important letter to Fr. Peregrine Bellezze assuring him of his support. That letter became a source of inspiration to Frs. Arimath Galt and Peregrine Bellezze¹⁴.

b. Santissima Annunziata, the benefactor: Though none of the two priests who were in Swaziland belonged to the Tuscan Province, the Prior provincial of the Tuscan Province had always supported the missionaries financially. Most of the support given by the Tuscan Province from 1914 until the end of the First World War was from the Priory of Santissima Annunziata, Florence. Further on in our discussion we will see that during the Second World the Priory of Santissima Annunziata would continue supporting Swaziland, not only with money but also with personnel.

Due to the excellent spirit of cooperation between Santissima Annunziata and

¹⁴. Alexis Lepicier, *letter to Fr. Peregrine Bellezze*, Glasgow, Scotland, 8 July, 1914.

Swaziland the missionaries were honoured by Santissima Annunziata to have their article published in the Italian periodical *l'Addolorata*, whose director, Fr. Rossi, was living at Santissima Annunziata. Cooperating with the periodical helped the missionaries to become familiar to its readers, who eventually became interested in articles coming from Swaziland. Swaziland had been a mystical land for the Italians, especially the Florentines for many years.

The relationship between Swaziland and the Addolorata helped the missions in Swaziland to benefit financially. When studying the correspondence between Fr. Peregrine Bellezze and the director of the Addolorata, Fr. Rossi we observe that Italy benefited culturally while Swaziland benefited financially. In their seven years of correspondence, Fr. Peregrine Bellezze wrote more than one hundred and ninety letters to Fr. Rossi. Only a fraction of those letters are kept at the historical archives of the Tuscan Province in Florence, Italy. We ought to mention that the letters sent to Fr. Rossi by Fr. Peregrine Bellezze are all numbered. It is difficult to believe that the numbers run up to one hundred and ninety¹⁵.

(viii) Transcending cultural barriers and the growth of the Church

As the mission was developing the missionaries understood that the growth of the Catholic Church in Swaziland would depend on the availability of female and male religious. As a result the missionaries became keen on having religious women as missionaries and on empowering local Swazi people to join the religious life.

¹⁵. N:B The above information is taken from the documents and photographs which have been examined during the research: these primary sources are kept at the Archivi storici della Provincia Toscana, in Florence, Italy.

Towards the end of 1914 the friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary were already thinking of inviting a female religious congregation to open a house in the country. The first religious congregation was due to arrive in Mbabane in 1915. It had been agreed that they would move to Mzimpofu where they would do pastoral work as sisters¹⁶.

Responding to the letter written by the Prior provincial of the Tuscan Province in 1916, Fr. Peregrine Bellezze suggested that should there be any Swazi who had an interest in priesthood he should be sent to Europe for his studies, since it would be too costly to run a seminary in Swaziland. The idea coincided with that of Fr. Arimath Galt. According to them, a college for training local catechists was to be opened in Swaziland¹⁷.

Fr Peregrine Bellezze was the first missionary who was working in Swaziland to send articles for publications in the Italian periodical, *l'Addolorata*. It is, however, difficult to establish the date when the first article was published. Those articles dealt with missionary experience in Swaziland¹⁸. In 1919, photographs of St. Joseph's mission which were taken by Fr. Arimath Galt were sent to the director of the periodical for publication. Those photographs included the first newly completed school at St. Joseph's mission. There were some photographs of the new outstation at Nyakeni dedicated to the Seven Holy Founders as early as 1918¹⁹.

¹⁶. Peregrine Bellezze, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Mzimpofu, 25 December, 1914.

¹⁷. Peregrine Bellezze, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Mzimpofu, 11 November, 1916.

¹⁸. Peregrine Bellezze, *letter to the Director of Addolorata*, Mzimpofu, 3 March 1917.

¹⁹. Peregrine Bellezze, *letter to the Director of Addolorata*, Dundee, South Africa, 21 August, 1919.

Benedetto Nkosi, Carlo Nkosi, Joseph Masina and Maria Nkosi were the names of the first children to be baptised by Fr. Peregrine Bellezze on 15 April, 1917 at St. Joseph's mission, and these were the first baptisms to be recorded in the parish register. The baptism of adults followed months later, and two of the candidates were baptised in their own houses²⁰. The earliest baptismal register shows that from June 1918 to July 1919 the only two Catholic priests working in Swaziland had baptised sixteen children and twenty four adults. They also married two couples. The total number of Communion made was two hundred and thirty.

Fr. Arimath Galt conducted a census in 1919 and found that there were one hundred and fifteen Catholics in Swaziland. Fr. Peregrine Bellezze, who was in Dundee, South Africa in August, 1919, might have asked the Bishop to come to Swaziland to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation. This is because soon after his return from Dundee, news, which brought great excitement about Confirmation, began spreading in the only two Catholic parishes in Swaziland. It is not surprising to find out that in September, 1919 they were expecting to have the Sacrament of Confirmation administered for the first time in Swaziland by a Bishop - who had to travel three days from Durban. Catholics were anxiously waiting to see the bishop. The Sacrament of Confirmation was celebrated for the first time at St. Joseph's on 21 September, 1919

²⁰. Baptismal Register, St. Joseph's Mission.

²¹. Peregrine Bellezze, *letter to the director of Addolorata*, Dundee, South Africa, 21 August, 1919.

(ix) Arrival of new missionaries

Evangelization has always been at the core of the mission of the Catholic Church. Catholic religious orders and congregations have played a major role in this whole process. At the dawn of the twentieth century, women religious began to show the Church, especially in Swaziland, that they possessed all the qualities of being missionaries. In southern Africa, the Church was not fully established, and Christianity was regarded as a foreign religion. An attempt by the sisters to catechise the local people would often be met with mixed feelings; the ambivalent feelings were typical of recipients of the Gospel when missionaries made their debut in any given apostolate. Paradoxically, the landlocked Swaziland with no direct access to the sea, and having no good roads, attracted a number of female religious Congregations. Mbabane, the largest town in Swaziland, which had the privilege of welcoming the first Catholic priests into the kingdom, extended its hospitality to the first Catholic female religious congregation.

An Austrian friar, Fr. Arimath Galt, who had been in Swaziland since 1914 had always wanted to invite Austrian sisters to work in Swaziland. His dream would not come true since the British government was always reluctant to give entrance visas to these sisters. When the Benedictine Sisters of Tutzing were at Mariannhill, South Africa, a priest belonging to the Mariannhill religious community, Fr. Hermann Arndt advised the acting superior of the Benedictine Sisters of Tutzing, Sr. Amanda Rankl, to have talks with Fr. Arimath Galt who was working in Mbabane. The feasibility of having a house in Swaziland was among the issues discussed²². After negotiations, Sr. Amanda Rankl set

²². Godfrey Sieber OSB, *The Benedictines of Inkamana*, (St. Ottilien: Eos Verlag Erzabtei), 1985, p. 317.

out for Mbabane, on 11 November, 1920, from Mariannhill together with Srs. Alfreida Dreher, Cyrilla Hecht, Christiana Schimmel, Eloquia Prutscher and Euphemia Falgér.²³ Their work in Mbabane consisted in giving catechetical instruction and helping people fight against illiteracy.

In November 1924, the Benedictine Sisters of Tutzing working in Swaziland were blessed by the visit of their superior general, Mother Melania who had come from Tutzing. Following that visit, Bishop Thomas Spreiter, whose jurisdiction included places such as Vryheid and Inkamana, started influencing the sisters to abandon their activity in Mbabane and go to Inkamana near Vryheid. The ambitious Benedictine prelate, Bishop Thomas Spreiter, built a convent to be used by the sisters at Inkamana, thus preparing for their final withdrawal from Swaziland²⁴. On 26 September, 1926 the Benedictine Sisters of Tutzing left Mbabane for Inkamana²⁵.

Missionaries belonging to Protestant Churches had arrived in Bremersdorp a number of years before the arrival of the Catholic missionaries in the country. Since Fr. Constantino Barneschi had a knack of dealing with any kind of people, he was allowed to celebrate Holy Mass and preach in a Protestant school every first Sunday of the month in 1922. Allowing a Catholic to celebrate Holy Mass in a building belonging to a Protestant Church was an unusual practice especially in those days when missionaries

²³. Godfrey Sieber OSB, *The Benedictines of Inkamana*, (St. Ottilien: Eos Verlag Erzabtei), 1985, p. 317.

²⁴. Godfrey Sieber OSB, *The Benedictines of Inkamana*, (St. Ottilien: Eos Verlag Erzabtei), 1985, p. 318.

²⁵. Godfrey Sieber OSB, *The Benedictines of Inkamana*, (St. Ottilien: Eos Verlag Erzabtei), 1985, p. 319.

belonging to different Christian Churches were competing for souls. Since Fr. Constantino Barneschi was fluent in English he would preach in English and a catechist would translate into the local language²⁶.

The construction of the first house of the Servite Sisters of Pistoia began in 1922 while the house of the friars was not yet completed at St. Joseph's mission. It was not easy to carry out the project since the friars had very little money and they could not hire local people to help in the building of the convent. They needed to hire people for farming as well²⁷.

Perhaps one of the reasons why the Catholic missionaries envied the Protestant missionaries was that Protestant missionaries were *quasi* self-sufficient financially. This stems from the fact that Catholics used to accuse Protestants of attracting people into their Faith by using money. Protestant Catechists used to receive better salaries than their Catholic counterparts in the 1920's. The other problem Catholic missionaries were faced with was the fact that they were the minority in the country²⁸.

A priest by the name of Constantino Barneschi was sent to Swaziland by the Tuscan Province after the request made by the Prior general of the Order of the Servants of Mary, Fr. Luigi Tabanelli, in February, 1921²⁹

Fr. Constantino Barneschi arrived in Swaziland in 1921. He worked for the people

²⁶. Constantine Barneschi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Mzimpofo, 21 June, 1922.

²⁷. Constantine Barneschi, *lettera a Alessio*, Mzimpofo, 21 June, 1922.

²⁸. Constantine Barneschi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Mzimpofo, 21 June, 1922.

²⁹. Luigi Tabanelli, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Piazza S. Nicola da Tolentino, Rome, 6 February, 1921.

of God in that accompanied by a catechist, he would travel long distances on foot visiting the sick. The letters Fr. Constantino Barneschi wrote are very important from the historical and doctrinal point of view: they give us a detailed account of the problems faced by early missionaries and of the local practices such as polygamy that affected the growth of the Church.

Like other missionaries, Fr. Constantino Barneschi had to learn how to mount a horse. There was a strong bond between the owner of the animal and the animal, so much so that animals were given names, for example the old horse of Fr. Arimath Galt was called "Hippo", and Fr. Constantino Barneschi was given "Hippo" to learn how to mount a horse³⁰.

The Benedictine Sisters of Tutzing were followed by the Congregation of the Servite Sisters of Pistoia (Mantellate), who after having been aggregated to the Order of the Servants of Mary, sought to strengthen their collaboration with the friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary. Their working together has enabled them to foster the growth of the Marian spirituality which gives them their identity as Servants of Mary. Under the auspices of the *curia generalizia* (mother house) of the Order, news about work undertaken by friars in Swaziland was made available to most of the congregations which were aggregated to the Order.

The Congregation of the Servite Sisters of Pistoia became increasingly interested in the Swazi enterprise, as more news on Swaziland was given in the only Italian edition of a missionary magazine of the Order, *le missioni dei Servi di Maria* (the missions of the Servants of Mary). Comprehensive plans for Swaziland were made and four sisters

³⁰. Constantino Barneschi, *lettera Fr. Alessio*, Mzimpofo, 4 April, 1922.

received obedience from their superior general to become missionaries in the African continent. Srs. Cecilia Grimoldi, Claudia Gonfiantini, Martina Gonovese and Savina Mariani are the names of the four sisters who were to be sent to Swaziland. After having had their religious farewell ceremony they took a ship from the port of Genoa, Italy to Durban, South Africa. When they arrived in Durban they met the local bishop, Mons. Henry Delalle whose jurisdiction extended to Swaziland. The four sisters were taken by train from Durban to Piet Retief where they boarded a bus for Mbabane, whose population barely exceeded five hundred inhabitants. The date of their arrival at Mater Dolorosa mission in Mbabane was 5 December, 1922³¹.

The population growth in Mbabane was not negligible: in 1911 it was two hundred and eighty³². The fact that the population of Swaziland had increased by seven thousand six hundred and twenty one inhabitants in the past ten years³³ is remarkable.

Soon after their arrival in Mbabane a German speaking priest, Fr. Bonaventure Kathrein who later founded the mission at Siteki, sent a telegram to Fr. Peregrine Bellezze who was at St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo notifying him of their arrival. The news impelled Fr. Peregrine Bellezze to hasten to Mbabane to fetch his compatriots in an oxen-drawn cart. It took them the whole day to reach St. Joseph's mission from Mater Dolorosa mission. In 1922 we observe strong nationalistic ties amongst missionaries present in the

³¹. Claudia Gonfiantini, OSM Interview in Italian, Our Lady of Sorrows Convent, Hluti, 2 September, 1996.

³². Microform, Swaziland census 3 May 1921, census including; population, agriculture, livestock, (Pretoria: Government Pastime and Statuary office), 1922.

³³. H.M Jones, *Report of the 1966 Swaziland population census*, (Mbabane: Swazi Government), 1968, p. 14-21.

country: German speaking missionaries were in Mbabane while at Mzimpofu there was a preponderance of Italians.

At St. Joseph's mission, Srs. Cecilia Grimoldi, Claudia Gonfiantini, Martina Gonovese and Savina Mariani were warmly welcomed by Fr. Constantino Barneschi; and a Dutch lay brother, Julius Potweer³⁴. Beside the fact that Bro. Julius Potweer made beds for the sisters, very little is known of him. Sr. Cecilia Grimoldi was elected prioress. Cooking for the religious was done by Sr. Savina Mariana who was helped by a Swazi girl.³⁵ The mission boasted cattle, chickens and pigs. Since there were no water taps in the mission, Swazi girls used to go to the nearby stream to fetch water, which was used mostly by the missionaries. Sr. Genovese worked in the orchard which was situated about twenty to thirty minutes walk from the mission³⁶. Sr. Gonfiantini taught in the school. She began with seven pupils: five girls and two boys³⁷.

(x) Election of the Provincial and its repercussions in Swaziland

Soon after the election of the Prior provincial of the Tuscan province numerous Catholic missions and outstations were established in Swaziland. The growth of the Church in Swaziland was so rapid that more and more personnel and material support was sought from Italy. Huts and other thatched roofed houses were replaced with proper houses. Friars started using modern transport; an improved standard of living became conspicuous in the Catholic missions for the first time.

³⁴. Distillati Afra, OSM, Cinquant'anni in terra di missione, [un-edited] p. 15 & 16.

³⁵. Distillati Afra, OSM, Cinquant'anni in terra di missione, [un-edited] p. 19.

³⁶. Distillati Afra, OSM, Cinquant'anni in terra di missione, [un-edited] p. 19.

³⁷. Claudia Gonfiantini, OSM, Interview in Italian, Our Lady of Sorrows Convent, Hluti, 2 September, 1996.

The missionaries were anxiously looking forward to the election of the new Prior provincial of the Tuscan Province. They thought that he would follow in the footsteps of his predecessors and be generous towards the poor mission of Swaziland. In June 1922, the Tuscan Province chose its new Prior provincial, Fr. Giulio Santini. Hitherto, the Prior provincial of the Tuscan Province had been supplying Swaziland with money and personnel. Fortunately, Fr. Giulio Santini continued the tradition of being generous towards Swaziland³⁸.

As early as 1922, the missionaries were already contemplating the idea of opening a large mission at Mhlatuze, which was to be dedicated to St. Philip Benizi, one of the important Saints of the Order of the Servants of Mary. Fr. Constantino Barneschi was very enthusiastic about opening the mission. According to him the mission was to be situated in a place where Protestants were dominant so that it could counter the expansion of the Protestant Churches in the area. Financial support for the future mission was to come from Italy³⁹. Up to that point Catholic missionaries had been using mules and horses for transport. The first motor car of the missionaries was bought at the end of November 1922 in Bremersdorp by Fr. Peregrine Bellezze. The cost of the car was 10 Pounds. Since it was bought during the rainy season it would hardly be used⁴⁰.

On 10 November, 1922 Fr. Ignatius O'Sullivan who was stationed at Mater Dolorosa mission, and Bro. Gabriel Signori of St. Joseph's mission accompanied by a Swazi man, left for Mbuluzi to open a mission dedicated to Santissima Annunziata,

³⁸. Peregrine Bellezze, *lettera a Fr. Giulio Santini*, Mzimpofo, 23 June, 1922.

³⁹. Constantino Barneschi, *lettera a Fr. Alessio*, Mzimpofo, 21 June, 1922.

⁴⁰. Constantino Barneschi, *lettera Fr. Giulio Santini*, Mzimpofo, 29 November, 1922.

commonly known as Florence mission. A mud house which was used as the first chapel was built. Fr. Ignatius O'Sullivan became the first priest-in-charge of Florence mission soon after its opening in 1922. It is apparent from the letter to the Prior provincial of the Tuscan Province on 22 December, 1922 that the Christians of Santissima Annunziata, Florence, would be the main benefactors of the newly founded mission. The second hut which was to be built as a chapel was completed on 20 December, 1922. In order to reach the mission, one had to cross the Umbuluzi river. Since there was no bridge, brother Signori promised to construct one. The project would begin in 1923 when money would have been received from benefactors⁴¹.

In September 1922, Fr. Peregrine Bellezze and Bro. Giulio Potweer left St. Joseph's for Hlatikhulu which is in the southern part of Swaziland. They crossed the Great Usuthu river, intending to first visit a place before buying a site for a mission⁴².

Summary

Attentive to the needs of the local people, the missionaries started to broaden their ministry: educational institutions were established. Initially, the work of the missionaries was restricted to the celebration of the Sacraments. We ought to mention the fact that the new ministries contributed a lot to the whole process of evangelization. We have seen that from the very beginning of their missionary activity the missionaries dedicated their time to the building of churches, schools and teaching the Catholic Faith.

Polygamy, which was practised by a large percentage of people in those days, was

⁴¹. Ignatius O'Sullivan, *lettera s Fr. Giulio Santini*, Mbuluzi, 22 February, 1922.

⁴². Constantino Barneschi, *lettera a Fr. Rossi*, Mzimpofo, 19 September, 1922.

the main obstacle to the work of the missionaries. Any man who had a large herd of cattle would marry as many wives as he could. Adhering to the Sacred Scripture and Tradition caused the Catholic Church to reject polygamy completely; however, the Church's position on polygamy was contrary to the position of the Swazi culture. Unfortunately none of the two institutions was willing to sacrifice their position. They remained adamant in their positions, thus cultivating an unbridgeable ideological breach. As a result of the misunderstanding those who wanted to have more than one wife became reluctant to embrace Catholicism.

Apparently, there was reluctance amongst the missionaries to administer the Sacrament of Baptism to teenagers in the fear that when they grew up they might be forced into a polygamous marriage: parents used to arrange marriages for their daughters and sons. That fear was overcome gradually as the trust between the missionaries and the Swazis developed.

The number of young people receiving Sacraments started to grow significantly in the early 1920's. These young people who had been admitted into the Catholic Church after the missionaries had overcome their fears, became useful in the mission of St. Joseph's parish. Since they knew siSwati and local places very well they offered invaluable support to the missionaries engaged in pastoral work. This is the reason why it became easy for the missionaries to buy large pieces of land and to open numerous outstations around Mater Dolorosa and St. Joseph's missions.

The missionaries who were at St. Joseph's mission had converted people staying miles and miles away. Some of those who were baptised were living at Manzini and Mafutseni. Fr. Peregrine Bellezze used to visit people in their homes, in fact, some of the

baptisms administered to the sick were performed by him in their houses. An important fact worth mentioning is that the tragic death of Fr. Francis Mayr meant that the Church in Swaziland would wait many years before it would have another talented missionary of Mayr's calibre.

Amidst this background of internal turbulence the blood of Fr. Francis Mayr nourished the Church in Swaziland. This is a paradox, since many had thought that the murder would discourage missionaries from continuing the work they had just begun in Swaziland. But, moved by the missionary spirit, they committed themselves to the work of the evangelization of the people. Their pastoral work involved visiting people in their homes, teaching the catechism and administering mainly the Sacraments of Christian initiation, that is: Baptism, Confirmation and Communion. Language was not an obstacle since they were proficient in Zulu, the then language of instruction which is in very similar to siSwati.

It is difficult to tell whether their preaching of the Gospel had an immediate impact on the local population. The number of people who were receiving the Sacraments was relatively low. This is due to the fact that Sacraments were not celebrated in large communities despite the fact that Swazis were community conscious people. If missionaries had taken that aspect into consideration they would have had a great number of people receiving Sacraments. Missionaries could have used the community consciousness to stress the theology of the communion of Saints and the Mystical Body of Christ which is at the heart of the teaching of the Catholic Church. The people who received the Sacraments of initiation, say Baptism, were not aware of the fact that they were being incorporated into the Body of Christ, the Church. They considered the

Sacrament to be a guarantee that they and their children would receive benefits such as free education from the Church.

Chapter Two

THE GROWTH OF THE CHURCH

A. PRAEFECTURE APOSTOLIC 1923-1931

(i) The erection of the Prefecture Apostolic

In less than ten years since the arrival of the first Catholic missionaries in Swaziland, the Holy See thought that it would be wise to make Swaziland a prefecture apostolic. On 19 April 1923, during the pontificate of Pope Pius XI, Swaziland became a prefecture apostolic. Fr. Pellegine Belleze became the first Prefect Apostolic of Swaziland.

By virtue of his office, Mons. Peregrine Bellezze had power to exercise a certain administrative control over the missionaries and to annul certain decisions of all missionaries in his prefecture. Serving as a local source of information to the Holy See was his primary duty. The appointment of the local religious superior almost ten years later, led to some decentralization paving a way for the reduction of the unfettered powers of the prefect apostolic.

Swaziland really deserved to be raised to the status of prefecture apostolic since the Catholic faith was spreading rapidly. Almost every month people were converted into Catholicism in large numbers. On the other hand missionaries were very enthusiastic

about the service. The arrival of religious congregations such as the Benedictine Sisters, Servite Sisters of Pistoia and the Oakford Dominican Sisters gave impetus to the missionary work in Swaziland. The other elements that made a significant contribution to the expansion of the Catholic Church in Swaziland was the spirit of cooperation that existed amongst the missionaries especially during the first decade of missionary work in Swaziland.

We have observed in the correspondence between the missionaries and their superiors who were in Italy that the missionaries had a collective approach to solving the problems they were faced with: no missionary dared to exhaust all his energy on matters pertaining to the mission or outstation entrusted to him without seeking help from his fellow missionaries. The opening of Florence mission in 1922 can be taken as a typical example: missionaries who were not even destined to work at Florence mission used to appeal for overseas funds so that their fellow brothers who were to be incardinated at Florence mission would not be obscured by material needs.

Ironically, the rivalry between the Catholic Church and other mainline Churches contributed a lot to the development of the Catholic Church. This is because Catholic missionaries felt compelled to join forces amongst themselves to try and stop the Protestant Churches from indoctrinating a large part of the population of Swaziland. All those elements made Swaziland to qualify for prefecture apostolic.

(ii) First Overseas' Missionary Campaign

Soon after his appointment to the office of prefect apostolic, Mons. Peregrine Bellezze made preparations for his visit to Italy. Most probably, the main aim for his visit was to solicit funds for the newly established prefecture apostolic so that the work of

evangelization could be carried on with full vigour. As the prefect apostolic of an unknown area, he was expected to brief the Holy See and the Curia generalizia of the Order of the Servants of Mary about the difficulties faced by the missionaries in his territory. The other issue which needed to be addressed was the shortage of personnel. In October 1923, he left for Italy where he remained for a period of four months.

While in Italy he did a lot of fund-raising campaign for the missions by preaching mission Sundays in different churches⁴³. The provincial of the Tuscan Province was impressed by the report on the newly erected prefecture presented by Mons. Peregrine Bellezze. It made him to be convinced that the future of the Church in Swaziland depended on the support the Tuscan Province can offer. Consequently, the Tuscan Province started to envisage sending more money and personnel to Swaziland in the near future. In December 1924 the provincial of the Tuscan Province had decided to send Fr. Barsi to work in Swaziland. Fr. Barsi was to join the other group of missionaries from the Tuscan Province who were working in Swaziland⁴⁴. The missionaries from the Tuscan Province were becoming numerous in Swaziland.

It is indeed a paradox that though Protestant Churches were multiplying and had more resources, a lot of people as well as baptised Protestants were being converted into Catholicism during the period when the Catholic Church was faced with the problems of schools as we have seen above. This is an unusual phenomenon, history has shown that the Church achieve maximum growth in times of crisis.

⁴³. Peregrine Bellezze, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana e al Priore della Santissima Annunziata*, Mzimpofo 24 January, 1924.

⁴⁴. Peregrine Bellezze, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Mzimpofo, 25 January, 1925.

In March 1925 for the first time in the history of the Catholic Church in Swaziland a son of a traditional healer who had been very sick was baptised in the Catholic Church after his father had apparently failed to heal him.

The growth of the Catholic Church is reflected in the parish register of St. Joseph's mission which shows that in four months the parish at St. Joseph's got forty four Catechumens, that is, between December 1924 and March 1925. There were also many baptisms of both infants and adults. Surprisingly, the results were remarkable when we look at the number of priests in the country.

Nyakeni was one of the early places to be evangelised by Catholic missionaries as we have seen earlier on in our discussion. The Nyakeni community had welcomed the Catholics a couple of years before the baptism of their chief Jakovu who received baptism from Fr. Constantino Barneschi when he was very old. Chief Jakovu had many wives and when Fr. Constantino Barneschi advised him to remain with one wife he told Fr. Constantino Barneschi that a man of his age did not even need a woman. Fr. Constantino Barneschi baptised him immediately.

The chief had premonition about his death; when his day of death was approaching he summoned all his subjects and he told them that he had been baptised in the Catholic Church and he wanted all his subjects to be baptised in the Catholic Church. He advised them that they should first go to Mawinji (Mons. Peregrine Bellezze) to receive Catholic instruction, which they did. In 1926 the total number of Catholic priests in Swaziland was six. Lay brothers were five and sisters were six⁴⁵, and all of them were Servites.

⁴⁵. Constantino Barneschi, *lettera a Fr. Alessio, Mzimpofo*, 22 January, 1925.

(iii) The influence of the Pontificate of Pius XI

Pope Pius XI was the father of the Catholic Action and missions. The main aim of the Catholic action was to protect the Catholic Church from the encroachment of the spirit of Atheism. At the Synod held in Kimberly, South Africa in 1925 it was suggested that Catholic actions be promoted⁴⁶.

In Swaziland, associations of Catholic men, Christian mothers, children of Mary, teachers and Catholic catechists were formed⁴⁷. In urban centres such as Mbabane, Bremersdorp and Siteki mens'associations flourished, while in rural places such as Mzimpofo, Mbuluzi and Mhlatuze women's associations were very strong⁴⁸. The reason behind that could be the fact that in rural areas few men could be in full communion with the Church due to the problem of polygamy. Migration among males was very high in rural areas.

The celebration of the Holy Year, 1925, coincided with the Golden jubilee of the priesthood of Pope Pius XI. Catholic missionaries were eager to introduce the first Holy Year celebration in Swaziland. About four years later, the Church in Swaziland started preparing for another Jubilee celebration. Some Swazis asked Fr. Constantino Barneschi to invite the Pope to Swaziland. They even mentioned that if he could not come to

⁴⁶. Constantino Barneschi, 1935, in *Le Missioni dei Servi di Maria*, anno 8, n47, (Rome: San Marcello), July 1935, p. 174.

⁴⁷. Constantino Barneschi, 1935, in *Le Missioni dei Servi di Maria*, anno 8, n47, (Rome: San Marcello), July 1935, p. 175.

⁴⁸. Constantino Barneschi, 1935, in *Le Missioni dei Servi di Maria*, anno 8, n47, (Rome: San Marcello), July 1935, p. 175.

Swaziland he could go to South Africa and they would go there to see him⁴⁹.

(iv) Personnel

In order to carry on with the work of evangelization, the missionaries were in desperate need of personnel and money. Fr. Remigio Mucciarini of the Tuscan Province was in Mbabane in March 1925 to learn Zulu before being transferred to Florence mission. He had arrived in the country on 24 August 1924 from Italy together with Fr. Anselmo Marsigli of the Picen Province and Bros. Antonio Agostinelli and Raimondo Dal Magro of the Tuscan and Venetian Provinces, respectively.

A year later, on 8 November, Frs. Agostino Botta of the Piedmont Province and Bros. Luigi Da Meda of the Venetian Province and Robert Prost of the Tyrolese Province received a blessing from the general of the Order of the Servants of Mary in Rome before their departure for Swaziland. Frs. Michael Ramsay and Emilio Toffano left Italy in February 1927 for Swaziland. Just before leaving Rome, they received a special blessing from the General of the Order of the Servants of Mary, Fr. Augustine Modè

Fr. Michael Ramsay had been a Protestant before becoming a Catholic. He was received into the Catholic Church by the friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary at Begbroke in Oxford, United Kingdom⁵¹. Fr. Arimath Galt who had been in the country went back to Europe. When he was about to return to Swaziland, he and two lay brothers: Bro. Bonifacio Schneider of the Tyrolese province and Bro. Vittorio Serpi had an

⁴⁹. Constantino Barneschi, 1933, in *Le Missioni dei Servi di Maria*, anno 6, n45, (Rome: San Marcello), May, 1933, p. 112-113

⁵⁰. Constantino Barneschi, 1928, in *Le Missioni dei Servi di Maria*, anno 1 n42, (Rome: San Marcello), February, 1928, p. 11.

⁵¹. Constantino Barneschi, 1928, in *Le Missioni dei Servi di Maria*, anno 1 n42, (Rome: San Marcello), February, 1928, p. 12.

audience with Pope Pius XI on 29 May 1927.

In June, they left the city of Genoa, Italy by ship for Lorenzo Marques (Maputo), Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique). The missionaries who were propagating faith in Swaziland found themselves without sufficient funds. The prefect apostolic, Mons. Peregrine Bellezze wrote a letter to Italy asking for financial assistance⁵². The economic situation was so bad that the missionaries even thought of closing some of their schools. In 1927 there were forty four schools which had to be maintained by them. Closing schools could have had detrimental effects on the whole process of evangelization, since they were making invaluable contribution to the evangelization of the people living in Swaziland.

(v) Acquiring more land

The Prefect Apostolic, mons. Peregrine Bellezze convened a meeting which was held at Mater Dolorosa mission on 29 October 1928. Frs. Constantino Barneschi and Michael Ramsay were present. At that meeting they discussed about the importance of buying a farm which was sold for not less than one thousand pounds sterling in the Mankayane area. The owner of the farm had two farms and was reluctant to sell the farms separately. He wanted the missionaries to buy both farms. A decision was made at the meeting that once enough money is found both farms would be bought. Not wanting to burden the Tuscan Province which has always been generous to the mission of Swaziland, a message was then sent to the General of the Order of the Servants of Mary by Fr.

⁵². Ministro della Chiesa A.M.E, in *Le Missioni dei Servi di Maria*, anno 1 n46, (Rome: San Marcello), June, 1928, p. 67-68.

⁵³. Bellezze, 1928, in *Le Missioni dei Servi di Maria*, anno 1 n42, (Rome: San Marcello), February, 1928, p. 10.

Arimath Galt notifying him about the farm that was on sale. We have to bear in mind that Fr. Arimath Galt had been previously asked by the General to find a site where a mission dedicated to Madonna di Monte Berico could be opened⁴.

(v) First local vocations

A letter dated 2 January 1930 was sent by Mons. Peregrine Bellezze to all priests asking their opinion about beginning a congregation of local sisters. Mons. Peregrine Bellezze had been in contact with some girls who wanted to embrace religious life. The main aim of Mons. Peregrine Bellezze was to make the girls postulants of the future congregation which was to be called Izithunywa zika Maria Olusizi (The Missionaries of the Sorrowful Mary or Missionariae Mariae Dolorosae).

The local congregation was destined to become the first of its kind in the prefecture: like other congregations working in Swaziland, its members were going to live the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. At a later stage the congregation was going to be aggregated to the Order of the Servants of Mary. Which was going to help it prepare its own constitution.

The priests who have been consulted were in favour of the idea of the prefect apostolic⁵⁵. In May 1930 a letter was sent to the general of the Order of the Servants of Mary asking him whether local candidates could be considered for religious life. He oppose the idea of recruiting local candidates. The general suggested that Mons. Peregrine Bellezze discuss the matter with his fellow missionaries who were also in favour of

⁵⁴. Council of the Prefecture, *Minutes of Council of the Prefecture Apostolic of Swaziland, Mater Dolorosa, Mbabane, 29 October, 1928.*

⁵⁵. (i) Peregrine Bellezze, *letter to Priests, Mzimpofo, 2 January, 1930.*

(ii) Arimath Galt, *letter to Peregrine Bellezze, Mbabane, 6 January, 1930*

having Black friars. When the issue was discussed Fr. Constantino Barneschi wanted the missionaries to clarify certain sensitive issues before a Swazi could be admitted into religious life. The main issue he was concerned about was the manner in which a Swazi friar would participate in community life. Questions like is the Swazi friar going to pray together, recreate and have his meals with his European counterparts were to be discussed⁵⁶.

The questions of Fr. Constantino Barneschi need not be interpreted as a sign of racism. In those days, especially in Swaziland it was forbidden for people of different races to partake in common life. Fr. Constantino Barneschi was concerned about the legal aspect of the matter. In fact in his reply to the letter of Mons. Peregrine Bellezze he wrote: "I am in favour..."⁵⁷ and he added the question we have seen above.

B. GEOGRAPHICAL EXPANSION

(i) Florence Mission

A missionary by the name of Fr. Ignatius O'Sullivan and a lay brother, Bro. Gabriel Signori started the mission at Mbuluzi in 1922. The mission was named after one of the basilicas of Florence, Italy a city famous for its flowers. The mission is commonly known as Florence mission in Swaziland. According to the legend, when the first friars arrived at Mbuluzi they spent time admiring the beauty of the flowers in the area.

⁵⁶. Peregrine Bellezze, *letter to the missionaries*, Mzimpofo, 8 August, 1930.

⁵⁷. Peregrine Bellezze, *Le memorie II*, [1934]

After the mission has been established the friars dedicated themselves to the painstaking work of spreading Catholicism. Three years later, the number of people who had been baptised was ten⁵⁸. Due to the pressure of work, Fr. Remigio Muccianini was sent to Florence mission, and he was joined later by Fr. Arimath Galt who had been in the country for quite a long period of time⁵⁹. Without the presence of the school and the catechist, the mission could not have enjoyed a steady progress. We ought to mention that the catechist was a Zulu speaking from Natal.

Most of the manual labour in the mission was done by the brothers whose number had increased in few years from one to three. Even the convent of the sisters was built by them. The project for the construction of the new Church was halted for two years. After the building has been completed Florence mission was chosen to be the first Marian Shrine in Swaziland⁶⁰. Since then a number of pilgrims have been flocking annually to receive special blessings from God. After twelve years of missionary activity at Mbuluzi, the total number of the baptised had reached eight hundred. In addition to that there were about two catechumens and one catechist. Progress was also observed in education; the mission had a big school and six schools in its outstations. Due to the shortage of teachers, there were only seven teachers altogether⁶¹.

⁵⁸. Remigio Muccianini, in *Le Missioni dei Servi di Maria*, anno 9, n46, (Rome: San Marcello), June, 1936, p. 148.

⁵⁹. Remigio Muccianini, in *Le Missioni dei Servi di Maria*, anno 9, n46, (Rome: San Marcello), June, 1936, p. 149.

⁶⁰. Remigio Muccianini, in *Le Missioni dei Servi di Maria*, anno 9, n46, (Rome: San Marcello), June, 1936, p. 149.

⁶¹. Remigio Muccianini, in *Le Missioni dei Servi di Maria*, anno 9, n46, (Rome: San Marcello), June, 1936, p. 175.

According to the report released in 1932⁶², if there had not been financial crises in the late 20's and the Second World War they would have been at least ten schools after the twelve years of missionary activity. The expansion of the Protestant Churches posed a great threat to the growth of Florence mission. Those Churches were preaching against the Catholic Church. Polygamy was also one of the huddles the Church had to overcome. The problem has further been compounded by the faith that many people strongly believed in witchcraft.

(ii) Good Shepherd Mission

At Siteki a mission dedicated to the Good Shepherd was opened on 28 October 1923 when Mons. Peregrine Bellezze was in Europe. It was opened by Fr. Bonaventure Kathrein and Bro. Martin Schultz. The first Catholic to be baptised at Good Shepherd mission was Anna Lita Lukhele who was sixteen years old. She was baptised on 20 January, 1924 by Fr. Bonaventure Kathrein. Unlike the other parishes, very few people were baptised on the same day at Good Shepherd. Most of those who were baptised in 1924 were children and people who were very sick. On 12 April 1925 seventeen candidates were baptised. That baptism was multiracial: Blacks as well as Coloureds were baptised. Frank Groening, son of Mr. Groening and Mrs Lomacala Mbhamali (maiden name) Groening were amongst the seventeen candidates who received the sacrament of Baptism on that day⁶³.

⁶². Remigio Muccianini, in *Le Missioni dei Servi di Maria*, anno 9, n46, (Rome: San Marcello), June, 1936, p. 175.

⁶³. Good Shepherd Mission Baptismal register 1924-1930.

(iii) St. Philip's Mission

St. Philip's mission at Mhlatuze is situated in the southern part of Swaziland and was open on 23 August 1926 by Fr. Anselmo Marsigli and Bro. Raimondo Dal Margo. The first friars to set a foot at the place where it was to be opened were Mons. Peregrine Bellezze and Bro. Julius Potweer in June 1926.

After the opening of the mission, Fr. Filippo Rizzi who has been working at Bremersdorp was transferred to St. Philip's mission and his place at Bremersdorp was taken by Fr. Anselmo Marsigli⁶⁴.

Fr. Filippo Rizzi rode a secondhand motorcycle which he was given by the prefect apostolic. Since it was not in good condition, Fr. Giovanni Baldini helped in repairing it so that Fr. Filippo Rizzi could have a reliable transport.

In those days, having a motorcycle was considered to be a luxury in Swaziland: riding it from Bremersdorp to Mhlatuze was an exciting adventure. A big river separated St. Philip's mission and the other Catholic missions, and the most difficult challenge Fr. Filippo Rizzi had to face was to cross the Great Usutu river. Since there was no bridge, he had to lift the motorcycle up. Fortunately, there were two students belonging to St. Philip's mission near by the river, who helped him to carry it across the river. He received a warm welcome from the friars and the Italian sisters when he arrived at St. Philip's mission⁶⁵.

St. Philip's mission was amongst the few that, in spite of being in the remotest part

⁶⁴. Filippo Rizzi, 1932, in *Le Missioni dei Servi di Maria*, anno 6, n43, (Rome: San Marcello), March, 1933, p. 58.

⁶⁵. Filippo Rizzi, 1932, in *Le Missioni dei Servi di Maria*, anno 6, n43, (Rome: San Marcello), March, 1933, p. 60.

of the country, had converted many people into the Catholic faith. On Sundays, many people from around the area would participate fully at the Eucharistic celebration, and a high percentage of them would receive Holy Communion. There were also young catechists who played an important role in spreading the good news. These catechists had been trained by missionaries⁶⁶.

(iv) St. Peregrine's Mission

After receiving the blessing from the Apostolic delegate who visited Swaziland on 9 November 1927, Fr. Agostino Fagiolo and Bro. Julius Potweer left Florence mission on horseback for Bulandzeni where they were to begin a mission⁶⁷. The Nazarene Church was well established in the area prior to the arrival of the Catholics. Reverend Spaha, a Nazarene minister had many schools and catechists.

When Catholic missionaries arrived at Bulandzeni in November 1927 they bought one thousand acres of land from Mr. Leone Franklin for twenty five shillings a morgan, St. Peregrine's mission was then begun on that piece of land.

At present the mission owns ninety seven acres. The first baptism at St. Peregrine's mission was celebrated on 30 September 1928 by Fr. Agostino Fagiolo. Almost after nine months baptisms have been celebrated at one of its outstations, St. Amadeus near Pigg's Peak: Eleven baptisms were celebrated at St. Amadeus before the first baptism could be celebrated at St. Peregrine's Mission. It is interesting to find that Rosina Tshozi was a sponsor on many candidates, in July 1928 baptised an old woman who might have been

⁶⁶. Filippo Rizzi, 1932, in *Le Missioni dei Servi di Maria*, anno 6, n43, (Rome: San Marcello), March, 1933, p. 91.

⁶⁷. Agostino Fagiolo, 1928, in *Le Missioni dei Servi di Maria*, anno 1, n45, (Rome: San Marcello), May, 1928, p. 54.

in a danger of death, who died forty two days after receiving the sacrament of Baptism.

Prior to that of all the candidates baptised only three were males and the eldest was seven months old. Most of those who were baptised were women their ages ranged from thirty to seventy, and two girls who were each a month old.

We could deduce from the figures reflected in the baptismal register of St. Peregrine's mission that at St. Amadeus there existed some form of catechetical structure. This is because in most of the baptisms, those who were baptised were belonging to the same age group⁶⁸.

In October, 1929 Fr. Agostino Fagiolo's missionary activity began to concentrate in the area around St. Peregrine's Mission. Most of those whom he baptised during his first two months at the mission were very young children. It is also interesting to find that Fr. Agostino Fagiolo baptised a four year old boy whose mother was a Protestant. We observe that four baptisms were administered by lay people and two candidates had a parent who was a Protestant. Missionaries belonging to different Churches were concerned about converting people to their faith⁶⁹.

(v) St. Mary's Mission

The first priest to go to the place where a mission to be dedicated to St. Mary was to be opened was Fr. Michael Ramsay together with Bro. Roberto Postl on 25 January, 1929. A small church was built in 1931. Unfortunately, it was destroyed, so they had to

⁶⁸. St. Peregrine's Mission Baptismal Register 1927-1938.

⁶⁹. Agostino Fagiolo, 1928, in *Le Missioni dei Servi di Maria*, anno 1, n46, (Rome: San Marcello), June, 1928, p. 69.

build another one, and a school was also built⁷⁰. Subsequently, St. Elizabeth and Holy Rosary became outstations of St. Mary's mission.

C. IMPORTANT VISITORS

(i) Apostolic Delegate

It was announced in Kimberly, South Africa, that the apostolic delegate to South Africa, Mons. B.J Gijlswijk, OP would visit Swaziland by September 1927. The first mission they visited was Mater Dolorosa at Mbabane.

Accompanied by Fr. Agostino Botta, Mons. B.J Gijlswijk, OP and his secretary, Fr. R.P. De Groen set for St. Philip's mission at Mhlatuze on 20 September, 1927. When they arrived at the one year old mission dedicated to St. Philip, they slept in a hut. Bro. Antonino Agostinelli took the apostolic delegate around the area⁷¹.

When King Sobhuza II heard that the apostolic delegate would be at St. Joseph's mission he went there on 22 September to meet him. About two hundred pupils welcomed their king. Since there was no room at Mzimpofo that could accommodate the apostolic delegate, the friars had to build a house with two rooms for that purpose. At St. Joseph's mission, he administered the sacrament of Baptism and Confirmation.

The next day, Frs. Agostino Botta and Giacinto Striolo accompanied Mons. B.J

⁷⁰. Gerardo Galandi, 1935, in *Le Missioni dei Servi di Maria*, anno 8, n48, (Rome: San Marcello), August, 1935, p. 202.

⁷¹. Constantino Barneschi, 1928, in *Le Missioni dei Servi di Maria*, anno 1 n42, (Rome: San Marcello), February, 1928, p. 13.

Gijlswijk, OP and Fr. R.P. De Groen to Florence mission, at Mbuluzi⁷² While at Florence mission he celebrated a Pontifical Mass on Sunday, during which catechumens and neophytes received the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation, respectively. The celebration ended with a solemn Benediction⁷³.

The last mission to be visited was Good Shepherd at Siteki, where Fr. Bonaventure Kathrein was pastor. Just like other missions visited by the apostolic delegate, solemn Mass was celebrated and a Papal blessing was imparted by the apostolic delegate. Mons. B.J Gijlswijk, OP then left for Lourenço Marques (Maputo)⁷⁴.

(ii) Titular Bishop of Sebastopoli

In 1928 the titular bishop of Sebastopoli, Mons. Hinsley, who was also rector of the English College in Rome accompanied by his secretary, Fr. Enghelbert Giersbach, OSB paid a visit to Swaziland. The main aim of the visit was to show support to the missionaries who were working in schools. News about his coming was spread all over Swaziland. Comprehensive preparations for his visit were also made by teachers and pupils in all Catholic schools.

With a population of at least thirty thousands people⁷⁵, Swaziland had more than two hundred schools by that time. One hundred and sixty were run by Protestants while

⁷². Constantino Barneschi, 1928, in *Le Missioni dei Servi di Maria*, anno 1 n42, (Rome: San Marcello), February, 1928, p. 14.

⁷³. Constantino Barneschi, 1928, in *Le Missioni dei Servi di Maria*, anno 1 n42, (Rome: San Marcello), February, 1928, p. 15.

⁷⁴. Constantino Barneschi, 1928, in *Le Missioni dei Servi di Maria*, anno 1 n42, (Rome: San Marcello), February, 1928, p. 15.

⁷⁵. H.M. Jones, *Report on the 1966 Swaziland population census*, (Mbabane: Swazi Government), 1968, p. 14-21.

Catholics had only forty four⁷⁶. On 10 April, 1928, Mons. Hinsley and Fr. Enghelbert Giersbach, OSB arrived in Mbabane from Natal, South Africa. At least two hundred and twenty five pupils and ten teachers from eight schools around Mbabane met the visitors the next day at Mater Dolorosa mission. In the evening of the same day the visitors met the governor of the place, Mr. Nicholson. Early in the morning the next day they left Mbabane for Bremersdorp and Siteki via Mzimpofu. St. Joseph's school prepared a big welcome celebration for Mons. Hinsley, on 12 April, 1928⁷⁷. St. Joseph's school had three hundred and sixty pupils. About a half met Mons. Hinsley on 12 April, 1928, due to the weather condition.

At the entrance of the mission a Vatican flag and the Union Jack stood magnificently, while the religious, teachers and students gathered around to meet the important visitors. When the car of the bishop which was carrying the prefect apostolic was spotted coming towards the mission, songs were sung and everybody was filled with awe. In the evening, teachers and pupils from the following Catholic schools arrived:- Holy Angels, Holy Spirit, Seven Holy Founders, Sacred Heart, St. Agnes, St. Juliana, St. Michael, St. Luis, St. Peregrine and St. Philomeña⁷⁸. Mons. Hinsley came to bring hope to the missionaries, teaching staff and the students about the future of education in the country which was being threatened by the lack of finances and teaching equipment.

In his talk, Mons. Hinsley assured the youth of the moral support of the pope. He

⁷⁶. Agostino Botta, 1928, in *Le Missioni dei Servi di Maria*, anno 1, n47, (Rome: San Marcello), July, 1928, p. 83.

⁷⁷. Agostino Botta, 1928, in *Le Missioni dei Servi di Maria*, anno 1, n47, (Rome: San Marcello), July, 1928, p. 85.

⁷⁸. Constantino Barneschi, 1928, in *Le Missioni dei Servi di Maria*, anno 1, n47, (Rome: San Marcello), July, 1928, p. 99.

told the youth that the pope firmly believed that the education of the youth would result in the conversion of the entire Swazi nation into Christianity⁷⁹ thus making them honest citizens⁸⁰. Pupils were encouraged to consider education as a priority, in spite of the difficulties which they might face.

The Magistrate who was representing the Government gave a talk in which he thanked the Catholic Church for all what it has been doing for the development of the country. A bunch of flowers was presented to Mons. Hinsley. The ceremony was closed gracefully with the singing of the British and Papal anthems on 13 April 1928. On Saturday, 14 April, the prefect apostolic accompanied Mons. Hinsley and Fr. Enghelbert Giersbach to Good Shepherd, Siteki.

Lord Steward who was assistant Commissioner to Swaziland arrived at Good Shepherd at 11:00am to meet Mons. Hinsley. During the Sundays' Eucharistic celebration, Holy Communion was distributed to the faithful, and a Papal blessing was given to everyone present. After the celebration of the Eucharist the visitors left for Mzimpofo where they were to leave for South Africa on the very same evening⁸¹.

Mons. Hinsley visited the schools in Swaziland when there was a great need for funds. His visit helped the Catholic Church in Swaziland to develop education which was on the verge of collapsing. In 1928 missionaries were contemplating the idea of increasing the number of schools from forty four to one hundred and forty. At least thirty

⁷⁹. Constantino Barneschi, 1928, in *Le Missioni dei Servi di Maria*, anno 1, n47, (Rome: San Marcello), July, 1928, p. 100.

⁸⁰. Constantino Barneschi, 1928, in *Le Missioni dei Servi di Maria*, anno 1, n47, (Rome: San Marcello), July, 1928, pp. 100-102.

⁸¹. Constantino Barneschi, 1928, in *Le Missioni dei Servi di Maria*, anno 1, n47, (Rome: San Marcello), July, 1928, p. 102.

thousand pounds sterling was needed for this project⁸².

D. THE BEGINNING OF CRISIS

(i) Nyakeni School

Nyakeni was one of the outstations established in 1917 during the absence of Fr. Peregrine Bellezze situated not far from Mzimofu who were under the tutelage of St. Joseph's mission, and the outstation was dedicated to the Seven Holy Founders. Having the name of the founders of the Order of the Servants of Mary it lured missionaries to guard it jealously. Fr. Constantino Barneschi who was working at St. Joseph's mission had a particular interest on that outstation; he was eager to develop it and its school. In the early 1925 he challenged the other missionaries to support the Seven Holy Founders school at Nyakeni which was threatened with extinction just like most of the Catholic schools in Swaziland. These schools had accumulated debts due to the economic difficulties faced by the Catholic Church in Swaziland⁸³.

Bishop Hinsley who had been sent by the Holy See to pay visit to all Catholic schools in British governed territories of southern Africa understood the situation⁸⁴. In Swaziland, Protestants had schools and were using their schools to propagate their religion. Due to the fact that other Christian Churches had schools for both Black and

⁸². Constantino Barneschi, 1928, in *Le Missioni dei Servi di Maria*, anno 1, n47, (Rome: San Marcello), July, 1928, p. 102.

⁸³. Constantine Barneschi, *letter to Fr. Alessio*, Mzimofu, 11 March, 1925.

⁸⁴. Peregrine Bellezze, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, 24 April, 1925.

White pupils in Swaziland, the Catholic missionaries in Swaziland felt the urge of opening schools for Blacks and Whites in Bremersdorp. They thought that by doing so they would get many young people into the Catholic Church. By August 1930 they had unanimously agreed to have a school in Bremersdorp. The Oakford Dominican Sisters were to be in-charge of the school⁸⁵ Mons. Peregrine Bellezze had had the idea of inviting the Dominican sisters in the 1920's. They thought that by having a school at Bremersdorp all the problems faced by Catholic education would be solved.

(ii) Madonna di Monte Berico, a project that failed

In the beginning of 1928 the Venetian Province of the Order of the Servants of Mary which was not directly involved in the mission in the prefecture apostolic of Swaziland expressed its desire to work in that mission. The decision of opening a mission was taken by the friars of the Venetian Province of the Order of the Servants of Mary. These friars were preparing themselves to celebrate the centenary of the historic apparition of Madonna di Monte Berico (Our Lady of Monte Berico) in Vicenza, northern Italy. The centenary celebration was scheduled to take place at the Basilica *Minori* (Minor) of Monte Berico in Vicenza.

The friars throughout the world thought that it would be wise to open a mission in Swaziland to commemorate the apparition of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and that mission should be dedicated to Madonna di Monte Berico. The opening was to coincide with the anniversary celebration which was to be held in Italy.

The friars who were already working in Swaziland were thrilled with the news that the Venetian Province wanted to finance the opening of a mission in Swaziland. For they

⁸⁵. Peregrine Bellezze, *letter to missionaries*, 8 August, 1930.

were concerned with the geographical expansion of the Catholic Church which was seen as a tool to counter the Protestant expansion in the country.

Two friars belonging to the Venetian Province: Fr. Filippo Rizzi and Bro. Elia or Raimondo Dal Magro were in England in 1928 to learn English language so that they could go to Swaziland, and help in the opening of the mission; it was going to be the first mission belonging to the Venetian Province in Africa. Fr. Giacinto Striolo and a lay brother belonging to the Venetian Province, who were already working in Swaziland; were to be asked to join the two Venetian friars, who were due to arrive in Swaziland after having completed their course of English in England⁸⁶. A piece of land was found and its cost was more than four hundred pounds sterling, and the Venetian Province was asked to pay that amount. Building was scheduled to begin in 1928.

The opening of Monte Berico mission was further delayed for two years due to the lack of funds. It is evident that the prefecture apostolic did not get the money he was expecting from the Venetian Province. Mons. Peregrine Bellezze wrote a letter in November 1930 to the Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of Faith, Guglielmo Cardinal Van Rossum asking for financial help so that the mission of Madonna di Monte Berico could be opened. On 18 December, 1930 the Prefect of the Congregation wrote back to him telling him that the Prior General of the Order of the Servants of Mary had already sent two hundred pound sterling, half of the amount needed to buy the piece of land⁸⁷. It is unfortunate that at the meeting of the Councillors held in May 1931 it was

⁸⁶. Agustine Moore, *letter to Peregrine Bellezze, Rome, 1 November, 1928.*

⁸⁷. Guglielmo Cardinal Van Rossum, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of Faith, Rome, 18 December, 1930, Prot. n4480/30.

decided that Monte Berico be closed⁸⁸.

(iii) The Controversy of the Office of the Procurator

Among the issues that Mons. Peregrine Bellezze discussed with the general of the Order of the Servants of Mary, Fr. Augustine Moore saw the importance of appointing a procurator of the prefecture apostolic of Swaziland. The procurator was to be in-charge of buying goods for all the missions. A certain amount of cash was to be kept by him. Since Mons. Peregrine Bellezze has been the one in-charge of buying, the general of the Order of the Servants of Mary suggested that he asks his main rival, Fr. Romauldo Migliorini to be procurator. In the opinion of the general, Fr. Romauldo Migliorini was suitable for that job. In mid 1931 Mons. Peregrine Bellezze formally asked Fr. Romauldo Migliorini to be procurator of the prefecture. On 3 June of the same year, Fr. Romauldo Migliorini wrote a letter in Italian explaining his opinion about the office of the procurator. Mons. Peregrine did not reply that letter, instead he waited for the meeting of all missionaries to take place. Since some of the missionaries participating in that meeting did not know the Italian language, he presented a copy of that letter he had personally translated from Italian into English. That letter became a source of conflict since 8 July 1931 Fr. Romauldo Migliorini wrote a letter to Mons. Peregrine Bellezze accusing him for not having translated it properly. In the opinion of Fr. Romauldo Migliorini, there were errors made in the translation of that letter. As a result of those errors the message contained in the letter has been altered⁸⁹.

In order to resolve the impasse, Mons. Peregrine Bellezze made copies of the

⁸⁸. Peregrine Bellezze, *le Memorie*, [1934].

⁸⁹. Romauldo Migliorini, *lettera a Peregrine Bellezze*, Bremarsdorp, 3 June, 1931.

original Italian version written by Fr. Romauldo Migliorini and the English version which had been translated from Italian to all missionaries asking them to establish whether any alterations had been made⁹⁰. Six of the seven missionaries who responded confirmed that there were no alterations⁹¹. Only Fr. Constantino Barneschi questioned the alterations which had been made⁹². After examining both versions of Fr. Migliorini's letter which are kept in the Archives of the Tuscan Province in Italy we concluded that no alterations were made.

(iv) Migliorini becomes Local Religious Superior

The apostolic delegate suggested that they elect a local religious superior who would attend to the problems of the missionaries. Though the missionaries were not in favour of electing a local religious superior they agreed that they would elect a local religious superior since they were concerned about the way things were done in Swaziland.

Immediately after having been appointed local religious superior of the missionaries in 1931, Fr. Romauldo Migliorini established his office at Bremersdorp. He took with him Bro. Paolo Bruciafreddo of the Piedmont Province without permission from the prefect apostolic. In order to stop further deterioration of the situation, courteously apologised for his forthright insistence that the local religious superior had

⁹⁰. Peregrine Bellezze, *letters to the missionaries*, Mzimpofo, July, 1931.

⁹¹. (i) Filippo Rizzi, *letter to Peregrine Bellezze*, Mbabane, 4 July, 1931.
(ii) Arimath Gralt, *letter to Peregrine Bellezze*, Mbabane, 31 July, 1931.
(iii) Michael Ramsay, *letter to Peregrine Bellezze*, Lobamba, 27 July, 1931.
(iv) Anselmo Marsigli, *letter to Peregrine Bellezze*, St. Philip's, 2 August, 1931.
(v) Bonaventure Kathrien, *letter to Peregrine Bellezze*, Siteki, 6 August, 1931.
(vi) Agostino Fagiolo, *letter to Peregrine Bellezze*, Luve, 16 September, 1931.

⁹². Constantine Barneschi, *letter to Peregrine Bellezze*, Mzimpofo, 31 August, 1931.

upset the vicar. His indignation surfaced, as he wrote in his memoir that he had paid *pro bono pacis* (because of the interest for peace) the expenses of the people who were working for the local religious superior. The General of the Order of the Servants of Mary had sent two hundred pounds sterling to Fr. Romauldo Migliorini. That amount was to be used for paying the expenses incurred by the friars including those of Bro. Paolo Bruciafreddo who was working at the Catholic mission at Bremersdorp. It is alleged that Fr. Romauldo Migliorini did not use that amount of money for the purpose it was intended for by the general of the Order of the Servants of Mary.⁹³

The Dominican sisters living at Bremersdorp had houses which they rented especially to friars who could not have accommodation in the priory due to the lack of rooms. Occasionally, meals would be provided by the sisters and the friars were expected to settle the account with the sisters whenever funds were available.

In October 1932 the prioress of the Dominican sisters, Sr. Gabriela in Bremersdorp presented the outstanding bill of the lay brothers who were living in Bremersdorp to the prefect apostolic who suggested that it be given to the local religious superior of the missionaries. The issue of the bill worsened the frail relationship between the prefect apostolic and the local religious superior. Since the local religious superior was not in a position to pay the outstanding bill, he asked the prioress of the Dominican sisters to write a letter to the apostolic delegate.

The prioress did not write it for she feared that the prefect apostolic may be in trouble with the apostolic delegate if such a letter was to be written. After receiving a letter from the prefect apostolic asking him to pay the sisters Fr. Romauldo Migliorini

⁹³. Peregrine Bellezze, *le Memorie*, [1934].

wrote him back telling him explicitly that he would not pay⁹⁴.

It is, however, important to note that in his letter dated 31 May 1932 Fr. Romauldo Migliorini had told Mons. Peregrine Bellezze that he did not have sufficient funds to pay all the expenses to be incurred in the improving of the church building at Bremersdorp. Fr. Migliorini was aware of the fact that Bros. Paolo Bruciafreddo and Martin Schultz needed to pay their bills. Fr. Romauldo Migliorini mentioned that the roof of the church at Bremerdorp needed urgent attention otherwise the rain would weaken the whole church building. Finally in his letter he suggested that Mons. Peregrine Bellezze should solicit offerings for that project.

Reflecting on the nature of the problem, we find that lack of communication, was one of the major problems encountered by the missionaries, hence it was the major cause of rift between the two missionaries: one wanted his project to be taken as a priority; the other thought that there were other projects in the prefecture that needed more attention. In fact, Mons. Peregrine Bellezze wanted to use the money for improving the house of the priests and the school at St. Peregrine mission.

(v) Projects under Bellezze 1931

A meeting of councillors presided by Mons. Peregrine Bellezze was held at St. Joseph's mission on 19 May, 1931. The main item on the agenda was the closing of Monte Berico mission which was situated few miles from St. Philip's mission. A month later another meeting was held at St. Joseph's mission to discuss the possibility of building

⁹⁴. Romauldo Migliorini, letter to Peregrine Bellezze, Bremarsdorp, 20 November, 1932. «Sara' inutile che ella insista perche' non risponderai piu a tal propositito» (It will be useless for you to insist that I should pay because I am not going to give you a reply anymore on that issue).

a double storied house for missionaries at St. Joseph's mission. According to the plan, the bottom floor was to have the refectory, parlour, priests' rooms. The room of the Prefect Apostolic was to be on the first floor.

The total cost of the building material, excluding bricks and staircase, was estimated to be five hundred and sixty five pounds sterling. Due to the scarcity of building material that massive project was to take a period of at least two years. Some labour was to be sought, and the total cost was to be over one thousand pounds starlings.

Frs. Filippo Rizzi, Bonaventure Kathrein and Arimath Galt were all against the project proposed by Bellezze. According to them the project was going to drain all the resources of the prefecture⁹⁵.

E. SCHISM IN THE PREFECTURE

Fr. Constantino Barneschi and Mons. Peregrine Bellezze lived together at St. Joseph's mission for at least ten years. Their characters were not compatible. Seemingly neither appreciated the personality of the other. In his letter dated 11 November, 1931 Fr. Constantino Barneschi wrote: "Le parole e le azioni di quest'uomo rivelano un'autorita piuttosto che un uomo..."⁹⁶(The words and action of this man reveal an authority rather than a man...). The above shows that Fr. Constantino Barneschi considered Mons.

⁹⁵. Councillors, *Minutes of the meeting of Councillors*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo, 29 June, 1931.

⁹⁶. Constantino Barneschi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Mzimpofo, 11 November, 1931.

Peregrine Bellezze to be a tyrant superior.

According to Fr. Constantino Barneschi, his election to the office of Prefect Apostolic was the root of all his behaviour. In fact, he wrote: "La superbia lo ha gonfiato talmente che no si degna nemmeno di parlarci come a confratelli a cooperatori suoi"⁹⁷ (Pride has inflated him such that he does not even speak to us as his brothers and his co-workers). The monsignor was also accused of causing fear amongst Swazis. Even some Europeans feared him. One day an Anglican Englishman approached Fr. Constantino Barneschi and asked him how he could become a Catholic, Fr. Constantino Barneschi advised him to contact Mons. Peregrine Bellezze. The Englishman told him that he was afraid of the monsignor since everybody feared him. At this point it would be futile to make an absolute judgement from what was said by Fr. Constantino Barneschi without getting a complete picture of the controversy from different perspectives. A critical judgement could be made after both sides of the story have been heard.

(i) Weakness of the Prefect Apostolic

Though it is difficult to get the other side of the story, since very little has been written by Mons. Peregrine Bellezze about other missionaries in our endeavour to reconstruct the story of the controversy of the monsignor, we will try to assemble different pieces of information from different sources. We ought to mention the fact that there is a danger of being viewed as being too apologetic by the reader. The controversy can be summed up into seven points: **a. Pastoral work:** Mons. Peregrine Bellezze is

⁹⁷. Constantino Barneschi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Mzimpofo, 11 November, 1931.

accused for not having taken care of the spiritual needs of the people of God. In his entire pastoral activity in Swaziland he baptised fewer people than those who came to Swaziland a couple of years after him. **b. Political life:** The success of Mons. Peregrine Bellezze and his appointment to the office of Prefect Apostolic are due to the fact that he had a knack of mingling with people of higher authority both: ecclesiastic and civil. It was very easy for him to manipulate them thus winning favours. **c. Possessiveness:** The monsignor was so possessive that he would consider all what was in the premises at St. Joseph's mission to be his. He would utter phrases like "my car", "my land", "my school", "my cattle", unconsciously. **d. Cynical:** It is alleged that the monsignor believed that he was the best and nobody could do what he did: At times he would send a memorandum to the missionaries with precise instructions on how things were to be done. Thinking that they were treated as if they were little children, some missionaries would seethe with rage. At a certain point he refused to have a secretary since he believed that nobody could do the job better than him.

e. Dictator: Mons. Peregrine Bellezze is said to have forced missionaries to do what they did not even want to do. He forced Fr. Romauldo Migliorini to do manual work and study Zulu at the same time⁹⁸. **f. Favouritism:** It is alleged that the only missionaries Mons. Peregrine Bellezze liked were the Austrians⁹⁹. **g. Very austere:** Fr. Remigio Mucciarini was given five pound sterling to spend a month. He was expected to pay the salary of five

⁹⁸. Romauldo Migliorini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Luve, 20 October, 1931.

⁹⁹. Romauldo Migliorini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Bremarsdorp, 20 October, 1931.

teaches, a catechist and twelve workers, including house expenses¹⁰⁰.

(ii) The Relations between Missionaries

In the early days of the church when there were two missionaries in Swaziland everything seemed to be going very well. The great distances between them made them to concentrate on their work rather than on their relationships. The language problem helped them to find something to be worried about. In the 1920's as the number of missionaries increased they began to change. The appointment of the prefect apostolic virtually brought to an end the original spirit of brotherhood amongst missionaries. They started pointing fingers at others accusing them for their financial hardships of the prefecture. Another important fact to note is that there was a division of the missionaries into two groups, that is, "German group" and "Italian group". In order to discredit one another the groups used different tactics: the German group would openly support the prefect apostolic, and in return they would get favours from him. On the other hand the Italian group would vent its frustration through writing letters to their authorities in Italy blackmailing the prefect apostolic. The German speaking friars were of the Austrian origin who belonged to the Tyrolese Province while the Italian group had most of its friars from the Tuscan Province. Though Mons. Peregrine Bellezze was an Italian it is believed that he was very sympathetic to the German speaking group.

The existence of those groups worsened relationships between the missionaries. The situation was so bad that Mons. Peregrine Bellezze and Fr. Constantino Barneschi

¹⁰⁰. Romauldo Migliorini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Bremarsdorp, 20 October, 1931.

his confrere were not talking to each other¹⁰¹. Overwhelmed by a sense of his own helplessness, Fr. Remigio Mucciarini wrote a letter to the newly elected Prior Provincial of the Tuscan Province informing him about the situation in 1931. We will see further on in our discussion that after the departure of Bellezze from Swaziland the German group began contemplating the idea of leaving Swaziland and go and settle in South Africa. In that letter he told the provincial that if the situation did not improve he and Fr. Constantino Barneschi would ask to be allowed to abandon the mission and go back to Italy¹⁰². Prior to that event, Fr. Romauldo Migliorini had written a letter telling the provincial that if Mons. Peregrine Bellezze was not replaced the Italian missionaries working in Swaziland would retire to Italy rather than enduring the traumas of working under continuous pressure. A petition with similar complaints was signed by most of the missionaries and handed to the apostolic delegate¹⁰³.

The Italian group was so organised that it asked Fr. Remigio Mucciarini to write a letter expressing on behalf of the missionaries their frustration about their work in Swaziland to the Prior Provincial of their Province. Later on, Fr. Romauldo Migliorini emerged as a leader of the Italian group, and he applied his skills to get all the Italian missionaries to rebel overtly against Mons. Peregrine Bellezze. We ought to mention that the efforts of Fr. Romauldo Migliorini did not come from his ambition for power but from his interest for peace and development. Fr. Constantino Barneschi wrote a letter in

¹⁰¹. Remigio Mucciarini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, 15 September, 1931.

¹⁰². Remigio Mucciarini, *letter to the Prior Provincial of the Tuscan Province*, 15 September, 1931.

¹⁰³. Romauldo Migliorini, *letter to the Prior Provincial of the Tuscan Province*, Bremarsdorp, 20 October, 1931.

November shortly after Frs. Remigio Mucciarini and Romauldo Migliorini had written their letters on behalf of the group in September¹⁰⁴ and in October¹⁰⁵, respectively.

Another point to note is that hitherto letters addressed to Fr. Remigio Mucciarini have been using the postal address of St. Joseph's mission. But during the time of crisis, Fr. Remigio Mucciarini changed his postal address and started using the one of Fr. Romauldo Migliorini who was living at Bremersdorp. This meant that he had to travel a very long distance from Florence mission to get his letters. Apparently, he opted to travel long distances so that he could avoid meeting Mons. Peregrine Bellezze who was living at St. Joseph's mission.

The symptoms of the existence of anarchy were evident: they were even increasingly becoming conspicuous. In November, 1932 a "support group" whose main aim was to offer support to the missionaries without seeking support from the prefect apostolic was formed. They even started calling the prefect apostolic: "*La belva*" (wild animal) which is a derogatory expression in Italian language¹⁰⁶.

Poverty was one of the main causes of the conflict between the prefect apostolic and the missionaries. This is because the missionaries were complaining a lot about insufficient funding from the prefect apostolic. It seems as if the budget was unreasonably austere. Even at St. Joseph's mission where Fr. Constantino Barneschi needed sufficient money to maintain himself, Fr. Agostino Botta and the prefect apostolic there were

¹⁰⁴. Remigio Mucciarini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, 15 September, 1931.

¹⁰⁵. Fr. quale Migliorini, *letter to the Prior Provincial of the Tuscan Province*, Bremarsdorp, 20 October, 1931.

¹⁰⁶. Giacinto Strilio, *lettera a Fr. Constantino Barneschi*, Mbabane, 9 November 1931.

complaining about the lack of resources. Fr. Constantino Barneschi needed sufficient money to run the priests' house, in addition to that he had to pay for the other two lay brothers, and buy food for five teachers and eighty students. As a result of insufficient funding from the prefect apostolic, in few months, Fr. Constantino Barneschi had accumulated a debt of more than one hundred pound sterling¹⁰⁷. The worsening of the relations between the monsignor and the missionaries coincided with the growing dissatisfaction amongst the Catholic teaching staff and catechists who were increasingly becoming reluctant to perform their duties since their salaries were not paid¹⁰⁸. Some people feared that a general strike by the Catholic staff was looming.

Mons. Peregrine Bellezze expected the missionaries to work on the farms and produce as much as they could so that they could use the income to support all the staff of the mission which included lay brothers, religious sisters and other domestic workers. At the beginning of the year he would give them a meagre subsidy: while working on farms, and he would not expect them to approach him if they had exhausted all the money and they had to go through interrogations before they could be given money. The eight farms were at St. Joseph's, Maloma, Good shepherd, St. Peregrine's, St. Mary's and Florence mission. In those days, farms were not a reliable source of income given the fact that irrigation was not practised and the farmers had to rely on seasonal rainfall. Six of the eight farms belonging to the missionaries could not be irrigated. Even commercial farmers in Swaziland were faced with the very same difficulty.

At a meeting of missionaries held at Bremersdorp on 19 February 1932, Fr.

¹⁰⁷. Constantino Barneschi, *lettera a Fr. Alessio*, Mzimpofo, 11 November, 1931.

¹⁰⁸. Remigio Mucciarini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Florence mission, 22 November, 1931.

Michael Ramsay told them of a well known farmer around Bremersdorp who in his one hundred acres farm did not get a profit the previous year. Fr. Marsigli Anselmo told them that some of the farmers around St. Philip's mission had abandoned their farms due to poor harvest. In that meeting it was further observed that St. Peregrine's mission was receiving a meagre subsidy of four and a half pounds sterling instead of five pounds sterling a month from the prefect apostolic. The same amount was received by Florence mission whose staff included four sisters¹⁰⁹. Dissension arose immediately over the issue of working on farms. Fr. Romauldo Migliorini, having seen the ineffectiveness of the system, wanted it to be changed.

F. THE CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE SITUATION

After looking closely at the situation we conclude that the main cause of the conflict between Mons. Peregrine Bellezze and the Italian missionaries was the lack of communication and proper planning that resulted in the scarcity of resources to run the mission properly. Mons. Peregrine Bellezze thought that by buying huge pieces of land and open farms he would solve all the problems in the prefecture. On the contrary the farms generated a lot of conflicts between him and the missionaries. He was not giving them enough money and he expected them to earn a living by working on the farms. A lot of money was spent between 1923 and 1929 buying farms. Consequently, none was left to buy modern farming equipment and for the construction of dams, as a result the land earmarked for development became useless.

¹⁰⁹. Minutes of the meeting held at Bremarsdorp on 19 February, 1932. The following missionaries were present in that meeting: Fr. Constantino Barneschi, Fr. Agotino Botta, Fr. Michael Ramsay, Fr. Giacinto Striolo and Fr. Romauldo Migliorini.

In South Africa, there were farms belonging to the Catholic missionaries. These farms helped a lot in the generation of income. Indeed, they made a significant contribution to the development of places such as Mariannhill Monastery and Inkamana Abbey in the Kwa Zulu-Natal province. This was due to the fact that a considerable amount of money had been used to improve irrigation on the farms. Modern farming equipment had been purchased to be used on the farms. Lay brothers who loved farming and who were specialists in farming were responsible for the farms in some of the missions in province. The other problem of the farms in the Prefecture Apostolic of Swaziland was the lack of proper farming skills amongst the lay brothers. If the prefect apostolic had bought few farms and had used the other money to develop those few farms, a lot of income would have been generated.

There were eight farms in the prefecture in 1932 and at least four hundred pound sterling was paid for the cheapest farm. To have an idea how money was wasted we could look at the farm at St. Peregrine which was situated in the remotest area; there were neither access roads to it nor commercial centres next to it. The total amount of money paid for such a farm was one thousand pound sterling. The other thing that was the cause of the conflict between the prefect apostolic and the missionaries was the whole question of administration of the mission.

According to Mons. Peregrine Bellezze, religious sisters living in the missions were supposed to be under the authority of the priest living in that mission. This meant that the priest in-charge had to provide for all their spiritual, psychological and material needs, as well. In practice it was difficult for the priest in-charge to carry all his obligations due to the lack of money. The complete dependence of the sisters on priests

made life very difficult for both priests and sisters. As a result this practice led to priests acquiring patronising mentality. We ought to mention the fact that at the end of the day priests did not have enough time to dedicate their time to pastoral work since they had to bear the burdens of the sisters. Apparently, Mons. Peregrine Bellezze did not listen to the constant demand for change by the priests to have a separate administration for the sisters.

It is likely probably that separate administration would have helped in solving some of the problems the prefecture apostolic was experiencing. If the structure of the separate administration were in place, the prioress of the sisters would have been empowered to start thinking about income generating projects that would have helped in the uplifting the standard of living of the sisters. It would have given impetus to further development within the sisters' congregation itself. Furthermore the sisters would have even had the opportunity to solicit funds from overseas.

The lack of money had an impact on education. Most of the Catholic schools were forced to close down. Some of the students who lost their education due to the closure of the Catholic schools lost their Catholic faith too. This was indeed a set back in the area of Catholic evangelization. The situation was so desperate that nobody wanted to take responsibility and admit that he or she made a mistake. All those problems led to the resignation of the prefect apostolic which will be dealt with in the next chapter.

Chapter Three

THE REALITY OF THE CHURCH IN SWAZILAND

A. THE DARK AGES OF THE CHURCH IN SWAZILAND 1928 - 1935

(i) Events leading to the crisis

a. Schools: As with any other Catholic mission, St. Joseph's mission had many schools in the country, but due to the financial difficulties some schools had to be closed down. In 1928 St. Joseph's mission had fifteen schools but in 1930 the number of schools remaining was seven. Each mission was responsible for the maintenance of all the schools it possessed.

It is interesting to note that St. Joseph's mission did pay the fees of pupils who had been sent there by St. Theresa's mission. The total number of children from other missions who were at the boarding school at St. Joseph's mission was nineteen: eight from St. Theresa's; one from Good Shepherd, two from Florence mission and eight from Mater Dolorosa mission, and the total number of students at the St. Joseph's boarding school was not less than fifty.

b. Finances: Since the arrival of the first missionaries in Swaziland, the missionaries had been depending on overseas funding. In 1928, six missions used up a total of four hundred and twenty four pounds sterling. St. Joseph's mission's expenditure account exceeded that of the other missions in the prefecture.

The total amount of money spent in the prefecture over a period of four years was one thousand and eight hundred and eight pound sterling, two shillings and three pence. At times the total expenses of Florence and St. Peregrine's missions appear to be very low. This is because St. Joseph's mission used to support those missions financially. Some of the teachers and other people were given food by the mission.

The missionaries received a total sum of one thousand and nine hundred and nine pound sterling, three shillings and five pence in Mass stipends. This figure exceeded the total expenses of food by one hundred and one pounds sterling, one shilling and two pence. Mass stipends were obviously a major source of income in the prefecture¹¹⁰.

The financial statement of the Prefecture Apostolic of Swaziland was different from the financial statements of the missions in the very same prefecture. This is due to the fact that a large sum of money was spent by the prefecture in the less developed missions so as to upgrade them. In fact, in the financial report of the mission the writer observed that the so-called developed missions, for example St. Joseph's and Mater Dolorosa were spending more than the less developed missions owing to the fact that the number of missionaries in the "developed missions" was not less than the number of missionaries in the less developed missions.

St. Joseph's mission, which represented the "developed missions", spent one hundred and ninety pound sterling, eight shillings and nine pence. Florence mission, a less developed mission, spent two hundred and twenty nine pound sterling, nineteen shillings and four pence according to the 1931 - 1932 financial statement of the prefecture¹¹¹. But

¹¹⁰. Financial report of the missions 1928-1931.

¹¹¹. Budget prepared by Romauldo Migliorini 1932.

on looking at the financial report of the mission of 1931 one finds that St. Joseph's spent one hundred and two pound sterling, sixteen shillings and one pence; while Florence mission spent only seventeen pound sterling eighteen shillings and four pence. It is interesting to note that the July subsidy by St. Joseph's mission exceeded that of Florence mission almost by a wider margin than as reflected by the figures. The expenses of Florence mission remained high.

According to the statistics, St. Theresa's and Florence missions had budgeted more money than when in the 1931 - 1932 financial year towards the improvement of the mission property. This could be due to the fact that Fr. Romauldo Migliorini, who had become the local religious superior, was very sympathetic to Florence mission which had always been hit by lack of sufficient funding.

The other expenses were borne by the central administration of the prefecture. The total expenditure of the Prefecture Apostolic of Swaziland as from the beginning of July, 1931 to 19th February, 1932 was one thousand eight hundred and twenty eight pound sterling, two shillings and six pence and the total income was one thousand six hundred and eighty four pound sterling, nineteen shillings and five pence¹¹². This means that the prefecture closed its financial year with a deficit of one hundred and four three pound sterling, three shillings and one pence.

(ii) Measures taken to avert the danger

a. **Fund-raising for missions:** Under the auspices of the provincial of the Tuscan province, Fr. Paolo Giannelli, a group of lay people belonging to the Third Order of the

¹¹². Romauldo Migliorini, *Financial statement of the Prefecture Apostolic of Swaziland as at from 1 July, 1931 to 19 February, 1932*, Bremersdorp.

Servants of Mary was commissioned to raise funds to support the missions in Swaziland in 1932¹¹³. By 1932, the Ufficio Propaganda Films Africane, which was under the Secretariat of the Missions of the Order, was already operating in Turin, Italy.

As part of the fund-raising campaign, a circular letter was sent to Italian politicians inviting them to be present at the showing of the film on the missions of the Order of the Servants of Mary in Swaziland. The film entitled 'Civiltà Cristiana nel Continente Nero' (Christian Civilization in the Black Continent) had been shot in Swaziland, and its production was directed by the Ufficio Propaganda Films Africane. A similar letter was sent to school principals empowering them to send pupils to see the films. The main aim behind the showing of the film was to disclose to the Italians the work done by the Italian missionaries in Swaziland.

The film was also intended to help Italians to learn about the culture of the Swazi people. Though everybody thought that the initiative of the Secretariat of the Missions of the Order would yield positive results, unfortunately by July 1933 the film industry had been plunged into debts¹¹⁴.

In 1932 the provincial of the Tuscan province allowed the missionaries of the Tuscan province who were working in Canada, to help the missionaries who were in Swaziland with Mass intentions. A list with names of the deceased Christians was sent together with an offering to Swaziland. The priests who were in Swaziland were obligated to celebrate Masses for the deceased. Since then the practice of Mass intentions had

¹¹³. Paolo Giannelli, *lettera al priore della comunità*, Firenze, 9 January, 1933.

¹¹⁴. Vite, *lettera a Fr. Vangelisti*, Ufficio Propaganda Films Africane, Torino, 19 July, 1933.

become one of the important source of income¹¹⁵.

b. Development: After the economic hardships experienced in the entire country at the close of the 1920's owing to bad weather, the Catholic Church under the leadership of Mons. Peregrine Bellezze became increasingly interested in farming. Prior to the arrival of missionaries, farm land was poorly managed in Swaziland. The British government had done very little to educate the local population in the best ways of managing land. As a result of growing the same crops on a small piece of land for a long period of time, the land began to lose its fertility gradually. As a result, a large area of the country became impoverished. Ignorance was the main cause of the dramatic fall in the percentages of food production.

The other serious threat to the effective use of land was the growing population; it was becoming virtually impossible for a farmer to abandon his unproductive piece of land and acquire a fertile piece of land. The main crops which were cultivated were beans, maize and sorghum. In an endeavour to help local farmers produce more food, Catholic missionaries began teaching the local farmers modern ploughing techniques. Farmers were encouraged to choose the flat top of a ridge or a gentle slope if they wanted to plough. The choosing of a site was seen as an important element in reducing soil erosion, which was and is a problem in the rural farming community of Swaziland. The missionaries demonstrated to the local farmers how top soil is washed away by rain if ploughing is not done properly. Using simple methods the farmers were taught how to determine the fertility of the soil and its retentiveness of moisture.

¹¹⁵. Romauldo Migliorini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Theresa's, Bremarsdorp, 6 July, 1932.

In Swaziland there were a handful of White farmers who used to buy kraal manure from the Swazi farmers for a few shillings. The missionaries warned the Swazi farmers about the danger of selling all their kraal manure to the White farmers, who would use it on their farms to improve the fertility of the soil. Those who did not have kraal manure were encouraged to grow cowpeas (local beans) since cowpeas also make the soil fertile. Cowpeas were suggested as a good cover crop which could reduce the damage caused by weeds. Since missionaries had farms it was easy for them to give practical lessons to the Swazi farmers.

In order to assist the stock-farmers to produce more beef and milk, they were taught how to improve the local breed, 'nguni', cattle. Stock-farmers had to be convinced that there was a need of crossbreeding nguni cattle with other breeds if good results were to be obtained.

The simple and cheap method of improving beef and milk production which became popular amongst the Swazi stock-farmers was to give cattle plenty of grass and water and to avoid making cattle walk long distances. Those who heeded these instructions benefited considerably.

The farm belonging to St. Joseph's mission was providing the mission with a lot of food since sound farming methods were followed very scrupulously by the missionaries, who wanted to give a solid example to the Swazi farmers: positive results were obtained by the Swazi farmers who emulated them.

c. School of the Dominican Sisters: In Swaziland, Protestants had schools, and were using them to propagate their religion. The Catholic missionaries who were in Swaziland felt the urge to open schools for Whites and Blacks at Bremersdorp. They

thought that by doing so they could draw many young people into the Catholic Church. By August 1930 they had unanimously agreed to have a school at Bremersdorp. The Oakford Dominican Sisters were to be in charge of the School⁶.

d. Farms: As the population of the country was growing, the missionaries became increasingly interested in opening more missions in the country, but this could only occur after land had been bought. Most of those who were selling land preferred to sell larger pieces of land than the missions wanted. The only option the missionaries had was to buy a big piece of land if they wanted to establish a mission. Consequently, the practice of acquiring more than four hundred hectares of land eventually became common amongst missionaries. Circumstances led them to believe that if they had enough land they would grow crops and graze herds of cattle. Owning land was seen as the only way to generate income. Fr. Kathrein Bonaventure harvested about four hundred bags of maize in 1933.

When the General of the Order of the Servants of Mary was in Swaziland, Fr. Romauldo Migliorini outlined the financial crisis in the prefecture. His conclusion was that so many farms had contributed significantly to the ailing economy of the prefecture. In fact, the situation has been so bad that Fr. Constantino Barneschi risked imprisonment because of an unpaid debt of one hundred pound sterling. Other missions such as St. Philip's had huge debts as well.

e. Visit by the prior General of the Order: The general of the Order of the Servants of Mary, Fr. Augustine Moore, arrived in Lourenço Marques in the beginning of 1931. Since Mons. Peregrine Bellezze was conducting a special course for teachers

¹¹⁶. Peregrine Bellezze, *letter to the Missionaries*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofu, 8 August, 1930.

which had been sponsored by the British government, he could not go to Lourenço Marques to welcome the general; he sent Fr. Michael Ramsay to fetch him in his car.

After their brief conversation, Mons. Peregrine Bellezze understood that the purpose of the visit of the general was to solve administrative problems in the prefecture and also to bring reconciliation amongst all the missionaries working in the prefecture. Fr. Remigio Mucciarini, one of the missionaries who were always in conflict with Mons. Peregrine Bellezze, was once heard saying to an Italian sister: « verrE pure il Padre Generale per mettere a posto monsignore» (the General will come to fix the monsignore)¹¹⁷.

After having met Frs. Remigio Mucciarini and Agostino Botta in their mission, Fr. Augustine Moore went to St. Joseph's mission to speak to the Prefect Apostolic. He told the Prefect Apostolic that all the priests, brothers and sisters were afraid of the Prefect Apostolic and they did not want him. Seemingly, the General might have been told this by Frs. Remigio Mucciarini and Agostino Botta.

The comment made by Fr. Remigio Mucciarini plunged the Prefect Apostolic into a pensive mood. We have to bear in mind that Frs. Remigio Mucciarini and Agostino Botta were great friends. Neither had a good relationship with Mons. Peregrine Bellezze.

Following the allegations that Mons. Peregrine Bellezze was ill-treating the missionaries, on 17 April 1931 Mons. Peregrine Bellezze wrote a letter to the General complaining about the virtual lack of cooperation he received from the missionaries especially after his appointment to the position of Prefect Apostolic.

¹¹⁷. Peregrine Bellezze, 1931, *Nota di archivio segreto sulla visita del Revmo. P. generale in relazione alla lettera del P. generale del 29 aprile 1931*, Archivi OSM, Marianum, Rome.

Fr. Augustine Moore did not reply to that letter; but in a letter he wrote some time later he mentioned some of the complaints of the other missionaries. In that letter Fr. Augustine Moore thanked the missionaries for their zeal for missionary work and their perseverance under the leadership of Mons. Peregrine Bellezze.

Strangely enough Fr. Augustine Moore never mentioned the fact that some missionaries felt that their power had been limited by the Prefect Apostolic¹¹⁸.

In almost every mission there were priests and lay brothers. Since most of the brothers were uneducated or had very little education, it was decided in 1926 that after lunch, lay brothers be allowed to rest. A half an hour break would enable them to have time for spiritual reading. In the morning and in the evening they meditated.

On a number of occasions Mons. Peregrine Belleze preached spiritual retreats to lay brothers. At least once a week priests had to give catechetical instruction to the lay brothers. This instruction began shortly before the canonical visitation by the General of the Order of the Servants of Mary, Fr. Augustine Moore in Swaziland. Unfortunately, soon after his visit those lessons were discontinued by the priests.

The only person that continued to teach after the departure of Augustine Moore was Mons. Peregrine Bellezze. He even taught the sisters of the congregation of the Servite Sisters of Pistoia the English and Zulu languages against their will. The then prioress of the Servite Sisters of Pistoia in Swaziland did not want her sisters to learn English and Zulu.

Mons. Peregrine Bellezze ordered these sisters to learn English and Zulu after

¹¹⁸. Peregrine Bellezze, 1931, *Nota di archivio segreto sulla visita del Revmo. P. generale in relazione alla lettera del P. generale del 29 aprile 1931*. Archivi OSM, Marianum, Rome.

having discussed the matter with the General of the Servite Sisters of Pistoia, who was living in Italy. He also persuaded them to attend standards V and VI classes at the local school, St. Joseph's school.

It is alleged that some priests tried to influence the sisters not to take lessons at St. Joseph's school. Then the Dominican Sisters who were at Bremersdorp offered to give standards V and VI lessons to the Servite Sisters of Pistoia. That offer was accepted, and about five Servite Sisters of Pistoia passed their standard V exams and in 1932 four of them were already preparing themselves to study for a teaching certificate.

Since Mons. Peregrine Bellezze was concerned about the social wellbeing of the lay brothers, he encouraged them to learn the local language. Unfortunately, he met great opposition from the lay brothers¹¹⁹.

(iii) Fr. Romauldo Migliorini, a leader

Soon after he has been made local religious superior, Fr. Romauldo Migliorini studied the possibility of sending friars to Heidelberg. Apparently, the election of the local religious superior, who had a great love for the Order, brought hope that there would be a subtle distinction between the administration of the Order and of the Prefecture Apostolic. The main task of the local religious superior was to attend to the needs of all the friars, promote the observance of the Constitution of the Order of the Servants of Mary and work towards the geographical expansion of the Order. After the local candidate had spent a year as a postulant, Mons. Peregrine Bellezze thought that it would

¹¹⁹. letter to the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide from the General of the Order of the Servants of Mary, Fr. Augustine Moore dated; 12 April, 1932. In Archives of the Order of the Servants of Mary, Marianum, Rome. The letter was sent to the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide after the visit of the General in 1931. The title of the letter is «Risposta ad alcuni fatti sull'amministrazione e governo della prefettura Apostolica del Swaziland».

be wise to erect a building which would be used as a novitiate for girls. The girls were to live in a modest building separated from the other buildings in the mission. The sisters were to begin their novitiate in the beginning of 1933. The councillors of the prefecture agreed that the house of the novices should resemble that of the local sisters at Inkamana, built with simple material¹²⁰.

In January 1933, the local religious superior, Fr. Romauldo Migliorini, was asked to release a lay brother so that the novitiate house could be built. Bro. Luigi Dal Meda was the only brother whom they thought could do the job properly. The local religious superior agreed to release him on the condition that the prefect apostolic pay for all his expenses. Unfortunately, the prefect apostolic did not want the above condition to be binding. Bro. Luigi Dal Meda told his superior, Fr. Constantino Barneschi that he was confused for he did not know whether to obey the prefect apostolic as sanctioned by the law of the Church, or his immediate superior, the local religious superior according to the constitution of the Order of the Servants of Mary¹²¹.

Bro. Luigi Dal Meda was also living at St. Joseph's and the superior of his priory was Fr. Constantino Barneschi. On 17 January, 1933 Mons. Peregrine Bellezze told Fr. Constantino Barneschi to request Bro. Luigi Dal Meda to begin the building of the novitiate house. In the evening of the same day a desperate Swazi man in search for a job knocked at the door of the priory. Bro. Luigi Dal Meda exclaimed: «He will help in digging stones...» and Fr. Constantino Barneschi responded: «I have been ordered by the

¹²⁰. Peregrine Bellezze, *letter to the Councillors of the Prefecture Apostolic of Swaziland*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo, 29 December, 1932.

¹²¹. Peregrine Bellezze, *lettera a Romauldo Migliorini*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo, 14 January, 1933.

local religious superior, Fr. Romauldo Migliorini not to allow you to build the novitiate house»¹²².

The dream of having two separate administrations had been anticipated by the friars of the Order, especially during the period preceding the establishment of the office of a local religious superior in Swaziland. Mons. Peregrine Bellezze, who had been accused of not being sympathetic to the Order was constantly and systematically ignored when important decisions pertaining to the life of the Order, such as opening a house in Heidelberg, were made. The lack of trust between the prefect apostolic and the local religious superior prompted the local religious superior not to communicate important decisions taken by the Chapter of the Order to the prefect apostolic, for the fear that the decision of the Chapter might not be implemented should the prefect apostolic interfere¹²³.

Since most of the missionaries regarded Mons. Peregrine Bellezze as a tyrannical ruler, they became more and more open to Fr. Romauldo Migliorini. As a result of their openness, cooperation grew and they ended up showing their moral support to him and open defiance to the prefect apostolic. Those who had projects in their missions began receiving financial support from the Tuscan province.

In fact in 1932 Fr. Romauldo Migliorini sent a photograph of a newly completed church at Luve dedicated to SS.ma Annuziata, commonly known as Florence mission, which was built by the money of the Tuscan province. After the euphoria caused by the opening of that church on 24 July, 1932 the missionaries were plunged into a pensive

¹²². Peregrine Bellezze, *Pro-memoria di archivio sul caso di Fr. Luigi*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo, 18 January, 1933.

¹²³. Romauldo Migliorini, *lettera al Priore General dell'Ordine dei Servi di Maria*, St. Theresa's, Bremarsdorp, 19 February, 1932.

mood when it was rumoured that Fr. Romauldo Migliorini, who had been made local religious superior was to be deported by Mons. Peregrine Bellezze to Italy, and that his successor was to come from Italy¹²⁴.

(iv) Acrimony and its consequences

a. **Dedication of Florence Mission:** Florence mission was opened in 1924, almost two years after the area had been visited by the first Catholic missionaries¹²⁵. Fr. Remigio Mucciarini and other missionaries were proud of the beautiful church in Swaziland, dedicated to SS.ma Annuziata, which was built at Luve.

The development of Florence mission would not have taken place if its friars and sisters had not been enthusiastic about their work. Sr. Sebastiana was amongst the sisters of the congregation of the Servite Sisters of Pistoia who were very pastorally oriented in 1932. She and the other sisters would visit families of students who were studying at Florence mission. At times the sisters would spend five hours walking in the villages visiting scattered Catholic families. Since most of the people could not come to the mission for Catholic instruction, they would be taught Catechism by the visiting sisters. The most important point to highlight is that all the pastoral visits were concluded with prayer. If the people did not know it they would be taught prayer¹²⁶. The church was officially opened on 24 July, 1932 by the Prefect Apostolic, Mons. Peregrine Bellezze.

¹²⁴. Remigio Mucciarini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Florence mission, Luve, 4 August, 1932.

¹²⁵. Gabriel Signori, *letter to the editor of Addolorata*, Florence mission, Luve, 1 August, 1924.

¹²⁶. Comunita' della SS. ma Annunziata, *Visite ai kraals*, Florence mission, Luve, 1932.

The opening took place when relations between the prefect apostolic and the missionaries had gone from bad to worse. During the ceremony one could perceive the hostility between the two. It is said that after the liturgical function of the opening of the church the prefect apostolic never uttered a word¹²⁷.

b. Mons. Peregrine Bellezze resigns: In December 1932, the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of Faith invited Mons. Peregrine Bellezze to Rome¹²⁸. Presumably he might have been invited to Rome after the news of the problems in his prefecture had leaked to Rome.

When Mons. Peregrine Bellezze was to leave for Italy, he asked Fr. Arimath Galt to look after the affairs of the Catholic Church in Swaziland¹²⁹. At that time, Fr. Arimath Galt was working in Mbabane. Mons. Peregrine Bellezze had been advised by the secretary of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, Mons. Carlo Salotti, to appoint a priest whom he trusted to look after the prefecture during his absence.

In March 1933, Mons. Peregrine Bellezze left Swaziland for Italy where he was to attend the celebration to mark seven hundred years of the foundation of the Order of the Servants of Mary¹³⁰. After having worked twenty years in Swaziland, he then resigned from his office, which he had held for almost ten years. The news about his resignation

¹²⁷. Remigio Mucciarini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Florence mission, Luve, 4 August, 1932.

¹²⁸. Carlo Salotti, *letter to Peregrine Bellezze*, Rome, 29 December, 1932, prot. n4 4630/32,

¹²⁹. Peregrine Bellezze, *letter to Mons. Carlo Salotti, Secretary of the Sacred Congregation Propagation of Faith*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimofu, 6 March, 1933.

¹³⁰. Claudia Gonfiantini, *lettera a Peregrine Bellezze*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimofu, 29 May, 1933.

was imparted by his long-time companion, Fr. Arimath Graft¹³¹ and was announced while he was in Rome¹³². Naturally, the news was received with mixed feelings by the Church in Swaziland: those whom he had helped felt very negative about his resignation; on the other hand his antagonists were pleased by the news.

Even the monsignor himself did not know that he would not come back to Swaziland when he left for Italy in 1933. Everybody had thought that Mons. Peregrine Bellezze would come back to Swaziland. In July 1933 he was scheduled to leave Trieste, Italy for Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Surprisingly, as early as March 1933 he started receiving letters from Christians who were in Swaziland. In those letters one could see how people treasured his friendship. Even the head of the British Colonial Government in Swaziland, Mr. T.A Dickson, had high esteem for Mons. Peregrine Bellezze¹³³

When Mons. Peregrine Bellezze left Swaziland he never bade farewell to the candidates of the Congregation of "Izithunywa zika Maria Olusizi" which he had founded. Claudia Mtsetfwa was one of the candidates who were saddened by the sudden departure of the prefect apostolic¹³⁴. The Mother General of the Dominican Sisters living in Bavaria, Germany was touched by the departure of Mons. Peregrine Bellezze¹³⁵. When reading the related letter from the Mother General and letters written by other sisters one concludes that Mons. Peregrine Bellezze was not generally liked by the missionaries; he was only

¹³¹. Claudia Gonfiantini, *lettera a Peregrine Bellezze*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo, 29 May, 1933.

¹³². Peregrine Bellezze, *lettera a Filippo Rizzi*, Trieste, 4 July, 1933.

¹³³. T.A Dickson, *lettera a Peregrine Bellezze*, Mbabane, 23 May, 1933.

¹³⁴. Claudia Mtsetfwa, *letter to Peregrine Bellezze*, 1 December, 1933.

¹³⁵. Cecilia, *letter to Peregrine Bellezze*, Bavaria, 11 June, 1933.

popular with the local people and the Dominican Sisters who were working at Bremersdorp.

Sr. Josephina Nkosi, who was staying in Mbabane in 1934, used to write Mons. Peregrine Bellezze letters. In those letters one could decipher the character of Mons. Peregrine Bellezze. When he was in Brazil in 1935 he wrote a letter of encouragement to one of the girls who was to begin her novitiate.

It is interesting to find that even after Mons. Peregrine Bellezze's departure from Swaziland some priests hated him to such an extent that one of them preached in the church saying that he who thought that Mons. Peregrine Bellezze was a bishop was committing a sin, and was liable to punishment from the Eternal Father. Sr. Emma accused Mons. Peregrine Bellezze of having sent her away from the mission in which she was living since the monsignor was in love with Sr. Josephina Nkosi. There is no substantial evidence to justify the allegations. What was known was that some sisters of the Congregation of the Servite Sisters of Pistoia envied Sr. Josephina Nkosi since, according to them, Mons. Peregrine Bellezze was paying much attention to Sr. Josephina Nkosi and the other sisters of the congregation of the Izithunywa zika Maria Olusizi.

It seems as if Sr. Emma and other sisters of the Congregation of the Servite Sisters of Pistoia did not understand the fact that it was necessary for the founder to nurture his congregation. At one stage, the Servite Sisters of Pistoia tried to stop Sr. Josephina Nkosi from corresponding with Mons. Peregrine Bellezze in Brazil¹³⁶. The new congregation of the Izithunywa zika Maria Olusizi needed much attention from him.

Rheumatism, which had been troubling the energetic missionary, Fr. Remigio

¹³⁶. Josephina Nkosi, *letter to Peregrine Bellezze*, Mbabane, 25 February, 1935.

Mucciarini since 1933, caused him to be concerned about his apostolate. By 1934 Fr. Remigio Mucciarini could not ride long distances on horseback, as he had done a couple of years previously¹³⁷.

c. Mons. Romauldo Migliorini becomes Prefect Apostolic: In June missionaries in the prefecture apostolic were anxious to see who would be the next prefect apostolic. Most of them wanted Fr. Romauldo Migliorini to be the prefect apostolic, but on the contrary Fr. Romauldo Migliorini did not want to assume this responsibility. There were many reasons why he did not want to be elected. The most important reason for his refusal was the financial situation of the prefecture apostolic of Swaziland and the severe division amongst the clergy that resulted in strong factionalism. The Germans and most of the nuns had been on the side of Mons. Peregrine Bellezze, while the Italian friars, especially those from the Tuscan province, formed their own group¹³⁸. In fact during Bellezze's time great animosity had developed between the German and Italian speaking friars.

On 19 June 1933 Fr. Remigio Mucciarini wrote a letter to the provincial of the Tuscan province suggesting that he persuade the German speaking friars to withdraw from Swaziland and find their own missions outside Swaziland. We have to bear in mind that at that period of time the Prefecture Apostolic of Swaziland was in the process of passing from the administration of the *Curia Generalizia* (Generalate of the Order of the Servants of Mary) to the administration of the Tuscan province of the Order of the

¹³⁷. Remigio Mucciarini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Bremarsdorp, 29 June, 1934.

¹³⁸. Remigio Mucciarini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Florence mission, Luve, 9 June, 1933.

Servants of Mary¹³⁹.

Fr. Romauldo Migliorini became the successor to Mons. Peregrine Bellezze in 1933. His election was no surprise since many people had expected him to succeed Mons. Peregrine Bellezze. Mons. Romauldo Migliorini inherited a prefecture whose future was hanging by a thread: everybody expected him to perform miracles overnight. Perhaps the most important matters that preoccupied him were the divisions amongst the clergy as we have seen above. Despite all these issues, there was some hope that the situation would improve. The arrival of a Tuscan friar, Fr. Galandi from Italy in 1933, brought some relief to the new prefect apostolic. Furthermore this was seen as the debut of the Tuscan province in the missionary scenario¹⁴⁰.

The Tuscan province had now been given the juridical responsibility over Swaziland. Hitherto, Swaziland had been under the Tyrolese province of the Order of the Servants of Mary and the General of the Order of the Servants of Mary. Handing power to the Tuscan province meant that the Tuscan province would be in charge of the daily running of the Catholic mission in Swaziland.

The then provincial of the Tuscan province, Fr. Paolo Giannelli, wrote a letter to all priories of the Tuscan province in 1933 explaining the importance of the Tuscan province taking over Swaziland. He reminded all the friars of the province that prior to the negotiations held on the issue of the prefecture Apostolic of Swaziland, the Tuscan province had always been supporting the missions in Swaziland.

¹³⁹. Remigio Mucciarini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Florence mission, Luve, 9 June, 1933.

¹⁴⁰. Remigio Mucciarini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Florence mission, 22 November, 1933.

The local hierarchy of the Catholic Church must have been delighted by the move of the General of the Order to request the Tuscan province to assume responsibility over Swazilands since there was some hope that personnel and financial needs would be met by the Tuscan province¹⁴¹.

Despite the violent confrontation which characterised the last years of the 1920's and the early 1930's, missionaries succeeded in achieving some peace, which enabled them to carry out a thorough reflection on their lives. Perhaps one of the issues they discovered was their lack of proficiency in the Zulu language. Mons. Romauldo Migliorini, who had been at the forefront during the difficult times of the prefecture, thought of performing the almost impossible task of writing a Zulu-Italian grammar in 1933, which was designed to be of great help to the Italian speaking missionaries¹⁴².

His initiative also led to the subsequent publications of other written material. The publication of the first monthly newsletter in Zulu, "Izwi lomalusi" (the voice of the shepherd) began towards the end of 1934 together with a Servite magazine which was in English. Frs. Constantino Barneschi and Michael Ramsay were the directors of those publications. Izwi lomalusi was distributed to the faithful and dealt predominantly with religious issues. Its existence was threatened by the Times of Swaziland, a local newspaper which was supported by the government¹⁴³.

d. Mucciarini's concern over missionary work: Fr. Remigio Mucciarini was

¹⁴¹. Paolo Giannelli, *Circular letter to all priories of the Tuscan Province*, Firenze, 1933.

¹⁴². Romauldo Migliorini, *lettera a Paolo Giannelli*, St. Theresa's, Bremersdorp, 28 January, 1933.

¹⁴³. Anselmo Marsigli, letter to Peregrine Bellezze, St. Philip's mission, Mhlatuze, 25 February, 1935.

aware of the fact that the schism which began during Mons. Peregrine's era was threatening the integrity of the Catholic Church in Swaziland. Furthermore, there existed a cold war between the Italian friars and the Servite Sisters of Pistoia. Seeing the gravity of the situation, Fr. Remigio Mucciarini suggested that the General of the Order of the Servants of Mary be asked to mediate between the two groups so that the impasse could be resolved without the local innocent Catholic community having to suffer the consequences. Meanwhile Mons. Romauldo Migliorini had to address four major issues.

Financial mismanagement needed very special attention since a structure that would ensure proper distribution of funds was lacking in the prefecture. Some friars were even tempted not to disclose the amount of money they were receiving from their benefactors; a practice that has continued even until today. In those days there was a common practice of sending money directly to the friars: certain provinces would send some money to their friars. Some friars would be receiving money from their friends, which they would use to develop their missions.

As money and other goods were being received from different sources with different ideals, it became virtually impossible for the prefect apostolic to monitor the flow of money into some missions.

The correspondence between Mons. Romauldo Migliorini and the provincial of the Tuscan province reveals the feeling of helplessness and frustration that characterised the life of the prefect apostolic.

Another issue that caused him sleepless nights was the fact that the Servite Sisters of Pistoia were insisting on restructuring: that is, the sisters who were living in places not belonging to them were supposed to leave the place and open another house.

Thirdly, at Heidelberg, the mission which had been begun by the friars was developing and there was a great need of sending more friars to reinforce the developing mission¹⁴⁴. As a result Fr. Geraldo was eventually sent to Heidelberg in 1934.

Finally, the Tuscan province had been sending friars to England so that they could be prepared for missionary work in Swaziland. England was seen as an ideal place to prepare those who would be working in an English speaking country such as Swaziland. It was thought that they would also learn English. Concerned about their level of English and their poor dedication to missionary work, Fr. Remigio Mucciarini suggested that the Tuscan province stop sending friars to England. He also told the provincial of the Tuscan province that the lavish lifestyle they enjoyed in England did not enhance their preparation for the tough missionary conditions¹⁴⁶.

e. Encouraging news from the Tuscan Province: As noted above, for a good number of years, the Prefecture Apostolic of Swaziland had been under the patronage of the Tyrolese province and the *Curia Generalizia (Generalate of the Order of the Servants of Mary)* when it was ruled by Mons. Peregrine Bellezze, though the majority of its friars were from the Tuscan province. Friars who belonged to the Tuscan province, including Mons. Peregrine Bellezze who was not a member of that province, would freely ask for both financial and personnel backing from the Tuscan province. Other friars would

¹⁴⁴. Romauldo Migliorini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Theresa's mission, Bremarsdorp, 9 September, 1934.

¹⁴⁵. Remigio Mucciarini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Florence mission, Luve, 29 June, 1934.

¹⁴⁶. Remigio Mucciarini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Florence mission, Luve, 29 June, 1934.

receive support directly from their provinces. Since they were fewer than those belonging to the Tuscan province, it was much easier for them to get money whenever they needed it from their provinces. At the Provincial Chapter of the Tuscan province held in the city of Florence, Italy between the 15 and 19 May, 1934, it was unanimously decided that the Tuscan province intensify its support for the Catholic Church in Swaziland. The above decision could not have been taken if the mission of Swaziland had not been placed under the jurisdiction of the Tuscan province. Having jurisdictional rights over a mission territory such as Swaziland was seen as a great privilege within the Order of the Servants of Mary. Unfortunately, a large price had to be paid for this privilege: that is, the mission territory had to depend entirely on the province so that the mission of the Church could be carried on with dignity.

The Tuscan friars took the decision that all their priories would be mobilised to help the Catholic Church in Swaziland¹⁴⁷. After studying the situation of the Church in Swaziland they erroneously concluded that the root cause of the problems of the Prefecture Apostolic of Swaziland was the lack of money, which is why the Tuscan friars resolved to send more money to Swaziland. The news of the above decision was communicated to the hierarchy of the Catholic Church in Swaziland. The news was received with mixed feelings: some friars were happy; others including the then prefect apostolic, Mons. Romauldo Migliorini decided not to anticipate their joy. They wanted to see whether the situation would change in Swaziland, because they knew that the problems Swaziland was experiencing did not only result from financial difficulties.

¹⁴⁷. Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana, *lettera a Romauldo Migliorini*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, 21 May, 1934.

Perhaps issues such as provincialism and nationalism needed much attention. In fact, in his letter to the provincial written in June 1934 shortly after the reelection of the provincial of the Tuscan province, Fr. Remigio Mucciarini suggested that the General of the Order of the Servants of Mary and the Provincial of the Tuscan province come to settle the disputes between the Italian and German speaking friars, as well as ending the "war" that was constantly waged by the Servite Sisters of Pistoia. Yet another problem the prefecture was faced with was the shortage of priests, which had been worsened by the opening of a house in Heidelberg, South Africa. A priest who had arrived from Italy, Fr. Geraldo, whom they had thought would work in Swaziland, was transferred to Heidelberg. A decision to ask the provincial to send priests who would be able to work in Swaziland in 1934 shows that there were priests who were not able to endure the hardships in the missions. Not being able to make a sacrifice was seen as a major issue. There was a general belief that priests who had been to England were less prepared for missionary work, in order to substantiate his claim, Fr. Remigio Mucciarini used the Latin expression: «intelligenti pauca»¹⁴⁸, which means that an intelligent person understands the situation from the little information given). The use of the above expression shows that Fr. Remigio Mucciarini was indirectly criticising the province for sending friars to England.

It is important to note that the above request had been made previously. An emphasis was placed on the quality of the priest. Other missionaries were concerned about the quality of the ideal religious brother who would be useful in any missionary

¹⁴⁸. Remigio Mucciarini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Florence mission, Luvu, 29 June, 1934.

territory. A need to have religious brothers with skills in farming, carpentry and other fields was felt in the prefecture. In 1935 Fr. Constantino Barneschi suggested that the provincial send brothers to a vocational college in Verona, Italy where they would receive adequate training before being sent to Swaziland¹⁴⁹.

An attack on crops by locusts in Swaziland meant that tons and tons of grain were destroyed, which obviously had an impact on the local economy. Also, Swaziland was one of the countries in southern Africa which were hit by a severe drought, in the early 1920's, resulting in the poor 1923 harvest. The two missionaries at Good Shepherd, Fr. Bonaventure Kathrein and Bro. Martin Schultz were forced to ask for help¹⁵⁰. Hundreds and hundreds of head of cattle died during the 1935 drought which hit Swaziland¹⁵¹. All these elements contributed significantly to the problems of the prefecture. After having spent eleven years in the mission, Bro. Antonino Agostinelli wanted to go back to Italy. The main motive for his desire to go home in 1935 was the amount of work he was expected to do in the mission at Bremersdorp in spite of his poor health¹⁵².

f. Crisis: 1934 was indeed a year of crisis in the Prefecture Apostolic of Swaziland. Nothing seemed to be proceeding smoothly; the local superior of the Servite Sisters of Pistoia was not able to cooperate with the prefect apostolic. Amongst the

¹⁴⁹. Constantino Barneschi, *Lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo, 7 September, 1935.

¹⁵⁰. Constantino Barneschi, *letter to the editor of Addolorata*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo, 19 January, 1924.

¹⁵¹. Anselmo Marsigli, *lettera a Bellezze*, St. Philip's mission, Mhlatuze, 28 November, 1935.

¹⁵². Antonino Agostinelli, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Bremersdorp, 27 July, 1935.

missionaries themselves there existed immense divisions.

Let us look briefly at the educational crisis: Questions like: could have been posed in the 1930's during the Dark Ages of the Catholic Church in Swaziland. The crisis in education was a clear manifestation of the pandemonium that prevailed in the prefecture. In 1934 the Colonial Government began granting favours to the National schools at the expense of Catholic schools. The premises of a Catholic school were confiscated by the political authority and permission to build a Catholic school was not granted. In one incident, pupils belonging to a Catholic school were obliged to leave their school and attend lessons at a National school. A Catholic school, St. Joseph's, which was one of the best schools in the country stopped receiving a government subsidy to pay the salaries of standard V and VI teachers. Most of the Catholic schools were threatened with suppression. Speculations over the cause of the government's hostility towards the Catholic Church in the post-Bellezze era existed. The contemporaries of Mons. Peregrine Bellezze strongly believed that reactions against Mons. Peregrine Bellezze did influence the government to launch a severe witch-hunt against the Catholic institutions that were founded by him. The missionaries believed that Mons. Peregrine Bellezze might have done this in order to prove to the world that if he was not in Swaziland, nothing could go right.

Though there is insufficient evidence to prove that the cause of the government's hostility towards the Catholic Church was extrinsic, we could say that during the time of Mons. Peregrine Bellezze there were fairly good relations between the Catholic Church and the educational authority of the British Protectorate of Swaziland, including King Sobhuza II, who was paramount chief.

These political figures knew the plight of Mons. Peregrine Bellezze. Any person who reads the letters which were written by Mons. Peregrine Bellezze to his friends after his resignation might be tempted to conclude that Mons. Peregrine Bellezze was a victim of discrimination. A more objective judgement could be given if other sources were consulted and thoroughly scrutinised. It appears from his letters that he considered himself a victim and that the missionaries were to blame. It is therefore possible that Mons. Peregrine Bellezze might have influenced local politicians, indirectly; that is, believing that their friend, Mons. Peregrine Bellezze was unceremoniously removed from Swaziland, they might have decided to suspend all the privileges the Catholic Church enjoyed from the State.

Nevertheless, there is proof that Mons. Peregrine Bellezze did speak badly of Frs. Constantino Barneschi and Agostino Botta to the inspector of education in the country, Mr. Dumbrell, on a number of occasions¹⁵³.

Though there is no credible written documentation the researcher believes that the Monsignor might have also spoken badly of Fr. Romauldo Migliorini, his worst enemy. One day Mons. Peregrine Bellezze told Fr. Constantino Barneschi that: Fr. Constantino Barneschi and company had even angered some government officials. Asked which government official he was referring to, Mons. Peregrine Bellezze answered that the person was the inspector of education, Mr. Dumbrell. Since that time, countless inspections were carried out by the inspector and his subordinates as a form of harassment.

¹⁵³. Constantino Barneschi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimofu, 22 November, 1934.

Mons. Peregrine Bellezze was accused by Fr. Constantino Barneschi of having tried to put himself under the protection of Mr. Dumbrell, whom Fr. Constantino Barneschi called Nebuchadnezzar¹⁵⁴, the Biblical king of Babylon who destroyed Jerusalem in B.C 586.

g. Consequences of Bellezze's resignation: After the departure of Luis Ginindza, twelve boys whom Fr. Anselmo Marsigli had been preparing so that in future they could go to the Seminary left in 1935.

In a letter written by Fr. Anselmo Marsigli to Mons. Peregrine Bellezze in the beginning of 1935 we found that some missionaries were not happy with the way the new prefect apostolic, Mons. Romauldo Migliorini, was leading the prefecture. These missionaries were told by Mons. Romauldo Migliorini that he was forced to be prefect apostolic and that his leadership was just for a short period of time. Since he considered himself a temporal prefect apostolic, he did not want to wear the insignia of the prefect apostolic, he did not even want people to call him prefect apostolic. As a result, people were asking the missionaries when Swaziland would have its prefect apostolic.

Due to the fact that Mons. Romauldo Migliorini did not know the local language people used to refer to him as "the dumb". The people knew that Mons. Romauldo Migliorini was their prefect apostolic, this is due to the fact that they used to remark saying «the missionaries have given us a skeleton». They were referring to Mons. Romauldo Migliorini as a skeleton since he was rather thin.

Perhaps the most important fact to mention is that after the departure of Mons.

¹⁵⁴. Constantino Barneschi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofu, 22 November, 1934.

Peregrine Bellezze the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of Faith cut down its subsidy to the Prefect Apostolic of Swaziland by half. The reduction of the subsidy made it impossible for the missionaries to open new missions. After opening a mission dedicated to Christ the King at Hlatikhulu, the missionaries wanted to open another mission at Hluti, where the Servite Sisters of Pistoia were already working. But some Catholic schools were threatened with closure.

(v) Spiritual & material revival

a. **Sacred Heart:** The Catholic Church was consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus by Pope Leo XIII on 25 May, 1899, about twenty four years after the institution of the feast by Pope Pius IX. In 1934 Catholic missionaries were very zealous in disseminating information about the significance of a devotion to the Sacred Heart in Swaziland.

June was specially dedicated to the spreading of the devotion to the Sacred Heart in the entire country. It is, however, difficult to establish when the Catholics began to show devotion to the Sacred Heart in Swaziland. The earliest written document in existence that makes allusions to this devotion dates back to the year 1934.

Fr. Remigio Mucciarini, who was incardinated at Florence mission, was the first missionary to mention the Sacred Heart. In June 1934 he journeyed to St. Philip's mission to preach about the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ¹⁵⁵. We could argue that the devotion to the Sacred Heart in Swaziland might have begun in the years preceding the

¹⁵⁵. Remigio Mucciarini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Florence mission, Luve, 29 June, 1934.

1930's. Apparently, after the erection of the Prefecture Apostolic of Swaziland in 1923 more emphasis was placed on popular religion. Most probably, the devotion to the Sacred Heart was included since it had been instituted two decades ago by the Church, and missionaries had some interest in it. The above devotion led to the foundation of the Sodality of the Sacred Heart in Swaziland, as we shall see further in our discussion.

b. Third Order: The work of the friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary attracted many people who ended up wanting to embrace the Servite life style. In the early 1934, Simon Mzondo of Siteki and Luis Ginindza were given the habit of the Third Order of the Servants of Mary.

c. Servite sisters of Swaziland: On 8 September, 1935 six novices and seven postulants who had been candidates for the newly founded congregation, Izithunywa zika Maria, joined the congregation during a religious ceremony. Though Mons. Romauldo Migliorini wanted the new congregation to work at Bremersdorp, the Dominican sisters were not pleased with this notion since they did not want to work in the same place with any other congregation.

The new congregation did go to Bremersdorp, where they were forced by the Dominican sisters to speak English properly, which did help them to learn English quickly. On the other hand it was difficult for the Dominican sisters to learn Zulu.

Ironically, they were asked to be formators of the newly established congregation of the Servite Sisters of Swaziland.

d. Project of the Servite Sisters' of Pistoia: Bro. Raimondo Dal Magro, who had been working with Fr. Anselmo Marsigli, was asked by the Servite Sisters of Pistoia who wanted to build a large convent which would have schools. The massive project was

scheduled to begin not later than 1935. Since there was no church building the priest, Fr. Galandi would celebrate Holy Mass in the chapel of the sisters, which was also used as a classroom and hostel by the students. A little hut used for accommodation by the priest was adjacent to the sisters' convent.

Chapter Four

RENEWED ZEAL FOR MISSIONARY WORK

(i) Meeting of Christian schools

As part of their calling, all Catholic missions ran schools in Swaziland. It is obvious that a large number of these schools were in the outstations since there were more outstations than missions.

In order to ensure that Catholic education was promoted in the country, a meeting for all Catholic teachers was held at St. Joseph's mission on 26 June, 1927. All the five missions operating in the country, namely: Mater Dolorosa, St. Joseph's, St. Philip's, Good Shepherd and Florence mission were represented at that meeting. Though not all Catholic teachers attended, by and large all the schools were fairly well represented. A total of thirty two teachers attended the meeting. In July 1928, another meeting of teachers was held at St. Joseph's mission. At least forty five teachers attended¹⁵⁶.

On 9 April, 1929 the Catholic Church was represented by Mons. Peregrine Bellezze at a meeting held at Bremersdorp, which had been organised by the government to discuss matters pertaining to education. Various Christian denominations were also well represented at that meeting. According to the report given at the meeting, at least seventy missionary run schools in the country were to be taken over by the government, and in return, the government was to pay the salaries of teachers of the schools in

¹⁵⁶. Constantino Barneschi, *unpublished English text of Chronicles of St. Joseph's Mission*, January 1924 to December 1929, Mzimpofo, 1929.

question. It was also resolved that the salary of those teaching from standard II downwards should be twenty four pounds sterling per annum. Standards III and IV teachers would receive fifty two pounds sterling per annum; while standards V and VI teachers would receive eighty pounds sterling. The missionaries were promised that more schools would be taken over by the government when sufficient funds would be available in future.

Following this meeting Mons. Peregrine Bellezze convened an emergency meeting for all Catholic priests in the prefecture on 18 April, 1929, and it was unanimously decided at that meeting that St. Joseph's school should be raised to the standard where it could meet all the conditions laid by the government so as to enable it to qualify for a government subsidy. On 23 May, 1929 the inspector of education, Mr. Dumbrell, paid a visit to St. Joseph's school. Unfortunately he was not impressed by the low number of pupils there¹⁵⁷. His dissatisfaction with St. Joseph's mission, however, did not have a negative impact on the proposed subsidy.

(ii) Visits

a. Father General and Mother General: In March 1931 the generals of the Order of the Servants of Mary and of the Congregation of the Servite Sisters of Pistoia visited Swaziland. The latter was scheduled to pay an important visit to the sisters at Florence mission on 7 April, 1931 and to be accompanied by her secretary and Mons. Peregrine Bellezze. Her visit to that mission coincided with the visit of the Father general to the same place, though the Father general arrived at Florence mission on 11 April. The

¹⁵⁷. Constantino Barneschi, *unpublished English text of Chronicles of St. Joseph's Mission*, January 1924 to December 1929, Mzimpofu, 1929.

secretary of the Father general, Fr. Alessandro Ferraris accompanied the general at Florence mission¹⁵⁸.

It is interesting to note that Florence mission, which had been begun by the friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary, became one of the fastest developing missions in the prefecture. The superiors of the Servite Sisters of Pistoia were eager to participate in this development. As a result they sent four sisters to open a house at Florence mission on 17 May, 1926. At that time the local superior of the sisters of the Congregation of the Servite Sisters of Pistoia was Sr. Domitilla Menegon, who was living at St. Joseph's mission.

The house of the sisters was blessed on 19 June, 1926 by Mons. Peregrine Bellezze when the sisters were celebrating the feast of St. Juliana, one of their saints. Soon after the opening of the house they were given various tasks to do in the community. Sr. Sebastiana Sudrio was made prioress; her duty was to make sure that the community of sisters was faithful to its charism. She held the position of prioress for a period of eight months, and was temporarily replaced by Sr. Clodovea after she had been transferred from Florence mission. Another sister who went to live at the community of sisters at Florence mission was Sr. Eustogia De Tomasi who had come directly from Italy in 1929. The election of the prioress was held on 15 June, 1927 and Sr. Savina was elected prioress. Sr. Afra Distillati was given a school to look after. Other sisters worked in the fields and elsewhere.

Two sisters belonging to this community renewed their vows in May, and in July

¹⁵⁸. *Suore Mantellate, Cronaca della comunità delle suore Serve di Maria di Pistoia della comunità di SS.ma Annunziata* (unpublished chronicles), Luve, 1926 - 1934.

1929 Sr. Savina Mariani took her perpetual vows. About two years later it was Sr. Stefania Zago's turn to take hers. Sr. Roberta Galigani took her perpetual vows on 12 May, 1933.

Often there would be frequent visitors at Florence mission, mostly sisters from St. Joseph's mission. Perhaps the most important visitor to the house of the sisters in 1927 was the Apostolic Delegate to South Africa, Mons. Gilsowijk on 23 September. Mons. Peregrine Bellezze would rather visit the sisters during important feasts such as that of their Patron Saint or Pentecost. In fact we are told that he celebrated the 1928 and 1929 feasts of Pentecost at Florence mission. The main motive for his visits was pastoral, though during isolated incidents we find him engaging himself in Canonical visitations.

In order to foster spiritual growth, spiritual exercises such as retreats were held on a regular basis, and they would normally take five days. Since there was no fixed place for retreats, at times they would be held at Florence mission. On a number of occasions the whole community would go to St. Joseph's mission for a retreat. The most favourable period for such exercises was during the school holidays when the mission would be quiet due to the absence of students⁵⁹.

b. First African Priest: An African Catholic priest, Fr. Andreas Ngidi from Zululand, South Africa arrived at Florence mission with Fr. Agostino Fagiolo on 17 July, 1931. Fr. Andreas Ngidi was the first African priest to set foot in Swaziland⁶⁰. It is, however, difficult to establish the exact date of his entry into the country.

¹⁵⁹. Suore Mantellate, *Cronaca della comunità delle suore Serve di Maria di Pistoia della comunità di SS.ma Annunziata* (unpublished chronicles), Luve, 1926 - 1934.

¹⁶⁰. Suore Mantellate, *Cronaca della comunità delle suore Serve di Maria di Pistoia della comunità di SS.ma Annunziata* (unpublished chronicles), Luve, 1926 - 1934.

The possibility that he might have worked in other missions in the country cannot be ruled out. The fact that he was acquainted with Fr. Agostino Fagiolo means that he might have had some contact with the missionaries of the Order of the Servants of Mary working in Swaziland. This is highly likely since in those days missionaries working in Swaziland used to travel a lot to Zululand. This is because the missionary territory of Swaziland fell within the boundaries of the Vicariate of Natal. Durban was the centre of all the affairs of the Church. Fr. Andreas Ngidi might have been sent by the hierarchy of the Church of the Vicariate of Natal. The other interesting fact to note is that Fr. Andreas Ngidi was a secular priest. By virtue of being a secular priest he did not have to stay in a particular religious community.

(iii) Fr. Giacinto Striolo: a missionary to the South

The scramble for southern Swaziland by Christian missionaries began in the mid-nineteenth century. A Wesleyan missionary, Rev. Allison, with a dozen relatives started working in one of the villages in the southern part of Swaziland called Mahamba, a little Swazi village adjacent to the border of Swaziland and South Africa.

About forty years later, that is, in the 1880's, a Wesleyan preacher, Daniel, from Edendale near Pietermaritzburg, South Africa revisited a Wesleyan mission at Mahamba. His brother, Joel made a start at Makhosini⁶¹. As a result of these visits Christianity spread in the southern part of Swaziland. It eventually reached the interior.

Catholic missionaries had always wanted to open a mission at Hlatikhulu, one of the remotest villages in Swaziland. Hlatikhulu was considered to be an ideal place for the

¹⁶¹. Appunti del Padre Banaventure Kathrein che dice di aver messo insieme, Good Shepherd Mission, Siteki, [1920's].

mission since around that area many Christian denominations had established themselves. The first ecclesiastic to be lured by Hlatikhulu was Mons. Peregrine Bellezze. Unfortunately, during his time hardly any land was for sale in the area. Due to the fact that there was no land available at Hlatikhulu, Mons. Peregrine Bellezze purchased a piece of land at Mooihoek, which was not far from Hlatikhulu. At Mooihoek a mission dedicated to Monte Berico was to be opened.

Naturally many were compelled to think that the dream of having a Roman Catholic mission at Hlatikhulu had virtually come to an end but the hope of having Hlatikhulu come to life again after the resignation of Mons. Peregrine Bellezze.

One of the priorities of Mons. Romauldo Migliorini, the new Prefect Apostolic from 1932 onwards, was to hasten to buy a piece of land which was on sale at Hlatikhulu. Buying it meant that Mooihoek, which was considered by many as not having arable land was to be ignored.

a. Apostolate at Hlatikhulu: Fr. Giacinto Striolo of the Venetian Province of the Order of the Servants of Mary founded the mission of Christ the King at Hlatikhulu when there was an alarming shortage of personnel and money in the Prefecture Apostolic of Swaziland. Fr. Giacinto Striolo became the first priest to be in charge of that mission. The zealous Venetian missionary went alone to Hlatikhulu since there was no religious to go with him. Fr. Giacinto Striolo was so poor that unlike other missionaries he did not even have a horse to use as transport in his numerous apostolic visits.

Mons. Romauldo Migliorini presided at the opening of the mission at Hlatikhulu in April 1934; the mission was dedicated to Christ the King. The mission was built on the land bought from Mr. Holpin. Many people came from Hlatikhulu and the surrounding

villages to participate in the opening ceremony; amongst them was Mr. Holpin and his wife.

There was rapid development at the outstations belonging to Christ the King mission. A month later, a chapel was opened at Mahamba, one of these. It is, however, important to note that some schools and outstations that previously belonged to St. Philip's mission were being taken up by Christ the King mission, which meant that Fr. Giacinto Striolo had to work very hard.

Though there is no credible evidence available, the visit to Monte Berico school which was at Mooihoek by Fr. Giacinto Striolo in the same period of time, allows us room to speculate that Monte Berico school might have been one of the schools affected by the creation of Christ the King mission.

Were it not for the enthusiasm of Fr. Giacinto Striolo, some mission stations would not have developed. Since he had a burning desire to see the Catholic Church increasing its influence on the lives of the people, Fr. Giacinto Striolo committed himself to spreading the Gospel in the southern part of Swaziland. At times he would walk over twenty miles to visit sick people. On 2 July, 1934 he took a bus to Goetgun (now Nhlangano), one of the relatively small important settlements and from there he walked at least twelve miles on foot to Makhosini where he met some Christians. After this, he continued his missionary journey and ended up at Sulphur Springs.

b. Relations with people: Fr. Giacinto Striolo was a man of ecumenism, though there was fierce competition between missionaries of different Christian denominations. As a Catholic priest, Fr. Giacinto Striolo attended the ceremony of the opening of the

Nazarene hospital in Bremersdorp in August, 1927¹⁶². At Hlatikhulu Fr. Giacinto Striolo became so popular that the livestock inspector, Mr. Fitzpatrick, used to give him his car whenever the priest wanted to travel long distances. In fact on 17 May, 1934 Fr. Giacinto Striolo went to St. Philip's mission in Mr. Fitzpatrick's car. Nevertheless, Fr. Giacinto Striolo enjoyed walking long distances on foot. On one occasion he was about to set out on foot from Hlatikhulu to Mzimpofo, a distance of about a hundred kilometres, when a man driving a lorry gave him a lift up to Hhelehhele; from there he walked four kilometres to Mzimpofo. Fr. Michael Ramsay took him back to Hlatikhulu in a car. Mr. Serra, a resident at Sulphur Springs, might have been a prosperous businessman; he offered generous hospitality to Fr. Giacinto Striolo. Though there is no evidence of an outstation being established at Sulphur Springs, Fr. Giacinto Striolo might have felt, as he left, that his visit had not been a hopeless failure. Mr. Serra, who donated poles to be used at Makhosini by Fr. Giacinto Striolo for building a school, could not know then that, in a few years to come, Sulphur Springs itself would attract missionaries.

Despite his commitments, Fr. Giacinto Striolo was amongst the priests who went to Heidelberg to participate in the opening of a mission on 16 September, 1934. The main celebrant at that ceremony was Bishop O'Leary of Johannesburg. The visit by Fr. Gerardo Galandi on 22 April, 1935 was one of the examples of the existing bonds of friendship between the missionaries. Fraternity was considered to be the key value by missionaries in those days. It helped to nurture the spirit of cooperation amongst them.

c. Building a church: In September, 1934 Bro. Elia was transferred from St.

¹⁶². Constantino Barneschi, *unpublished English text of Chronicles of St. Joseph's Mission*, January 1924 to December 1929, Mzimpofo, 1929.

Peregrine's mission to Christ the King mission; hitherto Fr. Giacinto Striolo had been living alone at Hlatikhulu. The arrival of Bro. Elia was indeed a great help to the zealous missionary of the south.

Helped by Fr. Giacinto Striolo and some lay people, Bro. Elia started building a church at Christ the King, in October 1934. Water was vital for the survival of the mission. In October 1935, Fr. Norbeto Signori, who was stationed in Heidelberg, came to Christ the King mission with a Pallotine brother, Luke, after having been asked by Fr. Giacinto Striolo to come and measure the amount of water in the ground of the mission. They discovered plenty of water a hundred feet underground.

The building of the church of Christ the King was often interrupted due to the fact that Bro. Elia would go to Hluti to inspect the building of the convent of the Servite Sisters of Pistoia, but the dedication of this church eventually took place on 25 October, 1936¹⁶³.

d. Promotion of Catholic Culture: In spite of the long distances he had to travel, in his spare time Fr. Giacinto Striolo would organise people and prepare in advance solemn celebrations of the Nativity of the Lord, Epiphany, Easter, All Saints and the feast of the Christ the King, which latter was very meaningful to the mission since it was dedicated to Christ the King. An average of two hundred people would participate at such celebrations. Latin hymns would be learnt by them. As the day of the solemnity or feast drew near Christians from distant outstations of Christ the King would begin converging at Hlatikhulu, thus giving impetus to the atmosphere of intense religiosity that became

¹⁶³. Giacinto Striolo, *Cronaca della missione di Cristo Re dal 17 maggio a novembre 1936*, Christ the King Mission, Hlatikhulu, 1936.

conspicuous in the symbols Catholics were using to express their belief. In most cases they would be envied by the Protestant pastors.

Education was one of the areas in which Fr. Giacinto Striolo had a keen interest. Earlier on, it was seen how he became involved in the building of the school at Makhosini. Almost every week, Fr. Giacinto Striolo would visit schools that belonged to Christ the King mission in order to solve the problems they were faced with and also to give moral support to the staff.

Fr. Giacinto Striolo went to Bremersdorp to ask the Congregation of the Dominican Sisters to come and teach at the Christ the King mission. Two days later, that is, on the 9 November, 1935, accompanied by Fr. Giacinto Striolo, the Mother General of the Dominican Sisters visited Christ the King mission. On 20 February, 1935 when St. Michael's school at Mahamba had lost its teacher, Fr. Giacinto Striolo succeeded in arranging for a Miss Gama from Mbabane to come down to Mahamba to teach.

e. First Canonical Visitation: The Prefect Apostolic of Swaziland, Mons. Romauldo Migliorini, paid his first Canonical visitation to Christ the King mission in 1936, the main purpose of which was to study the mission and discuss its problems. The visit lasted two days and coincided with the celebration of Pentecost. This comes as no surprise since it was customary for the prefect apostolic to celebrate a Pontifical Mass of the Solemnity of Pentecost in one of the missions of his prefectures. Such practice was intended to enable Catholics to have a glimpse of a Pontifical Mass at least once in their lifetime.

During the eve of Pentecost, a solemn Benediction was held in the church which was full of Christians: mostly students belonging to Christ the King mission. There was

also a good number who came from different outstations.

During the day of Pentecost two Holy Masses were celebrated: the second one was *Missa cantata* (sung Mass) celebrated by Fr. Giacinto Striolo. An unprecedented number of more than three hundred people attended it. During Mass, eleven people were baptised. Thirty seven Africans and two Whites received the Sacrament of Confirmation. The Mass concluded with a solemn Benediction. In the afternoon and in the evening there was a display and a concert by the school children. At the end of the Canonical visitation, the prefect apostolic expressed his joy and thanked Fr. Giacinto Striolo for the great deal of work he had done in the mission during the period of two years.

(iv) Growth of the mission

The first half of 1930's was seen many as a period of great expansion for the Order of the Servants of Mary in southern Africa. More church buildings were constructed in that period of time. The relations between Church and State received a major boost. In fact the Prefect Apostolic of Swaziland participated in the birthday celebration of King Sobhuza II in 1934, which was held at the Swazi National School at Matsapha. Mons. Romauldo Migliorini was seated amongst important guests¹⁶⁴.

The most important fact to mention is that friars of the Order began sending friars across the Swaziland border. St. Philip's mission, like any other mission that was developing rapidly, needed a clinic. Many people had to travel long distances to receive medical attention. A moment of joy was experienced by the people of Mhlatuze when

¹⁶⁴. Times of Swaziland, *King's Birthday*, 7 June, 1934, «.....His Honour the Resident Commissioner, Mr. T. Ainsworth Dickson C.M.G., M.C; the Deputy Resident Commissioner, Mr. A.G Marwick, O.B.E; the Government Secretary, Mr. J.R Armstrong; the Assistant Commissioner Central District, Mr. S.B William; Principal of the Swazi national School, Rev. G.E.P Broderick, B.Sc.; the Minister at Mahamba, Rev. Robinson and others», p. 3.

Bro. Raimondo Dal Magro started building a clinic in September 1936⁶⁵. In August 1936, Bro. Paolo Bruciafreddo was busy making furniture for the sisters at Hluff⁶⁶. One could say that the building of a clinic at Mhlatuze and a sisters' convent at Hluti resulted from the zeal the friars and the sisters had for missionary work. Let us look at the two communities that were opened by the friars at Heidelberg and Sulphur Springs, South Africa in the early 1930's.

a. Heidelberg: When the prior general of the Order of the Servants of Mary, Fr. Austin Moore, visited Swaziland in 1931 he realised that Swaziland was very far from Johannesburg, one of the main gateways to southern Africa.

In his endeavour to establish a Catholic mission near Johannesburg, he asked the then Catholic Vicariate of Transvaal to allow the Order of the Servants of Mary of Swaziland to open a house at Heidelberg near Johannesburg. After permission was granted by the Vicariate, an Italian missionary belonging to the Order of the Servants of Mary, Fr. Agostino Botta who has been working in Swaziland received obedience from the Prefect apostolic in Swaziland, Mons. Migliorini to suspend his missionary activity in Swaziland and go to Heidelberg. When Fr. Agostino Botta arrived at Heidelberg in 1932, he found Catholic families who had been served mainly by Oblate Fathers⁶⁷. Fr. Agostino Botta served the European and the African communities at Heidelberg town and the surrounding areas.

¹⁶⁵. *Chronicles of SS.ma Annunziata*, Florence mission, Luvu, 1936 - 1939.

¹⁶⁶. *Chronicles of SS.ma Annunziata*, Florence mission, Luvu, 1936 - 1939.

¹⁶⁷. unedited notes from De Statu Animarum European congregation, Heidelberg Transvaal, [page 2]

With the help of the Order of the Servants of Mary, a priests' house, to be used by Fr. Agostino Botta and his confreres Bro. Martin, and Bro. Roberto¹⁶⁸, was built at stand n453 in Hospital street, Heidelberg. After its completion it was blessed by the Bishop of Johannesburg, Mons. D. O'Leary, on 16 September, 1934 and the church was dedicated to Our Lady of Graces¹⁶⁹. The Venetian province under the leadership of Fr. Alfonso Bennetti sent Fr. Patrick Nolan (who was the oldest friar in the Order until his death in February 1998 at the age of 95 years) together with the other friars to the Catholic parish of Our Lady of Graces at Heidelberg in 1935.

A few years later, Monte Berico and Our Lady of Sorrows missions were opened at Nigel, which is why most official documents consider 1935 to be the foundation year of the communities of the Order of the Servants of Mary in the Transvaal province. After the return of Fr. Agostino Botta to Swaziland on 18 June, 1936, Fr. Noberto Signori became pastor at Heidelberg¹⁷⁰.

The former provincial of the Venetian province, Fr. Alfonso Bennetti who had become prior general of the Order of the Servants of Mary and who was on canonical visitation to the communities in Swaziland, visited Heidelberg in April 1939¹⁷¹. The presence of the Order of the Servants of Mary in Transvaal generated some enthusiasm,

¹⁶⁸. Agostino Botta, 1933, in *Le Missioni dei Servi di Maria*, anno 7, n42, (Rome: San Marcello), February, 1934, p. 31.

¹⁶⁹. unedited notes from *De Statu Animarum European congregation*, Heidelberg Transvaal, [page 4]

¹⁷⁰. unedited notes from *De Statu Animarum European congregation*, Heidelberg Transvaal, [page 4]

¹⁷¹. unedited notes from *De Statu Animarum European congregation*, Heidelberg Transvaal, [page 10]

especially amongst African Catholics, to found a Confraternity of the Seven Sorrows (Dolores)¹⁷² whose origins can be traced to 1645 in Europe when Pope Urban VIII granted permission to the general of the Order to erect the Confraternity of the Seven Sorrows in 1645¹⁷³.

The Confraternity, which was founded by seven women on 2 July, 1939, became popular amongst the African congregation of Our Lady of Graces parish; its members received Holy Communion every Friday and recited the rosary of Our Lady of Sorrows. Their apostolate consisted in assisting a priest when visiting the sick and performing other charitable duties¹⁷⁴. Due to the work carried out by the missionaries on the Order of the Servants of Mary, many people embraced the Catholic faith.

b. Sulphur Springs: Mons. Romauldo Migliorini went to Sulphur Springs with Fr. Gerardo Galandi to see the property in August, 1936. On this mission, they were also accompanied by Bro. Giovanni Ponti as the driver and Bro. Emilio Giacomozzi. Leaving behind Bro. Emilio Giacomozzi who had to look after the property, they crossed the border into Swaziland and spent the night at Hlatikhulu; the next morning they left from Bremersdorp. After a week, Mons. Romauldo Migliorini passed Sulphur Springs on his way to Durban, travelling with Fr. Giovanni Cattoci. On his way from Durban on 21 August he spent a night at Hluti. Early in the morning on the following day he left for St. Philip's mission. He met Bro. Raimondo Dal Magro who was on his way to Hluti and they

¹⁷². from Transvaal Vicariate Annual Statistics, June 1946, Germiston.

¹⁷³. F. Faustini, O. Dias & V. Benassi, *A Short History of the Servite Order*, Rome: General Secretariat for the Servite Missions, 1997, p. 158.

¹⁷⁴. from De Statu Animarum Native congregation, [page 9.]

discussed the project at Sulphur Springs. As a result, Bro. Raimondo Dal Magro was given orders to go to Sulphur Springs.

On 23 August 1936, Bro. Raimondo Dal Magro left Hluti with Fr. Gerardo Galandi for Sulphur Springs where they met Fr. Giovanni Cattoci who left the town for Hluti on a bus two days later. We ought to mention that Bro. Raimondo Dal Magro and Fr. Gerardo Galandi never spent a night at Sulphur Springs. Seemingly, they might have gone there to gain an idea of the situation. This is borne out by the fact that when Fr. Gerardo Galandi returned to Hluti he made comprehensive preparations for his departure for Sulphur Springs and on 27 August, 1936 set out for there, becoming the first friar of the Order of the Servants of Mary to take up residence there.

Since there was need of a brother who could help with ploughing the fields of the mission, Bro. Raimondo Dal Magro was eventually approached by Mons. Romauldo Migliorini, and asked to go and stay with Fr. Gerardo Galandi. His stay at Sulphur Springs was intermittent, though: often he would be asked to go to Swaziland to carry out some work.

In the meantime, Mons. Romauldo Migliorini proposed to buy a tractor. In a very short period of time, a tractor was bought and ferried by a train to the station at Moolmam, outside Sulphur Springs. Bro. Raimondo Dal Magro and Bro. Emilio Giacomozzi went to the railway station to fetch it on 1 September, 1936. It took them six hours to drive it from Moolman station to the mission at Sulphur Springs. The distance between the two places was nineteen miles.

Other developments included the purchase of six oxen to be used for farming on 7 October, 1936. On 8 October 1936 Mons. Romauldo Migliorini arrived with Bro.

Giovanni Ponti with a lorry full of supplies from Johannesburg. Items on the truck included seeds¹⁷⁵.

An ultimatum was given by the solicitor in-charge of Sulphur Springs to Mr. Fouche, a local businessman, to vacate the land. To his surprise Mr. Fouche started using abusive language, threatening to kill him, fomenting disharmony between the two. The prior took the matter to a lawyer in Piet Retief. After a thorough examination of the situation, the lawyer told the prior that all the disputed land, that is, plots n410, n411 and n412 belonged to the Sulphur Springs Catholic mission. The only thing that belonged to Mr. Fouche was the barley which needed to be harvested on plot n412. Later on, Mr. Fouche left the farm. The friars began planting crops. After a short period of time had elapsed, it was discovered that the friars had mistakenly ploughed on a farm belonging to Mr. Warrington. Serious negotiations were held in order to resolve the issue and it was agreed that the friars would allow Mr. Fouche's flock to graze on the farm belonging to the friars. At last the friars and Mr. Fouche were able to be reconciled. In fact, when Mr. Fouche was building a house behind his shop, the friars lent him a cart and four oxen. This would not have happened if they had not been reconciled¹⁷⁶.

In November 1937 Fr. Gerardo Galandi laboured to develop the mission at Sulphur Springs, which was then one of the potential income generating missions of the Order¹⁷⁷.

(v) Challenges

¹⁷⁵. *Chronicles of SS.ma Annunziata*, Florence mission, Luvu, 1936 - 1939.

¹⁷⁶. *Chronicles of SS.ma Annunziata*, Florence mission, Luvu, 1936 - 1939.

¹⁷⁷. Gerardo Galandi, *Lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Sulphur Springs, Piet Retief, 26 November, 1937.

a. **Typhoid epidemic:** In January 1936 a typhoid epidemic broke-out at Luve and the Catholic school at Florence mission. A medical doctor from Bremersdorp advised the staff to close the school. In fact one of the members of the staff, Sr. Eustorgia De Tomasi was in bed suffering from the very same disease when the doctor arrived¹⁷⁸.

b. **Temporary withdrawal of Fr. Remigio Mucciarini:** The General of the Order of the Servants of Mary received Fr. Remigio Mucciarini in Rome in 1936. Fr. Mucciarini had left Swaziland for health reasons. While in Rome he spoke much about his missionary experience in Swaziland. Moved with pity and compassion, the general of the Order, Fr. Raffaele Baldini, suggested that news on missionary territory should be disseminated in all the priories of the Order of the Servants of Mary in Italy, which in his opinion would encourage the Italian people to be interested in missions. During his stay in Italy, Fr. Remigio Mucciarini was expected to visit all the institutions of higher learning of the Order, including the Studium of St. Alexis College situated in the Gianicolo hills across the river Tiber, which became the Pontifical Theological Faculty "Marianum" in 1950.

Giving talks to students at the ecclesiastical educational institutions was seen as the best way of generating enthusiasm for the missions amongst them¹⁷⁹.

Meanwhile friars in Italy and in Swaziland were debating the future assignment of Fr. Remigio Mucciarini in Swaziland. Mons. Romauldo Migliorini wanted to transfer him (a priest who had worked for a number of years at Florence mission) to St. Mary's mission, where Fr. Michael Ramsay had worked. Unfortunately, there is insufficient

¹⁷⁸. *Cronaca della comunità delle suore Serve di Maria di Pistoia della comunità di SS.ma Annunziata, Luve, 1926 - 1934.*

¹⁷⁹. Priore Generale dell'Ordine dei Servi di Maria, *lettera al Reverendo Padre Priore, San Marcello, Rome, 6 May, 1936.*

evidence to substantiate the claim by many that it was Mons. Romauldo Migliorini who suggested that Fr. Remigio Mucciarini should be transferred from Florence mission to St. Mary's mission. This decision was made known to the public in the beginning of 1937.

The general of the Order of the Servants of Mary and the provincial of the Tuscan Province found themselves negotiating that issue. Nobody had thought that the above issue would involve the hierarchy of the Order and the Province in such a manner. Probably the main reason for that transference was that St. Mary's mission had a smaller territory than other missions in the prefecture. Its geographical position favoured communication: it was seven miles from Mater Dolorosa mission, in Mbabane and St. Theresa's mission in Bremersdorp. Mons. Romauldo Migliorini was emphatically against the idea of keeping the ailing missionary at Florence mission, a mission that had a larger territory situated in a place where any journeys were extremely difficult. His fear was that the pressure of work and the climate of the area could be detrimental to the health of the missionary. Mons. Romauldo Migliorini remained convinced that Florence mission needed a missionary in good health.

Previously, the general of the Order of the Servants of Mary, who had been briefed about the physical condition of Fr. Remigio Mucciarini, had suggested that a young priest who could work with Fr. Remigio Mucciarini be sent to Florence mission; this priest was supposed to become prior and pastor at Florence mission. Unfortunately, the unprecedented offer by the general of the Order of the Servants of Mary did not please Mons. Romauldo Migliorini, who foresaw a danger that the young priest might not be able to exercise his power as prior and pastor in the community where Fr. Remigio

Mucciarini had been a dominant figure for a good number of years¹⁸⁰.

Fr. Giovanni Cattoci, who was at that period of time working at Hluti, would have been a better choice than most priests since he was young and desired to work with another priest. Missionaries such as Frs. Agostini Fagiolo, Anselmo Marsigli and Bonaventure Kathrein had poor health as well¹⁸¹. However, it is possible that the fact that some of the priests in the prefecture also had poor health might have prompted the local superior to avoid appointing a priest whose auxiliary was going to be former prior and pastor of the very same mission. Another fear that haunted Mons. Romauldo Migliorini was that other sick priests would expect him to get priests that would work with them in their vast missionary territories.

In order to ensure that Florence mission continued to function during the absence of Fr. Remigio Mucciarini, Mons. Romauldo Migliorini wrote a letter to one of the priests living at the parish of St. Clement in Siena, Italy inviting him to come and work at Florence mission¹⁸². It remains a mystery why Mons. Romauldo Migliorini was very much concerned about the health of Fr. Remigio Mucciarini. The friendship that existed between the two certainly did contribute a lot to the respect Mons. Romauldo Migliorini had for Fr. Remigio Mucciarini.

The departure of Fr. Remigio Mucciarini in early 1936 and the opening of another

¹⁸⁰. Romauldo Migliorini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Theresa's mission, Bremersdorp, 15 February, 1937.

¹⁸¹. Romauldo Migliorini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Theresa's mission, Bremersdorp, 5 April, 1937.

¹⁸². Anonymous author, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Parrocchia di S. Clemente ai Servi, Siena, 16 April, 1937.

mission in Swaziland meant that some missions were left without missionaries. Mons. Romauldo Migliorini sent a telegram to the general of the Order asking him to send at least two friars to Swaziland. Fortunately, the general requested the provincial of the Tuscan Province to send Fr. Gregorio Logli to Swaziland. Bro. Martino Nagy who was at St. Alexis College, in Rome was to accompany him¹⁸³.

A thirty five year old priest who had just come from Italy without any previous missionary experience, Fr. Giovanni Cattoci, was forced to stay alone in a mission due to the shortage of priests. The company he had from the Sisters of the Congregation of the Servite Sisters of Pistoia did not satisfy him. He wrote a letter to the provincial expressing his desire to have Fr. Remigio Mucciarini back in Swaziland and saying that he hoped he would be assigned to the same mission as him. One could conclude from the letter Fr. Cattoci wrote that he thought that he was suffering greatly owing to the fact that he was staying alone. Because he had lived in a large priory in Florence, it became very difficult for him to stay alone. As a result, on 2 September, 1936 he wrote: «E' vero che la vita solitaria ci avvicina a Dio, ma a volta pero' ci puo' anche allontanare¹⁸⁴. (It is true that solitary life helps one to be near to God, but at times it can make one to move away from God).

c. The treatment of lay brothers and the ordeal of Bro. Giovanni Ponti:

Religious brothers contributed much to the growth of the prefecture. By the end of 1929 many schools had been built by the brothers.

¹⁸³. Priore Generale dell'Ordine dei Servi di Maria, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, San Marcello, Rome, 2 September, 1936.

¹⁸⁴. Giovanni Cattoci, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Our Lady of Sorrows mission, Hluti, 16 November, 1936.

In mid-1929 there were eleven brothers in the Prefecture Apostolic of Swaziland¹⁸⁵. Though they were in the majority they were passive when decisions were made. They were expected to do all that they were ordered to do by the priests. On the other hand the priests would meet and make decisions. Though some of the decisions would affect the brothers, they would not be consulted for their opinions. The total number of brothers and priests put together could not have exceeded that of the sisters. Despite the fact that the religious were numerous they could not participate in the decision making body of the prefecture. The sisters and the brothers had interiorised their position so much that they considered themselves to be inferior to the priests.

The subtle distinction between missionaries based on the Sacrament of Holy Orders paved a way for the conflict between the prefect apostolic and the priests, the symptoms of which became more evident towards the end of the 1920's.

The priests were lamenting their diminishing role in the decision making body of the prefecture. Evidently, the prefect apostolic who was the head of the Church in Swaziland was not heeding the voice of the priests, thus adding another "group" to the three existing groups, priests, brothers and sisters. Unfortunately, in the "new group" he was the only one by virtue of being prefect apostolic. If there had been no distinction amongst the missionaries, the conflict between Mons. Peregrine Bellezze and the missionaries would have been negligible. This is because the missionaries would have been accountable for all their financial and spiritual matters in the prefecture, since they would have taken an effective common decision with the prefect. It is interesting to find

¹⁸⁵. The names of the eleven brothers in the prefecture in 1929: Julius Potrein, Aloysius Da Meda, Antonini, Gabriel Signori, Martin Schultz, Raimondo Dal Magro, Paolo Bruciafreddo, Robert, Emilio Toffano, Boniface Schneider, and Vittorio Serpi.

out that the "group" formed by priests broke up, resulting into two factions. One faction became a staunch supporter of Mons. Peregrine Bellezze. It then became virtually impossible for him to compromise.

Another element that played a major role in widening the rift between the prefect apostolic and other missionaries was the support that the monsignor was getting from his "new friends", the politicians. The Acting Resident Commissioner, Mr. B. Nicholson, C.B.E, D.S.D, and Mr. Stewart, the Assistant Commissioner whom Mons. Peregrine Bellezze had befriended had paid him visits which made him feel important¹⁸⁶.

One of the unluckiest friars in the prefecture was Bro. Giovanni Ponti. Like any other brother, he had very little formal education. His strange personality made it impossible for him to be esteemed by his fellow friars. Other brothers whose background was similar to his were generally doing well. In fact, they quickly adjusted to the missionary life.

A number of letters complaining about Bro. Ponti's conduct were sent to Italy, especially in the mid-1930's when it had been apparent that he would not change¹⁸⁷. It seems as if in March 1936 he was living at St. Joseph's Mission, and by June 1936 he had been moved to St. Peregrine's Missions. In both missions, the friars complained that he was not able to plough nor to mix cement, sand and water to make bricks. Some might find it ridiculous that he could not even repair a chair. Due to his age it became apparent

¹⁸⁶. Constantino Barneschi, *unpublished English text of Chronicles of St. Joseph's mission*, January 1924 to December 1929, Mzimpofo, 1929.

¹⁸⁷. (a). Constantino Barneschi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo, 23 March, 1936.

(b) Giovanni Cattoci, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Theresa's mission, Bremarsdorp, 15 June, 1936.

that he could not learn to do any job, which demonstrates that sending him to Swaziland was a poor decision; if he had remained in Italy he would have perhaps worked as a sacristan in one of the basilicas of the Order. A decision to transfer him to St. Peregrine's mission was provisional: his superiors thought that he would learn some skills from Bro. Antonino and Fr. Agostino Fagiolo¹⁸⁸. Unfortunately, this helped neither him nor his confreres. After this sad incident, Fr. Constantino Barneschi suggested that before a brother was sent to work in the missions he must undergo training or otherwise he would become an object of scorn.

(vi) New hope

Bro. Ladislao Orban and Bro. Paolo Ghiselli were scheduled to leave Genoa for Swaziland on 14 June, 1937. Four sisters of the Congregation of the Servite sisters of Pistoia were to travel with them to Swaziland¹⁸⁹. A month later, they were to be joined by two Canadian born priests of the Order of the Servants of Mary. The two priests were to take a ship at the Italian port of Naples that was to transport them to Durban, where they were to travel to Swaziland by rail or road¹⁹⁰. Unfortunately, due to problems with tickets they had to return to Italy from Gibraltar and they were then expected to leave for

¹⁸⁸. Giovanni Cattoci, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Theresa's mission, Bremersdorp, 15 June, 1936.

¹⁸⁹. Anonymous author, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, S. Marcello, Rome, 1 June, 1937.

¹⁹⁰. Anonymous author, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, S. Marcello, Rome, 22 June, 1937.

Swaziland on 7 October, 1937⁹¹.

Fr. Remigio Mucciarini had to suspend his missionary activity at Florence mission and go to Italy so that he could receive treatment for rheumatism. He returned to Swaziland in August, 1937. Soon after his arrival at the southern border of Swaziland he was taken in a car by Fr. Agostino Botta and Fr. Constantino Barneschi to Florence mission, which he had served for a number of years.

Upon his arrival he received a triumphant welcome. At least two thousand people, mostly those whom he had baptised, gathered at the grounds of the mission to welcome their pastor. There was a great spirit of jubilation; most of the people had not thought that they would see their pastor again. In fact, Fr. Ignatius O'Sullivan, who founded the mission, never returned after his departure. Since the departure of Fr. Remigio Mucciarini from the mission the mission had been plunged into recession: huge debts had been accumulated, so much so that the staff of the mission could barely be paid their salaries. Another event that dismayed him was that his horse died two days before his arrival as a result of a snake bite.

Other missions in the prefecture were experiencing financial problems, so that two missionaries tendered their resignations and went to live in other missions. These were Frs. Anselmo Marsigli and Bonaventure Kathrein who went to Mankayane and Hluti, respectively⁹². Good Shepherd mission was then entrusted to Fr. Gregorio Logli, a newcomer from Italy who enjoyed much cooperation from Fr. Bonaventure Kathrein.

⁹¹. Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana, *lettera al Padre Remigio Mucciarini*, SS.ma Annuziata, Florence, 28 September, 1937.

⁹². Remigio Mucciarini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Florence mission, 23 August, 1937.

Both of them worked with great enthusiasm in the 1000 square mile territory of the Good Shepherd mission, serving more than twenty outstations¹⁹³. Hluti had been served by a friar of the Tuscan Province, Fr. Giovanni Cattoci who was at that period working at Mater Dolorosa mission with Fr. Arimath Gralt who, because of his advanced age, could not do much. Were it not for Fr. Gralt's age, Fr. Giovanni Cattoci would not have been transferred to Mbabane.

The place of Fr. Anselmo Marsigli at St. Philip's mission was then taken by Fr. Filippo Rizzi¹⁹⁴. We recall that Mons. Peregrine Bellezze left Mzimpofu on 25 July, 1929 for Mhlatuze, where he opened a house of the priests in a mission dedicated to St. Philip's¹⁹⁵.

Ironically, the return of Fr. Remigio Mucciarini from Italy did not solve the problem of the shortage of personnel. One of the consequences of this shortage was that Fr. Constantino Barneschi was denied his right to go to Italy for a holiday in 1937¹⁹⁶.

Everybody, including the prefect apostolic himself, knew that Fr. Constantino Barneschi deserved the right to take a break after sixteen years of service in the prefecture. Finally he obtained permission from the general of the Order of the Servants of Mary to go to Italy. The only consolation for the prefect apostolic was that while in

¹⁹³. Gregorio Logli, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Good Shepherd mission, Siteki, 6 October, 1937.

¹⁹⁴. Constantino Barneschi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofu, 12 October, 1937.

¹⁹⁵. Constantino Barneschi, *unpublished English text of Chronicles of St. Joseph's mission*, January 1924 to December 1929, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofu, 1929.

¹⁹⁶. Remigio Mucciarini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Florence mission, 23 August, 1937.

Italy, Fr. Constantino Barneschi would organise mission Sundays in favour of the missions of Swaziland. Since he was scheduled to leave Swaziland towards the end of 1937, it was inevitable that he would spend the 1937's Christmas at sea¹⁹⁷. Photographs and small items taken in Swaziland were to be displayed to the public who in turn would donate money or equipment to be used in the missions.

¹⁹⁷. Constantino Barneschi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo, 12 October, 1937.

Chapter Five

THE VICARIATE APOSTOLIC OF SWAZILAND

A. ARRIVAL OF FRIARS AND THE VISIT BY THE GENERAL OF THE ORDER OF THE SERVANTS OF MARY

On the eve of the Second World War (1939 - 1945), the hierarchy of the Catholic Church as well as the friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary living in Europe were preoccupied about the dangers the Second World War could bring, for the experience of the First World War was still fresh in their minds. Some friars of the Order thought that being in missionary territory could be a good option. As a result, many of them volunteered to go to mission territories outside Europe¹⁹⁸.

Swaziland was one of these destinations. Uncertain about the future, these friars laboured to develop the Church in the mission territories they were serving. A great deal of energy was invested. At the initial stage they encountered a number of problems and their task was to surmount these as quickly as they could, otherwise their mission would be in jeopardy. As the Second World War was drawing near they realised that their prospects for solving the problems were diminishing. The friars became increasingly preoccupied about their inefficiency in solving problems. Some of these had been worrying friars for a period of more than two decades.

Through an unprecedented initiative of the friars, various ways to lead the Prefect Apostolic out of its problems were elaborated. These included: erection of the Vicariate Apostolic, restructuring, debates over the change of jurisdiction, and other methods.

This chapter will consider some of these methods.

¹⁹⁸. Priore Provinciale, *lettera a Romauldo Migliorini*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, 16 January, 1939.

By mid February 1939, missionaries working in Swaziland knew about the canonical visitation by the prior general of the Order to the communities of the Order in Swaziland and South Africa. The general was scheduled to visit other missions of the Order in South America and in North America. While in the United States of America he was expected to solicit funds to support missions in poor countries such as Swaziland.

It was becoming virtually impossible for the Italian provinces, especially the Tuscan Province, to guarantee substantial financial support to the missions in Swaziland due to the fact that Europe was at war. The crisis of personnel was also rearing its head.

In 1939 the general of the Order of the Servants of Mary, Fr. A. Benetti, visited Swaziland. He also visited the two houses of the Order in Heidelberg and Nigel, South Africa. On his way back from the canonical visitations in Africa and in the Americas, the general of the Order stopped at Firenze where he met the provincial of the Tuscan Province. They discussed the life of the Order in Swaziland and the difficulties the Order was experiencing in Swaziland due to the lack of funds and personnel. After a lengthy discussion, the two concluded that the jurisdiction of the mission of Swaziland from the Tuscan Province should be transferred to the Order of the Servants of Mary where the jurisdiction previously belonged. They resolved that the best thing to do was to encourage the entire Order to support Swaziland financially and also with personnel.

B. CONSTANTINO BARNESCHI, FIRST BISHOP OF SWAZILAND

Born at Foiano della Chiana near Arezzo, Italy on 24 June, 1892 and entering the Order of the Servants of Mary, Fr. Constantino Barneschi was destined to become one of the leaders of the Church in Swaziland. In 1923 he went to Swaziland and died on 27 January, 1965 at a hospital in Vicenza, Italy at the age of eighty¹⁹⁹.

In the late 1930's, after having spent many years working in Swaziland, he

¹⁹⁹. Gabriel Roschini, IN Galleria Servitana, Vol. II, *Religiosi illustri dell'Ordine dei Servi di Maria dal 1933 al 1976*, Pontificia Teologica "Marianum", Rome, 1976, p. 93 -96.

obtained permission from his superiors to go to Italy for a holiday; like any other missionary who had worked for many years in Swaziland, Fr. Constantino Barneschi was entitled to pay a visit to his country of origin.

Normally the duration of one's holiday would be four months. Should there be a grave need, there had always been the possibility of extending it by a couple of weeks.

Having left Swaziland in December 1937 Fr. Constantino Barneschi arrived at the port city of Genoa, Italy, towards the end of January 1938. The ship he was travelling on had taken a record period of twenty days to reach its destination. It was not unusual in those days for a ship to take even a month to reach Italy from southern Africa. But due to hostilities between European powers, typical of the era preceding the Second World War, the ship had to sail along the western coast of the African continent. The journey would have been shorter had it not been for the problem of high tides experienced off the coast of Cape Town, South Africa and in one of the islands²⁰⁰.

Upon Fr. Barneschi's arrival in Italy he received a warm welcome from the friars of his province and myriads of people who had come to know him through articles and other forms of correspondence. Those who were rather curious and had heard some fascinating stories about parts of Africa wanted him to quench their thirst for knowledge about what was said to be the mysteries of that continent.

A man of great initiative such as Fr. Constantino Barneschi would not leave Italy for Swaziland without having had a series of fund-raising campaigns through organised conferences commonly known as *giornata missionaria* (mission days). Priors belonging to the Order of the Servants of Mary never hesitated to allow him to organise conferences in their churches or oratories. A huge sum of money was collected in those conferences. The unprecedented success demonstrated that even the laity appreciated the work done by Fr. Constantino Barneschi. It showed that the people of Italy were eager to work harmoniously with the people of Swaziland for the salvation of souls. From that time, generous contributions towards the development of the Catholic Church in Swaziland

²⁰⁰. Constantino Barneschi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Porto di Genova, 23 January, 1938.

started arriving from Italy. A series of fund-raising campaigns was organised by him and the skill with which he conducted those fund-raising campaigns made him emerge as a heroic figure; everybody wanted to meet him. Many appreciated his knowledge of the culture of the people of Swaziland and his zeal for missionary work.

In April 1938 Fr. Constantino Barneschi had not yet returned to Swaziland as had been previously anticipated. Coincidentally, a dialogue between the Holy See and the Order of the Servants of Mary with regards to the future of the Prefect Apostolic of Swaziland was taking place in the very same month. One of the most important issues that were discussed was the possibility of raising the Prefecture Apostolic of Swaziland into a vicariate apostolic.

It was suggested that the leader of the proposed Vicariate Apostolic of Swaziland be Fr. Constantino Barneschi, who had had much success during his missionary campaign a couple of weeks previously. As a matter of fact many would have expected the name of Mons. Romauldo Migliorini, who was prefect apostolic at that time, to be mentioned for the above office. Unfortunately, he was virtually excluded, thus causing division amongst the missionaries working in Swaziland. To other missionaries it came as no surprise at all since the authority of the present prefect apostolic was hanging by a thread. Apparently, there could be other very serious reasons that led to the systematic exclusion of the name of the prefect apostolic from the candidacy.

According to information gathered from the correspondence between the Tuscan Province and the Curia Generalizia of the Order of the Servants of Mary, there were at least two main reasons for this act: The first one was the fact that though Mons. Romauldo Migliorini had spent many years working in Swaziland he had failed to learn the local language, owing to the fact that he would not mix easily with his flock. Secondly, his leadership style did not impress the leaders of the Catholic Church and missionaries in Swaziland.

Incidents in which missionaries would express openly their dissatisfaction about his leadership were common in the prefecture. Unexpectedly the name of Fr. Constantino Barneschi was mentioned as a possible candidate. What made Fr. Constantino Barneschi

to gain a great deal of support was the fact that he had much experience of working in Swaziland. His knowledge of the local language coupled with his zeal for missionary work, certainly gave him an edge over his arch-rival, Mons. Romauldo Migliorini and other possible contenders such as Frs. Filippo Rizzi and Remigio Muciariff²⁰¹.

News about the possibility of Swaziland becoming a vicariate apostolic first spread in all houses of the Order of the Servants of Mary in Italy like bush fire. The news eventually reached Swaziland and caused turbulence as the possible leader of the Vicariate Apostolic of Swaziland was announced. Seemingly, some missionaries were highly critical of the way his appointment came about.

Let us establish that the election of Fr. Constantino Barneschi took many by surprise since in his many years of apostolate in Swaziland he held no significant position. However, there is a fact to be acknowledged that though he had no platform to exercise his power, he did have a strong influence in the Prefect Apostolic of Swaziland. His long correspondence with the Provincials of the Tuscan Province and other leaders of the Order of the Servants of Mary caused him to be listed amongst the most responsible friars in Swaziland, at the expense of others who due to their lack of consistency in corresponding with the provincials, remained unknown though they did possess adequate leadership skills.

With the exception of Mons. Romauldo Migliorini, most friars would have preferred to see Fr. Filippo Rizzi becoming a leader of the future Vicariate Apostolic of Swaziland. A belief that Fr. Filippo Rizzi had all the necessary qualities to be the leader of the Vicariate Apostolic of Swaziland prevailed in Swaziland²⁰².

We recall that when Mons. Peregrine Bellezze was Prefect Apostolic of Swaziland there was a great power struggle amongst the missionaries that ended up polarising the friars, who had become vulnerable. Despite strenuous efforts by the successor of Mons.

²⁰¹. Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana, *lettera al Priore Generale dell'Ordine dei Servi di Maria*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, 6 April, 1938.

²⁰². Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana, *lettera al Priore Generale dell'Ordine dei Servi di Maria*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, 28 November, 1938.

Peregrine Bellezze aimed at pacifying the friars, no positive results were obtained.

It would indeed be interesting to find out how Mons. Romauldo Migliorini reacted to this news. By and large the spirit of "factionalism" that had entered the minds of missionaries some years back when Swaziland was in the hands of Mons. Peregrine Bellezze continued to affect the life of the Church in Swaziland and threatened her growth. On the other hand the hierarchy of the Order of the Servants of Mary and ordinary lay people in Swaziland were happy about the fact that Swaziland would become a vicariate apostolic. The latter never made a fuss about who would be their leader. It is intriguing to find that some missionaries were longing to preserve the *status quo*, that is, seeing Swaziland remaining a prefecture apostolic. We ought to mention the fact that some missionaries, such as Frs. Remigio Mucciarini and Arimath Galt, had the same qualities which Fr. Constantino Barneschi had, but due to their persistent health problem they could not qualify for such a position. The former had a cardiac attack which could have been fatal.

On the eve of the feast of Palm Sunday in 1938 Fr. Arimath Galt nearly lost his life when he collapsed and remained motionless for twenty four hours in his room at Mater Dolorosa Mission. Convinced that the days of Fr. Arimath Galt were numbered, his confrere, Fr. Giovanni Cattoci who was at that time at Mater Dolorosa mission gave him the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Sick with Viaticum. A medical doctor who had come suggested that Fr. Arimath Galt be taken to hospital immediately. A physician who had made a thorough examination of the patient concluded that stress was the main cause of the sickness. In those days, stress was common amongst missionaries since the future appeared rather bleak; the threat of another world war made them restless. The veteran missionary Fr. Arimath Galt had had an indirect experience of the First World War²⁰³: though when the First World War was fought he was in Swaziland it did affect him psychologically, since he was of German blood.

We recall that most German speaking priests had had a rather bitter experience of

²⁰³. Giovanni Cattoci, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Mater Dolorosa mission, Mbabane, 19 April, 1938.

the First World War and his experience of this war had a huge impact on his life: It made him to be the most peace loving missionary in Swaziland. Fr. Arimath Galt would try to avoid conflicts at any cost. His fellow German speaking confreres emulated his example for they did not want the atrocities they witnessed during the First World War to be repeated in their lifetime.

There was indeed a strong conviction that what the Order was investing in Swaziland would one day bring glory to the Order of the Servants of Mary. Certainly, positive things did happen to the Order: The consecration of the first bishop in Swaziland and the elevation of Swaziland from being a prefecture apostolic into an apostolic vicariate during the first year of the pontificate of Pius XII were signs that the Universal Church was very grateful for the work done by the friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary, under the leadership of the Tuscan Province, which despite its problems back at home continued to support Swaziland.

(i) The election and the consecration of Mons. Constantino Barneschi

A telegram was received on 17 March 1939 from Rome informing the missionaries that Fr. Constantino Barneschi had been elected the first bishop of Bremersdorp with the title of Bishop of Tagaste²⁰⁴. Making him vicar apostolic meant that Swaziland ceased to be a prefecture apostolic. Pope Pius XII believed that Swaziland should become a vicariate apostolic. Church officials from across the border and government officials attended the ceremony of the consecration of Bishop Constantino Barneschi. The above appointment meant that Mons. Romauldo Migliorini had to leave his office and he was scheduled to leave for Italy on 25 April, 1939²⁰⁵. When Mons. Romauldo Migliorini left Swaziland for Italy his health had greatly deteriorated. The provincial was happy about his return to Italy and wanted to make him a spiritual director of students and lay brothers studying at one of the institutions of the Order at La Poggerina²⁰⁶. La Poggerina was

²⁰⁴. *Chronicles of SS.ma Annunziata*, Florence Mission, Luve, 1936 - 1939.

²⁰⁵. *Chronicles of SS.ma Annunziata*, Florence Mission, Luve, 1936 - 1939.

²⁰⁶. Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana, *lettera a Constantino Barneschi*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, 3 June, 1939.

probably a good choice, though Mons. Romauldo Migliorini had previously indicated that he wanted to stay at Viareggio, one of the Tyrian sea cities in Italy.

The consecration of Bishop Constantino Barneschi took place on a Sunday at St. Joseph's mission. The main celebrant was the Apostolic Delegate to South Africa, His Excellency Archbishop Gijlswijk. Bishop Dellale of Natal and Bishop D. O'Leary of Johannesburg were the co-consecrators. Other bishops present at the ceremony were T. Spreiter of Zululand; Fleischer of Mariannhill and T. de Gouveia of Lourenço Marques.

The creation of the Vicariate Apostolic of Swaziland increased the workload of the missionaries of the Order of the Servants of Mary as missionary territories outside Swaziland, such as Tongoland and Piet Retief, were formally incorporated into the Apostolic Vicariate of Swaziland. Everybody was lamenting the shortage of priests. The situation was further worsened by the departure of Fr. Barolet, another priest, and a lay brother for Italy in June 1939.

Fr. Barolet had left the port of Genoa, Italy for Durban together with Fr. Gerardo Joannisse in 1937. The total fare for the two priest was five thousand three hundred and fourty eight Italian Lire²⁰⁷.

Young priests did not want to stay at Our Lady of Sorrows mission, Hluti where a big college for Coloured students had been opened by the Servite Sisters of Pistoia. Hitherto the mission at Hluti had been served by four priests, namely: Frs. Geraldo Galandi, Giovanni Cattoci, Gregorio Logli and Canisio Wieser. The last-mentioned was born near Innsbruck, Austria on 10 November 1904. In 1932 he volunteered to be sent to the Prefecture Apostolic of Swaziland. While in Swaziland he was a great help to Fr. Arimath Galt. Fr. Canisio Wieser died on 26 April in 1946 of stomach cancer²⁰⁸.

In June 1939 Fr. Canisio Wieser was threatening to move away from the mission. St. Joseph's mission was, however, blessed with the arrival of a dynamic young priest, Fr.

²⁰⁷. SS.ma Annunziata, *Nota delle spese fatte per i padri missionari: Joannisse e Barolet*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, 10 October, 1937.

²⁰⁸. Gabriel Roschini, IN Galleria Servitana, Vol. II, *Religiosi illustri dell'Ordine dei Servi di Maria dal 1933 al 1976*, Pontificia Teologica "Marianum", Rome, 1976.

Giovanni Cattoci. It was indeed a blessing to a big mission such as St. Joseph's which had a relatively high Catholic population. Fr. Gerard Joannisse was sent to Mariannahill where he attended a special course²⁰⁹. The general of the Order promised the provincial that he would also do his level best to help Swaziland. We have seen earlier on in our discussion that there existed strong collaboration between the Tuscan Province and the General Curia of the Order of the Servants of Mary. It is also interesting to find out that the Bishop of the Apostolic Vicariate of Swaziland, Bishop Constantino Barneschi, was always in touch with the general of the Order. At one stage he tried to influence the general so that Fr. Remigio Mucciarini could be nominated local religious superior of Swaziland. In his letter to the provincial dated 28 August, 1939, Bishop Constantino Barneschi acknowledged the fact that Fr. Remigio Mucciarini was suffering from diabetes. In his opinion, this kind of sickness was not going to yield negative effects should he be nominated local religious superior, as he was a very good administrator. Bishop Constantino Barneschi wrote: "La ragione poi per cui io credo sarebbe bene che fosse eletto il R.P.M. Mucciarini é perch  é un bravo amministratore,..". (The reason why I believe that it would be better to elect Fr. Mucciarini is that he is a good administrator²¹⁰)

(ii) Election of Fr. Rizzi

The missionaries working in Swaziland were anxiously waiting for the appointment of a local religious superior, who would be a legal representative of the provincial of the Tuscan Province, to which the mission of Swaziland had been transferred. Seemingly, there were two likely candidates for that position: Fr. Remigio Mucciarini and Fr. Filippo Rizzi. Most of them did not want Fr. Remigio Mucciarini to be elected local religious superior.

Fr. Remigio Mucciarini was feared because of his strong character. The only missionary who was positive about the election of Fr. Remigio Mucciarini was Bishop

²⁰⁹. Tommaso Banci, *Lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Our Lady of Sorrows Mission, Hluti, 2 February, 1940.

²¹⁰. Constantino Barneschi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo, 28 August, 1939.

Constantino Barneschi²¹¹, who had recently become the leader of the Vicariate Apostolic of Swaziland and who wanted a man of Mucciarini's calibre to move to a higher position so that both of them could work towards the development of the Vicariate Apostolic of Swaziland. Bishop Constantino Barneschi wrote letters to the general of the Order and the provincial of the Tuscan Province suggesting that Fr. Remigio Mucciarini be appointed local religious superior²¹².

In a letter sent to the General of the Order of the Servants of Mary by the Provincial of the Tuscan Province we learn that the Provincial might have been influenced by the General to see to it that Fr. Filippo Rizzi was elected local religious superior. One of the reasons why the two wanted Fr. Filippo Rizzi to be appointed was that he was thought to have skills to promote harmony amongst the missionaries²¹³.

Unfortunately things did not go the way Fr. Filippo Rizzi wanted them to go. Towards the end of 1939, Fr. Filippo Rizzi was elected local religious superior of the Tuscan Province in Swaziland. A letter announcing the nomination of Fr. Filippo Rizzi to the office of local religious superior of the mission of the Servants of Mary in Swaziland was sent to Swaziland by the provincial of the Tuscan Province residing in Florence, Italy²¹⁴.

The election of Fr. Filippo Rizzi brought some hope to the prefecture whose ailing economy threatened its development. Since Fr. Filippo Rizzi was appointed by the friars of the Tuscan Province living in Italy, there was some hope that the friars of the Tuscan Province would offer him invaluable support. The prefecture needed a great deal of

²¹¹. Constantino Barneschi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofu, 28 November, 1939.

²¹². Constantino Barneschi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofu, 17 May, 1939.

²¹³. Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana, *lettera al Priore Generale dell'Ordine dei Servi di Maria*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, 21 November, 1939.

²¹⁴. Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana, *lettera a l'Eccellenza*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, 19 December, 1939.

foreign aid. This gesture of the Tuscan Province could have been interpreted as the renewed commitment by the Tuscan Province to help the mission in Swaziland. The general of the Order of the Servants of Mary had been briefed about the appointment of Fr. Filippo Rizzi, who was scheduled to meet the provincial of the Tuscan Province in Siena in December 1939. Among the issues to be discussed at that meeting was the support provinces were expected to offer to missionary territories such as Swaziland²¹⁵.

(iii) Re-organising the Vicariate Apostolic

1940 is considered to be a year of major restructuring in the Apostolic Vicariate of Swaziland. With eleven missions and many outstations there was an urgent need to reorganise the whole structure of the Vicariate Apostolic of Swaziland, so that the missionaries could be in a position to carry out all their pastoral responsibilities more efficiently.

In order for the mission of evangelization to take place, the vicariate apostolic needed to have at least twenty five priests and a good number of lay brothers. The vicariate apostolic had only 60% of the minimum number of priests whom it needed. Most of the lay brothers such as Bro. Antonino had grown old and they could not do all the manual work required of them. The number of lay brothers was declining continuously. The other element that contributed a good deal to the need of restructuring was the limited money available.

In February 1940 Fr. Filippo Rizzi, who had been nominated local religious superior the previous year, was already implementing his philosophical ideas aimed at improving the situation of the vicariate apostolic. By and large he had good support from the missionaries. One of the important factors worth mentioning is the fact that the missionaries asked him to help in transferring the mission of Swaziland from the jurisdiction of the Tuscan Province to the jurisdiction of the Order of the Servants of Mary.

²¹⁵. Priore della Provincia Toscana, *lettera al Priore General dell'Ordine dei Servi di Maria*, SS. ma Annunziata, Firenze, 2 December, 1939.

The only missionary who declined to give his opinion on that matter was Bishop Constantino Barneschi. We ought to mention the fact that before becoming bishop of the apostolic vicariate at one stage he was in favour of Swaziland passing into the jurisdiction of the Order of the Servants of Mary.

It is not easy to establish why he changed his mind in such a short period of time. In his letter dated 12 February, 1940 he writes: "Quando ero semplice missionario anch'io espressi il parere che forse sarebbe stato meglio che il Swaziland fosse nelle mani dell'Ordine..(When I was a simple missionary I was in favour of Swaziland passing into the jurisdiction of the Order)²¹⁶. On the other hand Bishop Constantino Barneschi was busy restructuring the vicariate apostolic. A young priest who had worked in different missions, Fr. Giovanni Cattoci, became a prior at St. Joseph's mission. He had been transferred from Mater Dolorosa to St. Theresa's mission at Bremersdorp in September, 1938²¹⁷.

One of the priests who had arrived recently from Italy, Fr. Tommaso Banci was sent to Our Lady of Sorrows mission, Hluti. Despite the fact that at Hluti the sisters of the Congregation of the Servite of Pistoia had a school, the mission was one of the poorest, and it was the most neglected mission by the friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary. The mission had struggled for years to have a stable resident priest.

(iv) Fr. Mucciarini appointed Administrator

Though Bishop Constantino Barneschi failed to have Fr. Remigio Mucciarini nominated as local religious superior, he succeeded in making him administrator of the Apostolic Vicariate of Swaziland. Appointing Fr. Remigio Mucciarini to the office of administrator came as no surprise since he had the reputation of being able to solve the most difficult problems. He proved his ability while serving at Florence mission. In less than a year, he succeeded in reducing the debts of the Catholic Church of Swaziland.

²¹⁶. Constantino Barneschi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimofu, 12 February, 1940.

²¹⁷. Giovanni Cattoci, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Theresa's mission, Bremarsdorp, 28 November, 1938.

Some of the friars who did not appreciate the work done by Fr. Remigio Mucciarini began to influence lay religious brothers, who ended up making unwelcome remarks about his person. In one incident a brother, speaking with an overwhelming sarcasm, said that the ailing priest, Fr. Remigio Mucciarini was very happy since he was about to liberate Swaziland with his death which was approaching²¹⁸.

(v) Education

We have seen in previous chapters that Bishop Constantino Barneschi had a strong belief in the adequate preparation of young people so that in the near future they could be instrumental in the propagation of the Catholic religion and its ethos. His philosophy made him very much concerned about the quality of teachers in Catholic schools.

The idea of having Protestant teachers teaching in Catholic schools was not welcomed by him, especially during the first years of his episcopate. Bishop Constantino Barneschi remained very suspicious of non-Catholic teachers. Due to the lack of Catholic teachers two Protestant teachers were teaching at St. Joseph's mission in 1939. Though they had no influence on the students, the bishop wanted to give them the sack and hire Catholic teachers. Unfortunately, he did not have sufficient resources to do that. He even wrote a letter to the Provincial of the Tuscan Province asking him to send more money to Swaziland so that the Catholic Church in Swaziland could be in a position to send its own people to teacher training. News about the economic difficulties of the Church in Swaziland spread throughout Italy. As a result the General of the Order of the Servants of Mary decided to summon all the Provincials of the Italian Province to a meeting. The main issue on the agenda was to be the continued difficulties faced by the Church in Swaziland. Unfortunately, it took some time before the General could hold that meeting.

Some people who were very much concerned about the situation of the Church in Swaziland were affected psychologically by this procrastination. Due to the crisis in Swaziland, the Provincial of the Tuscan Province thought that if the jurisdiction over the mission of Swaziland was given to the General of the Order or to the Venetian Province

²¹⁸. Anselmo Marsigli, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Peregrine's mission, Bulandzeni, 26 April, 1940.

matters would improve.

Unlike the Tuscan Province, the Venetian Province seemed to be in a sound position to help Swaziland. This is due to the fact that it had a large number of friars and its financial situation was much better than that of the Tuscan Province. There was a great hope that freeing the Tuscan Province from Swaziland would help in stimulating the morale of the friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary working in Swaziland.

It is, however, important to note that the proposal of handing Swaziland either to the General of the Order or to the Venetian Province came from the hierarchy of the Tuscan Province itself²¹⁹. However, most people might think that it had been imposed because of the prestige a province gains when it has jurisdictional power over a mission in another continent. To be in charge of Swaziland could have been seen as a high achievement given the fact that in 1939 the Church in Swaziland was promoted from being an Apostolic Prefecture to a Vicariate Apostolic. It was apparent that the Church in Swaziland was becoming a diocese.

But for the sacrifices of the Tuscan Province, the Church in Swaziland would not have progressed so far, in less than three decades, which shows that the Tuscan Province was more interested in the progress of the Church in Swaziland than in glory. This is, indeed, a true missionary spirit cherished in the entire Order, especially at the beginning of this century when scores and scores of missionaries were sent overseas to proclaim the Gospel. In schools the situation was so bad that most of the Catholic schools had staff who were Protestants²²⁰.

²¹⁹. Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana, *lettera al Priore Generale dell'Ordine dei Servi di Maria*, SS. ma Annunziata, Firenze, 17 November, 1939.

²²⁰. Constantino Barneschi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimofu, 28 August, 1939.

C. THE INGWAVUMA ENTERPRISE

Perhaps one of the greatest achievements of Bishop Constantino Barneschi was to initiate the work of evangelization amongst the Tonga and the Zulu people of the northern part of the KwaZulu-Natal Province. In the early 1900's the northern part of the KwaZulu-Natal Province of South Africa, which shared borders with Mozambique and Swaziland, was part of the enormous Vicariate Apostolic of Natal, which had been established in the nineteenth century. It was the responsibility of the Vicariate of Natal to spread Catholicism in that region.

Before the outbreak of the First World War friars belonging to the Order of the Servants of Mary and monks of the Order of St. Benedict had been given Swaziland and the Northern part of Kwa-Zulu Natal respectively, which were to become the prefectures of Swaziland and Zululand in the future. The Prefecture of Zululand, which extended to the border of South Africa with Mozambique and Swaziland, and which was given to the Benedictines of St. Ottilien Abbey in Germany was established in 1921.

Under the leadership of Bishop Thomas Spreiter, the Benedictine missionaries travelled hundreds of kilometres, mostly on horseback, celebrating Mass for the scattered White Catholics and administering the Sacrament of Baptism to Africans. The area to be evangelised was so vast that it was almost impossible for the Benedictines to evangelise all the northern region of their prefecture due to the shortage of priests.

The friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary who were working in Swaziland were then invited by Rome to take over the northern portion of the Kwa-Zulu Natal area. The territory where Benedictines were working was definitely separated from the Vicariate Apostolic of Natal and it became the Vicariate Apostolic of Eshowe by the decree of Propaganda fide of 1938. In the same year, the northern part of Kwa-Zulu Natal, which included the magisterial districts of Ingwavuma and Ubombo whose borders extended from the Mkuze river to the boundary of South Africa with Mozambique and Swaziland, was entrusted to the care of the Order of the Servants of Mary of what had become the Vicariate Apostolic of Swaziland.

After the first world war, the majority of the friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary sent to Swaziland from Europe were Italians. As more and more Italian friars arrived in Swaziland the German speaking Tyrolese friars felt threatened by the presence of the Italians in Swaziland. Apparently Swaziland was becoming an Italian jurisdiction.

A German speaking Tyrolese friar, Fr. Bonaventure Kathrein, who had gone to preach a spiritual retreat to the Tutzing Benedictine Sisters at Inkamana before the outbreak of the Second World War, spoke to Bishop Thomas Spreiter, informing him that he would be pleased if the German speaking Tyrolese friars could have their own house, which would be independent from the Italians who were in Swaziland.

Bishop Thomas Spreiter was happy to hear this, since he was reluctant to send his friars to Tongoland and Ingwavuma for fear of malaria. The Bishop remembered vividly how Benedictines lost many religious because of malaria while they were in East Africa. He did not want to repeat this grim experience. 15 August, 1939 was fixed as the date of the move into Ingwavuma by the German speaking Tyrolese Servants of Mary. Subsequently, the Second World War broke out in Europe and the dreams of the Tyrolese friars, of having their own communities in Tongoland and Ingwavuma, faded.

After the war, 1939 - 1945, the Church in Swaziland which was entirely dependant on funds and personnel from Europe, especially from Austria and Italy, found itself in an awkward position. It did not have finances and there was a virtual decline in the number of friars coming from Europe. One of the important tasks of the missionaries working in Swaziland was to plead for financial support from abroad so that the Catholic Church in Swaziland could survive. The Apostolic Delegate in Pretoria, Archbishop Martin. H. Lucas, S.V.C., in 1947 asked the provincial of the American Province of the Order of the Servants of Mary to assist the Church in Swaziland financially.

Wanting to strengthen the presence of the Catholic Church in the country, Archbishop Lucas urged the general of the Order of the Servants of Mary, Fr. Alfonso Bennetti to send more friars to Swaziland after the war. The Apostolic delegate was also looking forward to the beginning of missionary activity in Tongoland by the friars who were to be sent from Chicago.

In 1946, Bishop Constantino Barneschi, who was in Chicago, spoke about the missions of the Order which were in Swaziland. As a result of those talks, Fr. Edwin Kinch, who had been ordained in May 1945, and who happened to be assistant master at the local minor seminary together with other two friars was briefed about the prospects of having a mission in southern Africa.

Fr. Edwin Kinch was the youngest of the three friars, and he never thought that one day he would be asked to go to the missions. However, he found himself, with other two friars namely Fr. Michael Delehanty and Bro. Timothy Culhane, leaving Chicago on 15 May, 1947 and flying to Rome's Ciampino Airport after having been to Ireland, Britain, France and Switzerland. In those days, aircraft made numerous stops so that they could be refuelled. While in Italy, the two future missionaries to southern Africa met the veteran prelate, Mons. Romauldo Migliorini²²¹. He briefed them on the social and ecclesial situation of Swaziland.

They arrived at Palmietfontein Airport near Alberton, South Africa, on 3 July, 1947 and took a taxi to Johannesburg, the industrial capital of South Africa. Two days later, they caught a train from Johannesburg to Breyton where they boarded a bus for Bremersdorp²²². At Bremersdorp they were met by an experienced missionary who founded St. Peregrine's mission, Fr. Agostino Fagiolo: a priest who had a problem with learning the local language, siSwati; Swazis had nicknamed him, *Fr. Ngeligama lika Yise*, since this was the only sentence he could utter in the local language in spite of the fact that he had been in the country for more than two decades.

Fr. Edwin Kinch was assigned to St. Joseph's mission; Fr. Michael Delehanty and Bro. Timothy Culhane were sent to Bremersdorp; all had an opportunity to learn the local language. In those days, English could not have been used as a *lingua franca* since very few people knew it. siSwati was not taught at schools due to the fact that siSwati grammar

²²¹. F. Faustini, O. Diaz & V. Benassi, *A Short History of the Order*, (Rome: General Secretariat for the Servite Missions, 1987) p. 245.

²²². Edwin Kinch, OSM (first missionary of the Order of the Servants of Mary in Ingwavuma) (Nigel: Monte Berico Mission, 25 June, 1997).

texts did not exist. The only African language which was taught at schools was Zulu.

In order to be able to communicate with local people the American missionaries had to learn Zulu, a language which is very similar to siSwati. Fr. Michael Delehanty used to practice his Zulu by teaching catechism at the Dominican school for Africans in Bremersdorp. Fr. Edwin Kinch who had been taught Zulu by Mother Zoraide practised his Zulu with the young Swazi novices near St. Joseph's mission when he was working at this mission.

In September of the same year, Fr. Edwin Kinch and Bro. John Baldin hastened in a car to the port of Durban, to collect the goods belonging to the American friars after the news that their container had arrived from Chicago. Like any other missionary they had been waiting anxiously for their goods.

While on their way to Durban they stopped at Nongoma near Vryheid, where they met Bishop elect, Mons. Bilgieri who was to be consecrated a week later to the episcopate. It was indeed an important meeting since the two men were to collaborate in the future especially when Mons. Bilgieri would be Bishop of Eshowe and Fr. Edwin Kinch would be working in Ingwavuma.

According to a letter dated 25 September, 1947 the General of the Order of the Servants of Mary in Rome thought that it would be better for the American friars not to work with the Italian friars who had already started working in Swaziland, which is why there was a strong motivation for the three American friars to open a house in Tongoland, South Africa.

The Americans knew that if they left Swaziland they would open a house where everything would be done in an American style²²³. We have to bear in mind that the going to Swaziland of the American friars was the result of the initiative of the Apostolic delegate in Pretoria, who had asked them to come to Swaziland²²⁴.

²²³. DePencier W. Jerome, *letter sent to Fr. Kinch by the Servite Provincial of the American Province, Our Lady of Sorrows, Chicago, 25 September, 1947.*

²²⁴. DePencier W. Jerome, OSM, *letter sent to Fr. Kinch by the Servite Provincial of the American Province, Our Lady of Sorrows, Chicago, 16 September, 1947.*

After the arrival of the three American friars in Swaziland Archbishop Martin H. Lucas paid them a visit. A decision was reached while the delegate was in Swaziland that the delegate accompanied by his secretary, Fr. O'Sullivan and the prioress of the Servite Sisters of Swaziland, Mother Zoraide, would go to Ingwavuma together with the three American friars to appraise the place. Bishop Constantino Barneschi did not go since he knew the place very well²²⁵.

When the American friars arrived in Swaziland they were placed under the local jurisdiction. It emerges from the letters that one of the American friars, Fr. Edwin Kinch, acted as a liaison between the provincial of the American Province and the Bishop of Bremersdorp²²⁶. Fr Edwin Kinch was also the primus inter pares, first among equals in the American group that was in Swaziland. The then American provincial, Fr. Jerome DePencier would consult him before taking any decision with regard to the missionary activities in Swaziland. Bishop Constantino Barneschi wanted to develop the Church in Swaziland so he asked the American Province to make huge donations to Swaziland²²⁷.

Whenever the American Province was sending money to the Bishop of Bremersdorp, Fr. Edwin Kinch would be in fact be told. In one of the letters written to Fr. Edwin Kinch we find that in October 1947, the American Province sent \$ 5000.00 to Bishop Barneschi of Bremersdorp.

Seemingly, Fr. Jerome DePencier trusted Fr. Edwin Kinch such that he did not even dare to reverse any decision made by Fr. Edwin Kinch. In fact, Fr. Edwin Kinch had to send a monthly report to the American provincial in Chicago, United States of America and a duplicate copy of all their expenses and a brief outline of the activities and program

²²⁵. Calkins Thomas, OSM, 1960, *Servites in Zululand*, (un-edited notes), p. 25.

²²⁶. DePencier W. Jerome, *letter sent to Fr. Kinch by the Servite Provincial of the American Province, Our Lady of Sorrows, Chicago, 18 October, 1947.*

²²⁷. Cortney Louis, *letter sent to Fr. Kinch by the Servite Provincial secretary of the American Province, Our Lady of Sorrows, Chicago, 5 December, 1948.*

in Swaziland²²⁸. We could say that the expansion of the territory of the American Province in South Africa was favoured by the relationship between Fr. Edwin Kinch and Fr. Jerome DePencier.

After Fr. Jerome DePencier's term of office many projects aimed at generating income, such as running a sugar cane farm at Mtubatuba and others, failed. During the course of our discussion, we will find out that instead of going to Tongoland, Fr. Edwin Kinch went to Ingwavuma. In fact, while he was still contemplating the idea of going to Tongoland he told his provincial that he was thinking of building a hospital at Ingwavuma, and the provincial favoured the idea. He promised Fr. Edwin Kinch that once the hospital was built a certain congregation of sisters from the United Kingdom would be asked to help in the hospital. All those things happened after Fr. Edwin Kinch had been offered a teaching post at St. Joseph's Mission, Mzimofu in Swaziland by Bishop Constantino Barneschi in 1947. The provincial suggested that Fr. Edwin Kinch move to Tongoland, while Fr. Michael Delehanty and Bro. Timothy Culhane taught at St. Joseph's Mission²²⁹.

On 29 July, 1947 Fr. Jerome DePencier wrote a significant letter to Fr. Edwin Kinch which spoke about the importance of opening a house in Tongoland. The letter speaks about the warm welcome received by the three American friars when they first came to Swaziland²³⁰. In October 1947 it became obvious that the three American friars would leave Swaziland for Tongoland in April or May the following year²³¹. In order to get money for the future mission, Fr. Edwin Kinch began sending photographs of the indigenous people to his provincial in the United States of America, thus soliciting

²²⁸. DePencier W. Jerome, *Letter sent to Fr. Kinch by the Servite Provincial of the American Province, Our Lady of Sorrows, Chicago, 11 July, 1947.*

²²⁹. DePencier W. Jerome, *Letter sent to Fr. Kinch by the Servite Provincial of the American Province, Our Lady of Sorrows, Chicago, 6 September, 1947.*

²³⁰. DePencier W. Jerome, *Letter sent to Fr. Kinch by the Servite Provincial of the American Province, Our Lady of Sorrows, Chicago, 29 July, 1947).*

²³¹. DePencier W. Jerome, *Letter sent to Fr. Kinch by the Servite Provincial of the American Province, Our Lady of Sorrows, Chicago, 18 October, 1947.*

funds²³².

1. Tongoland

The friars in Swaziland were very much concerned about the future status of Tongoland before opening the mission there. With regard to the ownership of property in Tongoland the American provincial, Fr. Jerome DePencier, decided that it should be under the Catholic Church of Swaziland²³³.

2. Ingwavuma

When Fr. Kinch moved to Ingwavuma in March 1948 he asked the American Province to donate some money so that he could continue with his building programme. The estimated cost of the building programme was \$ 10 000.00. He also asked them to help him purchase an aeroplane²³⁴, which if bought would be flown by Bro. Timothy Culhane who had been a pilot, but unfortunately the province did not provide money to buy a plane²³⁵. In October 1948, Fr. Edwin Kinch wrote another letter to the provincial asking him to send some money which would be used in building a school. The school was to cost between \$ 10 000.00 and \$ 15 000.00²³⁶.

Before the end of 1948, the three American friars had opened four outstations at Ingwavuma. They were eager to build a house at Ubombo before one was built at Tongoland.

3. Important concessions

²³². DePencier W. Jerome, *Letter sent to Fr. Kinch by the Servite Provincial of the American Province*, «As I mentioned before, any pictures you can send, especially in connection with your new mission in Tongoland will be greatly appreciated since they can be used in campaigning for funds on behalf of our missions», Our Lady of Sorrows, Chicago, 24 November, 1947.

²³³. DePencier W. Jerome, *Letter sent to Fr. Kinch by the Servite Provincial of the American Province*, Our Lady of Sorrows, Chicago, 24 November, 1947.

²³⁴. DePencier W. Jerome, OSM, *Letter sent to Fr. Kinch by the Servite Provincial of the American Province*, (Chicago: Our Lady of Sorrows, 21 March, 1948).

²³⁵. Interview with Fr. Mooney Alphonse, 11 October, 1996, Star of the Sea, KwaNgwanase.

²³⁶. DePencier W. Jerome, *Letter sent to Fr. Kinch by the Servite Provincial of the American Province*, Our Lady of Sorrows, Chicago, 9 November, 1948.

The Apostolic delegate in South Africa, Archbishop Martin Lucas, S.V.C., wrote a significant letter to Fr. Jerome DePencier on 23 April, 1949 informing him that Tongoland, and the magisterial districts of Ubombo and Hlabisa had been given to the friars of the American Province after a consultation with Bishop Bilgieri.

The total area of the piece of land given to the Order was five thousand square miles. The provincial was to write a letter and declare that he was taking the piece of land offered and would staff it with priests, lay brothers and sisters²³⁷.

That letter was followed by another important letter sent to the American Province by Bishop Constantino Barneschi, in which he declared that he was willing to cede the magisterial district of Ingwavuma to the American Province. According to the proposed contract, the American Province was to supply personnel and means of sustenance in the magisterial district of Ingwavuma. Another issue that emerged from the agreement was that the Servite sisters working at Ingwavuma would become permanent staff of the mission and would remain under the authority of Bishop Constantino Barneschi and his successors. It was also suggested that a new agreement be reached between the province and the diocese as soon as the Ingwavuma district was formed into an independent ecclesiastical district²³⁸.

It is, however, important to mention that Bishop Bilgieri might have been involved in the negotiations between the Apostolic delegate and Bishop Constantino Barneschi with regard to the future of the magisterial district of Ingwavuma. This is because the Apostolic delegate wrote a letter dated 6 June, 1951 to the American provincial informing him that he would receive a «gentleman's agreement» between himself, Bishop Constantino Barneschi and Bishop Bilgieri²³⁹.

²³⁷. Lucas H. Martin, S.V.C, *letter sent to Fr. DePencier by the Apostolic delegate in South Africa*, Pretoria, 23 April, 1949.

²³⁸. Barneschi Constantino, Proposed contract between the Diocese of Bremarsdorp (Manzini) and the American province of the Servite Order, *sent to Fr. Grimes by the Bishop of the Diocese of Bremarsdorp*, Bishop's house, Bremersdorp, 17 July, 1951.

²³⁹. Lucas H. Martin, S.V.C, *Letter sent to Fr. Grimes by the Apostolic delegate in South Africa*, Pretoria, 6 June, 1951.

Though the missionaries were receiving financial support from overseas they thought that it would be better for them to embark on income generating projects.

The friars in the Ingwavuma region were surrounded by sugar cane farmers who were making a lot of money. At a certain stage, the friars therefore wanted to acquire a piece of land which could be used for sugar cane farming²⁴⁰.

The successor of Fr. Jerome DePencier, Fr. Philip Grimes suggested that they wait until he visited South Africa in April 1950²⁴¹. The provincial had promised a month earlier that he would also visit a two acre plot which was on sale at Ndumf²⁴².

By the end of 1951 the number of friars in the Ingwavuma region had grown to nine in three priories:-

Priory	Friars
INGWAVUMA	Fr. Kinch, Fr. Morgan & Bro. John
HLABISA	Fr. Marron, Fr. Hayden & Bro. Nicholas
TONGOLAND	Fr. Delehanty, Fr. Calkins & Bro. Timothy

243.

²⁴⁰. Grimes Philip, *letter sent to Fr. Kinch by the Servite Provincial of the American Province, Our Lady of Sorrows, Chicago, 15 November, 1950.*

²⁴¹. Grimes Philip, *Letter sent to Fr. Kinch by the Servite Provincial of the American Province, Our Lady of Sorrows, Chicago, 9 November, 1949.*

²⁴². Grimes Philip, *letter sent to Fr. Kinch by the Servite Provincial of the American Province, Our Lady of Sorrows, Chicago 21 October, 1949.*

²⁴³. Kinch Edwin, *letter sent to Fr. Grimes by the prior at Ingwavuma, Our lady of Ingwavuma, Ingwavuma, 11 December, 1951.*

D. THE CHAPTER

The Order of the Servants of Mary is divided into provinces and vicariates. These entities are called jurisdictions, and the main reason for the existence of these entities is administrative. Vicariates remain subordinated to the provinces. In the 1940's the Order of the Servants of Mary was already operating in many countries outside Europe. The communities of the Order which were outside Europe had been established by European provinces. Since they depended on the mother province for their existence they were called vicariates.

Though they enjoyed some form of autonomy their decisions could easily be overridden by the province to which they were belonging as a vicariate. By and large all friars belonging to a jurisdiction which is holding a chapter attend it: a major gathering of all the friars of the province.

The Provincial Chapter of the Tuscan Province was held in 1949 in Florence, Italy. In that gathering friars met to discuss issues pertaining to the life of the jurisdiction. In most chapters, office bearers in the jurisdiction are elected; those who have been elected prior to the chapter are confirmed in office. As the chapter draws to the end, resolutions on redeployment of friars, communion of goods, evangelization and on other issues would be made. It is not always easy to alter chapter decisions.

All priories or communities of the jurisdiction, including those in other parts of the world, are represented in a chapter. But due to practical reasons, these communities may be represented by a local religious superior.

In the 1949 chapter of the Tuscan Province, Swaziland was represented by its local

religious superior, Fr. Filippo Rizzzi²⁴⁴. By virtue of his office he was expected to give a detailed comprehensive report on the life of the Church and the Order of the Servants of Mary in Swaziland. As a matter of fact there were very sensitive issues of which he as a local religious superior had to give account, such as the moral conduct, and spiritual, psychological as well as the physical wellbeing of friars.

It is natural that during a Provincial Chapter, friars working as missionaries and those who collaborate closely with them would become anxious due to the fact that they did not know how the new leadership would govern the jurisdiction. Axiomatically, most of those who were affected by the above "chapter syndrome" were missionaries, for issues regarding their future in missionary territories were often nebulous. If one had read the letter written by Bishop Constantino Barneschi to Fr. Federico Aliboni in April 1949 he or she would have understood the above phenomenon.

Overwhelmed by feelings of anxiety and helplessness, Bishop Constantino Barneschi wrote an expressive letter. In that letter he ironically included a Neapolitan proverb: "*passata la festa, gabbato lo santo*"²⁴⁵ (after the feast the saint is forgotten): he was appealing to the new leadership of the Tuscan Province to follow in the footsteps of their predecessors who were generous towards the missions in the Vicariate Apostolic of Swaziland.

²⁴⁴. Constantino Barneschi, *lettera a Federico Aliboni*, Bremersdorp, 8 March, 1949.

²⁴⁵. Constantino Barneschi, *lettera a Federico Aliboni*, Bremersdorp, 26 April, 1949.

E. THE SCRAMBLE FOR SWAZILAND

(i) By lay groups

In the late 1940's a massive movement of friars between Italy and Swaziland could be observed. There was a considerable increase in the number of those who were being assigned to work in Swaziland. Those who had worked in Swaziland for a number of years were travelling to Italy for their holiday. The frail would go to Italy for medical attention, which would normally be followed by a period of convalescence, thus creating a need for more missionaries. On the other hand there was also a considerable number of sisters of the Congregation of the Servite Sisters of Pistoia entering Swaziland.

We need to mention the fact that people who were neither friars nor sisters nor candidates for the priesthood, showed an interest in the Swaziland enterprise. It is at this time that the majority of the Third Order members resolved to increase their financial support for the work of evangelization in Swaziland which had been entrusted to the Order of the Servants of Mary. Others even volunteered to go and stay in Swaziland.

The above movement of friars and goods increased the profile of the Order of the Servants of Mary especially in Italy, and both religious and secular institutions esteemed the Order of the Servants of Mary. International shipping companies such as Llyod Triestino and many others became acquainted with the Order of the Servants of Mary due to the fact that the Order was a regular customer. Obtaining visas for Swaziland and South African transit visas became very easy. We ought to mention that the Congregation of the Servite Sisters of Pistoia enjoyed huge benefits from the cooperation between the Order and these bodies.

For many years, ports situated along the Tyrian sea such as Genoa and Naples were widely used. But towards the end of the 1940's friars also used ports along the Adriatic sea, such as Venice. This is due to the fact that lay people in northern and eastern parts of Italy began supporting Swaziland. Prior to that support, Swaziland was by and large receiving support from the central and the western parts of Italy. The other factor that led to the Order using the port of Venice is that there was a steady growing number of friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary belonging to the Venetian Province traveling to Swaziland and South Africa. We have to bear in mind that most of them were involved in the development of the Order of the Servants of Mary in the Transvaal towns of Heidelberg and Nigel in South Africa.

Friars who had come from Swaziland almost fifteen years earlier had played a major role in the Transvaal, and they were being replaced by friars coming from the Venetian Province. In Swaziland, some friars of the Venetian Province, such as Filippo Rizzi who happened to be in Italy in 1948, played a major role in the missions in Swaziland. Fr. Filippo Rizzi was scheduled to return to his mission in Swaziland on 27 January, 1949²⁴⁶ with renewed zeal for missionary work. We recall that soon after the first world war many Christian missionaries showed interest in missionary work; they were determined to spread the Gospel across Africa and other continents. The same phenomenon happened again in Europe after the second world war.

Within the Catholic Church lay groups became champions in taking the Gospel to other parts of the world. We should not be surprised to find that in the era that was preceded by the second world war a good number of Italian lay people became

²⁴⁶. Federico Aliboni, *lettera a Genesio*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, 31 October, 1948.

increasingly interested in missionary work. Swaziland was one of the places that attracted missionaries. These people had developed bonds of friendship with the friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary, especially during the second world war.

Two young Italian men, namely Mr. Vincenzo Salsi and Dr. Adragna, were amongst the first lay Catholics to have the idea of going to work in the African missions of the Order of the Servants of Mary. Their example inspired other people such as Mr. Domenico Mazzucchi of Bologna and many others who followed suit. Mr. Domenico Mazzucchi, who was one of the great friends of the friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary, desired to become a missionary in Swaziland as well²⁴⁷.

As more lay people wanted to go to the missions the friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary were challenged by the acts of these lay people to reinforce their presence in missionary territory. The above challenge helped in renewing what we could call "the scramble for Swaziland" by Catholic missionaries. Female religious congregations based in Italy, such as the Servite Sisters of Pistoia, participated vigorously in that scramble; many missionaries were sent to Swaziland and the sisters started developing and incorporating new forms of ministries such as nursing, teaching and sewing into their apostolate.

In this period, sisters upgraded Our Lady of Sorrows school which eventually became a monument commemorating the heroic act by the sisters who were able to build a Catholic institute in a predominantly Protestant southern part of Swaziland. It ought to be mentioned that other Catholic religious Orders and Congregations such as the

²⁴⁷. Federico Aliboni, *lettera a Domenico Mazzucchi*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, 8 April, 1949.

Dominican and Oblates of Mary Immaculate could not enter into Swaziland since they were already involved in other parts of southern Africa.

(ii) By friars

a. Filippo Tessari: Bro. Filippo Tessari, who was living in the priory of the Tuscan Province at Filigne, held talks with the provincial of Tuscan Province in November 1948 about the possibility of his going to work in Swaziland. After a lengthy fraternal discussion with his superiors, a decision that he should leave for Swaziland in December 1948 was reached.

The above decision satisfied him and his superiors²⁴⁸. While news about his going to Swaziland circulated in Italy, Fr. Federico Aliboni speeded the process of securing places in the ship for Bro. Filippo Tessari and two other friars. Five hundred and seventy five thousand Italian Lire, equivalent to two hundred and ninety eight US Dollars, was the cost of travelling from Venice, Italy to Durban, South Africa on a ship. Three third class tickets were booked: one for Bro. Filippo Tessari and two more for the two friars who were to travel with him, namely: Ambrogio Mosca and Fr. Giuseppe Vitelli. The latter was a member of the Roman Province of the Order of the Servants of Mary. They were to take a ship from Venice to Durban on their journey to Swaziland and were scheduled to leave Italy on 16 December, 1948²⁴⁹.

Monte Senario is outside the city of Florence and it is the birthplace of the Order of the Servants of Mary, and for many centuries it has played a significant role in

²⁴⁸. Federico Aliboni, *lettera a Pietro Pennoni*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, 12 November, 1948.

²⁴⁹. Lloyd Triestino, *lettera al Segretariato Generale delle Missioni*, Firenze, 25 November, 1948.

propagating the spirituality of the Order. Those who go there feel the urge to sacrifice their lives, as the Seven Holy Founders of the Order of the Servants of Mary did in the year 1233.

Monte Senario has been considered by many to be a place where one could experience a personal pilgrimage before undertaking a very serious task such as going overseas to be a missionary, which was often interpreted as a heroic act. In order to prepare himself for the demanding missionary work in Swaziland, Bro. Filippo Tessari attended a spiritual retreat at Monte Senario, a few days before his departure for Swaziland²⁵⁰.

²⁵⁰. Federico Aliboni, *lettera a Pietro Pennoni*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, 4 December, 1948.

Chapter Six

THE LAST YEARS OF THE VICARIATE APOSTOLIC

A. FR. FEDERICO ALIBONI AND THE INSTITUTION OF THE SECRETARIAT FOR THE MISSIONS

Born at Marina di Carrara and nominated secretary for the missions and vocations of the Tuscan Province in the 1940's without experience, Fr. Federico Aliboni, developed his own philosophy of dealing with people of different cultures, which proved to be very effective. His appointment caused him sleepless nights in the SS.ma Annunziata Priory in the city of Florence, wondering where he would get money for the missions and for the vocations.

His job was the more challenging since during the post-Second World War era the standard of living had declined in Italy. The number of candidates for the priesthood was growing steadily. Much money was needed to satisfy all these needs. On the other hand, the Church in Swaziland expected money and personnel from the Tuscan Province.

The duties of Fr. Federico Aliboni consisted of raising money and sending it to Swaziland. If there were missionaries or volunteers destined to go to Swaziland it was his responsibility to raise money and buy tickets for them.

In this chapter we are to look at the relations between Fr. Federico Aliboni and the people he closely collaborated with, such as the General Secretariat for the Mission, Fr.

Pietro Pennon, the Bishop of the Vicariate Apostolic of Swaziland, Mons. Constantino Barneschi, the clergy and scores of lay people.

(i) Fund-raising for missions

At a meeting of Provincial Delegates of the Order of the Servants of Mary held in Rome in 1946 it was decided that each and every priory and parish of the Order of the Servants of Mary especially in Italy should promote charitable organisations, whose aim was that of collecting funds for missions of the Order of the Servants of Mary throughout the world. This meant that missionaries were given the privilege of obtaining funds from any house of the Order, for example, missionaries working in Swaziland did not need to ask for help only from the Tuscan Province under which the mission of Swaziland fell, but could obtain help even from the Roman Province.

In the past, some missionaries had already enjoyed that privilege for a number of years, though there was no guarantee that it would last longer. The above decision came as a result of the Second World War which had drained the Order of its resources. It was necessary that there be a spirit of solidarity within the Order itself.

Each and every priory of the Order was supposed to nominate a friar whose main duty would be that of presenting a detailed financial report on all fund-raising activities to the respective Provincial Delegate by the month of December each year. These financial reports would eventually end up in the hands of the General Secretary for the Missions of the Order of the Servants of Mary in Rome. All this information would then be inserted in the important publication of the Order, *Acta Ordinis*²⁵¹. We could argue that

²⁵¹. Segretariato Generale per le Missioni, *Conclusioni del convegno dei padri Delegati Provinciali per le Missioni*, Rome, 1946.

the institution of the office of the Secretariat for the Missions by the Tuscan Province proved to be positive.

Fr. Federico Aliboni who headed that office in the Tuscan Province sacrificed a lot of energy in order to obtain cash and material for the mission of the Order in southern Africa. In the midst of gloom, however, there were shining examples of success. Potential donors became increasingly generous, more and more people in Italy were convinced that the aid they were sending to Swaziland was well managed. Fr. Federico Aliboni was intelligent enough to understand that regular detailed financial report needed to be published regularly, so that those who donated money might know how their money was being used.

Let us establish that the income of missionaries in Swaziland increased as a result of this commitment by Fr. Federico Aliboni. The researcher also observed that most friars virtually stopped asking for financial support from their respective prior provincials. That was indeed a very positive development since it meant that every missionary was going to receive material and financial support in proportion to his needs. Another point to highlight is that there was no longer any need for missionaries to travel to Italy to conduct missionary Sundays since Fr. Federico Aliboni was conducting them in his own way. In fact, he did receive support.

Some priories and other lay organizations, such as the Centro di S. Pier Piccolo in Arezzo and other local nobilities of the Third Order that had strict collaboration with the Order of the Servants of Mary, raised huge sums of money in 1949 for the missions in Swaziland.

Missionary centres began flourishing in some parishes of the Order of the Servants

of Mary, especially in the Tuscan Region and their objective was similar to that of the lay groups. Lay groups and missionary centres collaborated well with Fr. Federico Aliboni.²⁵²

The following table shows us how a small group of Catholics of St. Andrea Apostolo in Viareggio and S. Pier Piccolo in Arezzo committed itself to raising huge sums of money. The above parishes are amongst those that had instituted offices for fund-raising known as *centro missionario*.

According to the 1949 financial report of the Sette Santi Fondatori parish in Florence, seven thousand nine hundred and thirty one Italian Lire was raised for the missions of Swaziland²⁵³. Though we do not have all the financial reports, one may assume that some parishes did contribute a lot of money.

The benefactors who were helping the missions in Swaziland had a personal relationship with Fr. Federico Aliboni. The above figures hardly reflected the number of those attending Masses in those churches, for there could have been more people attending Masses. Nevertheless, their contribution was remarkable.

One of the most important points to mention is that Fr. Federico Aliboni wanted all the priories of the Order of the Servants of Mary in Italy to be actively involved in raising funds for the missions in Swaziland. In his opinion, members of lay groups such as the Third Order of the Order of the Servants of Mary had to be involved as well. He

²⁵². 1. Centro Missionario, Chiesa Parr. St. 'Andrea Ap. in Viareggio, *Resoconto annuale - 1949*, Viareggio, November 1949.

2. Centro di S. Pier Piccolo in Arezzo, *Resoconto annuale - 1949*, Arezzo, 31 December, 1949.

3. Sezione dei Sette Santi Fondatori, *Offerte per le Missioni dei Servi di Maria 1949*, Firenze, 31 December, 1949.

²⁵³. Federico Aliboni, *Offerte per le Missioni dei Servi di Maria: Sezione dei Sette Santi Fondatori*, Firenze 1949, SS.ma Annuziata, Firenze, 31 December, 1949.

firmly believed in the empowerment of these lay groups.

According to Fr. Federico Aliboni those lay groups had to take part since they belonged to the Order of the Servants of Mary and they should work for the Order. He suggested that they help in selling five hundred Dutch Calendars, and that the profit be sent to Swaziland²⁵⁴

Unlike other friars whose fund-raising was purely mendicant, that is, it consisted in begging, Fr. Federico Aliboni's innovative philosophy of fund-raising was rather different and it proved to be very effective. It did certainly encourage priorities and lay groups to compete in raising funds.

Another fact worth mentioning is that some of the money raised by Fr. Federico Aliboni was also used in the vocational field. Promoting vocations was seen as a long term investment; friars thought that amongst those who joined they might find missionaries who could volunteer to go to Swaziland.

A decision to send missionaries and equipment to Swaziland was taken in December 1948 by the authorities of the Tuscan Province. In mid December 1948 Fr. Federico Aliboni had the painstaking task of preparing visas and the other documents of the missionaries who were destined to go to Swaziland.

He was so skilful in this task that it only took him a very short time to arrange all the necessary documents for the journey. In accordance with government laws, a certificate of vaccination against certain diseases needed also to be prepared. As secretary for the missions of the Tuscan Province it was his duty to make bookings on the ship in

²⁵⁴. Federico Aliboni, *Circolare numero 1 del 1949 ai tutti i priori*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, 11 October, 1949.

advance to ensure that all missionaries had a berth on the ship.

Perhaps the most difficult task was to solicit funds from different sources including the Tuscan Province, the General Secretariat of the missions of the Order of the Servants of Mary and other places so that tickets and equipment to be used in the mission territory of Swaziland could be purchased. Obtaining funds may not have been very difficult since the Italian people were generous.

A missionary who was to go to Swaziland with some of the sisters belonging to the Congregation of the Servite Sisters of Pistoia, Fr. Marsili who corresponded with a group of Catholic women known as Signore di Ancona, was expecting to receive parcels that included articles of clothing and other household material from the above organization. These parcels were to be shipped to Swaziland in February 1949 by Fr. Federico Aliboni²⁵⁵.

(ii) Difficulties

It was natural for a newly established Vicariate Apostolic to experience difficulties especially in the early years of its existence. According to Fr. Anselmo Marsigli the root of the problems experienced by the friars in the early 1940's was the fact that the mission of the Order of the Servants of Mary in Swaziland was under the jurisdiction of the Tuscan Province. The leader of the mission was belonging to the Venetian Province instead of the Tuscan Province²⁵⁶. Not wanting the missionaries to be discouraged in their work, the General of the Order of the Servants of Mary wrote a letter to all priories of the

²⁵⁵. Federico Aliboni, *lettera a Marchioni*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, 18 December, 1948.

²⁵⁶. Anselmo Marsigli, *lettera a Peregrino Bellezze*, St. Philip's mission, Mhlatuze, 25 November, 1943.

Order of the Servants of Mary in Italy asking them to organise at least one mission Sunday in a year. All the money which was to be collected in those mission Sunday campaigns was to be sent to the missions of the Order of the Servants of Mary in Brazil, Swaziland, Tongoland (South Africa) and other parts of the world. But since the missionaries did not have a common understanding of the root cause of the problems, they failed to adopt an effective way of solving the issues.

In our discussion we shall find out that there were at least four elements that certainly had an impact on the life of the Vicariate Apostolic of Swaziland. It is most likely that death, misunderstanding between the secretaries of the missions, lost goods and language might have been the causes of the problems.

a. Deaths: A member of the Tuscan Province, Fr. Remigio Mucciarini was born in Arezzo, Italy on 21 June 1891, and he died on 23 March, 1946 at Bremersdorp. He had a very strong character, and perhaps he was one of the few friars who were good at administration. However, all his successors at Florence mission, including the actual parish priest, Fr. Stefano Papini seem to have inherited his knack of administration. On 24 March, 1924 he arrived in Swaziland. He worked for many years at Florence mission.

In 1939 he left Florence mission for Bremersdorp, and his place was taken by Fr. Gregorio Logli, who was replaced by Fr. Giovanni Cattoci in 1946, the year in which Fr. Remigio Mucciarini died. One of his greatest achievements was to develop Florence mission. In Swaziland, he was famous for his natural ability to organise missions.

Fr. Filippo Rizzi was born at Caldogno, Italy on 1 October, 1889. He belonged to the Venetian Province of the Order of the Servants of Mary. In 1929 he went to work in Swaziland as a missionary. He first worked at Mbabane, then he was transferred to

Bremersdorp. When Fr. Remigio Mucciarini went on holiday to Italy in 1936, Fr. Filippo Rizzi acted as superior at Florence mission from February 1936 until August 1937. He also spent some time at St. Philip's mission at Mhlatuze. Seeing his dedication to work, he was elected local religious superior, an office which meant that he had to go back to Bremerdorp.

In 1949 he visited Italy and died there on 6 November, 1949 in the city of Milan, and a few days later news about his death reached Swaziland.

b. Misunderstanding between the secretaries: In order to lighten the burden which missionaries had to bear, the Vicariate Apostolic of Swaziland endeavoured to develop itself. Fr. Federico Aliboni had to answer a litany of questions from the office of the Secretariat for the Missions of the Order of the Servants of Mary based in Rome, so that he could be granted *nulla osta* to use some money for the Swaziland enterprise.

We recall a particular incident in which Fr. Federico Aliboni had to write a letter requesting Italian /300 000, equivalent to US\$630 according to the exchange rate of November 1949, to cover the cost of transporting friars, mostly by ship between Italy and Swaziland. The request was unjustly turned down and Fr. Federico Aliboni had to write a second letter giving unnecessary details so that some money could be released. He had to assure Fr. Pietro Pennoni of the Secretariat of the Missions of the Order of the Servants of Mary in Rome that the friars were not accommodated in first class on the ship but in third class²⁵⁷.

²⁵⁷. Federico Aliboni, *lettera a Pietro Pennoni*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, 19 November, 1949.

c. **Lost goods:** A friar belonging to the Tuscan Province, Fr. Federico Aliboni who worked at the office of the mission of the Tuscan Province, had the task of sending parcels to the missionaries working in Swaziland. Stoves, stationery, etc, were amongst the items collected in Italy and sent to Swaziland.

The above items were donated by benefactors and friends of the missionaries. As a result, some missionaries would receive more parcels than others. Just before the death of Fr. Filippo Rizzi in November 1949 parcels belonging to Fr. Anselmo Marsigli were mistakenly given to another missionary. This is due to the fact that on the list of parcels compiled by Fr. Federico Aliboni there might have been an error which led to the redirection of those goods.

After Fr. Anselmo Marsigli was notified about the parcels he was supposed to receive, he became angry with Bishop Constantino Barneschi and Fr. Galandi. Apparently, there was a suspicion that the misappropriation of parcels was a voluntary act. Other friars such as Fr. Banci became involved in this matter, so much so that Fr. Banci even refused to celebrate Masses whose intentions had come from Italy.

A letter requesting Fr. Federico Aliboni to intervene in this matter was sent to Italy by Bishop Constantino Barneschi²⁵⁸. A letter was immediately written to Fr. Anselmo Marsigli by Fr. Federico Aliboni explaining why he had not received his parcels, and he promised Fr. Marsigli that he would receive all his parcels in future.

It is, however, important to mention that Fr. Federico Aliboni was not pleased by the way Fr. Anselmo Marsigli had handled the matter. It is maintained that he had been

²⁵⁸. Constantino Barneschi, *lettera a Federico Aliboni*, Bishop's house, Bremersdorp, 11 November, 1949.

making unnecessary allegations claiming that everybody was cheating him. It was an important letter since it exonerated Bishop Constantino Barneschi and Fr. Galandi from blame.

In order to minimise costs Fr. Federico Aliboni put the parcels of Fr. Anselmo Marsigli together with the parcels of Fr. Luigi Ruggeri, Bros. Antonini and Ildebrando Pallanda. None of the parcels was addressed to Fr. Anselmo Marsigli. Letters describing the contents of each and every parcel were sent together with the parcels²⁵⁹. The above letter was followed by a letter sent to Bishop Constantino Barneschi in which Fr. Federico Aliboni stated clearly that he did resolve the issue by writing a letter to Frs. Anselmo Marsigli and Luigi Ruggeri²⁶⁰.

d. Language: In the late 1940's, Europeans who wanted to enter Swaziland could only be granted temporary residence permits if they knew English. Even Christian missionaries had to overcome this language barrier if they wanted to propagate their faith in the country. Had it not been for the problem of language, Swaziland would have received many Catholic missionaries and volunteers from Europe during the period of the scramble for Swaziland.

The language issue had a significant impact on the number of friars and lay people who wanted to go to Swaziland since its origin was both intrinsic and extrinsic, that is from within the Order itself and from government, respectively.

There was a tendency in the Order not to let those who could not express

²⁵⁹. Federico Aliboni, *lettera a Anselmo Marsigli*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, 12 December, 1949.

²⁶⁰. Federico Aliboni, *lettera a Constantino Barneschi*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, 18 December, 1949.

themselves adequately in English to go to Swaziland, because of the language policy of the government of the day. Those who wanted to migrate had to sit for English examinations at the British consulate before entering Swaziland. In addition to this they were expected to produce a police clearance certificate and a testimonial and other documents to the migration officer.

Being a missionary territory, Swaziland needed many missionaries; unfortunately some of the friars who volunteered for Swaziland were virtually denied the opportunity to be missionaries. The main cause for this was their lack of proficiency in the English language, for authorities of the Tuscan Province scrupulously observed the precept that all those who aspired to be missionaries in Swaziland must learn the English language.

Past experience had shown that it was a mistake to send people to Swaziland who did not know English. English was the basic requirement, but while in Swaziland they would also be expected to learn Zulu or siSwati so that they could be able to communicate with the local people, thus performing their apostolate more efficiently. The language issue was common even amongst Protestant ministers though it posed no serious threat since the majority of them were from English speaking countries.

It is interesting to find that even Italian sisters of the Congregation of the Servite Sisters of Pistoia took the issue of language very seriously. The secretary of the mission of the Tuscan Province, Fr. Federico Aliboni would not accept that a friar who did not know English be sent to Swaziland.

We recall that in the 1930's there was a complaint that there were friars working as missionaries in Swaziland who did not know English, and that some of them could not even learn the local language. It was alleged that these friars spent hours and hours in

their rooms studying English instead of doing pastoral work.

There was an incident where a group of young friars had requested to go to Swaziland but were turned down, apparently by Fr. Federico Aliboni after having learnt that they did not know English²⁶¹. This prudent decision was taken after Fr. Federico Aliboni had duly consulted with the Prior Provincial of the Tuscan Province.

In his letter dated 30 September, 1949 to Fr. Ubaldo, Fr. Federico Aliboni explained the motive for his refusal to allow the young friars to go to Swaziland. He wrote: "Il P. Provinciale date le condizioni delle nostre Missioni che necessitano di personale, S favorevole ad inviarli laggim, pere vorrebbe che fossero persone sicure, e per questo mi ha incaricato di dirLe che ancora li tenga Lei sotto una certo controllo, in questo frattempo intanto Lei li consigli a studiarsi l'inglese poiché senza la conoscenza abbastanza perfetta di tale lingua non possono entrare in Swaziland²⁶²."

Mr. Giuseppe Genovese who lived in Treviso, Italy was very enthusiastic about going to work for the Catholic Church in Swaziland as a volunteer. After having studied the English language for six months he thought that he would automatically be granted a temporary residence permit, and would not need to sit for an examination in one of the British Consulate offices. He was looking forward to going to Swaziland not later than February 1949.

²⁶¹. Federico Aliboni, *lettera a Ubaldo*, SS.ma Annunziata, 30 September, 1949.

²⁶². Federico Aliboni, *Lettera a Ubaldo*, SS.ma Annunziata, "Due to the conditions of the missions, there is a need of personnel and the Prior Provincial is in favour of sending them (young friars) to Swaziland. It would have been better if they had acquired some confidence, therefore, he had asked me to tell you to look after them. You must advise them to learn English language, since without adequate knowledge of the above language they may not enter Swaziland", 30 September, 1949.

He was plunged into a thoughtful mood, though, after having received a letter from Federico Aliboni informing him that before he could be allowed to enter Swaziland he needed to take an examination at the British Consulate in Florence. This meant that if he passed the examination he could go to Swaziland in April 1949²⁶³.

Responding to a letter which must have been written in March 1949 by Mr. Giuseppe Genovese, Fr. Federico Aliboni pointed out that he needed to go to the British Consulate in Venice and sit for an English examination. Fortunately, Treviso was nearer to Venice than to Florence, where most of the language examinations were taken by missionaries wanting to emigrate to Swaziland.

On the other hand those who wanted to go to work in South Africa did not need to have a certificate of English language skills since South Africa was not a British protectorate. In fact, it was easy for Mr. Vincenzo Salsi to obtain a passport since the migration officers were told that he needed one so that he could go and work in South Africa²⁶⁴.

²⁶³. Giuseppe Genovese, *lettera a Federico Aliboni*, Muscano di Travignano, Treviso, 27 January, 1949.

²⁶⁴. Federico Aliboni, *lettera a Giuseppe Genovese*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, 8 April, 1949

B. MALARIA

In the 1940's malaria was prevalent in Swaziland and many people lost their lives. Huge quantities of chemicals were sprayed in rivers, swamps and lakes in order to stop the spread of the disease. The other initiative taken by the ministry of health consisted in educating the public about the necessary precautions.

The Catholic Church together with the other Christian Churches in the country joined forces to address the issue of malaria. It was suggested that water be boiled before it was used. Schools became centres where thousands and thousands of tablets with quinine were distributed throughout the country. Government took an unprecedented leading role in educating the public about this issue.

Though the Catholic missionaries were concerned about the spread of malaria, unfortunately they never mention the epidemic in their writings. It took a number of years for the disease to be eradicated. Had there been an awareness and commitment from the side of the missionaries, the eradication of malaria would have been swifter. This is because Catholic missionaries would have received medical help from Italy that would have helped in combatting the disease.

Owing to the above diseases, the population of Catholics in the country was reduced. Some religious women died on account of the disease. The famous Catholic musician, Jacobina Gama who died in the late 1940's, might have died because of malaria²⁶⁵.

²⁶⁵. *Interview with Sr. Justina Tsoku, Heidelberg, 13 April, 1999.*

C. MEETING OF BENEFACTORS IN ROME

A two day meeting of all Provincial Delegates for the Missions of the Order of the Servants of Mary was held in Rome on the 23 and 24 March 1950 to discuss ways in which friars of the Order could be encouraged to make significant contributions to the mission of evangelization undertaken by the Order.

The above meeting was chaired by the General of the Order. The delegates felt that it was necessary to make impute missionary spirituality to young friars who were studying for the priesthood²⁶⁶.

Following this meeting a substantial donation that helped in paying all the debts of St. Peregrine mission was received from the priory of the Order of the Servants of Mary in Chicago in 1950. The money donated was also used to raise the standard of living of that mission²⁶⁷.

Amongst many tangible blessings of the 1950 Holy Year was the initiative taken by the Italian charitable organization, called Comitato Fiorentino per la Pia Opera delle Missioni dei Servi di Maria, who decided to run a special show on 25 March and all Sundays of April in 1950. The secretary of this organization, Fr. Andrea Dal Pino, explaining its aims, wrote: "The main aim of our Committee is to meet the needs of the Missionaries of the Order of the Servants of Mary who work in the missions of

²⁶⁶. Ordine dei Servi di Maria, *Conclusioni dei convegno dei Delegati Provinciali Pro Missioni*, Rome, 23-24 May, 1950.

²⁶⁷. Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Theresa's mission, Bremersdorp, 13 December, 1950.

Africa..²⁶⁸.

C. PROVINCIALISM

Ironically, the increase in the number of young friars in Swaziland in 1950 caused many problems for the Vicariate Apostolic of Swaziland. Nobody had anticipated those problems since it had been all missionaries had desired that more friars be brought into Swaziland.

Each province within the Order of the Servants of Mary had its own philosophy that determined its way of life. We recall that all the friars who were sent to Swaziland during that period were belonging to the Tuscan Province. Most of them had held leadership positions in Italy. When they arrived in Swaziland they were appointed to high positions such as superior of a mission. As a result only two missions, namely: St. Peregrine's and St. Mary's had superiors who were not from the Tuscan Province. Friars who were not belonging to the Tuscan Province were angered by the above practice. They felt that they were unjustly discriminated against, by the friars of the Tuscan Province.

An important visitor who visited the missionaries in March and stayed until April 1950 was the General of the Order of the Servants of Mary, who had come from Rome. Most missionaries were open with him. Even friars who held major responsibilities in the Vicariate Apostolic of Swaziland never hesitated to share with him some of the things

²⁶⁸. Andrea Dal Pino, *lettera del Segretario della sez. Fior. del Comitato Fiorentino per la Pia Opera della Missioni dei Servi di Maria, SS. ma Annunziata, Firenze, (Il nostro Comitato che ha per scopo di sovvenire alle necessitE dei missionari dei Servi di Maria che lavorano nelle Missioni africane..)*.

1 March, 1950.

they felt about the Bishop, the local religious superior and the superiors of their communities.

Most unfortunately, some friars had already started having negative attitudes towards their superiors, whom they were accusing of "provincialism". The issue of provincialism started surfacing after the Tuscan Province had sent many young and brilliant friars to Swaziland between 1949 and 1950. Not wanting to destroy their talents, soon after their arrival, they were all appointed to the highest positions in the Vicariate Apostolic of Swaziland. This caused bitterness amongst the older friars who had spent many years in the country without any promotion. Those who were affected most by the above practice were friars who were not from the Tuscan Province.

In their desperation they coined the term "provincialism". When the local religious superior, Fr. Luigi Ruggeri, who was also a Tuscan, learnt that the General of the Order had been told that he, together with the other superiors of the missions, were encouraging provincialism he became bitter. As a result he wrote a long letter on the 13 December, 1950 to the Provincial of the Tuscan Province lamenting the situation in the Apostolic Vicariate of Swaziland. In this letter he accused some friars of ignoring their superiors and of doing things for their own benefit.

One of the priests who was very critical of the leadership in the Vicariate Apostolic of Swaziland, Fr. Giacinto Striolo who had been asked to leave Good Shepherd mission and go to St. Mary's, openly protested. As a result he was asked to go and settle temporarily at St. Joseph's mission by the General while he was in Swaziland. Since he was not too happy about his transfer from Goods Shepherd mission his superiors thought the best thing they could do was to send him back to Italy.

The above decision was one of the unhappy decisions the vicariate apostolic had to make, especially at a time when Swaziland needed missionaries who had much missionary experience. The departure of Fr. Giacinto Striolo was indeed one of the saddest experiences in the history of the Church in Swaziland²⁶⁹.

Another issue that needed to be addressed by the Delegate Apostolic and the General of the Order of the Servants of Mary was the removal of Fr. Bello from St. Peregrine's mission after a grave incident that involved him and the religious sisters in that mission. It had been suggested by the Delegate Apostolic that Fr. Bello be transferred from that mission with immediate effect but Fr. Bello continued living there for a couple of months since there was no priest willing to swap places with him.

The only priest who did not object to going to St. Peregrine's mission was Fr. Mosca. There was a general feeling that Fr. Mosca would not be able to carry out pastoral duties at St. Peregrine's mission since he did not know the local language very well. Fr. Luigi Ruggeri could not persuade a priest to go and live at St. Peregrine's mission for fear that the priest might follow the example of Fr. Giacinto Striolo and opt to go back to Italy²⁷⁰. Fr. Anselmo Marsigli wrote a letter dated 30 November, 1950, on behalf of the friars who were not belonging to the Tuscan Province, complaining about the prevailing spirit of provincialism in Swaziland²⁷¹. Perhaps a close look at the situation would help

²⁶⁹. Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Theresa's Mission, Bremersdorp, 13 December, 1950.

²⁷⁰. Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Theresa's mission, Bremersdorp, 13 December, 1950.

²⁷¹. Anselmo Marsigli, *lettera al Priore Generale dell'Ordine dei Servi di Maria*, Our lady of Sorrows mission, Hluti, 30 November, 1950.

one to understand the philosophy of the Tuscan Province; comprehension would help in exonerating the province from blame. The Tuscan Province was one of the few provinces that believed in the empowerment of young friars. We have seen in the previous chapter how young, newly ordained friars such as Fr. Federico Aliboni exercised his duty. It was common to have communities in the province whose superiors were young priests. Being in the hands of the Tuscan Province, Swaziland could not have a leadership style rooted in principles that were not in harmony with the philosophy of the Tuscan Province.

D. A BLESSING IN DISGUISE

(i) Finances

In order to understand the financial statement prepared at the end of 1950, we need to mention that the Catholic Church in Swaziland had at least two separate administrations. By virtue of his office, the leader of the Vicariate Apostolic of Swaziland, Bishop Constantino Barneschi was in charge of all the funds of the Vicariate Apostolic of Swaziland.

As a leader, he had his collaborators and people whom he had appointed to look after the funds of the vicariate apostolic. Since Swaziland was under the jurisdiction of the Tuscan Province, all friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary working in Swaziland were under the leadership of a local religious superior, Fr. Luigi Ruggeri. He also had his collaborators who were termed councillors. The two above entities headed by the Bishop and the local religious superior had a common goal: to develop the Catholic Church in Swaziland.

Most of the money held by the Bishop's administrative office was for the physical development of the missions, hence much was used for the purchase of land and for the improvement of the infrastructure. On the other hand, the money which was administered by the local religious superior was used primarily to cater for the personal needs of friars, for example, retreats and overseas trips.

A substantial amount of it was used to pay the debts of the missions. In December 1950, /448.16 was given to the priest who was working at St. Peregrine's mission, Fr. Bello, so that he could settle his debt with one of the banks. With a great deal of money spent in building and other projects one would have expected the Vicariate Apostolic to be in deep debt.

When looking at the financial report of the financial year from August 1949 to December 1950, prepared by the friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary under the jurisdiction of the Tuscan Province, we find that the jurisdiction in Swaziland ended with a credit balance of /1453²⁷². When studying the above financial statement, we find that

²⁷². Luigi Ruggeri, *Resoconto finanziario dall' Agosto 1949 al Dicembre 1950*, St. Theresa's Mission, Bremersdorp,
"Entrata

Agosto 1949 Dal M.R.P. Provinciale	/1.3.10.-
Dicembre 1949 Dal M.R.P. Provinciale	/38.-.0
Dicembre 1950 Dal Rev.mo P. Generale	/1961.16.3
Totale	/2003.6.3
Uscita	
Spese varie del Super. Reg. durante l'anno 1949	/29.10.-
Aprile 1950. Al R.P. Bello per la sua Missione	/10.-.-
Aprile 1950. A Fr. Raimondo partenza per l'Italia	/2.-.-
Settembre 1950. Farina per la Missione di Hlatikulu	/8.-6
Dicembre 1950. Al P. Banci per la sua Missione	/20.-.-
Dicembre 1950. Al Bello per estinguere il debito con la Banca	/448.16.3
Dicembre 1950. Al Fr. Pietro Coser	/3.-.-
Dicembre 1950. Spese del Sup. Reg. durante l'anno	/28.19.6

the money of the vicariate apostolic was kept in at least two different accounts. Building and other expenses might have been borne by the Vicariate Apostolic of Swaziland since they are not reflected on that financial statement²⁷³.

(ii) Jurisdictional change

A key meeting attended by nineteen friars was held in April 1950, in one of their missions in Swaziland. Explaining the importance of that meeting, the secretary of the friars, Fr. Giovanni Cattoci, explained that it was intended to help the friars to make concrete proposals that would enable friars face the challenges of the last fifty years of the millennium. The friars expressed their desire to continue the work of evangelization in the Vicariate Apostolic of Swaziland with renewed strength. Fifteen friars voted in favour of the idea that the Tuscan Province cease to be in charge of Swaziland and that Swaziland be placed under the jurisdiction of the Order of the Servants of Mary. Only four friars were against this idea.

The main reason why the majority voted to be under the jurisdiction of the Order was that due to the decline in the number of vocations and income in the Tuscan Province, the province was unable to supply the Vicariate Apostolic of Swaziland with friars. The friars in favour thought that the Order itself would be in a good position to

	Totale	L 550.6.6
In Cassa al 31 Dicembre 1950		/1453.-.-"
31 December, 1950.		

²⁷³. Luigi Ruggeri, *Resoconto finanziario dall'Agosto 1949 al Dicembre 1950*, St. Theresa's mission, Bremersdorp, December, 1950.

send friars²⁷⁴.

A few days later, a meeting to discuss issues pertaining to the life of friars in Swaziland was held by the Tuscan Province in the city of Florence, Italy. Apparently, the Tuscan Province did not want Swaziland to be taken away from the jurisdiction of the Tuscan Province. As a result, a hasty decision to send five priests and two lay religious brothers to Swaziland was made.

One could see from the names of the friars who were to be sent to Swaziland that the Tuscan Province was prepared to make an unusual sacrifice by sending the best friars it had in the province because it wanted Swaziland to be under its tutelage.

The above decision sentenced the province to pay a huge price. The names of the friars were: The Italian born friar, Fr. Alfonso Borelli who had worked for many years in Canada and had a British passport: he was the best English speaker in the entire Tuscan Province. The other friars were the prior at Viareggio, one of the greatest preachers in his time, Fr. Girolamo Casalini who was a talented organist; Fr. Camillo Menchini, a graduate of the University of Louvain and also the master of students; Fr. Benedetto Biagioli, a young priest teaching at the La Poggerina College and a newly ordained priest, Fr. Roberto Dini.

These priests were to go to Swaziland with Bro. Domenico Lazzarini and an eighteen year old Bro. Tarcisio Lanari. The latter was about to complete his novitiate training at Monte Senario when the decision to send him to Swaziland was

²⁷⁴. Giovanni Cattoci, *lettera al Priore Generale dell'Ordine dei Servi di Maria*, St. Theresa's mission, Bremersdorp, 27 April, 1950.

communicated²⁷⁵.

A list containing the above names was immediately communicated to Swaziland. By August 1950 news about the coming of missionaries from the Tuscan Province was circulating in Swaziland.

Seeing all that the province was doing, friars in Swaziland ended up withdrawing voluntarily the proposal they had made concerning the change of jurisdiction, for they did not want to undermine the efforts made by the Tuscan Province. In his letter to the Prior Provincial of the Tuscan Province dated 11 April, 1951 Fr. Luigi Ruggeri mentioned that the friars working in Swaziland seemed to have abandoned the idea of a change in jurisdiction.²⁷⁶

(iii) Physical structures

1950 was the year when most of the major building work was brought to completion or progressed at an extraordinary pace. A year earlier two magnificent school buildings had been completed at the Christ the King Mission, Hlatikhulu and Florence Mission, Luve. The convent of the Servite Sisters of Pistoia at Mbabane which could have been finished the previous year was completed in 1951. Huge water tanks had been erected at Bremersdorp, Maloma and Sitek²⁷⁷.

Good Shepherd mission, one of the earliest Catholic missions in Swaziland, had

²⁷⁵. Federico Aliboni, *lettera al Vicario*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, 1950.

²⁷⁶. Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo, 11 April, 1951.

²⁷⁷. Vicariato Apostolico del Swaziland, *Rapporto del Superiore Regolare al Rev.mo P. Generale e al M.R.P. Provinciale per L'anno 1950*, St. Theresa's mission, Bremersdorp, 1950.

developed into one of the most important Catholic missions in the country. Situated in a place where there was a scarcity of water, people living around the mission premises had to walk long distances to fetch water. This shows that any development of the mission depended on the availability of water. In the late 1940's a huge quantity of drinkable water was discovered on the premises of the mission. A borehole needed to be sunk so that water could be pumped from underground. The discovery of water was destined to change the lives of many at Siteki and in the whole of the Lubombo region and prompted the friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary to think of building a hospital. Just like any other commercial centre, Siteki needed one.

The people of Siteki had to travel long distances to Bremersdorp if they needed medical attention. Even the local government was in favour of having a hospital in the area.

Catholic missionaries were looking forward to the building of what was going to be the first Catholic hospital in the country. Fr. Giacinto Striolo, a member of the Good Shepherd community who was in Italy in 1949, spread news of the project while he was abroad. The people whom he addressed in Italy began showing some interest in the venture. Some donated money and some material goods, destined to be used for the development of Good Shepherd mission.

At the end of his vacation in Italy, Fr. Giacinto Striolo left for Swaziland and arrived at Good Shepherd mission on 25 December 1949. After spending a week there, he was transferred to St. Mary's mission at Lobamba. This was indeed a sad experience

since it had not been his intention to leave Good Shepherd mission²⁷⁸.

All the dreams he had about Good Shepherd mission seemed to be heading towards a dead end. The friars who remained at Good Shepherd mission, such as Fr. Terenzio Biondi and Fr. Bonaventure Kathrein, never lost hope. They committed themselves to seeing the project reach its goal.

The first Catholic medical doctor to practice medicine at Siteki was a Polish man. Already in the 1940's he had been offering excellent services to the inhabitants of Siteki; his fame spread across the Lubombo plateau. Some patients would travel from Bremersdorp to Siteki to be treated by this doctor. Meanwhile friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary such as Fr. Terenzio Biondi flocked to him for medical attention. Since he did not have a surgery, Fr. Terenzio Biondi thought that it could be a wise idea if the clinic that would eventually develop into a hospital be built in the premises of Good Shepherd mission.

As early as January 1950, Fr. Terenzio Biondi was already working on the above project. Firstly, he had to obtain money from Europe. A hospital could not be built if there was not a plentiful supply of water. By the end of November 1950, a huge water tank that could hold between twenty five and thirty thousand gallons of water was near completion at Good Shepherd mission. The construction of the water tank had been commissioned by Fr. Terenzio Biondi after it had been discovered that there was a lot of water underground. The Provincial of the Tuscan Province at that time, Fr. Raffaele Tauci was

²⁷⁸. Terenzio Biondi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Good Shepherd mission, Siteki, 24 January, 1950.

pleased with what was done by the friars at Siteki, and he pledged his support for that mission.

Having learnt about the development of a hospital at Siteki, in October 1950, an Italian medical team based in Milan, known as *Unione Medico Missionaria Italiana*, donated a huge quantity of medicine to the Tuscan Province so that those medicines could be sent to Swaziland²⁷⁹.

It is particularly intriguing to find that while the building of a hospital was in progress at Siteki, a college for boys was being built at Bremersdorp by the friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary²⁸⁰. We need to mention the fact that the projects at Siteki and Bremersdorp went ahead despite the fact that much sacrifice was needed. The building of the hospital continued in 1951. Some of the money which was used in building the hospital was raised locally by the people of Siteki who organised a very successful raffle. At least /145 was raised. Special wood for the roof of the hospital was purchased with that money, from Lourenço Marques.

A month later government announced it would give the Catholic doctor working at the Good Shepherd hospital /360 per annum as a salary²⁸¹.

(iv) Hluti

Unlike most of the missions, Our Lady of Sorrows mission was entirely run by the

²⁷⁹. Marcello Candia, *lettera dell'Unione Medico Missionaria Italiana al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Milano, 20 October, 1950.

²⁸⁰. Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Theresa's mission, Bremersdorp, 13 December, 1950.

²⁸¹. Terenzio Biondi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Good Shepered mission, Siteki, 20 June, 1951.

Congregation of the Servite Sisters of Pistoia who established it in the early 1920's. The sisters had power to determine the way in which pastoral work was to be done in that mission. Priests who were assigned to that mission needed to have good relations with the sisters. Also, the mission did not have a large piece of land on which all its projects could be carried, but a few miles from the mission two big pieces of land were being sold. The price was ranging between /400 and /1000. The local religious superior was against the purchase of this land, but Fr. Anselmo Marsigli wanted those pieces of land to be bought so that the mission of Our Lady of Sorrows could have a sizeable place where schools and other buildings could be erected in the near future²⁸².

E. PROGRESS

(i) Education

The high school which was run by the Oakford Dominican Sisters in the early 1950's at Bremersdorp attracted many students from middle class families in Swaziland. As in any other Catholic school, the number of students was rather large. Due to the committed teaching staff, the Catholic School at Bremersdorp obtained the best school-leaving results in the whole country in 1950²⁸³.

Paradoxically, the economic hardships faced by the Vicariate Apostolic of

²⁸². Anselmo Marsigli, *lettera al Priore Generale dell'Ordine dei Servi di Maria*, Our Lady of Sorrows mission, Hluti, 30 November, 1950.

²⁸³. Vicariato Apostolico del Swaziland, *Rapporto del Superiore Regolare al Rev.mo P. Generale e al M.R.P. Provinciale per L'anno 1950*, St. Theresa's mission, Bremersdorp, 1950.

Swaziland in 1950 reinforced the commitment of Catholic educators in the country. They were able to use their limited resources to produce remarkable results in education.

The teaching staff the Catholic Church had were very dedicated to their work. We ought to mention the fact that there was a good number of missionaries, both friars and sisters, amongst the teaching staff. Some missionaries such as Bro. Albano tried their level best to make sure that pupils at St. Joseph's school received a good education. In the southern part of Swaziland, the Servite Sisters of Pistoia also had a school which was well placed to make a major contribution to eradicating illiteracy in that part of the country.

The two American Priests who had arrived in St. Joseph's a year earlier were also working in the country. They were very good educators, and their arrival at St, Joseph's mission meant that the school was going to be amongst the best schools in the country²⁸⁴.

(ii) Annual retreat

Towards the end of July 1950, an eight day annual spiritual retreat preached by Fr. Giovanni Cattoci at Bremersdorp was well attended by priests and lay brothers²⁸⁵. The retreat came at a time when some lay brothers were no longer interested in the vow of obedience. Some friars were beginning to lose their patience with their own superiors.

(iii) Corpus Christi

One of the greatest Catholic liturgical celebrations that originated in Italy, Corpus Christi, was celebrated with great solemnity in 1950 at the Good Shepherd church, preceded by days of preparations. Special Latin hymns that are used when there is an

²⁸⁴. Constantino Barneschi, *lettera a Federico Aliboni*, Bremersdorp, 26 April, 1949.

²⁸⁵. Terenzio Biondi, *lettera a Raffaele Taucci*, Good Shepherd mission, Siteki, 12 August, 1950.

adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, such as *Tantum Ergo Sacramentum*, were chanted by the lay people harmoniously though they never understood their meaning. This reflects the spirituality typical of the era preceding the period of the Second Vatican Council.

A long procession with the consecrated Body of Christ was held around the mission premises. Hundreds and hundreds of the faithful participated actively in this celebration. We should mention that there were celebrations in all the Catholic missions in Swaziland. What was important for them was to sing and pray²⁸⁶.

(iv) Visit by the Apostolic Delegate

The Apostolic Delegate to southern Africa (residing in South Africa) paid an official visit to the Apostolic Vicariate of Swaziland from the 17 to 23 September 1950. The main aim of his visit was to evaluate the missionary progress in the vicariate. While in Swaziland he had a meeting with Bishop Constantino Barneschi and other missionaries. He also visited several missions in the vicariate. One of the positive results of the mission is that it was suggested that the Vicariate Apostolic of Swaziland should have its own *Statutum de Missionibus* (statutes of missionaries), that is, a set of written laws concerning the rights and duties of the Vicariate Apostolic as a whole. Rights and duties of major superiors and other missionaries were also to be enshrined in this special statutum. According to the Apostolic Delegate, the existence of such a document would facilitate the work done by all missionaries.

The Order had two large pieces of land at Sulphur Springs and at St. Peregrine's

²⁸⁶. Andrea Dal Pino, *lettera del Segretario della sez. Fior. del Comitato Fiorentino per la Pia Opera della Missioni dei Servi di Maria, SS. ma Annunziata, Firenze, (Il nostro Comitato che ha per scopo di sovvenire alle necessitE dei missionari dei Servi di Maria che lavorano nelle Missioni africane..)*.

1 March, 1950.

missions. Fr. Luigi Ruggeri had to answer questions asked by the Apostolic Delegate concerning the purchases of those farms: he wanted to know whether those farms were bought with the money of the Order or of the faithful. In answer, Fr. Luigi Ruggeri told the Apostolic Delegate that though he was not sure about whose money was used, he knew that the two farms legally belonged to the Order of the Servants of Mary. Though there were issues that needed attention, the Delegate Apostolic was satisfied by the work which was done by the missionaries in Swaziland. He then left for South Africa immediately after having concluded his visit.

Finally, the Delegate Apostolic gave the missionaries some assurances of the interest shown by the Universal Church and the Order of the Servants of Mary in their missionary endeavour. The visit by the Apostolic Delegate was seen as an occasion for the Catholics of Swaziland to express their loyalty to the Holy See, thus demonstrating the universality of the Catholic Church.

Chapter Seven

DIOCESE OF BREMERSDORP

In January 1951 the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith communicated the news about the establishment of new Catholic dioceses in southern Africa. In its thirty seven years of missionary work amongst the Swazi people, the Catholic Church had been implanting in the minds of Swazi Catholics that preaching by mouth was not only for the chosen few, the ordained, but that none was exempt from the obligation of so living that he or she might be recognised by many as the disciple of Jesus Christ.

The Scriptures teach us that Christians who bear the burden of witness, shall have a share in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that strengthened the Apostles. The activity of the Holy Spirit which was widespread throughout the Early Church was bearing fruits in the Catholic Church in Swaziland. The above philosophy enabled the Church in Swaziland to develop in all aspects of Christian living.

The Catholic Church, as noted above, had been a vicariate apostolic for twelve years; then became the Diocese of Bremersdorp in 1951. Now it is known as the Diocese of Manzini: the new name of Bremersdorp, adopted after the independence of Swaziland from Britain in 1968.

The Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith was only interested in development; it did not really care about the number of priests each vicariate apostolic had. In its thirty seven years of existence, the Catholic Church in Swaziland had built schools, health centres and over and above this was involved in a number of development

projects.

An elaborate ceremony to mark the creation of the Diocese of Bremersdorp and the appointment of Mons. Constantino Barneschi as the first Bishop of the new diocese was held on the feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary on 15 August, 1951, almost eight months after the announcement of the creation of the diocese. This is one of the reasons why the cathedral of the diocese is dedicated to the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The archbishop of the Archdiocese of Pretoria, Mons. J.C Gardner, presided at the ceremony held at Bremersdorp to mark the above important historical event²⁸⁷. Those present at the ceremony expressed their joy. Some of them had memories of the ceremonies performed to mark the growth of the Church since it became a prefecture apostolic in the early 1921's. Nobody had thought that a Protestant country like Swaziland could have become a Catholic diocese in less than forty years' existence.

1951 was a year in which Fr. Luigi Ruggeri, who was the local religious superior in Swaziland, had to solve many urgent issues. His success in finding quick solutions to most of the problems caused him to emerge as one of the greatest local religious superiors in the history of the Order of the Servants of Mary in Swaziland. As we shall see in this chapter, the year 1951 presented unprecedented challenges to his leadership.

On a number of occasions he would be challenged by friars who were no longer faithful to their calling. We would not be surprised to find that some of them were not observing the vows of obedience, chastity and poverty. The decision to marry, taken by

²⁸⁷. Luigi Ruggeri, *Rapporto del Superiore Regolare per l'anno 1951, al Rev.mo P. Generale e al M.R.P Provinciale*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofu, December, 1951.

one of the priests, and infidelity to the vow of obedience by a friar caused him a lot of pain.

Perhaps one of the achievements of Fr. Luigi Ruggeri was to stop what could have become a scandal involving a priest and a young cook who, in the event of the priest being transferred from one mission to another, would also have gone to the new mission where the priest had been transferred and taken up a position.

At one stage, the priest was transferred from Hlatikhulu to Mbabane. The cook could not find a job in Mbabane; she ended up working at St. Mary's mission at Lobamba near Mbabane. It was rumoured that she would occasionally be visited by the priest. After a few months, the priest was transferred to St. Peregrine's mission, and was employed as a cook at St. Peregrine's Mission.

When the priest left to Italy for his holiday, Fr. Luigi Ruggeri suggested that he should not be allowed to come back to Swaziland. This is how he dealt with that very delicate issue which was causing some concern amongst the missionaries and the laity in the Diocese of Bremersdorp.

The above incident took place when the whole Catholic Church in Swaziland was still recovering from the scandal caused by a priest who left his mission and was married to a girl. Explaining his motive in not wanting that priest to come back to Swaziland, Fr. Luigi Ruggeri wrote that what happened to Fr. Vincenzo Marsili (the first Catholic priest in Swaziland to leave the priesthood) made him believe that if serious measures were not taken, experience would repeat itself²⁸⁸.

²⁸⁸. Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's Mission, Mzimpofo, "La prevaricazione del P. Marsili ci fa pensare con orrore anche alla sola possibilitE di qualche altro fattaccio del genere"., 27 October, 1951.

Fr. Luigi Ruggeri reported that Catholics were saying openly that Fr. Gregorio Logli was in love with the cook. Tales of clerical romance have a tendency to get out of hand. By October some friars had picked some rumours and sent them winging across Swaziland. Fr. Luigi Ruggeri wrote to Fr. Raffaele Tauci: "Infatti, durante i pochi mesi che stette a Mbabane egli discese varie volte a S. Maria dove la ragazza si trovava come cuoca." (When the girl was working at St. Mary's Fr. Gregorio Logli used to pay her a visit more often)²⁸⁹. Fr. Luigi Ruggeri was distraught and warned him of the scandal which was brewing.

In order to foster the spiritual growth of friars he organised two spiritual retreats for all friars in the diocese in 1951. He also encouraged friars to be faithful to community prayer and other forms of piety.

Due to his interest in the well being of people he supported friars who were involved in various projects such as the reopening of a health centre at St. Mary's Mission, Lobamba by Bro. Ildebrando Pellanda, which had functioned when Fr. Bonaventure Kathrein was at Lobamba.

In the same year, a small clinic was opened at Sulphur Springs by Frs. Camillo Menchini and Geraldo Galandi. A local African nurse worked in it. Fr. Luigi Ruggeri was highly esteemed by the leadership of the Order of the Servants of Mary and the Prior Provincial of the Tuscan Province. They gave him much support, especially during the turbulent period of his office.

The support he received caused him to witness a positive growth of the Church in

²⁸⁹. Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo, 27 October, 1951.

Swaziland, amongst the tangible signs of which were the sending of a young Swazi to Italy for studies, the prospects of having Salesians in Swaziland and the growing number of missionaries in Swaziland. Though the idea of having Salesians was quite novel to him when Bishop Constantino Barneschi mentioned it, the local religious superior thought it best not to turn it down.

As early as March 1951 three friars who had worked in Swaziland namely, Fr. Geraldo Galandi, Fr. Malva and Bro. Giulio Moretti had the opportunity to go to Italy for their holiday²⁹⁰. Fr. Bello was due to travel to Italy in August²⁹¹. Fr. Giovanni Cattoci and Bro. Gioacchino were also looking forward to their vacations in Italy.

Fr. Gregorio Logli urgently needed to travel to Italy so that he could receive medical treatment. One could see from the financial report in this chapter that he spent a lot of money buying medicines and visiting medical doctors. Unfortunately, the personal character of Fr. Gregorio Logli had been a cause of tension between him and his superior, Fr. Luigi Ruggeri.

In spite of the shortage of priests Fr. Luigi Ruggeri suggested that Fr. Gregorio Logli remained in Italy. Apparently, Fr. Gregorio Logli's philosophy on missionary life could not be reconciled with that of the Order of the Servants of Mary, which Fr. Luigi Ruggeri strongly defended. The approach of Fr. Gregorio Logli was rather secular. He believed very little in obedience and in community life. This became a source of conflict, since community life is at the heart of the charism of the Order of the Servants of Mary

²⁹⁰. Camillo Menchini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Sulphur Springs, March, 1951.

²⁹¹. Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimofu, 25 July, 1951.

and he who did not cherish the above idea, virtually excluded himself from the life of the friars of the Order.

Seemingly, Fr. Gregory Logli was aware of his inclination towards secular life, so that in 1946 he was rumoured to have applied to the Bishop of Johannesburg asking for permission to work in Johannesburg²⁹². If his request had been granted he would have joined the secular clergy in the then Vicariate of Johannesburg.

Under the auspices of Fr. Luigi Ruggeri major restructuring took place in the Diocese of Bremersdorp. The work of restructuring was aimed at enhancing development in the entire diocese. Fr. Alfonso Borelli was transferred to St. Philip's mission, which needed a priest. In mid 1951 Bro. Tarcisio Lanari was moved to Florence mission from St. Joseph's Mission²⁹³.

A. PROBLEMS

Nobody had ever thought that the newly created diocese would be plunged into the abyss of humanly made difficulties. In February a friar who was preparing himself to go to Swaziland became insane. A long "legal" battle over the ownership of one of the extra-territorial missions of the diocese turned hostile. Two months later a young, dynamic missionary was involved in a scandal.

(i) Insanity

²⁹². Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimofu, 27 October, 1951.

²⁹³. Tarcisio, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Florence mission, Luve, 8 October, 1951.

Fr. Benedetto Biagioli and the twenty six year old Bro. Alberto Rentini, commonly known as Ireneo, were amongst the friars who were studying English in England at the beginning of 1951 so that they could be sent to the missions in Swaziland. Evidently the two friars had qualities that made many people think that they qualified for the missionary life. Their constancy in prayer and willingness to sacrifice put them under the spotlight.

While in Newbury, Berkshire, Fr. Benedetto Biagioli received news about the sickness of his father and the poor health of his mother. This news almost made him lose his interest in going to Swaziland²⁹⁴. While friars were awaiting the arrival of Fr. Benedetto Biagiolo and Bro. Alberto Rentini, they were saddened when they received the news about the decision of Fr. Gerald Joannisse not to come back to Swaziland.

A few days later they learnt that Bro. Alberto Rentini could not make it to Swaziland, and there were doubts about the availability of Fr. Benedetto Biagiolo. Fortunately, the latter did make it to Swaziland, as will be seen further on in this discussion.

Fr. Gerald Joannisse, who had worked many years in Swaziland, asked the general of the Order of the Servants of Mary, Fr. Alfonso Benetti, to allow him not to return to the missions in January 1951. Fr. Gerald Joannisse had left Johannesburg by air towards the end of 1950 and arrived in Canada on 30 December, 1950. In his letter to the provincial he confessed that he did not want to go back to the missions; he preferred to work in his own country²⁹⁵.

²⁹⁴. Benedetto Biagiolo, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Our Lady's Priory, Berkshire, 18 January, 1951.

²⁹⁵. Gerald Joannisse, *letter to the Prior General of the Order of the Servants of Mary*, MonastSre Servite, Ottawa, 28 January, 1951.

The dreams of sending Bro. Alberto Rentini to the missions in Swaziland were shattered after he lost himself in the city of London. This incident led to a serious mental condition.

Bro. Alberto Rentini was living at the St. Mary's Priory at Fulham Road, London.

On 9 of January, 1951 at 2.30 pm he decided to go for a walk in the streets of London. Unfortunately he became lost and did not find the road home. He ended up at the Tower of London at 9.00 PM and wanted to enter it. A guard called the police after Bro. Alberto Rentini refused to leave the place. He was then taken to a police station. Refusing to give account of himself, he was kept there the whole night. In the morning he was taken to the Aliens' Office and identified immediately.

The friars were worried about his whereabouts. When he returned to the priory he had been almost twenty four hours without food and he refused to take any. The situation was so serious that he locked himself in his room and refused talk to people. Shrugging his shoulders was his only reaction to demonstrate to people that he did understand when they were communicating with him, though he refused to answer verbally.

A few days later, it was decided that Bro. Alberto Rentini be sent back to Italy since he was deliberately troublesome to the police in London. The friars in Fulham Road feared that the behaviour of the brother could lead to serious consequences.

Since a doctor believed that he could not make the journey to Italy by himself, it was suggested that an Italian priest who was living with him in Fulham Road, Fr. Roberto, accompany him to Italy²⁹⁶. The mental specialist wrote in his report that Bro.

²⁹⁶ Prior at Fulham Road, *letter to the Provincial of the Tuscan Province*, St. Mary's Priory, Fulham Road, London, 10 January, 1951.

Alberto Rentini's refusal to speak was almost certainly amnesia, loss of memory, due to strain, fatigue and probably fear of his being lost in London and because he was exhausted after so much walking from 2.00 PM to 9.30 PM. But his refusal to eat indicated something else, and the specialist thought that this was probably connected with the impulse that drove him outdoors to take that walk by himself²⁹⁷.

On 31 January, 1951 the following report was sent to the doctor in charge of Bro. Alberto Rentini in Florence, Italy. "When the patient was admitted here he was quite mute. We were unable, at first, to be certain whether his muteness was due to his complete lack of the knowledge of English, but later, with the help of interpreters, we decided that it was a condition of his illness. During his entire stay he was quite co-operative, ate and slept well, but refused, or was incapable of giving, any information at all about his mental state. We decided that the diagnosis was probably one of an acute schizophrenic episode. Mr. Kelly, the nurse who brought him to Florence, was able to give a little information about his mental state, and he apparently revealed during the journey that he thought he was being pursued by the Devil²⁹⁸. A copy of the above medical report was given to the Provincial of the Tuscan Province, and a decision not to send Bro. Alberto Rentini to Swaziland was made.

In February 1951 Bro. Alberto Rentini underwent therapy at the S. Salvi

²⁹⁷ Prior at Fulham Road, *letter to the Provincial of the Tuscan Province*, St. Mary's Priory, Fulham Road, London, 11 January, 1951.

²⁹⁸ M.J. Rosenthal, House Physician, Department of Psychological Medicine, *letter to the Doctor in charge of Mr. Rentini*, University College Hospital, London, 31 January, 1951.

Psychiatric hospital in Arezzo²⁹⁹. Prior to the incident, Bro. Alberto Rentini had been a conscientious brother in many ways, and had worked diligently in the sacristy. Everybody was pleased with the way he used to do his job. In his letter to the Prior Provincial of the Tuscan Province Fr. Vincenzo wrote: "the only thing that consoles us is the fact that the Divine Providence has made it possible for the sickness to be discovered before the friar was sent to Swaziland⁶⁰⁰.

(ii) Battle over Sulphur Springs

The Catholic mission at Sulphur Springs belonged to the friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary since it was begun by them before the outbreak of the Second World War, when Mons. Romauldo Migliorini was prefect apostolic. A great deal of money had been invested in that mission so that it could develop and become one of the missions that could support other missions of the Order in Swaziland.

In March 1951 when Fr. Camillo Menchini was working at that mission, a serious debate over the ownership of that mission began. High ecclesiastical officials were drawn into that debate. According to the Apostolic Delegate to South Africa, the mission at Sulphur Springs belonged to the Church but not to the friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary. The above statement caused some concern amongst the friars, due to the fact that they had struggled over decades in order to keep the above mission running.

Wanting to keep the mission in their hands, Frs. Luigi Ruggeri, Geraldo Galandi

²⁹⁹. Amministrazione della Provincia di Arezzo, *lettera al Padre Superiore del Convento della SS.ma Annunziata*, Ospedale Psichiatrico di S. Salvi, Arezzo, 28 February, 1951.

³⁰⁰. Vincenzo, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Mary's Priory, London, "La sola cosa che ci conforta e per cui si ringrazia la divina provvidenza, e il fatto fortunatissimo, che la malattia ci sia scoperta prima che andasse in missione"., 25 January, 1951.

and the prior at Sulphur Springs, Fr. Camillo Menchini, held a very important meeting. In that meeting they discussed measures that could be taken to ensure that Sulphur Springs mission was not taken away from them. At the end of the meeting it was decided that permission to build a health centre be sought from the government. The friars thought that a school should be built in that area. Comprehensive plans to save the mission were on the agenda of that meeting. It is, however, important to mention that those plans were to be implemented at the expense of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Bremersdorp and the friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary working in Swaziland.

Huge sums of money earmarked for the development of the Church in Swaziland were to be diverted to Sulphur Springs, which was not even in Swaziland. Quality priests such as Fr. Camillo Menchini whose pragmatic philosophy could have helped in encouraging development in Swaziland, had to be deployed at Sulphur Springs. Frs. Geraldo Galandi and Camillo Menchini feared that the mission might be taken away from the Order of the Servants of Mary and be given to the Franciscan Missionaries to whom the area where Sulphur Springs' mission was situated belonged.

Fr. Camillo Menchini opted to stay alone in a vast territory³⁰¹ and defend the interest of the Order of the Servants of Mary at Sulphur Springs so that his dream of creating an African Province of the Order of the Servants of Mary could come true.

In one of his letters addressed to the historian of the Order of the Servants of Mary, who was the Prior Provincial of the Tuscan Province, Fr. Raffaele Tauci, he wrote: " We could work peacefully for the good of the Church and the Order which might end up

³⁰¹. Camillo Menchini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Sulphurous Springs, "Io sono solo Sacerdote in un territorio pim grande della diocesi di Firenze"., March 1951.

having an African Province in future³⁰².

(iii) Infidelity to Vows

A Catholic Priest of Italian origin, Fr. Vincenzo Marsili who worked at St. Philip's mission fell in love with the daughter of one of the White farmers living in that area. The decision of Fr. Vincenzo Marsili to leave the priesthood caused a great scandal in the country and within the Order of the Servants of Mary³⁰³.

Returning home from pastoral work on 1 May, 1951, the local religious superior in Swaziland, Fr. Luigi Ruggeri, found Fr. Vincenzo Marsili in the mission of St. Joseph's. Since it was on the first day of the month of May, which is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Fr. Luigi Ruggeri thought that Fr. Vincenzo Marsili had come to join them in the evening prayer, since on that evening special Marian prayers were scheduled to take place.

After having exchanged cordial greetings, Fr. Vincenzo Marsili told Fr. Luigi Ruggeri that he had decided to leave the priesthood, go to live with a family of Whites near St. Philip's, and marry a certain daughter in that family.

The above news was devastating; attempts were made the same evening to make him change his mind. The friars who were at St. Joseph's mission asked him in vain to spend a night in the priory. But when it was dark he took a car and left St. Joseph's

³⁰². Camillo Menchini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Sulphur Springs, "Si potrebbe lavorare in pace per il bene della Chiesa ed anche per l'Ordine che potrebbe avere in futuro una Provincia Africana"., March 1951.

³⁰³. Constantino Barneschi, Bishop's house, *lettera a Vincenzo Marsili*, Bremersdorp, 11 May, 1951.

mission, travelling to St. Philip's Mission³⁰⁴.

The above incident took place on Tuesday; Bishop Constantino Barneschi was not in the country³⁰⁵. He had gone to Cape Town, South Africa with Fr. Giovanni Cattoci and was scheduled to be back by Friday.

In a matter of a few hours, a quick decision to find a replacement for Fr. Vincenzo Marsili at St. Philip's mission was taken by the local religious superior, Fr. Luigi Ruggeri, who left for Mater Dolorosa mission, Mbabane to ask Fr. Alfonso Borelli whether he would go and work at St. Philip's Mission. Fr. Alfonso Borelli did not object to the above suggestion.

The two left for St. Philip's mission and when they arrived there they learnt that Fr. Vincenzo Marsili had come the previous night, taken all his belongings and left the same night for his "new home", the house of the White farmer near the mission³⁰⁶.

Due to the fact that Fr. Vincenzo Marsili could not contract a marriage in the Church he took the daughter of the farmer to Siteki where they were married before a magistrate in a civil court, thus breaking one of the precepts of the Catholic Church³⁰⁷.

News about this priest spread to Italy like bushfire. His relatives, friends and his long time colleagues began offering prayers for his conversion. Unfortunately, they were

³⁰⁴. Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofu, 7 May, 1951.

³⁰⁵. Constantino Barneschi, *Lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Bishop's house, Bremersdorp, 11 May, 1951.

³⁰⁶. Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofu, 7 May, 1951.

³⁰⁷. Constantino Barneschi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Bishop's house, Bremersdorp, 11 May, 1951.

not answered.

Details about the life of Fr. Vincenzo Marsili began emerging shortly after the scandal. According to the two friars who were living with him at St. Philips's Mission, namely: Bro. Filippo Tessari and Bro. Ildebrando Pellanda, Fr. Vincenzo Marsili showed very little enthusiasm about his priestly vocation. His prayer life was poor and he would rarely be seen doing spiritual exercises such as meditations³⁰⁸. Though he had a poor spiritual life he received much respect from his fellow friars due to his openness, so much so that nobody ever knew of his friendship with the daughter of the farmer.

On 11 May, the local ordinary, Bishop Constantino Barneschi wrote a letter to Fr. Vincenzo Marsili asking him to repent after Fr. Vincenzo Marsili had written him a letter expressing his desire to be reconciled with the Order and the Church. The hopes of the friars to regain Fr. Vincenzo Marsili for active ministry failed when private talks held during the second week of May, 1951 by Bishop Constantino Barneschi and Fr. Terenzio Biondi with him collapsed.

Following this unhappy incident, Bishop Constantino Barneschi informed the Prior Provincial of the Tuscan Province. A decision to inform the Delegate Apostolic residing in South Africa and the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith was also taken³⁰⁹.

Fr. Roberto Dini, who had been studying English in London, was one of the friars

³⁰⁸. Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimofu, 7 May, 1951.

³⁰⁹. Constantino Barneschi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Bishop's house, Bremersdorp, 17 May, 1951.

who were scheduled to leave for Swaziland, though his name had not been mentioned³¹⁰. He and Fr. Benedetto Biagioli were to bring hope to the friars in Swaziland after the incident that led to the abandonment of his priestly vocation by Fr. Vincenzo Marsili.

B. HOPE

(i) Prospect of having Salesians

When the Bishop of Bremersdorp, Mons. Constantino Barneschi, went to Cape Town in May 1951 for a congress he met with some of the officials of the Order of the Salesians. Salesians are known in the Catholic Church to be good educators.

The discussion he had with the Salesians was obviously about education. There were some speculations that Salesians would be invited to come and work at the boys' college in Bremersdorp. The friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary had spent a lot of money in the past years building a college in Bremersdorp. This meant that if Salesians had to be invited, permission had to be sought from the General of the Order of the Servants of Mary.

Inviting Salesians to Swaziland so that they could be in charge of the college was seen as the best option, since the friars of the Order of Servants of Mary did not have enough teachers and money for the maintenance of the college. In fact the Order of the Servants of Mary did not even have enough money to maintain some of its schools. Let us take a short glance at some of the problems faced by one of the Catholic schools. The question of building new classrooms at Mafutseni took almost two years. This is because

³¹⁰. Roberto Dini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Mary's Priory, London, 30 May, 1951.

the Department of Education in the country was involved. The Catholic Church needed at least /25 from government so that new classrooms could be built³¹¹.

In October, 1951 the Principal Education Officer visited the Catholic school at Mafutseni and he was shocked to find that the school lacked basic teaching equipment such as blackboards and easel. The officer was willing to assist the school in receiving a subsidy that would enable it to purchase school furniture³¹².

A letter dated 28 November, 1951 was received from the Department of Education by Fr. Agostino Botta who was living at the Mater Dolorosa mission. According to the letter the Department of Education was willing to grant a sum of /25 to the Catholic Church. The above amount of money was to be used as a building fund at a Catholic school at Mafutseni³¹³.

The buildings needed to be repaired and upgraded.

On the other hand the Dominican Sisters had threatened to pull out of St. Theresa's High School when their contract expired in 1953.

Though some friars were initially against the idea of having Salesians in Swaziland they ended up being in favour after perceiving that having Salesians in the Diocese of Bremersdorp would definitely help in reducing their financial burden. There seem to have been some compromise on the question of the ownership of the Catholic college at

³¹¹. Principal Education Officer, *letter to Agostino Botta*, Department of Education, Mbabane, 24 April, 1951.

³¹². Principal Education Officer, *letter to Agostino Botta*, Department of Education, Mbabane, 30 October, 1951.

³¹³. Principal Education Officer, *letter to Agostino Botta*, Department of Education, Mbabane, 28 November, 1951.

Bremersdorp. Hence most friars were for the idea that the Order of Salesians be given authority over the college so that they could be responsible for its maintenance and its development.

We need to mention that there was a general feeling amongst Catholic educators in Swaziland that the goal of improving quality education given by the Catholic schools in Swaziland could only be achieved with the help of the Salesians.

We also need to acknowledge the fact that it took time for the Salesians and the Diocese of Bremersdorp to draw up a contract. Each party wanted to have enough time to examine the whole situation before taking a final decision.

(ii) A local candidate goes to Italy

Despite the problems faced by the Diocese of Bremersdorp in the first half of 1951 there were some individuals who believed that the problems faced by the Church would be surmounted. These individuals encouraged local (Swazi) young men to embrace religious life. In July 1951 a young candidate, Constantine Sifindza, who had shown some interest in religious life was held in high esteem by Fr. Bonaventure Kathrein and Bro. Bonaventure Schenieder. The two friars had worked for many years at the Good Shepherd Mission.

In his letter dated 25 July, 1951, Fr. Luigi Ruggeri did mention that Constantine Sifundza was a postulant³¹⁴. It is, however, not easy to establish whether there were other candidates for the priesthood in the seminary.

³¹⁴. Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo, " In questi mesi la condotta del postulante S stata buona per cui anche i due vecchi missionari di Stegi P. Bonaventure e Fr. Bonifacio sono bene impressionati e favorevoli all'accettazione", 25 July, 1951.

It seems as if in the 1950's there might have been a seminary for young men who wanted to become Catholic priests in the Diocese of Breimersdorp. The only house of formation that we are sure did exist in 1951 was the novitiate house at Florence Mission. Bro. Antonio Monaco had his entire religious formation at Florence mission and his novice master was Fr. Giovanni Cattoci, as seen earlier on in our discussion.

Constantine Sifundza was known to be an ardent Catholic, so zealous that he had the intention of becoming a diocesan priest. He was once a student at a minor seminary in Natal, South Africa. His superiors, who were not keen to send him to a major seminary, suggested that he be sent to one of the missions of the Order of the Servants of Mary. Bishop Constantino Barneschi sent him to Good Shepherd Mission¹⁵.

After having lived with the friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary in the above mission he must probably have been attracted into religious life. As time went on it became apparent that Constantine Sifundza had the intention of becoming a friar in the Order of the Servants of Mary.

The local religious superior, Fr. Luigi Ruggeri, was pleased with the determination of Constantine Sifundza and he started negotiating with the officials of the Order of the Servants of Mary in Italy about the possibility of sending Constantine Sifundza to Italy for further studies¹⁶.

Constantino Sifundza, who had been previously scheduled to go to Italy in December 1951 by ship together with Fr. Agostino Fagiolo who would be taking his

³¹⁵. Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo, 16 June, 1951.

³¹⁶. Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's Mission, Mzimpofo, 17 October, 1951.

vacation in Italy³¹⁷, had to wait until February 1952 so that he could get a plane ticket. This is because the booking was not done timeously and he ended up not getting a berth on the ship³¹⁸.

(iii) Overseas help

Ever since the Order of the friars of the Servants of Mary began missionary activity in Swaziland in 1914, the Catholic Church has been depending on money mainly from Italy. In only a few decades the Catholic Church in Swaziland developed and the Holy See decided to make it a diocese. Unfortunately, despite its status, it continued to depend heavily on overseas money for its survival.

In the early 1950's most of the friars working in Swaziland, including the bishop belonged to the Tuscan Province, and most of them had been in the country before the creation of the diocese, and had been used to obtaining money from the Tuscan Province whenever they needed it, and it would not have been easy for them to change their mendicant mentality. The mentality which they had interiorised made it difficult for them to think of initiating income generating projects that would help the Diocese of Bremersdorp to start moving towards self-sufficiency.

Other Catholic dioceses in southern Africa had begun experimenting with projects that could help them to limit their dependency on overseas money. With the skills and land possessed by the friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary in Swaziland they could have begun even during the period of the Second World War to develop viable income

³¹⁷. Luigi Ruggeri, *Lettera al Generale dell'Ordine dei Servi di Maria*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo, 17 October, 1951.

³¹⁸. Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo, 21 December, 1951.

generating projects. With great sarcasm one could say that perhaps their dependency on funds from Italy caused them to become experienced letter writers who would persuade even the meanest person to be generous towards the mission by their persuasive writing.

One of the advantages of having missionaries travelling from Italy to Swaziland was that they would bring with them many goods destined to be used in the missions in Swaziland. The goods were not necessarily belonging to those travelling with them. A letter would be sent in advance to the superiors in Swaziland notifying them about the goods. It was the duty of the superiors to distribute them to the missions throughout the country at their own discretion. Since there was a great demand for devotional articles such as rosaries, statues, holy images and material used at divine cults such as hymn books, special linens including liturgical vestments, Italians donated many of these items to the missions in Swaziland.

In addition to this, missionaries travelling to Swaziland would also bring their personal belongings. It is interesting to find out that amongst items labelled "personal belongings" it would not be unusual to find a rifle and live ammunition. Missionaries would make sure that enough goods had been collected before they could plan a journey. The reason behind that is that the above practice was much cheaper than sending goods directly to Swaziland, since friars in Swaziland were not expected to make numerous trips to the port city of Durban to collect goods. This explains why an average of four missionaries would be sent, knowing that they would all be transported together with the goods in a van from Durban to Bremersdorp.

We need to mention the fact that there was much cooperation between the friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary and the sisters of the Congregation of the Servite

Sisters of Pistoia, so that they would normally travel together and carry each other's goods. For instance a gold plated chalice donated to the Bishop of Bremersdorp could not be conveyed by the priests who were travelling to Swaziland from Venice, Italy in October and were expected to be in Bremersdorp, Swaziland in December 1951. Instead, it was to be brought by the sisters who were due to be travelling from Italy to Swaziland in February the following year³¹⁹.

In the endeavours of the Order of the Servants of Mary to raise funds that would be used to pay for tuition and other expenses for candidates to the priesthood, different bursary schemes were begun. The money collected was to be used in the education of Swazis who wanted to become priests in the Order of the Servants of Mary. A large proportion of the money was to be used to pay for future missionaries, in the event of the absence of Swazi candidates. These bursaries were named after saints such St. Francis Xavier, one of the greatest missionaries to Asia, or illustrious missionaries such as Bishop Constantino Barneschi.

Though the building of the hospital had not been completed by March 1951, sachets of medicines sent from Italy were delivered at Good Shepherd mission. These medicines were received free of charge from Italy. This explains the reason why people were generally not expected to pay for treatment³²⁰. As far as spiritual growth was concerned, through the initiative of priests spiritual retreats were organised for the laity in some of the Catholic missions in the country. In May at least forty Catholic women

³¹⁹. Federico Aliboni, *lettera a Constantino Barneschi*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, 2 December, 1951.

³²⁰. Anonymous, *lettera a Federico Aliboni*, Good Shepherd mission, 8 March, 1951.

attended a three day spiritual retreat at St. Joseph's mission. The retreat was organised and preached by Fr. Luigi Ruggeri. At the end of the retreat four women received the sacrament of Baptism, and others the sacrament of Reconciliation. The other priest who was living at St, Joseph's mission with Fr. Luigi Ruggeri, Fr. Girolamo Casalini, could not help in the retreat since he did not know the local language. Nevertheless, there was some hope that soon or later he would be fully involved in ministry since he was starting to pick up some Zulu³²¹.

Perhaps one of the most beautiful religious ceremonies performed at St. Joseph's mission in 1951 was the Solemnity of Corpus Christi, attended by many people from around the mission on Sunday 27 May, 1951. A procession with the Blessed Sacrament was part of the celebration. Hymns including the Te Deum and other Gregorian chants were sung by the choir while sweet smelling incense burned in the church. Most of the members of the choir were school children who had been thoroughly prepared by the missionaries for the above occasion. Though they did not understand Latin they followed the Latin Mass without any problems. One of the priests who took part in the celebrations, Fr. Girolamo Casalini, was pleased by the way the faithful participated in the celebration of the Mass.

C. FINANCES

The total amount of money spent by the Order of the Servants of Mary in Swaziland in

³²¹. Gerolamo Casalini, *lettera a Federico Aliboni*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo, 28 May, 1951.

1951 was two thousand and two hundred and fifty nine pounds sterling, four shillings and eleven pence. Almost half of that amount, /1139.14.10, was used by St. Peregrine's Mission. Our Lady of Sorrows mission spent as little as /32 while Florence mission and St. Philip's mission spent /46 and /60.18, respectively. Let us see how St. Peregrine's mission and Christ the King mission spent their money.

The total amount of money used by the three priests who were at St. Peregrine's Mission, Frs. Bello, Mosca and Gregorio Logli, was more than that used by Our Lady of Sorrows and Florence Missions³²².

D. OUSTANDING PERSONALITIES IN THE EARLY 1950's

The outstanding feature of the Catholic Church in the Vicariate Apostolic of Swaziland was its growth that resulted in the expansion of the mission within and outside Swaziland. This is due to the initiative of the young missionaries.

It seems appropriate to make special reference to some of the young missionaries such as Bro. Antonio Monaco and Sr. Justina Tsoku, whose contributions have not been acknowledged by many. This chapter will highlight some of the activities of those missionaries.

Towards the end of 1948, there was a growing concern about health and education. In this chapter, the issue of education will be explored in great depth. Hence we will be looking at the contribution made by two lay religious people: Bro. Antonio Monaco who

³²². Luigi Ruggeri, *Rapporto del Superiore Regolare per l'anno 1951, al Rev.mo P. Generale e al M.R.P. Provinciale*, St. Joseph's Mission, Mzimpofo, December, 1951.

built schools in the country and Sr. Justina Tsoku who promoted education in the country. We need to mention the fact that while emphasis was placed on education, health matters were not overlooked.

An Italian medical doctor, Dr. Adragna, who was also a great friend of Bishop Constantino Barneschi and who was scheduled to go and work in Swaziland in 1948, was one of them. Since he did not have much knowledge of tropical diseases he spent a couple of months in Rome updating himself. His tuition and lodging in Rome was organised by Fr. Federico Aliboni³²³. Catholic missionaries in Swaziland were anxiously awaiting the arrival of Dr. Adragna, since they knew that the Churches' mission of healing would be complete if Catholics had their own medical doctor. Evidently, the healing of bodies was the component that was lacking in the mission of the Church. The reason is that much energy was invested in the preaching of the Word of God and in education, so as to counter Protestant expansion in the country. We could say that it took the Catholic Church of Swaziland almost three decades to realise the importance of physical healing as well.

(i) Antonio Monaco

A humble, hard working young man, Antonio Monaco, was born at Monteodorisio near Chieti, Italy on 1 March, 1929³²⁴. While young, he joined the Order of the Servants of Mary and he changed his name, becoming known as Giulio. Later on, he started using his old name, Antonio. When he arrived in Swaziland, Swazis gave him the name

³²³. Federico Aliboni, *lettera a Pietro Pennoni*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, May 1948.

³²⁴. Federico Aliboni, *lettera al Sindaco del Comune di Monteodorisio*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, 2 March, 1949.

"*Mabindza*" (the one who does not talk), which described his introverted character.

Feeling called to the religious life, Monaco left his home town, Chieti for Florence. On 16 July, 1948 he asked the prior at SS.ma Annunziata permission to become one of the brothers in the community. Fortunately his request was granted by the priory after having learnt that he had a genuine religious vocation.

Coincidentally, a prelate who had been working in Swaziland as a missionary and who had gone to Italy on vacation, Bishop Constantino Barneschi, accompanied by Bro. Gabriel Signori were guests at the Priory of SS.ma Annunziata in Florence. The prior of SS.ma Annunziata was happy to host them since they had had missionary experience in an African country. Everybody in the priory was thrilled by the stories of missionary work in the mysterious *terra incognita*, Swaziland, which were recounted by the two guests.

Bro. Antonio Monaco who had never heard anything about Swaziland was moved by the stories they told and became interested in exploring Swaziland. He then told Bishop Constantino Barneschi that he would be pleased if he could be sent to the missions in Swaziland. Bishop Constantino Barneschi took the matter to the Provincial of the Tuscan Province who enthusiastically agreed to allow Bro. Antonio Monaco to go to Swaziland after he had completed a year of postulancy at the priory of SS.ma Annunziata in Florence.

While news about the future of Bro. Antonio Monaco was circulating as early as March 1949, Fr. Federico Aliboni wrote letters to the Montedorsio Town Council and other people so that the following documents: police clearance certificate, birth certificate, testimonial and medical certificate for Bro. Antonio Monaco could be obtained in time so that he would be eligible to apply for a passport and a resident permit for

Swaziland. Unfortunately, his birth certificate was delayed. The other three people who were to go with Bro. Monaco to Swaziland in April that is: Bro. Ildebrando Pellanda, Bro. Pietro Coser and Mr. Vincenzo Salsi were already in possession of their birth certificates³²⁵.

Initially, the Tuscan Province had intended to send Bro. Monaco to Swaziland in July 1949. The fact that the province was busy preparing his documents in March 1949 meant that they wanted to anticipate his departure to Swaziland and it was further suggested that the brother do his novitiate in Swaziland.

While his documents were still being processed other friars were busy organizing a missionary show which was to take place near the basilica of SS.ma Annunziata on the solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord. A huge number of people were expected to participate³²⁶. All the money to be collected in the show was to be given to the missionaries who were due to go to Swaziland in April as we have seen above.

At the end of July 1949, accompanied by Bro. Pietro Coser, a Canadian brother who later left the Order and went back to Canada, Marcel and Mr. Vincenzo Salsi who was a Third Order member, Bro. Antonio Monaco arrived in Swaziland. After spending a day or two at Bremersdorp Bro. Antonio Monaco went to Florence mission. The prior at Florence mission was Fr. Giovanni Cattoci, who also became his novice master. Fortunately Fr. Giovanni Cattoci liked him, an amiable if taciturn Italian and entrusted him with much responsibility.

After finishing his novitiate he continued living in that community for the next

³²⁵. Federico Aliboni, *lettera a Genesio*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, 29 March, 1949.

³²⁶. Paolo Giannelli, *lettera al Commendatore*, Firenze, 24 March, 1949.

fifteen years. Bro. Antonio Monaco lived at the Florence mission, where he worked on a large farm. It is unusual for a religious brother to spend even half of these years in one community. Perhaps the above enterprise did not prosper on account of bad weather that caused drought, however, for in the early 1950 he began building houses on the mission premises.

Due to the shortage of personnel he was never allowed to go to Zululand to learn the Zulu and English languages. Surprisingly, just by listening to people talk he ended up becoming fluent in siSwati and English, in fact, it was much easier for him to learn siSwati than English because he would spend all the time talking to the Swazi men he worked with.

Amongst the buildings he built at Florence mission which are still used nowadays are the girls' hostel and the storeroom where farming equipment and other tools are kept.

On 18 September, 1951 the local religious superior, Fr. Luigi Ruggeri, presided at the celebration of the ritual of religious profession during which Bro. Antonio Monaco made his simple profession in the Order of the Servants of Mary. The above celebration took place at Florence mission where Bro. Antonio Monaco completed his novitiate on 12 September, 1951. The church was fully packed with students and other people. Bishop Constantino Barneschi made a special address to boys and girls, students at the Florence Mission School, in the Zulu language. He spoke of the importance of religious vocation, exhorting young people to embrace religious life. Filled with joy, Bro. Antonio Monaco wrote a significant letter in Italian to the Prior Provincial of the Tuscan Province, Fr. Raffaele Tauci expressing his gratitude for having made it to simple vows. When reading that letter we find that Bro. Antonio was a very religious person who had full confidence

in the Divine Providence. Bro. Antonio Monaco wrote: "Oggi posso darLe la bella notizia che dopo tanto aspettare finalmente ho fatto la mia professione semplice. Era lungo tempo che desideravo consacrarmi al Signore, ed oggi Egli nella sua bontE ha accettato la mia offerta. Alla bella cerimonia qui nella nostra missione dedicata alla SS. Annunziata, erano presenti diversi padri ed anche Sua Ecc.za Monsignor Vescovo, che alla fine della cerimonia ha rivolto un bel discorso in Zulu ad i ragazzi e ragazze della scuola che avevano preso parte alla cerimonia³²⁷. When summarising the above letter dated 18 September, 1951 written in Italian by Bro. Antonio Monaco we find that he wrote that he was happy that at last he had made a simple profession after he had waited for a long time to consecrate himself to God. In His goodness God had granted him the desire of his heart. At a beautiful ceremony held at Florence mission in which the Bishop and other priests participated he made his vows. In 1954 he made his solemn profession at Florence mission. Bishop Constantino Barneschi presided at the celebration, and Fr. Luigi Ruggeri who was local religious superior received the three vows of Bro. Antonio Monaco³²⁸. Apart from this brief tantalizing glimpse, the early life of Bro. Antonio Monaco in the missions is shrouded in obscurity.

(ii) Justina Tsoku

Born three years before the arrival of the first missionaries of the Order of the Servants of Mary in her home town, Heidelberg, Justina Tsoku grew up with a strong desire to become a missionary. Her inspiration took her across the oceans and she ended

³²⁷. Antonio Monaco, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Florence mission, Luve, 18 September, 1951.

³²⁸. Claudia Gonfiantini, Interview in Italian, Our Lady of Sorrows Convent, Hluti, 2 September, 1996.

up becoming the first Servite African sister to be a missionary in the United States of America. In 1931 when she was two years old, Justina Tsoku was baptised into the Roman Catholic Church by an Oblate priest, Fr. Peron who was on a visit to Heidelberg. It is unlikely that there was a big celebration when she was baptised since a Catholic church had not been built at Heidelberg, though the local population had had contact with the Catholic clergy.

As we have seen in previous chapters, seven years after the Catholic Church had established itself at Heidelberg the Second World War broke out. At the time of the war Heidelberg and Nigel were served by the friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary, who were of course Italians. Unfortunately their service had to be interrupted due to government policies designed to victimise Italian missionaries, making it virtually impossible for them to carry on with their apostolate. All the Italian friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary working in Heidelberg and Nigel were taken to prison and could not serve the Catholics living in these areas. The government was very hostile to Italian and German nationals who were in the country during the war. This is because of the alliance between the architects of the Rome-Berlin *axis* that is, the German Nazi, Adolf Hitler and the Italian Fascist Benito Mussolini, the ambitions of whom precipitated the Second World War. Due to the fact that the Italian missionaries were in custody, the local ordinary requested English priests to work in areas which had been under the care of Italian priests before the outbreak of the Second World War. Catholics in Heidelberg and the surroundings were then served temporarily by Oblate priests who despite their dedication could not satisfy all the needs of the Zulu and Sotho speaking people of the area. When the Second World War ended, Italian friars were then allowed to come and

work in Heidelberg and Nigel, which brought relief to the local communities. Some of those friars were Fr. Noberto Signori, Fr. Zini, Fr. Malva and others. Fr. Zini used to visit all the outstations on horse back, baptising people and teaching Catholic doctrine. By and large most friars who were engaged in pastoral activity did try to propagate the devotion to Our Lady of Sorrows in places where they worked. Their zeal and dedication led to the foundation of the Confraternity of the Seven Sorrows in Heidelberg by devoted women. These women would recite the rosary of Our Lady of Sorrows and visit families. The mother of Sr. Justina, Lucia Tsoku, was amongst the first women to join the newly founded confraternity. Other members of the confraternity were Eva Mtshali, Letia Sekabate, Mrs. Mkwebane and others. After completing her studies at the Dominican College in Heilbron, Orange Free State in 1946, Justina Tsoku told a priest of the Order of the Servants of Mary, Fr. Noberto Signori that she wanted to become a nun. In January 1947 Fr. Noberto Signori suggested that she go to Swaziland for postulancy. We need to mention that at that period of time both Heidelberg and Sulphur Springs were under the jurisdiction of the friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary based in Swaziland. This meant that any girl living in those areas, as well as other places in South Africa served by the friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary, who wanted to embrace religious life would automatically be sent to Swaziland. A friar of the Order, Fr. Galandi, who was at that period of time stationed at Sulphur Springs and who happened to be on a short visit to Heidelberg, took Justina Tsoku in his car to Swaziland on 20 January 1947. On their way they stopped at Sulphur Springs, the mission where Fr. Galandi was prior. The next day Fr. Galandi took her to St. Juliana mission at Mahlabane in Swaziland. The prioress at the Mahlabane convent, Sr. Zoraide Calluso welcomed the new candidate into their

community. As early as February Justina Tsoku began her novitiate and her novice mistress was Sr. Assumpta Bianchi; there were at least seven novices altogether. Sr. Assumpta Bianchi was in charge of a group of novices of the congregation of the Servite Sisters of Swaziland. Sr. Bonfiglia Mtshali, who had arrived in Swaziland in 1937, was at Mahlabane when Justina Tsoku arrived there. Sr. Bonfiglia Mtshali was born in Heidelberg and was the first South African to join the Congregation of the Servite Sisters of Swaziland. Justina Tsoku, also from Heidelberg, was destined to become the second sister from the very same place if she achieved the profession of her vows. A few years later on, other girls from South African towns such as Meyerton, Nigel, Germiston, Hlabisa and other places where the friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary were working, joined the Congregation of the Servite Sisters of Swaziland. At the novitiate house the novices would be given lessons on spirituality, the life of the Saints in general and the rule of St. Augustine. They all did much manual work in the fields, harvesting maize, fetching water from the stream and fetching fire wood. In the morning they attended classes at St. Joseph's school.

On 6 January 1950 Justina Tsoku made her simple vows at St. Juliana. The vows were to be renewed each year for a period of ten years. This was because there was a general belief that Africans would not make it to solemn profession. The superiors thought that it was better for them to wait for a period of ten years before they could be given perpetual vows. On the other hand Europeans could take vows after five years. After taking her first vows, Sr. Justina Tsoku was sent to Mariannahill to complete a teachers' training course at St. Francis Training College under the Precious Blood Sisters. The other sister with whom Sr. Justina Tsoku went, Sr. Anna Maziya, took a course in

nursing at Mariannhill.

In 1951 she spent the whole year working at St. Constantine mission, Tshaneni which was under a Canadian priest, Fr, Gamaschi. She was living with Sr. Alphonsinah Dlamini. While at Tshaneni she and her colleague taught catechism to families. Since Fr. Gamaschi did not know the local language Sr. Justina Tsoku helped him with translations. The Servite Sisters of Swaziland were running a girls' hostel and a school at Tshaneni. There was also a hostel for boys, which was looked after by Fr. Gamaschi. In 1952 Sr. Tsoku went back to Mariannhill to continue her teachers' training course. In 1954 she and other sisters of the Congregation of the Servite Sisters of Swaziland were sent to Hlabisa to open a sisters' convent.

In order to ensure that schools continued to have a constant number of students, Catholic missionaries needed to convince parents about the importance of education. But being an agrarian society, most parents in Swaziland were reluctant to send their children to schools.

Concerned about food production, they expected their children to look after cattle and work in the fields. Since there was a clear division of labour: boys were to help their fathers and girls had to do what was expected of women such as fetching water and firewood, etc., the idea of education as suggested by the European system was seen as a threat to the structures of the Swazi society.

In those days, it was common to have a pupil aged fifteen or more years of age doing the first grade at school. Due to certain cultural practices such as betrothal and polygamy, many girls would systematically be denied the opportunity to go to school. In those days, when a girl reached a certain age, her parents and the parents of the boy who

might in future be her husband would enter into serious negotiations, aimed at helping the boy and the girl speed up the process of marriage before the two could have any relationship. At times the people involved would be the parents of the girls and a married man who wanted to marry the girl as his second or third wife. This practice was designed to preserve the virginity of the girl before marriage. In those days, virginity was valued by the whole of Swazi society.

Missionaries were aware of the difficulty of sending girls to school and they tried their best to address it. Sr. Justina Tsoku became a pioneer in addressing the above issue in her congregation. She thought that girls who were betrothed to men while they were still young, greatly risked growing up without receiving any formal education at all. Sr. Justina Tsoku was aware of the fact that parents would consider sending boys rather than girls to school.

The other factor that led to low enrolments of girls in schools, according to the study conducted by Sr. Justina Tsoku, was the belief that only men could find jobs and that women should stay at home and look after children. Sr. Justina Tsoku had the exacting task of explaining to parents the significance of education. Her initiative would be applauded by those who would believe in the empowerment of women in future, such as feminists. Though there was some resistance from parents, she and her colleagues never gave up the idea of encouraging parents to send their children, especially girls, to school.

As a result of her influence, the mentality of the people began to change: more and more girls were sent to schools, and some of those who were educated at mission schools during that period of time ended up holding high positions of leadership in the country

that was destined to emerge from colonialism a few years later: for example Robert Dlamini became a school principal at St. Joseph's High School and Christ the King School and a certain Shongwe became registrar at the University of Swaziland.

It is interesting to find that those who benefited a lot from education were mostly from poor families, having been supported by missionaries while staying in the missions. Since they could not pay tuition and lodging they were expected to give free service and keep missionary regulations. Wherever she Sr. Justina Tsoku went education was foremost in her mind and her superiors were aware of her interest in education.

We have seen earlier on in this chapter that when a sisters' convent was opened at Hlabisa she was amongst the first to be nominated for the new mission. Her task there was to promote education amongst the people of Hlabisa. While at Hlatikhulu she organised adult education at the sisters' convent at Christ the King Mission: a task she did with great love and dedication.

In order to impart a quality education, she would update herself about matters of education whenever she got an opportunity. She took some correspondence courses with the University of South Africa and other colleges³²⁹.

³²⁹. Justina Tsoku, *Interview with Sr. Justina Tsoku, Seven Holy Founders' Parish, Heidelberg, 13 April, 1999.*

Chapter Eight

THE FIRST YEARS OF THE DIOCESE 1952-1953

A. THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN 1952

(i) Achievements

a. Hospital: In the previous chapters, we have seen how the Good Shepherd mission was opened at Siteki in 1923 by Fr. Bonaventure Kathrein who had come from St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo. It was, indeed, interesting to monitor the development of the mission. After the end of the second world war, the mission had become one of the fastest developing in the country. The mission was built on land that was bought with /500.00 donated by a wealthy Italian family living in Rome. The amount paid for the purchase of the piece of land shows that the mission owned a very large piece of land.

Towards the end of 1940, Good Shepherd mission had about eleven outstations, which were visited by zealous priests who had to travel long distances from Good Shepherd mission.

During those pastoral visits they learnt that a true apostolate did not only consist in administering Sacraments but also included caring about the people. This is why schools mushroomed in those outstations so that illiteracy could be eradicated.

As more pastoral visits were made, priests began to understand more about the needs of the people. Whenever there was a sick person, priests would be summoned to administer Sacraments. Most people believed that priests had special powers to heal.

The youngest priest at Good Shepherd mission at that time, Fr. Terenzio Biondi who had arrived there in September 1948, used his energy to visit all the outstations.

Fr. Terenzio Biondi arrived at Durban together with Frs. Luigi Ruggeri and Stefano Papini after having left Venice. The three missionaries entered Swaziland near Sulphur Springs. They were welcomed at St. Joseph's by the local ordinary, Bishop Constantino Barneschi on Friday. On Saturday morning Fr. Terenzio Biondi was taken to Hluti by Bro. Raimondo Dal Magro to Our Lady of Sorrows mission, where Fr. Tomaso Banci was staying. Unfortunately, due to a certain illness, Fr. Tomaso Banci needed to be taken to a hospital in the Transvaal, South Africa for medical attention, and Fr. Terenzio Biondi was required to take his place while Fr. Tomaso Banci was in hospital. Fr. Terenzio Biondi remained eight months at the Our Lady of Sorrows mission, and in September 1948 he was transferred to Good Shepherd mission. In May 1970 Fr. Terenzio Biondi was transferred to St. Peregrine, and at the time of writing has been there for almost thirty years.

In Siteki, there was an old priest, Fr. Giacinto Striolo who left for Italy for holiday after the arrival of Fr. Terenzio Biondi³⁰. Also with them at Siteki were Bro. Boniface Schnieder and Fr. Bonaventure Kathrein. The former worked on the mission farm with Bro. Raimondo Dal Magro. We need to mention that Good Shepherd mission had a school for both boys and girls and that some of the students were living in the hostels. Bro. Boniface Schnieder was in charge of the boys' hostel. It is worth mentioning that Fr. Terenzio Biondi spent much of his time visiting all the outstations of the mission.

³⁰. Terenzio Biondi, *Interview with Fr. Terenzio Biondi*, St. Peregrine's mission, Bulandzeni, 27 July, 1999.

Through these visits he came to understand that the people of Siteki and the surroundings needed a hospital.

The widening of its apostolic activity by the Good Shepherd mission had an impact on the lives of the friars. The friars gradually learnt that they needed to open their hearts to the poor and the sick if they wanted to be considered as good shepherds at Siteki. The generosity of the friars caused the people to establish personal relationships with the friars.

There were growing incidents of pregnant women, people who had sustained injuries at work and those who had been bitten by snakes seeking help at the Good Shepherd mission. Since there was no health centre in the area, the priest would normally take the sick in his car to Bremersdorp where they would receive medical attention. The above practice had some disadvantages, especially when dealing with cases such as snake bites and pregnant women who needed urgent medical treatment.

The above reasons impelled zealous missionaries such as Fr. Terenzio Biondi to begin contemplating the idea of having a hospital at Siteki. The hospital was not only going to benefit the Catholic community but it was also going to offer medical support to all without discrimination based on their credo.

We ought to mention the fact that the idea to have a hospital at Siteki had been in the mind of the government. Unfortunately, due to the lack of water at Siteki, the government was compelled to abandon the plan. We should also mention the fact that in other places where there was plenty of water available, one of government's priorities, that is providing health care, had been fulfilled.

A visiting priest from St. Mary's mission, Lobamba, who had once lived at Siteki,

Fr. Bonaventure Kathrein, agreed to search for water at Siteki after having been told by Fr. Terenzio Biondi that government would be more than willing to build a hospital at Siteki if there was plenty of water in the area. In the past, the government had tried to search for water but in vain. After having searched for water by using his pendulum Fr. Banaventure Kathrein discovered huge quantities of water on the premises of Good Shepherd mission. The sensational news about the discovery of water was sent to the government, which suggested that the Catholic Church build a hospital at Siteki. Nevertheless, government was prepared to help the Catholic Church financially.

Fr. Terenzio Biondi and Bishop Constantino Barneschi were empowered to see to it that the first Catholic hospital in the country was built at Siteki. They were eager to commit themselves so that the project could be a success, because they thought that the hospital would bring glory to the Catholic Church in Swaziland.

Bishop Constantino Barneschi made a visit to Benedictine monks at Inkamana Abbey near Vryheid, South Africa shortly afterwards to look for a Catholic medical doctor who would work in the hospital.

These monks ran a hospital at Nongoma, Kwa-Zulu Natal. They helped Bishop Constantino Barneschi to recruit a sixty year old Polish medical doctor, Dr. Wilczkiewicz, who was in Cape Town.

The doctor had graduated in general medicine, gynaecology, surgery in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Due to political reasons, he had had to abandon his country, Poland.

In 1948 Dr. Wilczkiewicz came with his two daughters and his wife to Siteki. Bishop Constantino Barneschi bought him a house at Siteki, and he stayed there while the

hospital was being built. At times he would treat sick people in a hut which he used as a surgery, temporarily.

Worth mentioning also is the fact that the bishop was very pleased to have a pious Catholic medical doctor. Two other doctors arrived at Good Shepherd, and one of them was Dr. Rossi.

In 1950 the construction of the hospital began. Prior to this, the doctor's surgery was a hut as we have seen above. The present church building stands on the place where the surgery was.

Initially the friars at Good Shepherd mission had thought that the hospital they were building at Siteki would have been completed by the beginning of 1952, and that it was going to be one of the powerful vehicles used by the Catholic Church to convert myriads of people to Roman Catholicism.

Due to lack of funds, the above project was delayed, which caused much insecurity amongst the Catholic missionaries working in that area. This was immediately followed by a sharp fall in the number of Catholics; many people were abandoning the Catholic Church, accusing it of making empty promises.

We cannot dismiss the fact that the other cause for the unprecedented fall in the number of Catholics was the coming into existence of health centres belonging to other Christian Churches. Those health centres attracted a large number of Catholics who were in need of primary health care.

In order to stop the above decline, Fr. Terenzio Biondi and other Catholic missionaries working at Siteki engaged themselves in the painstaking task of obtaining funds from abroad so that the hospital at Siteki could be completed without further delays.

The plight of the missionaries at Siteki drew attention from many people of different backgrounds who ended up sympathising with them.

We need to acknowledge the fact that a positive factor about the plight of the Catholic missions at Siteki was that some Protestants were able to transcend their differences with Catholics and ended up seeing a needy fellow Christian who urgently needed help. This is because the Catholic Church did not encounter any difficulties with the Protestants of those days. They were good and also helpful, though in terms of new church members, the intake was largely from schools, and not necessarily from the older generation.

After the situation at Good Shepherd had been made public, donations started pouring in from different sources. A very generous Protestant man living at Siteki helped Good Shepherd mission to obtain /500.00 from one of the South African based companies, and the money was used to put toilets, roof, taps etc, in the new building. An amount of /15.00 that was received as a donation from overseas was used to purchase beds and bedding. On the other hand Dr. Candia of the U.M.M.I charitable organization based in Milan, Italy promised to send a substantial amount of medicine to Good Shepherd³³¹.

The above assistance was received within a very short period of time and gave some hope to the friars who were concerned about the hospital. Luckily Fr. Bonaventure Kathrein decided to remain at Siteki. He became a great spiritual healer since he had some skills in supernatural healing and was recognised by many as a man of God who had been

³³¹. Terenzio Biondi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Good Shepherd mission, Siteki, 18 February, 1952.

sent by God to bring healing to the people: he was able to heal certain kinds of sicknesses that could not be healed by physicians, owing to their cause. Those sicknesses could not be healed without psychological and spiritual approaches.

On the other hand the Catholic medical doctors who exercised their profession at the Good Shepherd hospital were so famous that people beyond Siteki spoke of them. The above personalities, that is, Fr. Bonaventure Kathrein and the Polish medical doctor became beacons that attracted many people to Good Shepherd mission hospital. As a result, Good Shepherd became a centre where those afflicted with different kinds of sufferings could find refuge.

One of the major projects undertaken by the Catholic Church in Swaziland in 1952 was the completion of several buildings belonging to the Good Shepherd Hospital. Perhaps one of the reasons why the Catholic Church was so anxious about the project was that government had promised her that once the hospital was completed the authorities would assist the hospital financially. The above promise generated much enthusiasm amongst Catholic missionaries who had an impromptu meeting and set the deadline for the completion of all the buildings to be not later than early 1953.

This tardy project was not immune to the influences of pessimists who thought that the hospital would not be completed in their life time. The negative elements steaming from them rendered the project costly and lengthy.

However it is interesting to find that other building projects undertaken by the Catholic Church in the very same period of time, such as the restoration works done on St. Mary's church at Lobamba and the up-grading of the boys college at Bremersdorp, were not interrupted by the dream of having a hospital as early as 1953. Ironically some

of those projects were completed earlier, in 1952.

Unfortunately as time went on, it became evident that the opening of the hospital might have to be delayed by a year or two. The delay did not adversely affect the spirit of the friars involved in the project. On the contrary it fired their zeal, and they became more enthusiastic about the project.

b. College and Schools: We have seen that in 1951, owing to financial difficulties the friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary had no choice but to hand over the college they had built at Bremersdorp to the Salesians. Much money was spent by the Order of the Servants of Mary developing it. Most of the friars and the Servite Sisters of Pistoia were not pleased that the college was going to be run by Salesians: the sisters had qualified staff who could teach at the college as long as it were under the hands of the friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary.

Wanting to return the college to the Order of the Servants of Mary, Fr. Luigi Ruggeri wrote a letter dated 15 January, 1952 to the Prior General of the Order of the Servants of Mary asking him for his opinion.

Other people whom Fr. Luigi Ruggeri had thought could be requested to teach were Fr. Terenzio Biondi and Fr. Girolamo Casalini. Unfortunately, the former would not be able to prepare himself for the above post since he was involved in a project of building a hospital at Siteki. Also, Fr. Girolamo Casalini could not undertake it since he was parish priest at Bremersdorp and the thirty five year old Fr. Camillo Menchini, who had previously been asked to look after the college, did not accept on account of poor

health and personal reasons³³².

A great deal of effort needed to be put into Catholic schools. One of the earliest Catholic outstations in the country, Nyakeni, required a better school, since many children in the area needed to travel long distances in order to receive education in a Catholic school.

In 1952 Frs. Geraldo Galandi and Girolamo Casalani paid a visit to Nyakeni to find out whether a Catholic school could be developed in the area³³³. Meanwhile at Hluti the Servite Sisters of Pistoia laboured to complete some school buildings at Our Lady of Sorrows Mission and by 1953 the main school building on the mission's premises, which has a big coat of arms of the Order of the Servants of Mary placed artistically above the words "Our Lady of Sorrows School", had been completed.

A large proportion of money spent during the building project came from overseas. Many pupils, especially boys, contributed much to the reduction of the building costs by offering to make bricks and doing a lot of labour.

One of the important characteristics of the schools in those days is that they offered a variety of courses such as home management skills. One of the staff members, Sr. Alda Bonera, became a pioneer in that field.

A number of repairs were carried out in 1952: Bro. Vittorio Serpi went to St. Mary's mission on 31 May, 1952 to begin the work of repairing the church, and according to the contract he was to be paid /10 a month by the diocese of Bremersdorp. The money

³³². Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Generale dell'Ordine dei Servi di Maria*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo, 15 January, 1952.

³³³. Geraldo Galandi, *lettera a Luigi Ruggeri*, St. Theresa's mission, Bremersdorp, 31 May, 1952.

was to be credited to the account of his community³³⁴.

c. Congress: In April and May, 1952 a large number of missionaries and laity belonging to the diocese of Bremersdorp attended a Marian Congress held in Durban, South Africa. Catholics from different parts of South Africa attended it in great numbers.

The above congress was indeed one of the major Catholic meetings in southern Africa. The fact that there was some representation from the Catholic Church of Swaziland meant that the Catholic hierarchy in Swaziland wanted to improve its image in the Catholic Church in southern Africa.

The other reason why a great number of missionaries of the Order of the Servants of Mary, in particular, took part in the congress is that the congress was centred on the Blessed Virgin Mary. Friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary have a spirituality which is firmly focused on the Blessed Virgin Mary; she is considered to be the mother and the model of the church. In the history of the Church, friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary have always played a major role in all Marian gatherings.

d. Re-election of Fr. Luigi Ruggeri: At the Chapter of the Tuscan Province held in 1952 in Florence, the situation of the Church in Swaziland received much attention. A large number of friars attended. Amongst them was Fr. Luigi Ruggeri.

At the close of the Chapter, sensational news about the election results was announced. The prior provincial of the Tuscan province Fr. Raffael Tauci, and the local religious superior Fr. Luigi Ruggeri, were re-elected³³⁵.

³³⁴. Geraldo Galandi, *lettera a Luigi Ruggeri*, St. Theresa's mission, Bremersdorp, 31 May, 1952.

³³⁵. Geraldo Galandi, *Lettera a Federico Aliboni*, St. Theresa's mission, Bremersdorp, 17 June, 1952.

At least a hundred kilograms of goods to be used mainly in Church services arrived in Swaziland in July 1952³³⁶. While in Italy Fr. Luigi Ruggeri was promised support by the friars who re-elected him to his office.

Numerous letters had been written by Fr. Alfonso Borelli to Italy seeking financial assistance. Towards the end of 1952, there was some hope that at least Italian /100 000 was to be granted to St. Theresa's mission by the secretary of the missions of the Tuscan Province³³⁷.

e. Annual retreat: So as to help friars to relax and discern their religious vocation, annual retreats were organised in the diocese of Bremersdorp at least once a year in July. July was chosen as the best month since schools were closed and practically no work was done in the fields.

For a number of years, a large proportion of, if not all, friars attended a spiritual retreat. Traditionally friars would go to one mission for a spiritual retreat. But due to certain difficulties, it was not easy to organise an annual retreat for all friars in 1952. Instead of having one spiritual retreat, three places were identified for annual retreats, and for the first time they were attended in small groups, rendering them manageable.

The above practice enabled those who could not go to a certain place for a retreat to choose another venue. The first retreat was held at Florence mission in September. In December 1952 two spiritual retreats were held on two different dates in two different missions: one at St. Theresa's mission and the other at St. Joseph's mission.

³³⁶. Federico Aliboni, *Lettera a Geraldo Galandi*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, 3 July, 1952.

³³⁷. Federico Aliboni, *lettera a Alfonso Borelli*, Convento Sette Santi Fondatori, Firenze, 21 October, 1952.

In spite of the efforts made by Fr. Luigi Ruggeri to help friars to grow in their spiritual lives through retreats and conferences, there were some disappointments. The Catholic Church in Swaziland was entangled in scandals. One of the priests who had been having difficulties with the vow of obedience, Fr. Gregorio Logli, is said to have ended up living with an African girl. The above experience plunged the whole diocese into great sorrow, for the diocese was not prepared to lose another priest. Memories of the priest who left the priesthood at St. Philip's mission were still fresh in the minds of the clergy and the laity in the diocese of Bremersdorp.

The health of the leader of the Church in Swaziland, Bishop Constantino Barneschi, who had been subjected to pressure from some of his priests who were not faithful to their religious call, and to the pressure exerted by huge pastoral responsibility, was affected. By April 1952 his health had deteriorated; as a result, he was admitted to one of the hospitals in South Africa. However, he returned to Swaziland in complete health³³⁸.

f. **Fr. Menchini:** Ironically, one of the reasons that led to the relatively greater financial independence enjoyed by the Sulphur Springs mission was its unfavourable geographical position. It is indeed a paradox that it became a blessing in disguise.

The mission of Sulphur Springs was the remotest of all the missions run by the friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary in southern Africa. Its friars were virtually isolated from the rest of the Order.

There were a handful of friars working in Swaziland who made frequent visits to

³³⁸. Superiore Regolare, *Rapporto del Superiore Regolare per l'anno 1952 al Rev.mo Padre Generale e al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofu, 1952.

Sulphur Springs, which was becoming a corridor where friars travelling between Durban and Bremersdorp would pass. Those visiting communities of the Order of the Servants of Mary in the Transvaal from the southern part of Swaziland would make it a point to pass through Sulphur Springs.

The "isolated" friars developed a philosophy of living that proved to be very efficient. Evidence to substantiate the above affirmation can be gathered from the economy and the spirit of fraternity cherished by the friars living in that mission. Otherwise there would have been an absence of vigorous life in the mission, which explains why the first African Catholic priest of the Order of the Servants of Mary, Fr. Albert Mndzebele to be ordained was from Sulphur Springs mission.

Though there was no Catholic mission run by the Order of the Servants of Mary that was self-sufficient, we could mention the fact that Sulphur Springs was better in this respect than all the other missions and was gradually becoming a model for them. The three friars who were living there worked with great commitment; under the leadership of Fr. Camillo Menchini they were able to raise the standard of living in the mission.

Like any other mission of its size, the mission was running a clinic. The only difference is that the clinic it was running was doing very well as compared to other clinics run by the friars of the Order.

According to the financial statement issued at the end of October 1952, the income of the clinic exceeded /352.12.2, while the expenditure was /407.10.4. Though the expenditure was higher than the income, the clinic could still function since it had a lot of medicines in stock, which were in good condition and could be used by patients. Another fact worth mentioning is that most of the people were given treatment free of

charge.

There was a subsidy provided by the government, which was used to pay the salary of the nurse who worked in the clinic. In the opinion of Fr. Camillo Menchini, if the clinic was run by a Congregation of Sisters it would help to generate more income for the mission.

Sulphur Springs mission did not depend much on money coming from overseas for its functioning. We have seen that since the opening of the first Catholic mission in Swaziland in 1914 by the Order, missionaries working in Swaziland never sent money overseas when they wanted to purchase goods or devotional articles. However, a total sum of /2 was sent to Italy by Fr. Camillo Menchini so that they could have the seven dolour rosaries for the mission of Sulphur Springs.

Another point to note is that the house of the priest was modest and that it had running water in the rooms. In his letter dated 6 November, 1952, Fr. Camillo Menchini speaks of "up-grading electrical wiring". This means that the mission had developed to such an extent that there was a need to up-grade its electricity supply. In order to save money, the above job was done by Fr. Camillo Menchini after having consulted manuals dealing with the subject of electricity³³⁹.

(ii) A glance at difficulties faced by missionaries

In his letter to the prior provincial of the Tuscan Province dated 29 January, 1952, Fr. Camillo Menchini mentioned the fact that the cause of the problems experienced by

³³⁹. Camillo Menchini, *lettera a Federico Aliboni*, Catholic mission, Sulphur Springs, 6 November, 1952.

most of the missionaries was the lifestyle which circumstances forced them to adopt in a missionary territory.

According to Fr. Camillo Menchini, the best way to help friars to avoid those problems was not to allow them to spend many years in the mission territory. Another way which could help would be to embark on the project of erecting a bigger priory where some form of monastic life would be observed³⁴⁰. Given the ecclesial context of Swaziland, though, the two above proposals did not materialise.

In order for the Church to grow in Swaziland, it needed priests who could work with great independence in a large territory. They needed to be able to live alone, for their limited number could barely guarantee community life, which guarantees moral and psychological support to a friar in a given community. It enhances the observance of the three vows of obedience, chastity and poverty. Missionary life made friars vulnerable to temptations owing to the fact that most of the friars working in missions lacked support from the priory due to the shortage of friars. These friars would spend all their time on their own.

The absence of community life made it impossible for some friars to observe faithfully all the three vows. This is due to the fact that a friar finds himself fully absorbed into pastoral work. He returns home from pastoral work very exhausted by the work he had been doing all day. As a result, he develops a habit of not praying and of not doing meditations. Since prayer forms an integral part in the development of a friar, the friar who misses it ends up living a superficial religious life. That eventually leads to laxity in

³⁴⁰. Camillo Menchini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Sulphur Springs, 29 January, 1952.

discipline and unwillingness to obey his superiors.

During the course of our discussion we have seen that most of the friars who had difficulties with their superiors did not have inclination towards prayer life and meditation. Some of them did not even want to go back to Italy for they feared that they might not be able to adjust themselves to the proper community life after they have been exposed to greater freedom in missionary territories.

In this chapter we shall see how a priest who had a problem with the vow of obedience, Gregorio Logli who was expected to return to Italy fled to Johannesburg and decided to settle there against the will of his superiors. His superiors both in Swaziland and in Italy wanted him to go back to Italy.

It became evident that they would not allow him to come back to Swaziland because of his behaviour. While in Johannesburg in January 1952 he wrote a letter to his provincial asking him to allow him to stay in Swaziland or in Johannesburg. He thought that he would be chaplain to the Italian community if he went to Johannesburg³⁴¹. Fr. Gregorio Logli might have written a similar letter to Bishop Constantino Barneschi.

Bishop Constantino Barneschi was against the idea of Fr. Gregorio Logli remaining in Africa; he suggested that he should go to Italy³⁴². If Fr. Gregorio Logli had been living in a larger community he might not have yielded to the temptation of abandoning his priory. The emotional support he would have received from his fellow brothers would have helped him surmount some of the difficulties that eventually led to

³⁴¹. Gregorio Logli, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Johannesburg, 2 January, 1952.

³⁴². Constantino Barneschi, *Lettera a Gregorio Logli*, Bishop's House, Bremersdorp, 9 January, 1952.

his abandoning the community.

In March 1953 he was rumoured to be trying to build a shop near a Catholic mission. One missionary wrote:

"Fr. Gregorio Logli has been seen near one of our missions; he is planning to open a shop, he (Logli) is definitely trying to find out if he could cheat his neighbour (in his new venture)⁸⁴³.

a. **Lack of Money:** Though education seemed to be foremost in the mind of government, educational institutions remained some of the few bodies that did not guarantee security to those whose lives depended upon it: school teachers would often not receive their monthly salaries.

In the previous chapters, we have seen that because of government subsidies, missionaries did not need to worry about being able to pay full salaries to the people they employed to teach in their schools. But the attitude of government towards education had taken a different direction in the early 1950's.

Teachers teaching in Catholic schools would experience months without receiving their monthly salaries. Catholic missionaries were compelled by the situation to use money earmarked for evangelization to pay these salaries.

The situation became worse as the number of Catholic schools increased each year. Most of the buildings which had been built when missions were established in the 1920's badly needed repairs. Some needed to be demolished so that new and modern buildings could be built.

³⁴³. Geraldo Galandi, *lettera a Federico Aliboni*, St. Theresa's mission, "Quello che fu P. Logli adesso s'è (apparso) vicino a una nostra missione e cerca di mettere una bottega, per vedere se riesce ad imbrogliare il prossimo...", 30 March, 1953.

It is interesting to find that in spite of the problem of the shortage of money, the Catholic Church was eager to build a huge modern girls' hostel at St. Joseph's Mission. It was thought that the future hostel would be a replica of the boys' hostel built by the Catholic Church at Bremersdorp.

In the summer of 1952 Fr. Stefano Papini built new classrooms and a big laundry at Mater Dolorosa Mission, Mbabane³⁴⁴.

While Fr. Terenzio Biondi was busy with the hospital in Siteki other priests such as Stefano Papini and Luigi Ruggeri invested a lot of energy in the development of the diocese of Bremersdorp.

b. Lack of Priests: A huge diocese like Bremersdorp needed more priests than the eighteen it had in 1952. Paradoxically, between the years 1946 and 1952, though a great number of priests were arriving in Swaziland, the Catholic Church experienced an acute shortage of priests, which was caused by factors such as deaths and retirement.

In 1946 Swaziland had fourteen Catholic Priests, but within a period of five years, four of the priests had died, five returned to their country of origin, one left the priesthood and another was out of the priestly ministry. On the other hand, from September 1946 until the end of 1952 twenty five priests arrived in Swaziland.

At the end of 1952 there were only nineteen Catholic priests in Swaziland. Nine of them, namely: Frs. Geraldo Galandi, Giovanni Catocci, Luigi Ruggeri, Stefano Papini, Terenzio Biondi, Alfonso Borelli, Girolamo Casalini, Roberto Dini and Siro Edoni belonged to the Tuscan Province. Others belonged to other provinces. (See table below.)

³⁴⁴. Girolamo Casalini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Florence mission, Luve, 18 October, 1952.

Name of the priest	Name of the province
Botta	Piedmont
Cattilino	Piedmont
Cicccone	Southern Italy
Scelza	Southern Italy
Walsh	English
Wright	English
Vitelli	Roman
Boglari	Hungarian

There were other priests such as Fagiolo, Banci and Camillo Menchini whose names were not mentioned in the documents studied, but who might have been in Swaziland in 1952.

The above number of priests was far less than required, since the Catholic Church was eager to open more missions and schools. However, there was a general feeling that most provinces of the Order were reluctant to send their friars to Swaziland since Swaziland was under the jurisdiction of the Tuscan Province.

Wanting to solve the problem, Fr. Luigi Ruggeri suggested that Provinces of the Order send friars to Swaziland, and that these friars would be under the jurisdiction of their own Province. He assured the Provinces that they would be given opportunity to have missions and outstations under their complete jurisdiction.

The above move was indeed going to encourage different Provinces of the Order to help Swaziland with personnel and finances³⁴⁵. One of the reasons that might have

³⁴⁵. Superiore Regolare, *Rapporto del Superiore Regolare per l'anno 1952 al Rev.mo Padre Generale e al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo, 1952.

compelled Fr. Luigi Ruggeri to suggest that other provinces be given the right to be in charge of some missions in Swaziland was financially motivated. He knew well that if a province assumed a juridical responsibility over a mission it would be its primary responsibility to finance the mission and all projects undertaken by the mission.

When we look at the annual financial report released by the local religious superior, Fr. Luigi Ruggeri, we find that more than two thousand two hundred and twelve Pounds Sterling three Shillings and three Pence were used by the friars in Swaziland.

A large percentage of the money came from the Prior General of the Order of the Servants of Mary and the Tuscan Province³⁴⁶.

The following table gives a picture of the finances of the friars of the Servants of Mary in Swaziland.

EXPENDITURE

Administrative expenses.....	/.	224.3.11
Postulant.....	/...	67.5.0...
Clothing.....	/...	16.13.6.
Grants to different missions.....	/.	784.13.0
Overseas trips		E 300. 8.4
Money given to the Bishop.....		E 818.19.6
 Total		 E 2212.3.3

³⁴⁶. Missione del Swaziland, *Rapporto finanziario dell'anno 1952*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo, 23 April, 1953.

INCOME

Opening balance.....	£	146.5.0
Money received from the Prior General.....	£	1 637.19.0
Money received from the Tuscan Province.....	£	119.7.7
Money received from Fr. Pennoni.....	£	45.0.0
Farming machinery sold.....	/	60.0.0
Total.....	/	2 008.11.7

The 1952 financial year was closed with a deficit of two hundred and three Pound Sterling eleven shillings and eight pence.

As the number of priests defecting from the Order of the Servants of Mary and eventually from active priestly ministry increased, the local religious superior, Fr. Luigi Ruggeri, became concerned with the quality of priests sent to Swaziland³⁴⁷.

In 1952, a priest who had been sent to Swaziland, Fr. Francesco Arcangeli, was judged to be unfit for missionary life and it was suggested that he went back to Italy. Since Fr. Francesco Arcangeli was reluctant to return he was sent to South Africa to learn the English language. His superiors might have thought that if they sent him to South Africa he would eventually abandon the idea of being a missionary in Swaziland in future.

Unfortunately, after completing his language course he showed his interest in being a missionary in Swaziland. Very interestingly, just before he completed his English course Fr. Luigi Ruggeri suggested that Fr. Francesco Arcangeli be sent to St. Mary's Priory at Fulham Road, London in the United Kingdom to learn English.

³⁴⁷. Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimofu, 17 July, 1952.

The motive he gave for his suggestion was that in London there was a priory of the Order of the Servants of Mary where Fr. Francesco Arcangeli could learn English in a Servite environment³⁴⁸.

About four months later, Fr. Francesco Arcangeli wrote a letter to Fr. Luigi Ruggeri informing him about his return to Swaziland. Fr. Luigi Ruggeri tried to influence the prior provincial of the Tuscan Province by suggesting that the provincial ordered Fr. Francesco Arcangeli to stay longer in South Africa so that he could learn better English³⁴⁹.

When Fr. Francesco Arcangeli was due to come back to Swaziland, Fr. Luigi Ruggeri had the idea of sending him to St. Peregrine's mission, where he was to replace Fr. Enrico Gamaschi who was due to go to Canada on holiday. Bro. Ladislao Orban who was living at St. Peregrine's mission was petrified when he heard a rumour that Fr. Francesco Arcangeli might be sent to St. Peregrine's Mission. This is due to the fact that Bro. Ladislao Orban did not like Fr. Francesco Arcangeli. As a result he influenced Fr. Luigi Ruggeri so that he could abandon his plan of sending Fr. Francesco Arcangeli to St. Peregrine's Mission³⁵⁰.

In May 1952 Fr. Giovanni Cattoci and Bro. Gioacchino Bottari were expected to go to Italy on vacation³⁵¹, thus worsening the situation of the shortage of priests in the

³⁴⁸. Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, 12 August, 1952.

³⁴⁹. Luigi Ruggeri, *Lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo, 22 December 1952.

³⁵⁰. Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo, 17 July, 1952.

³⁵¹. Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo, 5 April, 1952.

country.

c. **The question of Fr. Camillo's successor now arose:** Since it was not easy for foreigners to obtain a residence permit from the government of South Africa, Italian priests of the Order of the Servants of Mary working in Swaziland could not be sent to South Africa. Nevertheless, an Italian priest belonging to the Order of the Servants of Mary, Fr. Camillo Menchini, was fortunate to obtain a residence permit and was working at Sulphur Springs but had to stay in South Africa. His service was greatly needed in Swaziland but owing to the fact that if he left for Swaziland his successor might not get a residence permit for South Africa, Sulphur Springs would be without a priest.

While at Sulphur Springs, Fr. Camillo Menchini worked very hard for the development of that mission. His way of doing things made his superiors to think of sending him to Swaziland where he was clearly needed.

One can decipher from the correspondence between Fr. Camillo Menchini and the Prior Provincial of the Tuscan Province that Fr. Camillo Menchini was a very honest man whose life was characterised by humility and abnegation³⁵². It was indeed unusual for priests who were not living with other priests to have those qualities.

On a number of occasions a desire to live without other priests was observed amongst friars. The above trend seemed to have been very strong amongst those who were given a huge mission land to administer. They would often be tempted to behave as though they owned the land and the people who were put under their care. This is why in most cases transferring them from one mission to another was not easy. On the other

³⁵². Gregorio Logli, *lettera al Priore Generale dell'Ordine dei Servi di Maria*, St. Joseph's mission Mzimpofo, 15 January, 1952.

hand, Fr. Camillo Menchini seemed to have been immune to this attitude of most missionaries.

In one of his letters he confided to the Provincial of the Tuscan Province that he would not have difficulty even if he were moved from Sulphurous Springs, a mission where he worked amicably with the local people.

d. A fugitive priest, Logli:

By the beginning of January 1952 Fr. Gregorio Logli fled to South Africa after having been involved in an acrimonious squabble with his superior who had established himself in Johannesburg. Prior to his defection he had been given the option to go to Italy; unfortunately he decided to go and live in South Africa against the will of his superiors. As a religious priest, Fr. Gregorio Logli was obliged to be complaisant with the will of his religious superior.

By the very fact that he fled from the religious community in Swaziland he was virtually running the risk of being suspended by the Catholic Church. Article number 2386 of the then Code of Canon Law stipulated that:

"Religiosus fugitivus ipso facto incurrit in suspensionem proprio superiori majori reservatam (A religious who is a fugitive *ipso facto* incurs privation of any office he may have had in his institute and if he is in sacred orders, suspension is reserved to his own major superior³⁵³)".

In his letter dated 4 January, 1952, this fugitive priest asked Bishop Constantino Barneschi to help him solve his problem so that he could enjoy all priestly privileges in

³⁵³. Lincoln Bouscarens and Adam Ellis, *Canon Law a Text and Commentary*, The Bruce Publishing Company, Milwaukee, 1957, Can. 2386.

the local Church. The letter was read carefully by Bishop Constantino Barneschi who thought that the best punishment to assist Fr. Gregorio Logli to make a thorough reflection on his faith and vocation as a Catholic priest was to urge him to go to Italy where he would be subjected to penance. The bishop assured the fugitive priest that while in Italy he would ask for clemency on his behalf³⁵⁴.

Interestingly, on 2 January, 1952 Fr. Gregorio Logli had written a letter to the prior provincial of the Tuscan Province asking for pardon for what he did and informing him that he was willing to return to Swaziland and stay at Mater Dolorosa mission at Mbabane³⁵⁵.

It seems as if the superiors in Swaziland and in Italy did not believe what Fr. Gregorio Logli was saying. While negotiations were still in progress about his future, other friars were spreading news in the diocese of Bremersdorp and elsewhere that Fr. Gregorio Logli was a fugitive priest.

When Fr. Gregorio Logli learnt what he considered to be an untrue story he denied the fact. In his letters Fr. Gregorio Logli categorically denied the fact that he was a fugitive.

Their refusal to remove the label "fugitive" might have paved the way for further misunderstandings between him and his superiors, that threatened his life as a friar of the Order of the Servants of Mary.

Some friars found it very hard to forgive him, so much so that in March 1952 when

³⁵⁴. Constantino Barneschi, *Lettera a Gregorio Logli*, Bishop's House, Bremarsdorp, 9 January, 1952.

³⁵⁵. Gregorio Logli, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, 2 January, 1952.

he showed some willingness to work in Swaziland, most of the superiors of the missions in Swaziland openly declared their refusal to have Fr. Gregory Logli in their community.

In the early 1952's Fr. Gregorio Logli was not established in any community; he was wandering from one community to another. In the beginning of April 1952, he was living at St. Mary's Mission, Lobamba. The superior at St. Mary's Mission, Fr. Giuseppe Vitelli and Bro. Ildebrando Pellanda were no longer willing to stay with him. The continuous complaints about the conduct of Fr. Gregory Logli caused Fr. Luigi Ruggeri to think of transferring him from St. Mary's mission to St. Joseph's mission so that he could look after Fr. Luggeri.

In his letter to the provincial dated 30 April, 1952 Fr. Luigi Ruggeri gave an account of what happened on one of the gloomiest days in the history of the diocese of Breimersdorp. On 21 April, 1952 Fr. Gregorio Logli left priesthood.

After his departure, it was discovered that he had been involved in what could be defined as "clandestine business" if it is done by a religious. In these dealings quite a substantial amount of money was involved³⁵⁶.

By May Fr. Gregorio Logli was lucky to be employed as a compound manager at a tin mine at Ezulwini near Mbabane. His salary was /20 a month, and he had to pay for his accommodation and meals³⁵⁷.

Fr. Ambrogio Mosca came under the spotlight soon after the predicament of Fr.

³⁵⁶. Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo, "La mattina del 21 Aprile, il P. Logli ci lascio per andarsene per conto suo"., 30 April, 1952.

³⁵⁷. Geraldo Galandi, *Lettera a Luigi Ruggeri*, St. Theresa's Mission, Breimersdorp, 31 May, 1952.

Gregorio Logli. Obviously, the Catholic Church in Swaziland was plunged into another scandal.

(iii) Soil and Water conservation

The proclamation for the Protection of Natural Resources (No. 71 of 1951) was published by the government in December 1951. Its main aim was to set up machinery which would help to prevent soil erosion on demarcated farms. A task team composed of twelve people was formed, the duty of which was to direct the work of conservation in the country. All farmers had to abide by the decisions of the Board which had powers to enforce the law; failure to obey it could result in one incurring a substantial fine.

Mr. G.L Wallis, O.B.E. was entrusted with the responsibility of supervising the St. Joseph's farms together with other farms in the vicinity. After having been admonished by the Natural Resources Board, St. Joseph's farm changed its farming methods.

The Board had been informed that the farm owned by the friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary at the St. Joseph's mission was poorly managed as far as conservation was concerned. Hence the friars of the above mission risked prosecution. We need to mention that farms owned by Swazi people in the rural areas were not affected by the above proclamation³⁵⁸. As a result soil erosion was not prevented there.

³⁵⁸. Natural Resources Board, *Letter to St. Joseph's Mission*, Natural Resources Board, Mbabane 13 November, 1953.

B. THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN 1953

(i) Salesians

The long awaited handing over of the Catholic college at Bremersdorp from the Order of the Servants of Mary to the Congregation of the Salesian finally materialised in the beginning of 1953. We need to bear in mind that the above handover was not a pleasant experience for the friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary. For a good number of years they had tried to block it, but as noted above they had to hand it over to the Salesians or close it.

A friar of the Order of the Servants of Mary who built the college, Bro. Giulio Moretti, was plunged into a thoughtful mood after the handover of the college. Those who were living with him at Bremersdorp noticed a dramatic change in his behaviour. As a result he was transferred to the Ingwavuma region in South Africa where friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary belonging to the American province worked. It did not take him long to acclimatize himself in that area³⁵⁹.

The official opening of the college at Bremersdorp was scheduled to have taken place by mid-1953. Government officials including the Resident Commissioner were amongst the invited guests. Though the official opening had not been performed, Salesians were already involved in their work as educators.

It seems that giving the college to the Salesians indeed had some advantages, that included quality education and the introduction of a youth ministry in the diocese of

³⁵⁹. Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo, 12 March, 1953.

Bremersdorp. As we have seen earlier on in our discussion, Salesians are amongst the best congregations within the Catholic Church for offering high quality education.

Salesian priests and brothers undergo training that enables them to minister to the youth. Swaziland needed a very powerful youth ministry, especially in the 1950's where the whole country was geared towards independence. Only Salesians could give proper training to young people who were to lead the country in the near future.

In the same year, the Order of the Servants of Mary was studying ways in which a college could be built at St. Joseph's mission. Had funds been available, the project of a college would not have been delayed. The other element that motivated the friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary to start contemplating a college at St. Joseph's was that the hospital which was being built at Siteki was near completion,, and at St. Theresa's mission there was a girls' college.

It is interesting to find out that most of the friars were very supportive of the above project. Even Fr. Benedetto Biagioli who was at St. Joseph's mission in 1953 was eager to write letters to benefactors in Italy soliciting funds that would be used to build this college.

In his letter to the prior provincial of the Tuscan Province Fr. Benedetto Biagioli made an explicit request to be given the names and addresses of noble Italian families that could finance the project of a college at St. Joseph's mission. A few months earlier, a Canadian friar also working in Swaziland, who had had similar thoughts, had written numerous letters to friends and benefactors asking for some funds, but unfortunately

received none³⁶⁰.

Prior to that Fr. Benedetto Biagioli had taken a rather low profile in matters pertaining to the development of the diocese of Bremersdorp, owing to the fact that over the past years he had been involved in further studies. Fortunately in March 1953 he graduated from college, after having sat for a state examination. His invigilator was Fr. Luigi Ruggeri³⁶¹. He was thus freed from academic preoccupations. His desire for a college at St. Joseph's mission could be interpreted as his willingness to exercise his teaching profession in a school run by the Order of the Servants of Mary.

He felt that teaching was going to restore some tranquillity in his life and renew his sense of purpose, especially after the death of his father who had been paralysed for thirteen years. Ever since he arrived in Swaziland, Fr. Benedetto Biagioli had been bombarded with letters from home explaining the sickness of his father and the problems they were experiencing.

(ii) Trips abroad

In 1953 numerous trips were made by friars and sisters working in Swaziland. There was much travelling between Bremersdorp and Johannesburg. A large number of missionaries travelling to and from Europe on ship used the port of Durban.

A letter informing Fr. Geraldo Galandi about the arrival of two missionaries in Durban was not received by him since he was not at Bremersdorp when it arrived.

Fr. Francesco Arcangeli and Bro. Giovanni Fondihad been in Italy for a holiday

³⁶⁰. Benedetto Biagioli, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofu, 5 May, 1953.

³⁶¹. Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, 12 March, 1953.

together with Fr. Tomaso Banci. It is very interesting to note that when he left Swaziland for Italy he took a snakeskin, given to him by Fr. Geraldo Galandi for Fr. Federico Aliboni who was in Florence³⁶².

On arrival in Durban they found that nobody had come from Swaziland to meet them. They spent two days waiting for someone to fetch them in a car. Seeing that nobody had come to fetch them one of the missionaries, Fr. Francesco Arcangeli, sent a telegram from Durban to Bremersdorp; fortunately Fr. Geraldo Galandi was at home and he left immediately for Durban to fetch them.

On the 13 August, 1953 they arrived safely at Bremersdorp. Fr. Francesco Arcangeli stayed temporarily at St. Joseph's awaiting transfer to Florence mission where Fr. Giovanni Cattoci was prior³⁶³.

An American friar of the Order of the Servants of Mary, Fr. Thomas Calkins, working in the Ingwavuma area, was given some money to hand over to Fr. Luigi Ruggeri in May or June 1953. The money was used to pay the travelling expenses of Bro. Lanari Tarcisio, who had left Swaziland for Italy on 28 May, 1953³⁶⁴. He was a young friar who had a rather strange personality, which might have been caused by a distorted childhood or the experience of the second world war. He was so inconsistent that in a day he would communicate two totally opposed decisions both of which he had made in a very short

³⁶². Gerelado Galandi, *Lettera a Federico Aliboni*, St. Theresa's Mission, Bremersdorp, 30 March, 1953.

³⁶³. Geraldo Galandi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Theresa's mission, Bremersdorp, 14 August, 1953.

³⁶⁴. Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo, 3 June, 1953.

period of time. Physically the brother was strong and was very faithful in his work, but with him a small problem could turn into a very serious crisis.

Having been aware of the mental condition of the friar, Fr. Luigi Ruggeri brought him to St. Joseph's mission so that he could be near to the Brother. The support he received from Fr. Luigi Ruggeri aided him to gain some tranquillity, that helped him do his work without having it interrupted by mental crisis.

Fr. Luigi Ruggeri left for Italy in 1952 for the Chapter but symptoms of mental crisis became conspicuous again shortly after his return from the Chapter of the Tuscan Province. The only choice Fr. Luigi Ruggeri had was to send Bro. Lanari Tarcisio back to Italy³⁶⁵. It was indeed a necessary but painful decision.

Very interestingly, a missionary volunteer such as Mr. Vittorio Serpi, who was not a friar, was treated as though he was a friar. An Italian Catholic, Mr. Serpi, who had dedicated all his life to the missions was honoured by the friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary who bought him a ticket so that he could go to Italy for a holiday. In July 1953 he left for Italy. While in Italy he enjoyed all the privileges usually reserved to friars who were missionaries³⁶⁶.

At Durban on the 29 December, 1952 Fr. Geraldo Galandi met Fr. Giovanni Cattoci. The two friars entered Swaziland on the 31 December, 1952³⁶⁷. Upon his return

³⁶⁵. Luigi Ruggeri, *Lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's Mission, Mzimpofu, 12 March, 1953.

³⁶⁶. Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofu, 14 July, 1953.

³⁶⁷. Giovanni Cattoci, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Florence mission, Luve, 12 January, 1953.

from his holidays in Italy, Fr. Giovanni Cattoci never hesitated to go back to the mission where he worked. In the beginning of 1953 he was fully involved in his work.

The local people whom he worked with were pleased to see their pastor coming back. Other missionaries were also glad to see Fr. Giovanni Cattoci returning since they knew that he would share the burden of pastoral work with them. Certainly Fr. Terenzio Biondi was amongst those who had been looking forward to his return, since he knew that Fr. Giovanni Cattoci would bring him parcels from Italy. In his letter dated 10 January, 1953 Fr. Terenzio Biondi wrote:

"Grazie della lettera, delle cinque sterline ed anche di un calice che mi ha portato il P. Cattoci" (I would like to thank you for the letter, the five Pound Sterling and the Chalice which were brought by Fr. Giovanni Cattoci)³⁶⁸".

Clearly, one of the precious gifts received by Fr. Terenzio Biondi was a beautiful chalice which was supposed to be used by the bishop. Since all chalices at Good Shepherd mission were worn out, the chalice was donated to be used there. The above donation was approved by the local religious superior, Fr. Luigi Ruggeri.

Fr. Giovanni Cattoci was amongst the best disciplined missionaries in Swaziland. His love for liturgy made him always busy during the Easter and Christmas seasons in the diocese of Bremersdorp.

Few changes were made in the diocese in the early 1950s. This is due to the fact that Fr. Giovanni Cattoci had returned from Italy and Fr. Tomaso Banci was to leave for Italy. During the absence of Fr. Giovanni Cattoci, Florence mission was served by Fr.

³⁶⁸. Terenzio Biondi, *Lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Good Shepherd Mission, Siteki, 10 January, 1953.

Roberto Dini. In 1953, Fr. Roberto Dini was transferred to Christ the King mission where Fr. Tomaso Banci had been working for quite some time.

A lay friar, Bro. Antonio Monaco, was moved to St. Theresa's mission while Bro. Giulio Moretti was called upon to take his place at Florence mission. St. Theresa's mission was served by Fr. Fagiolo; meanwhile Anselmo Marsigli was chaplain of the Sisters at Our Lady of Sorrows, at Hluti.

A priest who had been transferred from St. Peregrine's mission because of ethical reasons, Fr. Ambrogio Mosca was now staying at Bremersdorp. The vicar general of the diocese of Bremersdorp was Fr. Agostino Botta, whose office required that he be transferred from St. Philip's mission to take up residence near the place where the bishop stayed³⁶⁹.

When he returned to Swaziland in October 1953 Fr. Girolamo Casalini was asked to take the place of Fr. Alfonso Borelli at St. Philip's mission, the reason being that Fr. Alfonso Borelli was very ill and could not afford to do any pastoral work at St. Philip's mission. St. Philip's mission indeed needed a very energetic priest who would look after the place. The size of the mission made this impossible for Fr. Alfonso Borelli to look after the place properly.

When Fr. Girolamo Casalini arrived at St. Philip's mission he found that the church, the houses of the priests and those of the sisters including several buildings such as the clinic were in very bad shape. They needed urgent repairs³⁷⁰. Unfortunately, the

³⁶⁹. Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofu, 3 June, 1953.

³⁷⁰. Girolamo Casalini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Philip's mission, Mhlatuze, 5 November, 1953.

diocese of Bremersdorp could not guarantee financial support for St. Philip's mission since it was spending a huge fortune at Lobamba repairing the priest's house at St. Mary's mission. A large sum of money had been budgeted for the repairing of the sisters' convent at Florence mission.

One could ask himself or herself why friars had to pay for the repairs of the sisters' convents. In addition to that they had to buy food, furniture, bed and blankets for the sisters.

Were it not for the 1949 meeting, friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary would not have felt obliged to repair sisters' convents. In fact an important meeting was held in Pistoia, Italy on the 17 January, 1947, attended by the following individuals: the General of the Order of the Servants of Mary, Fr. Alfonso Benetti, the Bishop of the Vicariate of Swaziland, Mons. Constantino Barneschi and the General of the Congregation of the Servite Sisters of Pistoia, Sr. Gugliema Borsari.

The main item of the agenda was missionary activity co-undertaken by the Order of the Servants of Mary and the Servite Sisters of Pistoia. It was decided that the newly founded Congregation of the Servite Sisters of Swaziland be given autonomy.

Furthermore it was said that sisters belonging to the above congregation be treated equally with the Servite Sisters of Pistoia. With regard to the question of language it was resolved that all future missionaries to be sent to Swaziland should be proficient in English, and expenses should be borne by the Order or Congregation that sent them to Swaziland³⁷¹.

³⁷¹. Minutes of the Meeting, *Conferenza Tenuta a Pistoia dal Rev.mo P. Generale Alfonso Benetti dei Servi di Maria con l'ordinario del Vicariato del Swaziland Mons. Attilio C. Barneschi e con la Rev. ma Madre Generale delle Mantellate Gugliema Borsari il giorno 17*

The future of St. Philip's mission depended on funds that could be obtained from overseas. Unlike other missions, St. Philip's mission had very hard working religious brothers, such as Bro. Filippo Tessari and Bro. Raimondo Dal Magro³⁷².

(iii) Local art

In those days there was virtually no interest in local art. Hundreds and hundreds of Pounds Sterling were spent buying objects that could have been produced by local people. The Catholic Church in Swaziland in the 1950's was still far from the concept of inculturation.

In May 1953 at least Italian / 110 000 was paid to the Francesco Martiner Company based in Bolzano³⁷³, Italy for the Stations of the Cross that were ordered by Fr. Geraldo Galandi in October, the previous year. They were destined to be used in one of the chapels at Bremersdorp³⁷⁴. It would have been very cheap to produce them locally.

(iv) Donations

Fr. Girolamo Casalini, who was at that time pastor at Bremersdorp, had friends in the Italian city of Florence who used to send him second hand clothing. In January, 1953 he was expecting goods from Italy. Catholic children at Bremersdorp and the surroundings benefited a lot from them³⁷⁵.

Gennaio 1949, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, 18 January, 1949.

³⁷². Girolamo Casalini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Philip's mission, Mhlatuze, 1 December, 1953.

³⁷³. Federico Aliboni, *lettera alla Ditta Francesco Martiner*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, 20 April, 1953.

³⁷⁴. Francesco Martiner, *lettera a Federico Aliboni*, Bolzano, 1 May, 1953.

³⁷⁵. Girolamo Casalini, *lettera a Giulia e Astolfo Paoli*, St. Theresa's mission, Bremersdorp, December 1952.

Large quantities of medicines were brought by Fr. Francesco Arcangeli in August, 1953 when he arrived in Swaziland from Italy. The medicines were to be used at Good Shepherd hospital. With the help of a certain customs official who knew Fr. Geraldo Galandi only one Pound Sterling and five Shillings was paid for all the medicines brought from Italy. Other luggage was not even opened for inspection³⁷⁶.

Earlier on, another friar who arrived at the port city of Durban, Bro. Giocchino Bottaro, must have been relieved that the luggage was not opened by the customs officials, since in one of the pieces of his luggage there was a rifle, and he did not have a licence to carry a firearm³⁷⁷. Fr. Geraldo Galandi made numerous journeys between Bremersdorp and Durban in a car transporting missionaries who were going and coming from overseas which is why he was well known by the customs officials.

Amongst the missionaries he used to take in his car were sisters belonging to the Congregation of the Servite Sisters of Pistoia. In one of his trips to Durban in the beginning of 1953, that is, on 5 March he took two sisters namely: Palmina and Roberta to Durban, where they boarded a ship that took them to Italy³⁷⁸.

(v) Setbacks

a. Provincialism: An anonymous letter, very critical of the leadership of the Order of the Servants of Mary was sent to the prior provincial of the Tuscan Province. He was

³⁷⁶. Francesco Arcangeli, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, 25 August, 1953.

³⁷⁷. Geraldo Galandi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Theresa's mission, Bremersdorp, 7 January, 1953.

³⁷⁸. Geraldo Galandi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Theresa's mission, Bremersdorp, 30 March, 1953.

accused of transferring only friars who were not belonging to the Tuscan Province.

When looking at mid-1953 statistics we find that there were seven priests not belonging to the Tuscan Province working in Swaziland. These priests were: Frs. Agostino Botta, Fagiolo, Anselmo Marsigli, Bonaventure Kathrein, Enrico Gamache, Ambrogio Mosca and Giuseppe Vitelli.

The friar who wrote the letter was not happy about the way things were done in Swaziland. He accused the local religious superior, Fr. Luigi Ruggeri, of favouritism. When Fr. Luigi Ruggeri received news about the accusation he defended himself.

One could see the motive behind the transferring of friars from one mission to another. According to Fr. Luigi Ruggeri two of the friars whom he transferred from the missions where they had been working asked to be transferred. One friar was transferred from the place where he had been working after he had been made vicar general of the diocese of Bremersdorp.

Another friar was transferred by the predecessor of Fr. Luigi Ruggeri, Fr. Filippo Rizzi. Only one priest had to be transferred because of his behaviour. We need to mention the fact that not all the friars who were transferred belonged to the Tuscan Province: the friar who wrote the letter accusing Fr. Luigi Ruggeri erred.

b. Friar sent to Ingwavuma: A religious brother who was living at St. Theresa's mission, Bro. Marcello, was sent to Ingwavuma region in March 1953 after he had apparently failed to heed his superiors in Swaziland. Being a religious brother he was required to do a lot of manual work in the mission.

At Bremersdorp, Bro. Marcello had European friends with whom he socialised all day, neglecting his primary duty in the community.

Bishop Constantino Barneschi and Fr. Geraldo Galandi who were living with him at Bremersdorp were not too happy with his behaviour. When asked why he was not doing his job he would often tell them that he was involved in pastoral work. His superiors tried in vain to help him understand the importance of him performing his duties. Seeing that it was hard to help him change his behaviour, a decision was taken by the local religious superior to send him to Durban for a two month holiday, hoping that when he returned he would have improved. In Durban he stayed with the fathers of the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate.

There was some hope that by the time he came back from holiday he would have reflected thoroughly on his life and been enabled to change his attitude. Unfortunately, when he came back from Swaziland he did not show any signs of improvement. Then it was suggested that he be sent to Ingwavuma in South Africa where he would be under the authority of the American friars for another period of two months.

We need to mention the fact that Bro. Marcello had in the past mentioned that he wanted to work in the Ingwavuma region. This therefore means that Bro. Marcello was instrumental in the choice of Ingwavuma. A meeting between Fr. Luigi Ruggeri and the superior at Ingwavuma, Fr. Morgan, was held and a decision to keep Bro. Marcello for an indefinite period of time in the Ingwavuma region was made³⁷⁹.

c. Sickness: In the Ingwavuma area which was under the jurisdiction of Swaziland there were some changes also: There were rumours that an American priest, Fr. Edwin Kinch who had gone to the United States, might not come back to Africa since he was

³⁷⁹. Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo, 12 March, 1953.

suffering from yellow fever. An ailing but zealous missionary, Fr. Michael Delehanty had a heart problem and it was suggested that he went back to the United States of America.

d. Deportation: In those days there was what was termed the "immorality act" in South Africa whereby Whites and Blacks were not supposed to have any sexual relationship at all. Suspected of contravening the immorality act by a White policeman, an American priest, Fr. Hayden was jailed for two months.

After his release from prison he was expelled from South Africa. Another missionary who was to leave the country was Fr. Moron. However, there was some hope that other priests were to be sent to Ingwavuma from the United States of America³⁸⁰.

(vi) Fund-raising

As we have seen earlier on in our discussion, one of the goals set by Fr. Luigi Ruggeri during his term of office as local religious superior was to build more schools and repair old church buildings. Much money was needed so that the above goals could be achieved.

The main benefactor of the missions in Swaziland, the Tuscan Province, received many letters from friars working in Swaziland seeking financial assistance, so that all the projects undertaken by the Catholic Church could go ahead without being interrupted due to lack of money. Fortunately, friends of the friars who were in Italy became very generous and pledged their support for the missions.

A total sum of Italian /85 370 was raised by the community at Viareggio, Italy which was due to be sent to Swaziland so that it could help friars in their missionary

³⁸⁰. Giovanni Cattoci, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Florence Mission, Luve, 12 January, 1953.

endeavour.

In 1952 a generous parishioner at Viareggio, Biggi Emma, had given a bursary in the amount of Italian /35 000 to missionaries in Swaziland for the training of local candidates for priesthood³⁸¹. There may have been other monies sent to Swaziland during that period.

The Tuscan Province had struggled over the past decades so that the mission of the Church in Swaziland could develop and embrace the whole spectrum of life, thus attracting many people into the Catholic Church. We need to acknowledge the fact that this was indeed a huge sacrifice for the Tuscan Province, one of the largest provinces in the Order of the Servants of Mary and thus having many friars and students to maintain.

Some help from other provinces of the Order was badly needed by the province, but other provinces were actively engaged in missionary work in other continents. The price to be paid by the Tuscan Province was huge, due to the distance between the province and the missions. Furthermore the province had a relatively high number of missions in the missionary territories.

In one of the meetings of friars held in Chicago, United States of America, Fr. James Keane was elected Treasurer for the mission of the American Province.

We ought to bear in mind that the American Province had missions to support in Ingwavuma. The treasurer of the province wrote a letter to Fr. Raffaele Tauci, who was the Prior Provincial of the Tuscan Province residing in Florence, asking him to send him some information about the general situation of the mission in Swaziland.

The main reason for this request was that the American Province was about to

³⁸¹. Anonymous, *lettera a Federico Aliboni*, Viareggio, 28 May, 1953.

launch a missionary magazine. There was some hope that the American Province was going to offer financial assistance to the Catholic Church in Swaziland.

Articles on missions were to be published together with the names of friars engaged in pastoral work in the missions. Photographs taken from the missions were to be used³⁸². This was seen as a great opportunity to solicit funds in the United States of America that could help in the development of the missions in Swaziland. The response of the Tuscan Province to the idea of the American Province must have been positive. Catholic missionaries in Swaziland were keen on fund-raising.

Different methods of fund-raising were employed; some proved to be more efficient than others. The strategies used depended on the creativity of the individuals. The most common way of fund-raising was writing letters to overseas parishes asking money.

Those who benefited a lot from this method were those who had good literary skills such as Fr. Terenzio Biondi. The American friars working at Ingwavuma were skilled at photography. A rather unique way of fund-raising was carried out by the Servite Sisters of Pistoia, who were marketing skins of snakes caught in Swaziland in Italy³⁸³. On the other hand, a Swazi candidate studying for priesthood in Italy, Bro. Constantine Sifundza, was expected to preach at Holy Masses dedicated to mission Sundays organised by Fr. Federico Aliboni so as to collect more money for the

³⁸². James Keane, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana, Servite Fathers*, Chicago, 19 October, 1953.

³⁸³. Geraldo Galandi, *lettera a Federico Aliboni*, St. Theresa's mission, 13 July, 1952.

missions³⁸⁴.

A letter announcing a meeting to be held in mid-November 1953, of all provincial missions' secretaries, was sent to all provinces of the Order of the Servants of Mary. Each and every delegate was expected to give a comprehensive report of the missionary activity undertaken by his province. The above meeting would certainly have given an opportunity to the friars of the Tuscan Province to share with the rest of the Order some of the difficulties they were encountering in their missionary territory³⁸⁵, thus influencing other provinces to fund the missions of the Catholic Church in Swaziland.

There is no doubt that the question of money and personnel was going to be high on the agenda of the above meeting.

³⁸⁴. Federico Aliboni, *lettera a Geraldo Galandi*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, 31 December, 1953.

³⁸⁵. Segretariato Generale delle Missioni dei Servi di Maria, *lettera al Segretariato Provinciale delle Missioni dei Servi di Maria*, San Marcello, Rome, 20 October, 1953.

Chapter Nine

JUBILEE OF CATHOLICISM IN SWAZILAND 1954

In this year every leader of the friars in the Order of the Servants of Mary endured a multiplicity of problems. In 1954 the Catholic Church in Swaziland celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the arrival of the first Catholic missionaries in the country.

The 1954 Jubilee was marked with significant events for the life of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Bremersdorp; a surge of exhilaration and intense relief was to be felt by the hierarchy of the Catholic Church in Swaziland as well. It is sad that many events that occurred during the jubilee year were not recognised by many; they seemed trivial, though in reality they were not.

The hierarchy of the Church was spelling out its vision; bracing itself to take the Church into the new era. By and large, the majority of Catholics in the country were proud of the two missions, namely: St. Theresa and Good Shepherd, because of the two institutions, a boys' college and a hospital respectively, having been established in those missions.

Other missions such as Florence and St. Philip's competed for recognition in the country and before long they came under the spot light.

Nobody would have expected this. Everybody had expected St. Joseph's mission and Mater Dolorosa mission to be in the limelight. These missions had been founded about forty years ago.

One of the projects undertaken by the Church in Swaziland to mark the jubilee year

was the beginning of the construction of the cathedral of the Diocese of Bremersdorp, and the building of many classrooms in Catholic schools throughout the country³⁸⁶.

At St. Joseph's mission the missionaries had finished the new classrooms and they had begun building a boys' hostel³⁸⁷.

In that year, sizeable amounts of money and goods were donated to the Catholic missions in the country. Some of the donations included the handing of /470 to Fr. Roberto Dini who was at Christ the King Mission, Hlatikhulu, for the purchase of a car, by the Comitato di S. Pietro Claver based in Italy. After receiving the money Fr. Roberto Dini thought of buying a Chevrolet or an International van that cost /800 instead of buying an Austin, though it was /120 cheaper than the Chevrolet, since the Chevrolet was an ideal car for the mountains of Hlatikhulu³⁸⁸.

A. AN HISTORIC VISIT BY THE GENERAL AND THE PROVINCIAL

In the beginning of 1954 the general of the Order of the Servants of Mary, Fr. Alfonso MontE, was contemplating the idea of visiting the missions of the Order of the Servants of Mary in Swaziland. In Easter 1954 he came to Swaziland together with the prior provincial of the Tuscan Province, Fr. Raffael Tauci.

³⁸⁶. Roberto Dini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Christ the King mission, Hlatikhulu, 21 December, 1954.

³⁸⁷. Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo, 23 December, 1954.

³⁸⁸. Roberto Dini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Christ the King mission, Hlatikhulu, 21 December, 1954.

Very interestingly, the missions of the Order of the Servants of Mary founded in South Africa were also visited by the general and the provincial. These included Nigel, Heidelberg, Monte Berico, Hlabisa³⁸⁹ and others.

Normally after each and every visit by the general, a letter summarising the visit of the general is written by the general himself. The letter is very important since it gives an outline of the local situation as perceived by the general.

Fr. Alfonso MontE concluded his canonical visitation to the missions in Swaziland by writing a very powerful letter. The willingness to support the missionary endeavour in Swaziland was mentioned explicitly in the letter of the general and gave some hope to the missionaries.

One can understand from his letter that the visit by the general was very fruitful; it enabled him to understand the situation of the local Church and the daily struggles faced by the friars and sisters who were actively involved in the evangelisation of the local people.

It had always been the intention of the friars working in Swaziland that their general understood that missionaries were besieged with all kinds of problems. In his letter, the general exhorted all the friars to live a rather austere life characterised by daily meditations, regular spiritual retreats and the observance of the Constitution of the Order of the Servants of Mary.

The above suggestions by the general were aimed at challenging those friars who had little time for personal and communitarian prayer. Furthermore, the general of the

³⁸⁹. Morgan, *letter to the Prior Provincial of the Tuscan Province*, Good Shepherd mission, Hlabisa, 31 May, 1954.

Order encouraged friars to promote local vocations to religious life. Because some friars were not obedient to their superiors, a spirit of laxity crept into some of the religious communities.

The letter by the general showed that he had been briefed about the situation of the Order of the Servants of Mary in Swaziland by the friars themselves, during the private audience they had with him. The fact that in his letter he strongly defended the authority of the local superiors and he decreed that all friars must humble themselves before their superiors - they should not go against any of the decisions of their superiors - explains everything.

According to the general, friars and sisters belonging to the two Servite Congregations operating in Swaziland needed to work together as brothers and sisters. During his stay in Swaziland the general had an opportunity to visit some of the schools which had been opened by the friars of the Order. The hospital at Siteki and other health centres in the country were also visited by him.

In his letter to the friars one could see that he believed that the future of the Church in Swaziland depended on the work done by the friars working hand and hand with the sisters. In order to help Catholics to grow their faith the general suggested that First Friday Masses in honour of the Sacred Heart of Jesus be celebrated throughout the diocese of Bremersdorp. He urged friars to promote Marian feasts. For he believed that if the two elements were blended together many people could benefit, which would enhance their Christian maturity thus making them staunch Catholics in a country full of

different Christian denominations³⁹⁰.

B. JUBILEE BLESSINGS

Perhaps one of the most tangible signs of the jubilee blessing was the commitment shown by benefactors to help the local Church. The above commitment led to a renewed zeal amongst European Catholics (who had helped in the establishment of the Catholic Church in Swaziland) to send more material goods to Swaziland. Many of them donated money and equipment which were largely used in Catholic institutions in the country such as schools and health centres.

It is interesting to find out that these donations were made by individuals, lay groups and other charitable organizations. It is, however, important to mention the fact that some European and American priories of the Order of the Servants of Mary did also contribute a lot of money.

A total sum of /400 was sent to Fr. Luigi Ruggeri by one of the priories of the Order of the Servants of Mary in England³⁹¹. In the same period of time, at least /300 was sent to the Catholic Church in Swaziland by the Congregation for the Propagation of Faith based in the Vatican, Rome³⁹². These monies were to be used by the friars of the Order

³⁹⁰. Alfonso MontE, *Ac Totius Ordinis Servorum B. Mariae Virginis Prior Generalis: Lettera ai Rev. Padri e Fratelli della nostra missione del Swaziland*, Bremersdorp, 1954.

³⁹¹. Prior, *Letter to the Prior Provincial of the Tuscan Province*, Our Lady's Priory, Newbury, 12 September, 1954.

³⁹². Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimofu, 5 October, 1954.

in Swaziland.

Due to the fact that English was the only European language used in Swaziland, the friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary of the English Province decided to offer assistance to the Italian friars who did not know English by hosting them in England during the duration of the entire course in the English language; the Italian friars were to go to Swaziland after they had mastered English³⁹³.

Statistics show that most of the friars who were working in Swaziland in the 1950's had studied English in England. Missionaries never stopped soliciting funds from overseas; those who happened to be in Europe would make it a point to obtain something that would benefit the missions in Swaziland. A missionary who had gone to Italy in 1954 on vacation, Fr. Giovanni Cattoci, asked Italian friars to send religious vestments to Swaziland. By October 1954, dozens of boxes containing religious vestments as well as altar-servers' cassocks had been prepared and were to be sent to the missions in Swaziland.

The newly erected Diocese of Bremersdorp badly needed those goods especially for the divine cult³⁹⁴. It is particularly intriguing to find that all missionaries were concerned with the welfare of all the missions, not only their own. This stems from the fact that while overseas they would speak on behalf of the diocese itself.

One of the highlights of the jubilee celebration was the solemn profession of a religious brother in a time when the vocation to brotherhood was becoming less attractive.

³⁹³. Prior, *letter to the Prior Provincial of the Tuscan Province*, Our Lady's Priory, Newbury, 12 September, 1954.

³⁹⁴. Priory of St. Clement, *lettera anonima*, San Clemente, Siena, 22 October, 1954.

On 23 September, 1954, about twenty three friars attended an extraordinary event in one of the earliest missions in Swaziland. The above event drew a large number of people to the premises of Florence mission where Bro. Antonio Monaco made his solemn profession in the Order of the Servants of Mary. His vows were received by the local religious superior, Fr. Luigi Ruggeri³⁹⁵ who was, like Bro. Antonio Monaco, an amiable if taciturn Westerner.

Reflecting on the life of the Church in Swaziland we may say that the solemn profession of Bro. Antonio Monaco came at a time when the Catholic Church needed religious brothers. We recall that in July 1954 one of the religious brothers had asked to be released from missionary work. The religious brother who had been working at Christ the King Mission, Hlatikhulu, Bro. Gioacchino Bottari wrote a letter in July 1954 requesting the prior provincial of the Tuscan Province to withdraw him from the missions in Swaziland. Apparently, Bro. Gioacchino Bottari was not happy about missionary life³⁹⁶. His decision to go back to Italy came as no surprise at all and should be judged as a positive decision.

It is unfortunate that his entire missionary life in Swaziland was characterised with acrimonious squabbles with other friars, especially superiors. We cite here one episode that showed his total lack of obedience. It happened at Christ the King mission where Bro. Gioacchino Bottari was living with Fr. Roberto Dini, a priest he failed to recognise as his superior as stipulated in the constitution of the Order of the Servants of Mary.

³⁹⁵. Antonio Monaco, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Florence mission, Luve, 30 September, 1954.

³⁹⁶. Gioacchino Bottaro, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Christ the King mission, Hlatikhulu, 19 July, 1954.

In trying to solve their differences, Fr. Luigi Ruggeri would make frequent visits to Hlatikhulu. In one of those visits he mentioned that he wanted to transfer Bro. Gioacchino Bottari from Christ the King mission to another mission; unfortunately, Bro. Gioacchino Bottari told him that he would rather go back to Italy than stay in another mission in Swaziland³⁹⁷. Though he did not want to go to another mission he was transferred to Good Shepherd mission at Siteki when Bro. Boniface Schnieder left Siteki for a holiday overseas. His place at Christ the King mission, Hlatikhulu was taken by Bro. Giovanni Fondi³⁹⁸.

(i) Health centres at Lobamba and Luve

The scarcity of rain at Lobamba made the life of the friars and the local people very difficult. St. Mary's mission there could not function well with the amount of water available. The mission had a health centre, which meant that plenty of water was needed.

In order to obtain water, the people of Lobamba and the friars needed to walk long distances to the river so that they could fetch it. The river was always crowded with people and livestock in search of water.

The future of the health centre at St. Mary's mission became uncertain when government began scrutinising the nursing staff in an attempt to rid the widespread corruption in the health department. Government was aware of the fact that health centres run by unqualified personnel were mushrooming in the country at an alarming rate.

³⁹⁷ Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimofu, 28 August, 1954.

³⁹⁸ Giovanni Fondi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Christ the King mission, Hlatikhulu, 20 November, 1954.

According to the new government regulations, the staff at any health centre in the country needed to have a certificate. Since the head of all hospitals and health centres in Swaziland in 1954 was a Catholic doctor who appreciated the work done by Bro. Ildebrando Pellanda and other Catholic health workers, it seemed as if the new law would not affect Catholic health centres. Catholics could run a health centre without having all the necessary documents required by the department of health.

As the term of office of the Catholic doctor was approaching its end, he advised Bro. Ildebrando Pellanda who ran a health centre at St. Mary's to obtain a certificate. Though Bro. Pellanda did not have a certificate in nursing, he knew his job very well. For many years he helped a lot of people with different kinds of sicknesses. This is because he had worked with Fr. Bonaventure Kathrein and had acquired much experience in working at the mission health centre.

Bro. Ildebrando Pellanda had a profound knowledge of some different diseases which were common in Swaziland but the issue of the certificate was so serious that Bro. Ildebrando Pellanda wrote a letter to the provincial of the Tuscan Province asking him to forge a nursing certificate in Italy and send it to Swaziland.

The reason he gave for the above illegal way of doing things was that if he did not have a nursing certificate he would have no option but to end his nursing vocation.

The only thing that could guarantee the continuity of his nursing vocation was to go to Nongoma, South Africa or Florence, Italy to take up a nursing course. The disadvantage of the above legal way was that the existing health centre at St. Mary's

mission would be closed while Bro. Ildebrando Pellanda was on study leave³⁹⁹. The friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary also feared that the above procedure would cost a fortune.

The Catholic Church in Swaziland could risk losing many of her converts to other Christian Churches should the health centre cease to be a vehicle for evangelization.

In order to keep the health centre opened, the Bishop and his Councillors decided to remove Bro. Ildebrando Pellanda from the health centre and employ a qualified local nurse. Plans to send Bro. Ildebrando Pellanda to Italy or England for a certificate in nursing were made. Due to the above changes some friars expressed their concern about the efficiency of the health centre: they thought that the number of patients going to Mary's Health Centre for treatment would be reduced since an African nurse had been employed.

The issue of the health centre was resolved in September 1954 when an African nurse who had a nursing certificate was employed by the mission to work at the health centre. It is significant that the health centre continued to receive many patients⁴⁰⁰.

It took the friars almost a year to complete the work of building a clinic at Florence mission. This is due to the fact that Florence mission was engaged in other building projects. Once completed, the clinic was to be used by the sisters of the Congregation of the Servite Sisters of Pistoia to help local people with primary health care. Fr. Giovanni Cattoci, who was nicknamed "Mazinyo", the Zulu name for teeth since he did not have

³⁹⁹. Ildebrando Pellanda, *lettera al Priore Provinciale, St. Mary's mission, Lobamba*, 22 August, 1954.

⁴⁰⁰. Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale delle Provincia Toscana, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo*, 5 October, 1954.

front teeth, was certainly going to benefit from it himself. In November 1954, he was compelled to extract most of his teeth due to a certain illness⁴⁰¹, and he needed regular medical care. In February 1955 he was going to be given false teeth⁴⁰².

(ii) Awakening of spirituality

Perhaps one of the greatest blessings bestowed on the Catholic Church in Swaziland in the anniversary of her forty years of presence in the country was the awakening of Christian spirituality, which challenged the leadership of the Church to promote Catholic feasts and solemnities.

All Catholic missions in the country had renewal programmes that helped the priest and the whole Christian community to opt for authentic Catholic celebrations. Liturgical vestments and books were sought in this period from Europe..

There was a growing interest in Catholic culture and literature. The latter is evident from the collection of Catholic literature printed in that period. Catholics in general became fascinated by Catholic art which is why most of the church buildings completed at that time are reminiscent of the European renaissance.

According to most of the chronicles, the number of people attending major Catholic solemnities such as Christmas and Patron Saint of the mission exceeded that of previous years. The above phenomenon could be observed in all missions in Swaziland and in South Africa where the friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary worked.

So as to accommodate the many Catholics living around the Pongola area, a hall

⁴⁰¹. Giovanni Cattoci, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Florence mission, Luve, 29 November, 1954.

⁴⁰². Giovanni Cattoci, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Florence mission, Luve, 21 December, 1954.

was hired and Christmas Mass was celebrated since there was no other building that could be used to accommodate all the people. At Hlatikhulu, a large number of people had gathered for the solemnity of Christ the King, Patron Saint of the mission in November, 1954. Fr. Roberto Dini who was parish priest at Christ the King had spent weeks preparing for the above solemnity.

As a result of the growth of the Church, many people were baptised in the Catholic Church in 1954. A large number of them received the Sacrament of Confirmation. The local ordinary, Bishop Constantino Barneschi and Catholic missionaries were pleased to see that the Church was developing, and they sacrificed their energy and time to the development of the Church.

Since many had been converted to the Catholic Church there was a urgent need to build bigger schools, more health centres and to open more outstations in the country so that those who had become Catholics would not leave the Catholic Church.

(iii) Self-sufficient Church

In her forty years of existence in Swaziland, the Catholic Church had not achieved economic stability. There are a number of factors that contributed to the above fact. In order to understand them, we need to look at two events that shaped the Catholic Church in Swaziland; cynicism and a highly centralised local Church.

a. Cynicism: Due to lack of trust between missionaries and the people they were serving, it became virtually impossible to speak of the empowerment of the local people. Should the people have been empowered, they would have developed an awareness that the Catholic Church in Swaziland was theirs and they were bound to develop it themselves. Practices such as giving free medical care and free education to the local

people made them think that the church was a humanitarian organization.

b. Highly centralised local Church: Missionaries who had been given missions to look after did not have complete freedom to develop their own pastoral plans that could have helped in the development of the missions they were serving. The local superiors, that is, the Bishop of Bremersdorp and his predecessors who were Prefects Apostolic, and also the local religious superior, had all power vested in them, and they could act unilaterally, thus leaving no room for the priest working in the mission to put his dreams into practice. In fact missions that were situated far from Bremersdorp and Mzimphu, where the Bishop and the local religious superior resided, were by and large on the way towards economic stability. Sulphur Springs and Our Lady of Sorrows Missions could be taken as good examples. Other missions such as Florence, and Good Shepherd as well as St. Theresa's and St. Joseph's depended heavily on funds from overseas.

(iv) Education

With the industrialization of Swaziland from mid 1954, a number of people started moving from rural areas to industrial centres. Mbabane became one of the places which was experiencing the effects of the above demographical change. The massive movement of the people challenged the Catholic Church to start thinking about widening its apostolate. The urgent need to have a youth ministry was felt by the pastor at Mater Dolorosa mission in Mbabane, Fr. Agostino Botta. In those days at Mbabane there was a convent of the Congregation of the Servite Sisters of Pistoia. A school run by the mission flourished.

Due to the sudden surge in the population, a need to build more classrooms and

upgrade the school became imperative. Unfortunately, when Fr. Agostino Botta spoke about the need to upgrade the school and to have more sisters of the Congregation of the Servite Sisters of Pistoia teaching in that school, his idea seemed so far fetched such that the sisters did not show any interest. Hence they were not aware of the challenges wrought by the demographical change. Perhaps one of the reasons that led to that attitude was that the sisters had been in Mbabane for more than twenty five years, and there had been very little progress observed in that mission. Other missions had developed faster than Mater Dolorosa.

In November 1954 the Italian Ambassador to the South African Government paid a visit to Mater Dolorosa Mission. Upon his arrival at the Mater Dolorosa school he learnt that the sisters of the Congregation of the Servite Sisters of Pistoia were actively involved in the education of children. Hoping to find some Italian sisters whom he could talk to in Italian, the ambassador visited all the classrooms and was surprised to find out that there was not even a single sister in any of the classrooms. The only sister who taught at Mater Dolorosa was not even present; she had gone to Hluti for an examination. We need to acknowledge the fact that the sisters of the Congregation of the Servite Sisters of Pistoia had a school at Hluti (Our Lady of Sorrows Mission) which was doing very well. Seemingly, the sisters were concentrating all their efforts on developing Our Lady of Sorrows Mission.

In the 1950s, Our Lady of Sorrows was developed into one of the best missions in the country. Most of the work at Our Lady of Sorrows, especially the teaching, was done by the sisters, and the results at the end of the academic year were astonishing.

In 1953, Mater Dolorosa School had more than three hundred pupils, almost all the

teachers were African, and there was only one sister who taught there, Sr. Anna, who would make frequent visits to Hluti. Her priority was Hluti, not Mbabane, hence she was regarded as a temporary teacher at Mater Dolorosa. The above sister was not even able to dedicate all her time to teaching since she was pursuing a degree with one of the Universities.

Beside the fact that the school had a problem with shortage of staff, the ministry of education suggested that the Mater Dolorosa introduce standard VII, and promised the mission that if standard VII was introduced the school would receive a subsidy from Government. Fr. Agostino Botta hastened to recruit teachers who would be teaching standard VII in the following year. He also began to raise hundreds and hundreds of Pounds Starling so that new classrooms could be built by February 1955. Furthermore Fr. Agostino Botta was contemplating the idea of inviting the Congregation of the Cabrini Sisters to come and run the school at Mater Dolorosa. Fr. Agostino Botta had been told by the Apostolic Delegate to South Africa that the Cabrini Sisters were looking for a place in Africa to open a mission.

A substantial donation of money from overseas was used by the Catholic missions of Good Shepherd and Florence to up-grade their schools in the same period. The former had introduced standard V and was going to introduce standard VI the next year⁴⁰³.

The only Catholic priest in Swaziland who was teaching in a school in 1954 was Fr. Benedetto Biagioli. Unfortunately, due to his frail health, a medical doctor suggested that he be given a break from teaching.

⁴⁰³. Agostino Botta, *lettera al Priore Generale dell'Ordine dei Servi di Maria*, Mater Dolorosa mission, Mbabane, 10 December, 1954.

An African priest, Fr. Albert Mdzebele who was overseas at that time, was seen as the best person to replace Fr. Benedetto Biagioli. As a result, a letter was sent to the prior Provincial of the Tuscan Province dated 23 December, 1954, asking him to send Fr. Albert Mndzebele to Swaziland, who was then due to arrive in Swaziland before the beginning of the academic year on 1 February, 1955⁴⁰⁴.

In November 1954 the Principal Education Officer visited a Catholic school, St. Philomena at Ngculwini, and was disappointed to find out that discipline in the school was poor. He noticed that some teachers arrived at 10:35 AM, and teaching was poor owing to lack of preparation. He also discovered that the last lesson preparation done by the headmaster, Mr. A. Nkambule, was in March 1954.

The Principal Education Officer felt compelled to write a letter to Fr. Agostino Botta requesting him to warn the headmaster of the school that his allowance was going to be withdrawn⁴⁰⁵. When the acting Principal of Education Officer visited the school on 5 March, 1954 found that the headmaster neglected his duty: as a result he received no allowance for the second quarter of the year⁴⁰⁶.

(v) Hope dawns at Siteki

A missionary who had worked very hard at Good Shepherd and St. Mary's missions for more than thirty years, Fr. Bonaventure Kathrein, died at the age of seventy

⁴⁰⁴. Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimofu, 23 December, 1954.

⁴⁰⁵. Principal Education Officer, *Letter to Agostino Botta*, Department of Education, Mbabane, 7 February, 1955.

⁴⁰⁶. Acting Principal of Education, *Letter to Agostino Botta*, *Department of Education*, Mbabane, 11 May, 1954.

eight years on 7 July, 1954, at Good Shepherd mission where he had laboured since 1922. Shortly after they returned from pastoral work in the villages, the friars learned that Fr. Bonaventure Kathrein, whose simplicity and gaiety had been one of the happiest memories for decades, had died.

Soon after the news of his death was known, people flocked in large numbers to the Good Shepherd mission to pay their last respects. In the past, no other event had drawn such a large number of people into the mission. Since the church was too small to accommodate all the mourners, a large number of mourners had to follow the funeral Mass from outside. At least thirty Europeans, excluding missionaries from different parts of the country, were present⁴⁰⁷.

Towards the end of 1954 most of the Catholics who believed in the communion of Saints had already started praying over Fr. Kathrein's, tomb expecting to obtain miracles through his intercessions, from God. Fr. Terenzio Biondi was amongst those who prayed over his tomb every evening⁴⁰⁸.

With the death of one of the most zealous missionaries, the number of the friars at Good Shepherd mission was reduced to four. These friars took up different activities so that the mission at Good Shepherd could maintain its standard.

The other friars in the diocese, namely, Fr. Terenzio Biondi, Fr. Stefano Papini and Bro. Giocchino Bottari were looking forward to their turn to go on vacation the

⁴⁰⁷. Giovanni Cattoci, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Florence mission, Luve, 9 July, 1954.

⁴⁰⁸. Terenzio Biondi, *Lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Good Shepherd Mission, Siteki, 11 October, 1954.

following year⁴⁰⁹.

There was some hope that the harvest would be fruitful since Siteki had had splendid rains. The only worry facing the brother who was in charge of farming, Bro. Gioacchino Bottari, was that the north east winds had begun again and they posed a great threat to food production.

All the friars at Good Shepherd concentrated their activity on the good of the hospital. For example, some of the food produced in the farm by Bro. Gioacchino Bottari was given to Good Shepherd hospital⁴¹⁰.

Fr. Terenzio Biondi looked after the welfare of the hospital and was assisted by Frs. Giuseppe Vitelli and Ambrogio Mosca, who served faithfully the people of God through the administering of Sacraments⁴¹¹, and in December they were joined by Fr. Benedetto Biagioli⁴¹².

Bro. Gioacchino Bottari spent most of the time working in the farm of the mission, which he inherited from Bro. Boniface Schnieder who had gone overseas on vacation and was scheduled to be back by the end of 1954.

Due to the fact that Good Shepherd hospital urgently needed a medical doctor, in the months preceding September 1954 Fr. Terenzio Biondi had tried to get a European

⁴⁰⁹. Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofu, 23 December, 1999.

⁴¹⁰. Terenzio Biondi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Good Shepherd mission, Siteki, 29 September, 1954.

⁴¹¹. Terenzio Biondi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Good Shepherd mission, Siteki, 29 September, 1954.

⁴¹². Terenzio Biondi, *Lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Good Shepherd Mission, Siteki, 22 December, 1954.

doctor living in Salzburg, Austria, to come and work at the Good Shepherd Hospital. Unfortunately, by September 1954 it became apparent that the doctor would not come to the Good Shepherd hospital⁴¹³.

Since a lot of money was needed to purchase equipment for the hospital's theatre, Fr. Terenzio Biondi organised a bazaar which was held on the 2 October, 1954 in the premises of the Court House at Siteki. The following people helped him in organising the bazaar: Mrs. Whittle, Mrs. Donaldson Rawlins, Mrs. Cook, Mrs. H. Harries, Mrs. Dot Mackay, Mrs. E Wilson, Mrs. Aldwinkle, Mrs. H. Tommas, Mr. B. Holland and Mr. and Mrs. Denis Wilson. Raffle and tombola were part of the bazaar, and many prizes including a bottle of whisky and a turkey were won.

The bazaar was officially opened by the District Commissioner, Mr. Donaldson Rawlins who also gave a speech, after which the brisk business of selling began and when the stalls had been cleared, they found that they had raised /120.

At the end of the bazaar, those who had helped in the bazaar were invited for tea at the Good Shepherd Hospital by the friars⁴¹⁴.

Many people attended the Christmas Eucharistic celebration at the Good Shepherd mission. Just like any other Christian feast, this Christmas celebration attracted a large number of people to the church. In all Catholic missions in Swaziland Christmas was celebrated in great solemnities. Paradoxically, the scarcity of transport did not discourage Christians who lived very far from the mission from attending these celebrations.

⁴¹³. Terenzio Biondi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Good Shepherd mission, Siteki, 29 September, 1954.

⁴¹⁴. The Times of Swaziland, *Stegi Jottings*, Mbabane, 9 October, 1954.

One of the reasons that caused Catholics to make a pilgrimage to the mission so that they could celebrate Christmas was that according to one of the precepts of the Catholic Church, Catholics should confess their sins and attend the celebration of Holy Mass at least in Easter or Christmas day. Catholic missionaries in Swaziland became watchdogs of the above precepts.

Another reason that could have contributed to an unprecedented participation at Christmas celebrations was that the Good Shepherd hospital had been opened, and numbers of people had been converted to Catholicism by it.

The Good Shepherd hospital had a massive building, which at night was illuminated with electricity and could be seen from a distance. Also, the quality of life at the Good Shepherd mission was improving gradually so that by the beginning of 1954 the mission was producing its own electricity using its own 220 volts generator⁴¹⁵.

The increase in the number of patients at the Good Shepherd hospital inevitably affected the workload of the medical doctor. The doctor could not cope with the large number of patients in the hospital. As a result, Fr. Terenzio Biondi contacted a young South African medical doctor who agreed to come and work at Siteki in January 1955.

(vi) Sulphur Springs

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the mission at Sulphur Springs was the only mission run by the friars who were working for the Tuscan Province in Swaziland. Though it was doing well; the mission attracted few missionaries to itself and superiors

⁴¹⁵. Terenzio Biondi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Good Shepherd mission, Siteki, 5 January, 1954.

⁴¹⁶. Terenzio Biondi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Good Shepherd mission, Siteki, 24 November, 1954.

of the Order of the Servants of Mary were reluctant to send friars there. One of the reasons for this attitude was that there was a rumour that Sulphur Springs mission would be taken away from the Order of the Servants of Mary by one of the Catholic religious congregations.

There were also speculations that the Tuscan Province was willing to hand over Sulphur Springs mission to the American Province which was largely involved in the Ingwavuma area⁴¹⁷. The above events put the mission at Sulphur Springs under the spotlight in 1954. Hence in this chapter, we are going to pay special attention to some of the events that shaped the history of this mission.

Two important events that shaped the life of Sulphur Springs mission were the proposed departure of Fr. Camillo Menchini and the opening of the house of the Congregation of the Servite Sisters of Pistoia. Many thought that the above events were destined to change the life of Sulphur Springs mission.

The provincial of the Tuscan Province had written a letter to Fr. Camillo Menchini informing him about the decision of the superiors in Italy to transfer him from Sulphur Springs mission to Canada, where friars of the Order belonging to the Tuscan province were involved in some apostolic work; there was an urgent need to reinforce their presence in that part of the world.

The choice of Fr. Camillo Menchini did not come as a surprise. Obviously, the decision to send Fr. Camillo Menchini was taken after his superiors had seen that he was the best person in the entire Tuscan Province to go and work in Canada, since he was a

⁴¹⁷. Joseph Srill, *letter to Raffaele Taucchi*, American Province of Servite Fathers, Chicago, 7 May, 1954.

man of great vision. The above decision meant that the friars in Swaziland need to search for a suitable person to replace Fr. Camillo Menchini, otherwise, all the work done by him would be affected negatively.

In October 1954 there were speculations that the Congregation of the Servite Sisters of Pistoia might open a house at Sulphur Springs. The arrival of the sisters had long been awaited by the friars and the people living in that area. According to the proposed plan, the sisters were going to run a clinic in that mission. We recall that the clinic was begun by Fr. Camillo Menchini, years back, and was offering good service to the local people. An African nurse worked in that clinic. It seems as if with the coming of the sisters the African nurse was going to lose her job.

It is worth mentioning the fact that the friars of the American Province working in Ingwavuma had refused the offer to take Pongola, a small town near the boarder of South Africa and Swaziland. Pongola was not very far from Sulphur Springs. It seems as if Fr. Camillo Menchini might have had some interest in that area, which stems from the fact that in his letters one could discover his passion for that area.

Since Fr. Camillo Menchini was about to be moved from South Africa to Canada, it became evident that the chances of having friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary in Pongola were diminishing.

Fr. Camillo Menchini's proposed departure from South Africa also meant that the Congregation of the Servite Sisters of Pistoia would not come and work at Sulphur Springs. We recall that Fr. Camillo Menchini had been eager to invite the Servite Sisters

of Pistoia to come and work at Sulphur Springs⁴¹⁸.

(vii) St. Philip's mission, no-longer in the precipice of poverty

Prior to the arrival of Fr. Girolamo Casalini at St. Philip's mission, the mission was one of the least developed in the whole diocese of Bremersdorp. We recall that in previous years, St. Philip's mission has been labelled as a mission with many problems.

Most of the buildings belonging to the mission needed urgent repairs. Were it not for the money sent from Italy, some of the major repair works would not have been done. We need to acknowledge the fact that the philosophy of development used by the local superior, Fr. Luigi Ruggeri, helped in the development of the missions. Fr. Luigi Ruggeri had the knack of appointing priests whom he knew would be capable of developing a mission.

The predecessors of Fr. Girolamo Casalini also tried their level best to upgrade the mission; unfortunately, their efforts never yielded concrete results since almost all the missions in the diocese were involved in some kind of project. For example, the mission at Bremersdorp was busy with the boys' college; St. Mary's mission and Florence mission had undertaken the task of renovating dilapidated buildings in the mission's premises, while Good Shepherd mission was investing all its energy in the hospital. This shows that there was fierce competition amongst missions to obtain funds and personnel for those projects.

On 29 August, 1954 the newly renovated church building was blessed during the feast of the patron saint of the mission, St. Philip Benizi. A large number of people

⁴¹⁸. Camillo Menchini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale*, Catholic mission, Sulphur Springs, 21 October, 1954.

gathered in the mission to witness this historic occasion.

The mission had a large field where cotton was grown for commercial purposes. In spite of the difficulties experienced with farming in the area there was some hope that the 1954 harvest would be good.

Though the mission was situated in a remote area where there were few families living, there was a great number of Catholics belonging to St. Philip's mission.

According to the statistics released at the end of the year, more than three hundred people attended the blessing of the church in mid 1954⁴⁹.

On Sundays and other days of obligation, Catholics belonging to St. Philip's mission would walk long distances to the mission so that they could attend the celebration of Holy Mass. This clearly shows that the friars and sisters working in that area had dedicated a lot of their time converting people to Catholicism. During the week, friars would visit people in their homes.

Finally, we need to mention the fact that like any other mission, St. Philip's had a school that contributed a lot to the evangelisation of the local people. The work done at St. Philip's mission by the sisters of the Congregation of the Servite Sisters of Pistoia needs to be acknowledged. It is evident that had the sisters not offered support St. Philip's mission it could not have become one of the fastest developing Catholic missions in the country. Like other Catholic missions in the country, it helped in increasing the number of Catholics by hundreds in the 1950's. St. Philip's mission stood in one of the remotest areas in the lowveld. The area was sparsely populated; missionaries needed to travel long

⁴⁹. Girolamo Casalini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Philip's mission, Mhlatuze, 10 September, 1954.

distances administering Sacraments. Summer rains could render the place almost inaccessible. The climate of the area was hostile; summer temperatures could reach forty degrees centigrade. The largest river in the country, Great Usuthu river, made the place very damp, thus making it a favourable place for the breeding of mosquitoes. Hence there was a high risk of a malaria epidemic in the area.

All those factors might have made business people uninterested in the area. The only commercial activity that could be carried in the area was cotton farming.

Ironically, in 1954, the mission was becoming one of the more advanced Catholic missions in the country. A univocal message of hope was sent to all other Catholic missions in the country by St. Philip's mission, the disadvantaged background and history of which did not condemn it to underdevelopment. The spiritual and material progress recorded in that mission were so remarkable that the local superior, Fr, Girolamo Casalini, the religious brothers and the Servite Sisters of Pistoia became champions of development in the entire diocese of Bremersdorp.

According to statistics released at the end of the year, there was a rise in the number of people being received into the Catholic Church by St. Philip's missions. The attendance at Easter and Christmas celebrations was very high in 1954.

It is said that Fr. Girolamo Casalini heard confessions for more than three hours at Christmas, and that he celebrated a beautiful Solemn Mass of the Nativity of Jesus Christ in the church. Unfortunately a good number of faithful had to hear Mass from outside since there was no space for them in the church.

The mission had a huge field estimated to be not less than eight hectares in area, in which cotton was grown. According to Fr. Girolamo Casalini everybody in the mission

was anxiously waiting for the harvest season, and there was a great hope that the harvest would exceed that of other years. The mission had bought a new tractor and other farming tools for the harvest.

There were about sixty five school children, both boys and girls, living in the mission. Fr. Girolamo Casalini and the two religious brothers worked in the field together with the school children living in the mission premises. Luckily the mission was able to feed them. The mission had undertaken the project of constructing more classrooms and renovating most of its buildings⁴²⁰.

⁴²⁰. Girolamo Casalini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Philip's mission, Mhlatuze, 28 December, 1954.

Chapter Ten

THE FOURTH YEAR OF THE DIOCESE 1955

A. THE GREAT RESTRUCTURING

A priest who had been parish priest at St. Theresa's mission in Bremersdorp, Fr. Agostino Fagiolo, but who had resigned from the above position, was living at St. Joseph's mission. His stay there was temporary since he was expected to go back to his home country, Italy, not later than March 1955. Another friar, Bro. Giovanni Fondi had left Swaziland early February 1955 for Italy. He might have gone to Italy on vacation⁴²¹.

There were rumours that Fr. Camillo Menchini would be requested to go to Canada by the provincial of the Tuscan Province⁴²². On 17 February, 1955, he did receive a letter from the prior provincial of the Tuscan Province requesting him to leave for Canada. Unhappy about the news, Fr. Camillo Menchini wrote a letter to the provincial, agreeing but nevertheless mentioning that if he had had an opportunity to choose between going to Canada or remaining in South Africa he would have preferred the latter and that he wished he had been given more time to bring into completion some of the projects he had begun at Sulphur Springs mission. One of them was the upgrading of Sulphur Springs mission.

⁴²¹. Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimofu, 5 February, 1955.

⁴²². Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimofu, 16 February, 1955.

Fr. Camillo Menchini received this letter requesting him to go to Canada while he was having discussions with the department of health, which had promised to subsidise the Catholic clinic. The department of health was willing to give at least /600 to the mission so that the nurses could be paid their salaries.

There was a possibility that at least three sisters of the Congregation of the Servite Sisters of Pistoia from Our Lady of Sorrows convent in Hluti would come and work at Sulphur Springs' clinic⁴²³. This therefore meant that the early departure of Fr. Camillo Menchini from Sulphur Springs could jeopardise the whole project, unless a priest who was capable of communicating with government officials was appointed to succeed Fr. Camillo Menchini at Sulphur Springs.

Other priests in the diocese of Bremersdorp were not too happy about the decision to transfer Fr. Camillo Menchini to Canada. In his letter dated 4 March, 1955, the parish priest at St. Philip's mission, Mhlatuze, Fr. Girolamo Casalini expressed his feelings and the feeling of other friars about the scheduled departure of Fr. Camillo Menchini. According to Fr. Girolamo Casalini, the mission of the Order of the Servants of Mary in Swaziland would collapse if friars were removed from it. He was referring specifically to the departure of a number of friars over the past few years that had made it very difficult for the mission to be faithful to its commitment. Fr. Girolamo Casalini wrote: "Most people here had a high esteem of Fr. Camillo Menchini, they liked him. I understand that when the decision to transfer Fr. Camillo Menchini was communicated, the local religious superior did not offer any resistance, perhaps this is due to the fact that

⁴²³. Camillo Menchini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Catholic mission, Sulphur Springs, 18 February, 1955.

he has been accused in the province...⁴²⁴. We recall that amongst those who had left the missions were: Fr. Giacinto Striolo, Fr. Bello, Fr. Gregorio Logli, Fr. Anselmo Marsili and Fr. Gerald Joannisee. Their place was taken by: Fr. Roberto Dini, Benedetto Biagioli and Fr. Gamache. A question that remained unanswered was how three priests could replace five priests. Moreover, there was also concern about the physical health of some of the friars in the diocese of Bremersdorp who could not perform their duty due to their frail health. There was a possibility that the mission at Sulphur Springs would remain without a priest until the end of March 1955. If no priest was found, the mission might risk being closed since its priest, Fr. Camillo Menchini, was expected to have travelled to Canada by April 1955⁴²⁵.

Amongst the priests who wrote letters expressing their dissatisfaction about Fr. Camillo Menchini's departure was Fr. Francesco Arcangeli who mentioned in his letter dated 21 March, 1955 that it was indeed an erroneous decision to transfer Fr. Camillo Menchini from Sulphur Springs. According to him, Fr. Camillo Menchini could use his linguistic skills to counter Protestant expansion in the diocese for he knew the local language very well and could dedicate all his energy for the good of the Church he loved. Fr. Francesco Arcangeli mentioned explicitly in his letter that: "Per me di fronte a Dio e alla Chiesa, vale pim un missionario come il P. Camillo qui in Swaziland che tutta la diplomazia canadese" (before God, the presence of a missionary like Fr. Camillo

⁴²⁴. Girolamo Casalini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Philip's mission, Mhlatuze, "Il P. Camillo era troppo ben voluto e stimato quaggim. Per di pim ho capito che il P. Vicario non ha posto difficultE per senso di dovere e di obbedienza, ma anche per timore che essendo giE stato accusato in Provincia....", 4 March, 1955.

⁴²⁵. Camillo Mecnhini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Catholic Mission, Sulphur Springs, 9 March, 1955.

Menchini in Swaziland worth more than the Canadian diplomacy⁴²⁶.

Finally, the travelling arrangements for Fr. Camillo Menchini were made. On his way to Canada he was supposed to fly by EL AL from Johannesburg to Tel Aviv where he was to refresh his mind by visiting the Holy Land. The second stopover was Rome⁴²⁷.

The departure of Fr. Camillo Menchini and other friars for North America and Europe caused the need for restructuring to be felt in the diocese of Bremersdorp. Zealous priests in the entire diocese requested to move from the missions where they had worked to other missions so that gaps created by the departure of the friars could be closed. As a result, Fr. Benedetto Biagioli was transferred from Good Shepherd mission to Christ the King mission. One of the reasons that led to the decision by Fr. Luigi Ruggeri to transfer Fr. Benedetto Biagioli was that it would be easier for Fr. Benedetto Biagioli to travel to Johannesburg hospital in South Africa to receive specialised medical treatment periodically.

Fr. Francesco Arcangeli was sent to St. Theresa's mission to replace Fr. Agostino Fagiolo⁴²⁸. The mission of St. Theresa's had been under the care of the veteran missionary, Fr. Agostino Fagiolo, who in 1955 felt that it should be given to a missionary belonging to a younger generation who would be able to deal with its challenges. The arrival of Fr. Francesco Arcangeli meant that the work begun by Fr. Agostino Fagiolo had to be

⁴²⁶. Francesco Arcangeli, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Theresa's mission, Bremersdorp, 21 March, 1955.

⁴²⁷. Camillo Menchini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Catholic mission, Sulphur Springs, 23 March, 1955.

⁴²⁸. Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimofu, 5 February, 1955.

continued in the mission. This was indeed a great challenge to Fr. Francesco Arcangeli since he did not have enough pastoral experience.

A /50 cheque was sent to Fr. Francesco Arcangeli by the Priory of the Order of the Servants of Mary in Berkshire, England. The money was to help Fr. Francesco Arcangeli in the daily running of the mission⁴²⁹ which he had just inherited. Other missions in the country had received donations as early as January, 1955; for example, when Bro. Boniface Schnieder returned to Swaziland in January 1955 after having had his vacation in Italy, he brought material goods from Italy⁴³⁰ which were used in the mission where he was living. He had been given the goods by Fr. Federico Aliboni, who had developed good relations with friars working in Swaziland and benefactors in Italy.

The Catholic mission at Bremersdorp was one of the few in the country whose people did not have a homogeneous culture. Some were following the European culture while others followed the African culture. Nevertheless, the new priest was determined to work in this mission. One of the challenges Fr. Francesco Arcangeli was to face was that his mission consisted of people with different cultural backgrounds. This therefore meant that he had to design a pastoral plan that would be relevant to a place that was becoming more and more urban although the mission had a lot of outstations situated in the countryside where people led a different life from that of those living in an urban area. Despite the great work done by Fr. Girolamo Casalini at St. Philip's mission, Bishop Constantino Barneschi and Fr. Luigi Ruggeri wanted to transfer him to the minor

⁴²⁹. The Prior, *letter to the Prior Provincial of the Tuscan Province*, Our Lady's Priory, Berkshire, 17 April, 1955.

⁴³⁰. Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo, 5 February, 1955.

seminary scheduled to open during the course of the year, which was going to train future priests in the diocese of Bremersdorp⁴³¹. If he went to Bremersdorp then there would be two priests living in Bremersdorp, one actively engaging in pastoral work and the other in the training of future priests.

A young priest who had just arrived in Swaziland from Italy, Fr. Filippo Grigioni, was appointed to succeed Fr. Camillo Menchini at Sulphur Springs. After the news of his appointment was released, Fr. Camillo Menchini wrote a letter on 23 March, 1955 expressing his joy that a successor had been found. However he did mention that he would have been pleased if a much older priest had been appointed. Undoubtedly, Fr. Filippo Grigioni lacked experience. His goodwill could not compensate for the above handicap⁴³². Unfortunately, Fr. Filippo Grigioni, who was at the time of appointment living in Swaziland, was not in possession of a South African residence permit. This meant that his departure for Sulphur Springs was going to be delayed. As a result, Fr. Camillo Menchini wrote a letter to the prior provincial of the Tuscan Province requesting to be allowed to travel to Canada in May instead of April⁴³³. In the meantime the department of Home Affairs of the South African government would be processing the residence permit of Fr. Filippo Grigioni. On 23 April, 1955 Fr. Camillo Menchini went to Johannesburg to buy a plane ticket for Italy, and was due to leave South Africa for Italy

⁴³¹. Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo, 16 February, 1955.

⁴³². Camillo Menchini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Catholic mission, Sulphur Springs, 23 March, 1955.

⁴³³. Camillo Menchini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Catholic mission, Sulphur Springs, 13 April, 1955.

on 15 May, 1955 at midnight⁴³⁴.

(i) First African Priest

Preparations were made to welcome the first African priest and the first African friar in the Order of the Servants of Mary, Fr. Albert Mndzebele who was to celebrate his first Mass at Bremersdorp on the last Sunday of March in 1955.

After having successfully completed his studies for the priesthood in Europe, Bro. Albert Mndzebele was ordained priest in Italy. In March 1955 he travelled to Swaziland together with Fr. Filippo Grigioni, though the two had been expected to be in Swaziland a month earlier.

The local religious superior of the friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary in Swaziland fetched Fr. Albert Mndzebele in a car from Durban. The ship that brought Fr. Albert Mndzebele to South Africa in March 1955 took Fr. Terenzio Biondi to Italy during the last week of March 1955.

Amongst the gifts prepared to be given to Fr. Albert Mndzebele were a beautiful chalice and liturgical vestments. These gifts had been bought with the money partly raised by the local Catholics and the missionaries. Many people including Fr. Camillo Menchini, who had left Sulphur Springs and was preparing for his departure for Canada, were to participate at the celebration of solemn Mass said in the Latin language by Fr. Albert Mndzebele⁴³⁵.

⁴³⁴. Camillo Menchini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale*, Johannesburg, 23 April, 1955.

⁴³⁵. Francesco Arcangeli, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Theresa's mission, Bremersdorp, 21 March, 1955.

Assisted by Fr. Giovanni Cattoci, this famous liturgist, who was also the official master of ceremonies in the diocese of Bremersdorp, celebrated the solemn Mass in Latin on 25 March, 1955, at Florence mission, Luve. Very interestingly, Fr. Giovanni Cattoci had met the little Albert Mndzebele twenty years earlier in one of the outstations of the Catholic Church. The Mass he celebrated at Florence mission was his first Mass in that mission. Since the church at Florence mission was dedicated to Our Lady of the Annunciation whose feast day was on the 25 March, there was a great feast on this day⁴³⁶. According to the *Missale Romanum* of 1937, used in those days, the feast he was celebrating, was in the category of *Duplex I classis*; in today's language it would be a Solemnity.

The triumphant welcome of Fr. Albert Mndzebele was followed by a rather sad incident, that is, the leaving of religious life by a young Swazi religious, Constantine Sifundza. Constantine Sifundza who had been studying in Italy. Apparently, the reasons for his decision were not known. Nevertheless, there were speculations that the then Prior General of the Order of the Servants of Mary and some individuals knew some of the reasons that led to Constantine Sifundza abandoning his vocation⁴³⁷.

In June 1955, Constantine Sifundza returned from Italy to Swaziland. Constantine Sifundza knew the Italian language very well. In his letter to the prior provincial of the Tuscan Province dated 14 June, 1955, he wrote: "It would not be a good thing to forget you and your community and especially for all what you did for me while I was in

⁴³⁶. Giovanni Cattoci, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Florence mission, Luve, 25 March, 1955.

⁴³⁷. Constantine Sifundza, *letter to the Prior Provincial of the Tuscan Province*, Collegio Sette Santi Fondatori, Firenze, 1955.

Italy"⁴³⁸.

(ii) Buildings

By 1955 St. Joseph's mission had a school that was attracting many pupils. Statistical analysis indicated that there was an improvement in the pass rate. In order to solve the problem of the shortage of classrooms caused by the increase in enrolments, comprehensive plans to build extra classrooms and to open a hostel for boys and girls were made. A priest living in that mission, Fr. Corrado, also wanted to alleviate the problem of the shortage of houses for teachers by building them⁴³⁹.

On the other hand, at least three hundred bags of cement were needed by Fr. Girolamo Casalini so that he could continue with the project of renovating the mission of St. Philip. At Lubuli, St. Philip's mission had an outstation; a school was being built in this outstation. Fr. Girolamo Casalini was behind all the projects undertaken by St. Philip's mission. There was some hope that the life in the mission of St. Philip would improve.

In the beginning of the year, 1955 a total amount of /36 sent by Fr. Ignazio Patriarchi was received by Fr. Girolamo Casalini. Unlike in other years, the friars were expecting to reap a good harvest of cotton in 1955⁴⁴⁰.

⁴³⁸. Constantine Sifundza, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana, Bremersdorp*, " Non sarebbe giusto dimenticarmi di Lei e la sua comunitE. Prima di tutto esprimo la mia sincera gratitudine per tutto quello che mi ha fatto durante la mia dimora in Italia", 14 June, 1955.

⁴³⁹. Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo*, 16 February, 1955.

⁴⁴⁰. Girolamo Casalini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana, St. Philip's mission, Mhlatuze*, 13 January, 1955.

A priest living at the Christ the King mission at Hlatikhulu, Fr. Roberto Dini, received /50 from one of the English priories of the Order of the Servants of Mary. The money was to be used for the development of the mission⁴⁴¹. In the same period, Good Shepherd mission received a total of /55 from two different benefactors; a large percentage of that amount received was from Canada. This shows that more people from overseas countries were willing to help this mission. Large quantities of medicine to be used in the hospital were also received.

Good Shepherd mission had the largest number of friars of the Order in Swaziland: there were three priests and three lay brothers living there⁴⁴². Much money was indeed needed by the mission to support these friars.

In the southern part of Swaziland where St. Philip's mission stood, the only crops that could be grown for commercial purposes were cotton and tobacco. Most of the farmers in the area earned their living by growing cotton.

Situated in a place where there was a high level of unemployment, St. Philip's mission needed to offer activities that would be of great benefit to the local people. It comes as no surprise to find that the friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary thought that they needed to grow cotton in order to obtain an income that would in future eventually help them to be less dependent on funds from overseas.

Fr. Girolamo Casalini was eager to make St. Philip's mission one of the most developed Catholic missions in Swaziland. Farming, health care and education were part

⁴⁴¹. Anonymous, *letter to the Prior Provincial of the Tuscan Province, Our Lady's Prior, Newbury, 16 January, 1955.*

⁴⁴². Terenzio Biondi, *Lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana, Good Shepherd mission, Siteki, 29 January, 1955.*

of the activities of the mission. It is likely that Good Shepherd mission was inspired by St. Philip's mission to pursue a number of activities, since the religious brother who cultivated crops at Good Shepherd mission had been involved in farming while he was living at St. Philip's mission. Good Shepherd mission had introduced carpentry as one of the subjects in the school, taught by Bro. Boniface Schnieder⁴⁴³. It was designed to help many local people, who might not be very good in other subjects, to acquire skills that would help them to earn a living.

(iii) Doctor sacked

In previous chapters, we have seen how Fr. Terenzio Biondi and other friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary invested their energy so that Good Shepherd hospital could be developed into one of the best hospitals in the country. Good Shepherd hospital, which had been opened a couple of years previously, had been offering excellent an healing ministry to many: the middle class, as well as the poor, benefited much from it. Its reputation dated back to 1953. When it was regarded as the best missionary hospital in the entire Lubombo region in Swaziland. It would not be surprising to find out that patients from the former East Portuguese Africa (now Mozambique) may have used it, because the little town of Siteki where the hospital had been built was near the border of the two countries.

Unlike other Catholic institutions in the country who employed only Catholic staff, Good Shepherd had mixed staff. This is evident in the early 1950's. The spirit of ecumenism prevailed in the hospital premises; the staff worked harmoniously though they

⁴⁴³. Terenzio Biondi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Good Shepherd mission, Siteki, 29 January, 1955.

belonged to different Christian Churches and incidents of sectarian discrimination were not known.

Towards the end of 1955, a Protestant medical doctor working at the Good Shepherd mission was dismissed. The reasons that led to the expulsion of the medical doctor are not known. The decision to sack the medical doctor was rather hasty; the priest who had been behind the building and the development of the hospital, Fr. Terenzio Biondi, was not in the country when the medical doctor was sacked. Those who sacked the medical doctor did not wait until the return of Fr. Terezio Biondi from holiday overseas.

Upon his arrival at Good Shepherd mission he was dismayed when he learnt that the Protestant doctor who had been working at the Good Shepherd hospital had been sacked. Unfortunately, it was too late for him to do anything that could help to bring the doctor back.

We need to mention that Fr. Terenzio Biondi admired the medical doctor; the two had been great friends and they knew each other very well. The sacking of the medical doctor became a very big issue; Fr. Terenzio Biondi was angered about the sacking of the Protestant doctor since he had not been consulted by those who sacked him. In his opinion, the friars at Good Shepherd mission should have waited for his return instead of taking this decision. Seemingly, the hierarchy of the Catholic Church in Swaziland might have been involved in the sacking of the medical doctor.

He also mentioned that he was not too happy about the manner in which the above

matter had been handled⁴⁴⁴. The above incident clearly showed that the hierarchy of the Catholic in Swaziland believed that it had the power to interfere with the running of any Catholic institution in the country. This is an overt manifestation of the paternalistic mentality characteristic of the era.

(iv) Silver Jubilee of Fr. Galandi

In December 1955, the local religious superior, Fr. Gerardo Galandi, who had worked for many years in Swaziland, celebrated the twenty fifth anniversary of his ordination to priesthood. He received dozens of letters from friends and friars living in Europe congratulating him. Fr. Gerardo Galandi was known by many people in Italy since he had made several trips to Italy during the term of his office as local religious superior. We recall that on 21 August, 1955 he arrived in Swaziland from one of the latest trips he had made in Italy⁴⁴⁵.

Despite the fact that he was celebrating twenty five years of priesthood, he was in very good health and was amongst the few veteran missionaries in Swaziland still hale⁴⁴⁶. Due to the fact that Fr. Gerardo Galandi was a man with vision, unflappable and focused on the task at hand, he was known by many people in the country.

One of the blessings he received during his term of office as local religious superior was witnessing an important historical event in the history of the Catholic

⁴⁴⁴. Terenzio Biondi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Good Shepherd mission, Siteki, "... e sono sicuro che avrei potuto fare la stessa cosa - se fosse stato necessario - senza offendere la suscettibilitE di nessuno", 31 December, 1955.

⁴⁴⁵. Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimofu, 12 September, 1955.

⁴⁴⁶. Gerardo Galandi, *Lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Theresa's mission, Bremersdorp, 29 December, 1955.

Church in Swaziland, that is the debut of an indigenous priest in the missionary life. In 1955 Fr. Albert Mndzebele became the first African in the whole world to become a friar of the Order of the Servants of Mary.

While Fr. Albert Mndzebele was still in Europe waiting for his appointment to the missionary field, there were rumours that he would go and work in North America. But due to the fact that a priest who knew the English language very well was needed in Swaziland to take the place of Fr. Benedetto Biagioli, who at that period of time was undergoing medical care at Good Shepherd hospital, being a member of the community there⁴⁴⁷.

Ironically, the very same priest whose silver jubilee was being celebrated came under attack from a group of missionaries. These missionaries were not too happy about the way he was administering the Vicariate. In mid July 1955, a letter written by one of the missionaries working in Swaziland who never wrote his name was received by the prior provincial of Tuscan Province.

The letter gave the impression that by and large friars were not too happy with the leadership of Fr. Luigi Ruggeri. He was accused of not having the right skills to run the Vicariate.

According to the letter, a missionary who could do the job better was Fr. Girolamo Casalini, prior at St. Philip's mission, Mhlatuze. The letter was received when the Tuscan Province was about to have its Chapter in Florence⁴⁴⁸.

⁴⁴⁷. Anonymous, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, San Marcello, Rome, 7 January, 1955.

⁴⁴⁸. Anonymous, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Swaziland, " mosso solo dal desiderio che anche attraverso il prossimo Capitolo faccia del bene alle nostre

The friar who wrote the letter thought that the problem of the leadership of the Vicariate would be on the agenda of the Chapter. Hence he introduced his letter saying that he wished the forthcoming Chapter could do something about the problems experienced by friars in Swaziland.

B. IMPORTANT VISITOR

A distinguished friar of the Order of the Servants of Mary paid a visit to Swaziland. His visit coincided with the inauguration of the cathedral of Bremersdorp in the mid-1950s. When we look back at history, we find that St. Theresa's church, built in 1931 at Bremersdorp, was considered to be the mother church in Swaziland. As such, it would host important religious functions as well as those that were normally celebrated in the cathedral by the bishop.

St. Theresa's church could not take more than two hundred people in the early 1950's after the Vicariate Apostolic of Swaziland had been created into the Diocese of Bremersdorp. Hence an urgent need to build a bigger church was felt. Soon after the announcement of the creation of the Diocese of Bremersdorp in January, 1951, missionaries took an unanimous decision that the name of the cathedral to be built should be Our Lady of the Assumption since there was no cathedral in southern Africa with such

Missioni del Swaziland, *Le devo comunicare che S tremendamente vero che noi Missionari del Swaziland siamo pochi, troppo pochi e quello che S ancora peggio non siamo uniti nel nostro lavoro missionario. Una delle ragioni principali di cie S perché ci manca un capo che svolga sul serio il suo ufficio di Vicario, come si deve", 14 July, 1955.*

a name⁴⁴⁹.

A commission to study the project of a new church that would be used as a Cathedral was instituted. Many plans were presented to the commission by prospective contractors. Only four of them reached the short list and these were taken for further scrutiny by the commission. The contractor who presented a rather traditional design was chosen, though he was asked to make slight modifications.

The experienced builder, Bro. Giulio Moretti, worked with the Portuguese constructors who built the cathedral. The total cost of the contraction was /40000. After its completion, the Cathedral was dedicated to Our Lady of Assumption. It could accommodate one thousand people seated.

An important report that could be used by historians to understand the life of the Catholic Church in Swaziland, made by the visitor on the occasion of the inauguration of the cathedral, is kept in the archives of the Tuscan Province in Florence, Italy. The above report could also enable one to understand the socio-economic situation of the country in the 1950's.

It emerges from the report that the development of Swaziland has been largely spearheaded by the Christian Churches, especially the Catholic Church, through the institutions they created throughout the country. In the Catholic world, the Order of the Servants of Mary, the Congregation of the Salesians and several women religious congregations such as the Congregation of the Servite Sisters of Pistoia, the Oakford Dominican Sisters, the Servite Sisters of Swaziland and other congregations played a

⁴⁴⁹. Constantino Barneschi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Bishop's house, Bremersdorp, 29 January, 1951.

major role.

The completion of the cathedral of Bremersdorp and other projects brought much glory to the Catholic hierarchy in Swaziland. The cathedral was indeed a jewel and the most admired church building in the country, boasting had the highest bell tower in the country. Inside the cathedral, one could admire the main altar, walls and the blending of colours in the windows.

During the day of inauguration, the Prior General of the Order of the Servants of Mary, who was expected to be amongst the important guests, was not present, though he was one of those who had supported the project of the building of the cathedral, in which friars of the Order of the Servants of Mary played a major role. Due to other commitments in Italy, the Prior General was unable to attend the celebration.

We need to acknowledge the fact that resources of the Order of the Servants of Mary were widely used in the above project. Nevertheless, some contributions came from different sources, and one of them being the Sacred Congregation of the Evangelization of Peoples, Propaganda Fide, based in Rome, Italy.

CONCLUSION

The Christianization of Swaziland began towards the end of the nineteenth century. Most of those who brought Christianity came from Europe. Countries such as Britain, Italy, Germany, Austria and others, had played a major role in proclaiming the Christian message.

Most of the Christian Churches who brought Christianity into Swaziland, used schools, health centres and other institutions to attract the local people to their religion. It is therefore impossible to establish with certainty that the local people who were converted into Christianity had deep Christian convictions. This comes from the fact that the above institutions were badly needed by the local people. Some of the people might have made a profession of faith before the missionary hoping that in return they would have rights to benefit from the above institutions.

There were also local people who embraced Christianity wholeheartedly from the onset. This is evident from the fact that traditional Swazi customs and culture such as polygamy began to lose value amongst some of the baptised, especially amongst the Roman Catholics.

The growing interest in the consecrated life shown by young Swazi Catholics as early as the 1920's testifies to the fact that many local people had taken Christian life very seriously. By the beginning of the Second World War, more than twenty different Christian Churches had worked in Swaziland. Due to the fact that missionaries came from different parts of Europe, the churches they built resembled those they had in Europe. For example, the church built by the Catholic Church in the 1920's at Good Shepherd had a

German style of architecture. It had high roofs typical of those in Germany where there is snow which was not necessary in Swaziland due to the fact that the climate of Swaziland was different from that of Germany. Italian Catholic missionaries built churches that were very similar to those found in Italy. This shows that there was virtually no influence of local or colonial architecture on churches built by the Catholic church in that period of time. Since Swaziland was a British Protectorate, the colonial art inspired by the British architecture is conspicuous in most of the Anglican and Protestant churches built at that time. Some of those buildings had Dutch architecture due to the fact that Swaziland had also been influenced by Afrikaans Dutch Reformed Churches.

European art was conspicuous in all Catholic church buildings. One of the reasons could be that there were no Swazi clergy who could have been inspired to impart an African flavour in art and other aspects of the Church, though Benedictine monks working at Inkamana in South Africa promoted the local Zulu art and architecture.

Christian missionaries belonging to different Churches worked harmoniously in Swaziland. There were no major incidents of sectarian violence. As early as the period preceding the Second World War there was some form of cooperation amongst them. But that does not mean that there was no fierce competition amongst them for believers. It emerges from most of the letters written by early Catholic missionaries that this spirit of competition existed. But good relations between different Christian Churches prepared the ground for closer ecumenical collaboration.

It has been interesting looking at the role played by government in the evangelization of the people. Most people would argue that government never interfered with the religion of the people. The fact that government enacted marriage laws based on

Christian ethics and faithfully observed the Christian calendar shows that there was an inclination by government to Christianise the Swazi people. The insistence on baptismal certificates when applying for a place to study and in other fields makes one conclude that government practised some form of proselytism in favour of Christianity.

Education in Swaziland did enjoy high priority. Measured by almost any yardstick, advances by missionary education in Swaziland never lagged behind the programmes of South Africa and Portuguese East Africa. Missionaries had a concern for such activity. In order for government to free itself from social services such as education and basic health services, it began subsidising schools and health centres run by Christian missionaries. Missionaries were pleased with those subsidies. These institutions had become an indispensable vehicle for evangelisation and missionaries marvelled at seeing people being converted into their religion in large numbers, though one should question the authenticity of those conversions.

The hierarchy of the Catholic Church in southern Africa might well have been critical of the way things were done in Swaziland. Were it not for the support the Prefect Apostolic of Swaziland had enjoyed from the Tuscan Province it might not have been erected Vicariate Apostolic of Swaziland.

Drinking has been an endemic disease of some missions. When there was no work to be done, friars who would not mingle with their co-workers, to encourage conviviality and friendship, could succumb to alcoholism as an occupational hazard, especially during the week when there was less demand for pastoral work.

It was unusual for brothers to do a lot of manual work. Due to the fact that there was a small number of religious brothers belonging to the Order of the Servants of Mary

in southern Africa, the few who were builders were expected to make heroic sacrifices. Bro. Gabriel Signori was amongst the few builders who were requested to leave Swaziland and go and work in South Africa where the Order of the Servants of Mary was building churches and priories.

Finally, conflicts became inevitable owing to the fact that individual friars would rarely compromise their philosophy of developing their mission, for they were not prepared to accept the opinions of others. They were friars who had worked in Swaziland for more than twenty years, whose experience and wisdom made it easy for them to influence younger friars, especially those who had just come from Europe, making them to follow their personal philosophies. Those who took advantage of the situation were able to emerge as potential leaders of the Church in Swaziland. Unfortunately, religious sisters and the laity did not understand the trends that were prevailing in the Prefect Apostolic of Swaziland.

SOURCES

Primary Sources

(a) Oral:

Claudia Gonfiantini, OSM Interview in Italian, Our Lady of Sorrows Convent Hluti, 2 September, 1996.

Justina Tsoku, OSM, Interview in Zulu, Seven Holy Founders' Parish, Heidelberg, 13 April, 1999.

(b) Written:

Alexis Lepicier, *letter to Fr. Peregrine Bellezze*, Glasgow, Scotland, 8 July, 1914.

Alfonso MontE, *Ac Totius Ordinis Servorum B. Mariae Virginis Prior Generalis: Lettera ai Rev. Padri e Fratelli della nostra missione del Swaziland*, Bremersdorp, 1954.

Acting Principal of Education, *Letter to Agostino Botta*, Department of Education, Mbabane, 11 May, 1954.

Amedeo Brugnoli, *letter to Fr. Peregrine Bellezze*, Bologna, Italy, 8 September, 1914.

Andrea Dal Pino, *lettera del Segretario della sez. Fior. del Comitato Fiorentino per la Pia Opera della Missioni dei Servi di Maria, SS. ma Annunziata*, Firenze, 1 March, 1950.

Anonymous author, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Parrocchia di S. Clemente ai Servi, Siena, 16 April, 1937.

Anonymous, *letter to the Prior Provincial of the Tuscan Province*, Our Lady's Prior, Newbury, 16 January, 1955.

Anonymous, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, 1955.

Anonymous, *lettera a Federico Aliboni*, Good Shepherd mission, 8 March, 1951.

Anonymous, *lettera a Federico Aliboni*, Viareggio, 28 May, 1953.

Anselmo Marsigli, *lettera a Bellezze*, St. Philip's mission, Mhlatuze, 28 November, 1935.

Anselmo Marsigli, *lettera al Priore Generale dell'Ordine dei Servi di Maria*, Our lady of Sorrows mission, Hluti, 30 November, 1950.

Anselmo Marsigli, *letter to Peregrine Belleze*, St. Philip's mission, Mhlatuze, 25 February, 1935.

Anselmo Marsigli, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Peregrine's mission, Bulandzeni, 26 April, 1940.

Anselmo Marsigli, *lettera a Peregrino Bellezze*, St. Philip's mission, Mhlatuze, 25 November, 1943.

Antonino Agostinelli, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Bremersdorp, 27 July, 1935.

Antonio Monaco, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Florence mission, Luve, 18 September, 1951.

Antonio Monaco, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Florence mission, Luve, 30 September, 1954.

Arimath Gralt, *letter to Peregrine Bellezze*, Mbabane, 6 January, 1930.

Augustine Moore, *letter to Peregrine Bellezze*, Rome, 1 November, 1928.
Agostino Botta, 1933, in *Le Mission dei Servi di Maria*, anno 7, no2, (Rome: San Marcello), February, 1934, p. 31.

Agostino Botta, *lettera al Proire Generale dell'Ordine dei Servi di Maria*, Mater Dolorosa mission Mbabane, 10 December, 1954.

Baptismal Register, Good Shepherd Mission, 1924-1930

Baptismal Register, St. Joseph's Mission, 1917

Baptismal Register, St. Peregrines's Mission, 1927-1938

Barneschi Constantino, Proposed contract between the Diocese of Bremarsdorp (Manzini) and the American province of the Servite Order, *sent to Fr. Grimes by the Bishop of the Diocese of Bremarsdorp*, Bishop's house, Bremarsdorp, 17 July, 1951.

Benedetto Biagiolo, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Our Lady's Priory, Berkshire, 18 January, 1951.

Benedetto Biagioli, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo, 5 May, 1953.

Bonaventure Kathrein, *Appunti del Padre Bonaventure Kathrein che dice di aver messo insieme*, Good Shepherd mission, Siteki, (1920's).

Budget prepared by Romauldo Migliorini 1932.

Calkins Thomas, OSM, Servite in Zululand, (un-edited notes) [1970].

Carlo Salotti, *lettera a Peregrine Bellezze*, Rome, 29 December, 1932, prot. no. 4630/32.

Camillo Menchini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Sulphur Springs, March, 1951.

Camillo Menchini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Catholic mission, Sulphur Springs, 13 April, 1955.

Camillo Menchini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Johannesburg, 23 April, 1955.

Camillo Menchini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Catholic mission, Sulphur Springs, 9 March, 1955.

Camillo Menchini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Catholic mission, Sulphur Springs, 23 March, 1955.

Camillo Menchini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale*, Catholic mission, Sulphur Springs, 21 October, 1954.

Camillo Menchini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Catholic mission, Sulphur Springs, 18 February, 1955.

Cecelia, *letter to Peregrine Bellezze*, 1 December, 1933.

Chronicles of SS.ma Annunziata, Florence mission, Luve, 1936-1939.

Claudia Gonfiantini, *lettera a Peregrine Bellezze*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo, 29 May, 1933.

Claudia Mtsetfwa, *letter to Peregrine Bellezze*, 1 December, 1933.

ComunitE della SS.ma Annunziata, *Visite ai kraals*, Florence mission, Luve, 1932.

Constantine Sifundza, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Bremersdorp, 14 June, 1955.

Constantine Sifundza, *letter to the Prior Provincial of the Tuscan Province*, Collegio Sette Santi Fondatori, Firenze, 1955.

Constantino Barneschi, *lettera a Federico Aliboni*, Bremersdorp, 26 April, 1949.

Constantino Barneschi, *lettera a Federico Aliboni*, Bishop's house, Bremersdorp, 11 December, 1949.

Constantino Barneschi, *lettera a Federico Aliboni*, Bremersdorp, 8 March, 1949.

Constantino Barneschi, *lettera a Gregorio Logli*, Bishop's house, Bremersdorp, 9 January, 1952.

Constantino Barneschi, *lettera a Fr. Alessio, Mzimpofo*, 4 April, 1922.

Constantino Barneschi, *lettera a Fr. Alessio, Mzimpofo*, 21 June, 1922.

Constantino Barneschi, *lettera a Fr. Alessio, Mzimpofo*, 11 March, 1925.

Constantino Barneschi, *lettera a Fr. Alessio, Mzimpofo*, 22 January, 1925.

Constantino Barneschi, *lettera a Fr. Alessio, Mzimpofo*, 11 November, 1931.

Constantino Barneschi, *lettera a Fr. Rossi, Mzimpofo*, 19 September, 1922.

Constantino Barneschi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, 21 June, 1922.

Constantino Barneschi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana, Mzimpofo*, 12 March, 1925.

Constantino Barneschi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana, Mzimpofo*, 25 April, 1925.

Constantino Barneschi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana, Mzimpofo*, 11 November, 1931.

Constantino Barneschi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo*, 7 September, 1935.

Constantino Barneschi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo*, 22 November, 1934.

Constantino Barneschi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo*, 23 March, 1936.

Constantino Barneschi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana, Bishop's house, Bremersdorp*, 29 January, 1951.

Constantino Barneschi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo*, 12 February, 1940.

Constantino Barneschi, *letter to the editor of Addolorata, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo*, 19 January, 1924.

Constantino Barneschi, *un-published English text of Chronicles of St. Joseph's mission, January 1924 to December 1929, Mzimpofo*, 1929.

Constantino Barneschi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo*, 12 October, 1937.

Constantino Barneschi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofu, 28 August, 1939.

Constantino Barneschi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Portio di Genova, 23 January, 1938.

Constantino Barneschi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofu, 28 November, 1939.

Constantino Barneschi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofu, 17 May, 1939.

Council of the Prefecture, *Minutes of Council of the Prefecture Apostolic of Swaziland*, Mater Dolorosa, Mbabane, 29 October, 1928.

Councillors, *Minutes of the meeting of Councillors*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofu, 29 June, 1931.

Cortney Louis, *letter sent to Fr. Kinch by the Servite Provincial secretary of the American Province*, Our Lady of Sorrows, Chicago, 5 December, 1948.

Cronaca della comunità delle suore Serve di Maria di Pistoia, della comunità di SS.ma Annunziata, Luve, 1926-1932.

DePencier W. Jerome, *letter sent to Fr. Kinch by the Servite Provincial of the American Province*, Our Lady of Sorrows, Chicago, 18 October, 1947.

DePencier W. Jerome, *Letter sent to Fr. Kinch by the Servite Provincial of the American Province*, Our Lady of Sorrows, Chicago, 11 July, 1947.

DePencier W. Jerome, *letter sent to Fr. Kinch by the Servite Provincial of the American Province*, Our Lady of Sorrows, Chicago, 25 September, 1947.

DePencier W. Jerome, OSM, *letter sent to Fr. Kinch by the Servite Provincial of the American Province*, Our Lady of Sorrows, Chicago, 16 September, 1947.

DePencier W. Jerome, *Letter sent to Fr. Kinch by the Servite Provincial of the American Province*, Our Lady of Sorrows, Chicago, 24 November, 1947.

DePencier W. Jerome, *Letter sent to Fr. Kinch by the Servite Provincial of the American Province*, Our Lady of Sorrows, Chicago, 6 September, 1947.

DePencier W. Jerome, OSM, *Letter sent to Fr. Kinch by the Servite Provincial of the American Province*, (Chicago: Our Lady of Sorrows, 21 March, 1948).

DePencier W. Jerome, *Letter sent to Fr. Kinch by the Servite Provincial of the American Province*, Our Lady of Sorrows, Chicago, 9 November, 1948.

De Statu Animarum Native congregation, [1950].

Distillati Afra, OSM, *Cinquant'anni in terra di missione*, (un-edited) [1950]

Federico Aliboni, *Centro Missionario di S. Pier Piccolo in Arezzo: Resoconto annuale anno 1949*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, October, 1949.

Federico Aliboni, *Centro Missionario St.Andrea Apostolo in Viareggio: Resoconto dal 18 maggio al 10 ottobre 1949*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, October, 1949.

Federico Aliboni, *Circolare numero 1 del 1949 ai tutti i priori*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, 11 October, 1949.

Federico Aliboni, *Offerte per le Missioni dei Servi di Maria: Sezione dei Sette Santi Fondatori*, Firenze 1949, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, 31 December, 1949.

Federico Aliboni, *lettera a Genesio*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, 31 October, 1948.

Federico Aliboni, *lettera a Domenico Mazzucchi*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, 8 April, 1949.

Federico Aliboni, *lettera a Marchioni*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, 18 December, 1948.

Federico Aliboni, *lettera a Geraldo Galandi*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, 31 December, 1953.

Federico Aliboni, *lettera a Geraldo Galandi*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, 3 July, 1952.

Federico Aliboni, *lettera al Vicario*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, 1950.

Federico Aliboni, *lettera a Giuseppe Genovese*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, 8 April, 1949.

Federico Aliboni, *lettera a Ubaldo*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze.

Financial report of the missions 1928-1931.

Federico Aliboni, *lettera a Constantino Barneschi*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, 2 December, 1951.

Federico Aliboni, *lettera a Constantino Barneschi*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, 18 December, 1949.

Federico Aliboni, *lettera a Anselmo Marsigli*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, 12 December, 1949.

Federico Aliboni, *lettera al Sindaco del Comune di Monteodorisio*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, 2 March, 1949.

Federico Aliboni, *lettera a Pietro Pennoni*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, May 1948.

Federico Aliboni, *lettera a Pietro Pennoni*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, 12 November, 1948.

Federico Aliboni, *lettera a Pietro Pennoni*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, 4 December, 1948.

Federico Aliboni, *lettera a Pietro Pennoni*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, 19 November, 1949.

Francesco Arcangeli, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Theresa's mission, Bremersdorp, 21 March, 1955.

Gabriel Signori, *letter to the editor of Addolorata*, Florence mission, Luve, 1932.

Geraldo Galandi, *lettera a Luigi Ruggeri*, St. Theresa's mission, Bremersdorp, 31 May, 1952.

Geraldo Galandi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Theresa's mission, Bremersdorp, 29 December, 1955.

Geraldo Galandi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Theresa's mission, Bremersdorp, 14 August, 1953.

Geraldo Galandi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Theresa's mission, Bremersdorp, 30 March, 1953.

Geraldo Galandi, *Lettera a Federico Aliboni*, St. Theresa's mission, Bremersdorp, 17 June, 1952.

Geraldo Galandi, *lettera a Federico Aliboni*, St. Theresa's mission, 13 July, 1952.

Geraldo Galandi, *Lettera a Federico Aliboni*, St. Theresa's Mission, Bremersdorp, 30 March, 1953.

Giacinto Striolo, *lettera a Constantino Barneschi*, Mbabane, 9 November, 1931.

Giacinto Striolo, *Cronaca della missione di Cristo Re dal 17 maggio a novembre 1936*, Christ the King Mission, Hlatikhulu, 1936.

Giovanni Cattoci, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Theresa's mission, Bremersdorp, 15 June, 1936.

Giovanni Cattoci, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Theresa's mission, Bremarsdorp, 28 November, 1938.

Giovanni Cattoci, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Our Lady of Sorrows mission, Hluti, 16 November, 1936.

Giovanni Cattoci, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Florence mission, Luve, 25 March, 1955.

Giovanni Cattoci, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Florence mission, Mzimpofo, 12 January, 1953.

Giovanni Cattoci, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Mater Dolorosa mission, Mbabane, 19 April, 1938.

Giuseppe Genovese, *lettera a Federico Aliboni*, Muscano di Travignano, Treviso, 27 January, 1949.

Giovanni Cattoci, *lettera al Priore Generale dell'Ordine dei Servi di Maria*, St. Theresa's mission, Bremersdorp, 27 April, 1950.

Giovanni Cattoci, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Florence mission, Luve, 29 November, 1954.

Giovanni Cattoci, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Florence mission, Luve, 21 December, 1954.

Giovanni Cattoci, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Florence mission, Luve, 9 July, 1954.

Girolamo Casalini, *lettera a Federico Aliboni*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo, 28 May, 1951.

Girolamo Casalini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Philip's mission, Mhlatuze, 13 January, 1955.

Girolamo Casalini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Phillip's mission, Mhlatuze, 28 December, 1954.

Girolamo Casalini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Philip's mission, Mhlatuze, 4 March, 1955.

Girolamo Casalini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Phillip's mission, Mhlatuze, 10 September, 1954.

Gregorio Logli, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, 2 January, 1952.

Gregorio Logli, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Good Shepherd

mission, Siteki, 6 October, 1937.

Grimes Philip *letter sent to Fr. Kinch by the Servite Provincial of the American Province, Our Lady of Sorrows, Chicago, 15 November, 1950.*

Grimes Philip, *Letter sent to Fr. Kinch by the Servite Provincial of the American Province, Our Lady of Sorrows, Chicago, 9 November, 1949.*

Grimes Philp, *letter sent to Fr. Kinch by the Servite Provincial of the American Province, Our Lady of Sorrows, Chicago 21 October, 1949.*

Giocchino Bottaro, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana, Christ the King mission, Hlatikhulu, 19 July, 1954.*

Giovanni Fondi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana, Christ the King mission, Hlatikhulu, 20 November, 1954.*

Ignatius O'Sullivan, *lettera a Fr. Giulio Santini, Mbuluzi, 22 February, 1922.*

Interview with Terenzio Biondi, St. Peregrine's Mission, Bulandzeni, 27 July, 1999.

Interview with Fr. Mooney Alphonse, 11 October, 1996, Star of the Sea, KwaNgwanase.

Josephina Nkosi, *letter to Peregrine Bellezze, Mbabane, 25 February, 1935.*

Joseph Srill, *letter to Raffaele Tauci, American Province of Servite Fathers, Chicago, 7 May, 1954.*

James Keane, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana, Servite Fathers, Chicago, 19 October, 1953.*

Kinch Edwin, *letter sent to Fr. Grimes by the prior at Ingwavuma, Our Lady of Ingwavuma, 11 December, 1951.*

Letter to the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide from the General of the Order of the Servants of Mary, Fr. Augustine Moore dated; 12 April, 1932. In Archives of the Order of the Servants of Mary, Marianum, Rome.

Geraldo Galandi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana, Sulphur Springs, Piet Retief, 26 November, 1937.*

Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Generale dell'Ordine dei Servi di Maria, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo, 17 October, 1951.*

Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo, 11 April, 1951.*

Luigi Ruggeri, *Lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo, 12 March, 1953.

Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Theresa's mission, Bremersdorp, 13 December, 1950.

Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo, 27 October, 1951.

Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo, 14 July, 1953.

Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia, Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo, 30 April, 1952.

Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia, Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo, 5 February, 1955.

Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia, Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo, 16 February, 1955.

Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia, Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo, 12 September, 1955.

Luigi Ruggeri, *Resoconto finanziario dall'Agosto 1949 al Dicembre 1950*, St. Theresa's mission, Bremersdorp, December, 1950.

Luigi Ruggeri, *Rapporto del Superiore Regolare per l'anno 1951, al Rev.mo P. Generale e al M.R.P Provinciale*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo, December, 1951.

Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo, 28 August, 1954.

Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo, 23 December, 1999.

Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo, 3 June, 1953.

Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo, 23 December, 1954.

Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provincial della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo, 5 October, 1954.

Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Generale dell'Ordine dei Servi di Maria*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo, 15 January, 1952.

Luigi Ruggeri, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofu, 5 October, 1954.

Lloyd Triestino, *lettera al Segretariato Generale della Mission*, Firenze, 25 November, 1948.

Lucas H. Martin, S.V.C *letter sent to Fr. DePencier by the Apostolic delegate in South Africa*, Pretoria, 23 April 1949.

Lucas H. Martin, S.V.C, *Letter sent to Fr. Grimes by the Apostolic delegate in South Africa*, Pretoria, 6 June, 1951.

Minutes of the meeting held at Bremersdorp on 19 February, 1932.

Marcello Candia, *lettera dell'Unione Medico Missionaria Itaiana al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Milano, 20 October, 1950.

Morgan, *letter to the Prior Provincial of the Tuscan Province*, Good Shepherd mission, Siteki, 31 May, 1954.

Natural Resorces Board, *letter to St. Joseph's Mission*, Natural Resorces Board, Mbabane 13 November, 1953.

Ordine dei Servi di Maria, *Conclusioni dei convegno dei Delegati Provinciali Pro Missioni*, Rome, 23-24 May, 1950.

Paolo Gianelli, *lettera al priore della comunità*, Firenze, 9 January, 1933.

Paolo Giannelli, *lettera al Commendatore*, Firenze, 24 March, 1949.

Peregrine Bellezze, *first notebook of the "Memorie della missione"*, 1934.

Peregrine Bellezze, *letter to the Councillors of the Prefecture Apostolic of Swaziland*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofu, 29 December, 1932.

Peregrine Bellezze, *letter to the General of the Order of the Servants of Mary*, St. Theresa's mission, Bremersdorp, 19 February, 1932.

Peregrine Bellezze, *letter to the Missionaries*, Mzimpofu, 8 August, 1930.

Peregrine Bellezze, *letter to the Missionaries*, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofu, 8 August, 1930.

Peregrine Bellezze, *letter to Priests*, Mzimpofu, 2 January, 1930.

Peregrine Bellezze, *letter to the Director of Addolorata*, Mzimpofu, 3 March, 1917.

Peregrine Bellezze, *letter to the Director of Addolorata, Dundee, South Africa*, 21 August, 1919.

Peregrine Bellezze, *lettera a Fr. Giulio Santini, Mzimpofo*, 21 June, 1922.

Peregrine Bellezze, *lettera a Fr. Giulio Santini, Mzimpofo*, 29 November, 1922.

Peregrine Bellezze, *Lettera a Filippo Rizzi, Trieste*, 4 July, 1933.

Peregrine Bellezze, *lettera a Romauldo Migliorini, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo*, 14 January, 1933.

Peregrine Bellezze, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana, Mzimpofo*, 25 December, 1914.

Peregrine Bellezze, *lettera al Priore provinciale della Provincia Toscana, Mzimpofo*, 29 March, 1915.

Peregrine Bellezze, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana, Mzimpofo*, 11 November, 1916.

Peregrine Bellezze, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana, Mzimpofo*, 21 June, 1922.

Peregrine Bellezze, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana e al Priore della Santissima Annunziata, Mzimpofo*, 24 January, 1924.

Peregrine Bellezze, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana, Mzimpofo*, 25 January, 1925.

Peregrine Bellezze, *Pro-memoria di archivio sul caso di Fr. Luigi, St. Joseph's mission, Mzimpofo*, 18 January, 1933.

Peregrine Bellezze, *Nota di archivio segreto sulla visita del Revmo. P. generale in relazione alla lettera del P. generale del 29 aprile 1931, Archivi OSM, Marianum, Rome*.

Priore Generale dell'Ordine dei Servi di Maria, *lettera al Reverendo Padre Priore, San Marcello, Rome*, 6 May, 1936.

Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana, *lettera al Priore Generale dell'Ordine dei Servi di Maria, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze*, 21 November, 1939.

Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana, *lettera al Priore Generale dell'Ordine dei Servi di Maria, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze*, 17 November, 1939.

Prior, *Letter to the Prior Provincial of the Tuscan Province, Our Lady's Priory, Newbury*, 12 September, 1954.

- Priory of St. Clement, lettera anonima, San Clement, Siena, 22 October, 1954.
- Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana, *lettera a Romauldo Migliorini*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, 21 May, 1934.
- Priore della Provincia Toscana, *lettera al Priore General dell'Ordine dei Servi di Maria*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, 2 December, 1939.
- Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana, *lettera al Priore Generale dell'Ordine dei Servi di Maria*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, 6 April, 1938.
- Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana, *lettera al Priore Generale dell'Ordine dei Servi di Maria*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, 28 November, 1938.
- Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana, *lettera a Constantino Barneschi*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, 3 June, 1939.
- Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana, *lettera a l' Eccellenza*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, 19 December, 1939.
- Principal Education Officer, *Letter to Agostino Botta*, Department of Education, Mbabane, 7 February, 1955.
- Remigio Mucciarini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, 15 September, 1931.
- Remigio Mucciarini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, 9 June, 1933.
- Remigio Mucciarini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Florence mission, Luve, 22 November, 1931.
- Remigio Mucciarini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Florence mission, Luve, 22 November, 1933.
- Remigio Mucciarini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Florence mission, 29 June, 1934.
- Remigio Mucciarini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Florence mission, 23 August, 1937.
- Romauldo Migliorini, *Financial statement of the Prefecture Apostolic of Swaziland as from 1 July, 1931 to 19 February, 1932*, Bremersdorp.
- Romauldo Migliorini, *lettera a Paolo Giannelli*, St. Theresa's mission, Bremersdorp, 28 January, 1933.

Romauldo Migliorini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, 20 October, 1931.

Romauldo Migliorini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Florence mission, Luve, 4 August, 1932.

Romauldo Migliorini, *lettera a Peregrine Bellezze*, Bremarsdorp, 20 November, 1932.

Romauldo Migliorini, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Bremersdorp, 20 October, 1931.

Romauldo Migliorini, *lettera a Priore Provinciale della Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, St. Theresa's mission, Bremersdorp, 6 July, 1932.

Suore Mantellate, *Cronaca della comunità delle suore Serve di Maria di Pistoia della comunità di SS.ma Annunziata* (un-published chronicles), Luve, 1926-1934.

T.A Dickson, *letter to Peregrine Bellezze*, Mbabane, 23 May, 1933.

Tarcisio, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Florence mission, Luve, 8 October, 1951.

Terenzio Biondi, *lettera a Raffaele Tauci*, Good Shepherd mission, Siteki, 12 August, 1950.

Terenzio Biondi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, 24 January, 1950.

Terenzio Biondi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Good Shepherd mission, Siteki, 20 June, 1951.

Terenzio Biondi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Good Shepherd mission, Siteki, 10 January, 1953.

Terenzio Biondi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Good Shepherd mission, Siteki, 5 January, 1954.

Terenzio Biondi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Good Shepherd mission, Siteki, 18 February, 1954.

Terenzio Biondi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Good Shepherd mission, Siteki, 29 September, 1954.

Terenzio Biondi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Good Shepherd mission, Siteki, 24 november, 1954.

Terenzio Biondi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Good Shepherd

mission, Siteki, 29 January, 1955.

Terenzio Biondi, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Good Shepherd mission, Siteki, 31 December, 1955.

Tommaso Banci, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Our Lady of Sorrows mission, Hluti, 2 February, 1940.

Vite, *lettera a Fr. Vangelisti*, Ufficio Propaganda Films Africane, Torino, 19 July, 1933.

50 Years Iminyaka yomsebenzi wokwandisa ukhoho, Mzimpofu 1914-1964

50 Years of Missionary work, Mzimpofu [1980]

Secondary Sources

Agostino Fagiolo, 1928, in *Le Missioni dei Servi di Maria*, anno 1, n. 5, (Rome: San Marcello), 1928

Anonymous article, 1934, in *Le Missioni dei Servi di Maria*, anno 7, no. 8, (Rome: San Marcello), 1934

Constantino Barneschi, 1928, in *Le Missioni dei Servi di Maria*, anno 1, no. 2, (Rome: San Marcello), 1928

Constantino Barneschi, 1928, in *Le Missioni dei Servi di Maria*, anno 1, no. 7, (Rome: San Marcello), 1928

Constantino Barneschi, 1933, in *Le Missioni dei Servi di Maria*, anno 6, no. 5, (Rome: San Marcello), 1935

Constantino Barneschi, 1935, in *Le Missioni dei Servi di Maria*, anno 8, no. 7, (Rome: San Marcello), 1935

Bellezze, 1928, in *Le Missioni dei Servi di Maria*, anno 1, no. 2, (Rome: San Marcello), 1928

Edwin Kinch, OSM, *First missionaries of the Order of the Servants of Mary in Ingwavuma* (un-published notes) [1960].

F. Faustino, O. Diaz & V. Benassi, *A Short History of the Order*, (Rome: General Secretariate for the Servite Missions), 1987

Filippo Rizzi, 1932, in *Le Missioni dei Servi di Maria*, anno 6, no. 3, (Rome: San Marcello), 1933.

Gabriel Roschini, IN *Galleria Servitana*, Vol. II, *Religiosi illustri dell'Ordine dei Servi di Maria dal 1933 al 1976*, Pontifical Teologica "Marianum", Rome, 1976.

Godfrey Sieber OSB, *The Benedictines of Inkamana*, (St. Ottilien: Eos Verlag Erzabtei), 1985

H. M Jones, *Report of the 1966 Swaziland population census*, (Mbabane: Swazi Government), 1968

Gerardo Galandi, 1935, in *Le Missioni de Servi di Maria*, anno 8, no. 8, (Rome: San Marcello), 1935

Gerardo Galandi, 1936, in *Le Missioni de Servi di Maria*, anno 9, no. 4, (Rome: San Marcello), 1936

- L'Addolorata, no. 6, 1913, p. 144
- L'Addolorata, no. 12, 1913, p. 298
- L'Addolorata, no. 32, 1914, p. 2
- L'Addolorata, no. 5, 1914, p. 115
- L'Addolorata, no. 8, 1914, p. 171
- L'Addolorata, no. 9, 1914, p. 214
- L'Addolorata, no. 10, 1914, p. 222
- L'Addolorata, no. 10, 1914, p. 230
- L'Addolorata, no. 11, 1914, p. 257
- L'Addolorata, no. 12, 1914, p. 293
- L'Addolorata, no. 1, 1915, p. 18
- L'Addolorata, no. 2, 1915, p. 42
- L'Addolorata, no. 5, 1915, p. 114
- L'Addolorata, no. 7, 1915, p. 165
- L'Addolorata, no. 1, 1916, p. 17
- L'Addolorata, no. 2, 1916, p. 40
- L'Addolorata, no. 4, 1916, p. 91
- L'Addolorata, no. 5, 1916, p. 114
- L'Addolorata, no. 6, 1916, p. 135
- L'Addolorata, no. 7, 1916, p. 163
- L'Addolorata, no. 8, 1916, p. 188
- L'Addolorata, no. 10, 1916, p. 232
- L'Addolorata, no. 11, 1916, p. 254
- L'Addolorata, no. 12, 1916, p. 280
- L'Addolorata, no. 1, 1917, p. 15
- L'Addolorata, no. 3, 1917, p. 68
- L'Addolorata, no. 6, 1917, p. 119
- L'Addolorata, no. 7, 1917, p. 132
- L'Addolorata, no. 8, 1917, p. 155
- L'Addolorata, no. 9, 1917, p. 172
- L'Addolorata, no. 10, 1917, p. 185
- L'Addolorata, no. 11, 1917, p. 213
- L'Addolorata, no. 12, 1917, p. 231
- L'Addolorata, no. 1, 1918, p. 11

- L'Addolorata, no. 3, 1918, p. 50
L'Addolorata, no. 4, 1918, p. 73
L'Addolorata, no. 5, 1919, p. 128
L'Addolorata, no. 8, 1919, p. 194
L'Addolorata, no. 1, 1920, p. 15
L'Addolorata, no. 3, 1920, p. 85
L'Addolorata, no. 1, 1921, p. 18
L'Addolorata, no. 2, 1921, p. 43
L'Addolorata, no. 4, 1921, p. 109
L'Addolorata, no. 5, 1921, p. 145
L'Addolorata, no. 7, 1921, p. 191
L'Addolorata, no. 8, 1921, p. 231
L'Addolorata, no. 9, 1921, p. 264
L'Addolorata, no. 11, 1921, p. 308
L'Addolorata, no. 12, 1921, p. 335
L'Addolorata, no. 1, 1922, p. 10-12
L'Addolorata, no. 2, 1922, p. 31-35
L'Addolorata, no. 3, 1922, p. 57-69
L'Addolorata, no. 4, 1922, p. 85-88
L'Addolorata, no. 5, 1922, p. 105
L'Addolorata, no. 6, 1922, p. 129
L'Addolorata, no. 7, 1922, p. 150
L'Addolorata, no. 8, 1922, p. 171
L'Addolorata, no. 9, 1922, p. 190
L'Addolorata, no. 10, 1922, p. 217-222
L'Addolorata, no. 11, 1922, p. 237
L'Addolorata, no. 12, 1922, p. 261-266
L'Addolorata, no. 1, 1923, p. 11
L'Addolorata, no. 2, 1923, p. 30-33
L'Addolorata, no. 4, 1923, p. 76
L'Addolorata, no. 5, 1923, p. 103
L'Addolorata, no. 6, 1923, p. 122-124
L'Addolorata, no. 7, 1923, p. 138-141
L'Addolorata, no. 8, 1923, p. 166-170
L'Addolorata, no. 9, 1923, p. 192
L'Addolorata, no. 10, 1923, p. 242
L'Addolorata, no. 12, 1923, p. 271
L'Addolorata, no. 1, 1924, p. 5
L'Addolorata, no. 2, 1924, p. 29
L'Addolorata, no. 3, 1924, p. 52-54
L'Addolorata, no. 4, 1924, p. 58
L'Addolorata, no. 6, 1924, p. 133
L'Addolorata, no. 7, 1924, p. 149-151
L'Addolorata, no. 7, 1924, p. 156-158
L'Addolorata, no. 8, 1924, p. 174
L'Addolorata, no. 9, 1924, p. 200
L'Addolorata, no. 10, 1924, p. 223-226

- L'Addolorata, no. 10, 1924, p. 230
L'Addolorata, no. 11, 1924, p. 247
L'Addolorata, no. 12, 1924, p. 286-292
L'Addolorata, no. 1, 1925, p. 5-8
L'Addolorata, no. 1, 1925, p. 23
L'Addolorata, no. 2, 1925, p. 33-37
L'Addolorata, no. 3, 1925, p. 58
L'Addolorata, no. 4, 1925, p. 78
L'Addolorata, no. 5, 1925, p. 102
L'Addolorata, no. 6, 1925, p. 127-131
L'Addolorata, no. 7, 1925, p. 150
L'Addolorata, no. 9, 1925, p. 224
L'Addolorata, no. 10, 1925, p. 236
L'Addolorata, no. 1925, p. 262-265-269
L'Addolorata, no. 11, 1925, p. 277-289
L'Addolorata, no. 1, 1926, p. 4-14
L'Addolorata, no. 2, 1926, p. 29-46
L'Addolorata, no. 3, 1926, p. 52
L'Addolorata, no. 4, 1926, p. 76-87
L'Addolorata, no. 5, 1926, p. 108
L'Addolorata, no. 6, 1926, p. 130
L'Addolorata, no. 7, 1926, p. 152
L'Addolorata, no. 8, 1926, p. 173-174
L'Addolorata, no. 9, 1926, p. 198-203-204
L'Addolorata, no. 10, 1926, p. 222
L'Addolorata, no. 11, 1926, p. 254
L'Addolorata, no. 12, 1926, p. 273-277
L'Addolorata, no. 1, 1927, p. 4-11
L'Addolorata, no. 2, 1927, p. 32-34-37
L'Addolorata, no. 3, 1927, p. 57-62
L'Addolorata, no. 4, 1927, p. 84-87-89
L'Addolorata, no. 5, 1927, p. 108
L'Addolorata, no. 6, 1927, p. 133-135
L'Addolorata, no. 7, 1927, p. 159
L'Addolorata, no. 8-9, 1927, p. 198
L'Addolorata, no. 10-11, 1927, p. 227
L'Addolorata, no. 12, 1927, p. 255-262
L'Addolorata, no. 1, 1928, p. 11-14
L'Addolorata, no. 2, 1928, p. 43
L'Addolorata, no. 3, 1928, p. 73-77
L'Addolorata, no. 4, 1928, p. 110-112
L'Addolorata, no. 5, 1928, p. 138
L'Addolorata, no. 6, 1928, p. 170
L'Addolorata, no. 7, 1928, p. 206-211
L'Addolorata, no. 8, 1928, p. 232-233-236
L'Addolorata, no. 10, 1928, p. 278-281
L'Addolorata, no. 11, 1928, p. 315-317-319

L'Addolorata, no. 12, 1928, p. (348) -351

Lilian Moriconi, 1925, in *Le Missioni dei Servi di Maria*, anno 7, no. 8, (Rome: San Marcello) 1934

Luigi Tabanelli, *lettera al Priore Provinciale della Provincia Toscana*, Piazza S. Nicola da Tolentino, Rome, 6 February, 1921.

Ministro della Chiesa A.M.E, in *Le Missioni dei Servi di Maria*, anno 1, no. 2, (Rome: San Marcello), 1928

Paolo VI, 1975, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 7
Remigio Mucciarini, in *Le Missioni dei Servi di Maria*, anno 9, no. 6, (Rome: San Marcello), 1936

Microform, Swaziland census, 3 May 1921, *Census including; population, agriculture, livestock*, (Pretoria: Government Office, 1922.

Lincoln Bouscarens and Adam Ellis, *Canon Law a Text and Commentary*, (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company), 1957.

Santoro Maria, *La Catechesi Come Atto Ecclesiale*, (Rome: Edizioni Borla), 1989.

Society of St. Paul, *The New Jerusalem Bible*, (Bombay: The Bombay Saint Paul Society), 1993.

The Times of Swaziland, *Stegi Jottings*, Mbabane, 9 October, 1954.

APPENDIX

A. TABLES

1. Proposed 1932 annual budget of St. Joseph's school. (In Pound Sterling)

Meat (once a week) for twenty students of std (standard) V&VI.....	12.
Tea with sugar (once a day) for students of std V&VI.....	15.
Salt, flour, fire wood.....	10.
Petrol & diesel (for generating electricity for the school).....	5.
Windmill.....	15.
Medicine, etc.....	10.
TOTAL.....	222 ⁴⁵⁰

The above expenses exclude beans and other vegetables that were grown in the farms of the mission.

2. The following figures show how money was spent to buy food over a period of four years.

Mission	1928	1929	1930	1931
Mater Dolorosa	123-1-1	114-12-1	55-17-4	101-16-1
St. Joseph's	161-19-1	258-4-8	170	240
Florence	49-16-9	27-18-10	1-7	17-18-4
Good Shepherd	21	28-6-10	31	56-1
St. Philips'	47-12-8	62-18-6	14-19-3	90-1-2
St. Peregrine's	20-15-8	4-9-7	1-2	16-3-4
St. Mary's	----	32-5-3	22-15-9	34-19-6
TOTALS	424-5-3	528-15-9	297-1-4	557-19-11 ⁴⁵¹

N:B Money in Pound Sterling (pounds, shillings and pence)

3. The following table gives more detail of the financial statement of a less developed mission and a "developed mission" in the Prefecture Apostolic of Swaziland as at from¹July, 1931 to 19th February, 1932.

A. St. Joseph's mission

July 1931 subsidy.....	32-10.....
Tan & calfhide for floor.....	4-2-1.....
September subsidy.....	46-5.....
October, subsidy for the head teacher, Mr. Sikhunyana.....	2-10.....
Boarding of the prefecture apostolic for 3 months.....	9.....
Special subsidy for St. Juliana's school.....	10.....
January, subsidy for head teacher, Mr. Sikhunyana.....	48-15.....
Material supplied as <i>per list</i>	3-1-3-9.....
TOTAL.....	193-18-9 ⁴⁵²

⁴⁵⁰. *Financial report of the missions 1928-1931.*

⁴⁵¹. *Financial report of the missions 1928-1931.*

⁴⁵². Romauldo Migliorini, *Financial statement of the Prefecture Apostolic of Swaziland as at from 1 July, 1931 to 19 February, 1932, Bremarsdorp.*

B. Florence mission

July 1931 subsidy.....	15.....
August, cement (24 bags).....	15.....
August subsidy.....	10.....
Gutters.....	2-8-2.....
September subsidy.....	15.....
September, cement (6 bags).....	3-13-6.....
October, Refund of collection of Propaganda Fide.....	2-12.....
November subsidy.....	10.....
November, flooring.....	3-5.....
Two cases of glasses.....	2-8.....
Railage gutters.....	3-2-8.....
December subsidy.....	5.....
January subsidy.....	10.....
January, one and half bag of lime.....	18.....
TOTAL.....	229-19-4⁴⁵³.....

4. The following table shows the total amount spent by each mission on improving the mission property as from the beginning of July 1931 to 19 February, 1932.

Name of Mission	Total amount	percentage
Mater Dolorosa	125-4-10	3.1%
St. Joseph's	193-18-9	0%
Florence	229-19-4	29%
Good Shepherd	163-19-3	9%
St. Philip's	124-3-10	6%
St. Peregrine's	68-8	0%
St. Mary's	160-7-7	3%
St. Theresa's	<u>423-4-8</u>	<u>35%</u>
TOTAL	1489-4-8	1%

5. Amount of Money spent by St. Peregrine's Mission in 1951

Building material...../	2
Farming equipment.....	
Cement.....	
Journey to Johannesburg: Frs. Mosca and Logli...../	20. . .
Medical attention: Fr. Gregorio Logli...../	11.4
Special grant to the mission...../	60
X-ray: Fr. Gregorio Logli...../	

⁴⁵³ Romauldo Migliorini, *Financial statement of the Prefecture Apostolic of Swaziland as at from 1 July, 1931 to 19 February, 1932*, Bremarsdorp.

X-ray and treatment: Fr. Mosca...../	28.7
Chemicals...../	
Clothing: Fr. Gregorio Logli...../	3
Departure for Italy: Fr. Gregorio Logli...../	30.
Departure for Italy: Fr. Bello...../	3
Special grant to the mission...../	3
Household equipment and food...../	97.1
Settlement of a debt...../	1
Clothing: Fr. Gregorio Logli...../	7
Settlement of a debt.....E	
Celebration of Holy Masses...../	173
<hr/>	
TOTAL...../	1 139.14.10

Amount of Money spent by Christ the King Mission in 1951

Settlement of the debt...../	1
Special grant to the mission...../	20
Journey: Fr. Banci...../	
Special grant to the mission...../	40
Journey: Fr. Bottaro...../	
<hr/>	
TOTAL...../	124.16.

6. Financial Reports

A. Financial report: Centro Missionario St. Andrea Apostolo in Viareggio from May to October, 1949

/(Italian Lire)

Irene Bertilotti's Mass offered; stipend for missions	300 .
Special collection for missions by Cardella.	1 040
Donation by Alba Pezzini	700

Donation by E. Ricci	750
Donation by P. Des and Sorelle Toscano	1 000
Donation by Cassa Risparmio di Lucca.	2 000
Donation by E. Ricci	500
Donation by E. Ricci and Panigadi	100
Donation by E. Ricci	400
Donation by P. Santini	160
Collected from the missionary box in church	1 433
Donation by Ghilarducci Mariona	525
Donation by Darsella Maria.	2.000.
Donation by P. Casalini	200
Donation by Moretto Pasticceria Gambalunga	100.
Three Masses offered for the deceased by E. Ricci	1 000
Special collection by Bergellini Caterina	6 460
Special Baptismal offering by Cardella	200
Special Baptismal offering by Lombardi Anna Maria.	200
Mission Sunday collection	10 000.
	<hr/>
	Total Italian / 30 863 ⁴⁵⁴

B. Annual Financial Report: Centro Missionario di S. Pier Piccolo in Arezzo / (Italian Lire)

Twenty nine Baptismal offerings by Sandroni Angioletta	14 500
Baptismal offering by Sandroni Elena	200.
Baptismal offering by Romanelli Matteo	500
Baptismal offering by Spedini Fulvia	200

⁴⁵⁴. Federico Aliboni, *Centro Missionario St. Andrea Apostolo in Viareggio: Resoconto dal 18 maggio al 10 ottobre 1949*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze, October, 1949.

	340
Baptismal offering by Paci Mariani	300 . . .
Seven Baptismal offerings by Paci Emilia	300 . . .
Donation by a pious member of the Third Order	10.000
Special collection by Onorati Albergotti Maddalena	4 450
Donation by Don Sisto Baldassarri	1.000.
The Venturinis' Golden jubilee offering	1 000
Donation by Guadagni Angiolina	300 . . .
Donation by Falaschi Maria	100 . . .
Donation by Girolami Claudia	50
Donation by Maurizi Antonio	350 . . .
Mission Sunday collection	2.566 . .
Two hundred missionary calendars sold	10 000

Total Italian / 47 116⁴⁵⁵

⁴⁵⁵. Federico Aliboni, *Centro Missionario di S. Pier Piccolo in Arezzo: Resoconto annuale anno 1949*, SS.ma Annunziata, Firenze October, 1949.

- B. DOCUMENTS**
- C. MAPS**
- D. ILLUSTRATIONS**

PREFETTURA APOSTOLICA DEL SWAZILAND



11. - Attraversando un fiume

SERIE IV - SCENE DI VITA MISSIONARIA

PREFETTURA APOSTOLICA DEL SWAZILAND (SUDAFRICA)



Alunni della Scuola "Mater Dolorosa" dopo una processione.



MISSIONI DEI SERVI DI MARIA - PREFETTURA APOSTOLICA DEL SWAZILAND
Il Prefetto Apostolico, Missionari, Madre e Bambini indigeni.

PREFETTURA APOSTOLICA DEL SWAZILAND



4. - Sessione di catechismo a domicilio

SERIE IV - SCENE DI VITA MISSIONARIA