

## ROSARIO CATHEDRAL **The Church of the most Holy Rosary, Mangalore**

Portuguese built this oldest Church in the year 1568. The Church was reconstructed in 1910. Its attractive design is in Roman style. Situated near Hampankatta of Mangalore city, its locality is very calm and cool.

### **History**

#### **Early Periods:**

St. Thomas the Apostle of India kindled the light of faith during the first century A.D. in the Southern Part of India. The early Franciscan Missionaries later continued the Gospel preached by him in Kanara in the year 1510. Befittingly Mangalore is called "Rome of the East". Alphonso-de-Albuquerque a Portuguese explorer conquered Goa and was its Viceroy of the Indies from 1510-1515. This made it easy to Portuguese King Immanuel to send missionaries to Kanara for evangelization of Christianity. Albuquerque conquered this territory from the Bijapur Sultan Ismael Adil Shah. Later in the year 1542 St. Francis Xavier a Spanish Jesuit arrived in Goa from Portugal and propagated the true faith.

The Portuguese under Diego de Silveira attacked Mangalore in the year 1568. On January 5th 1568 the city was occupied and Portuguese built a fort called the "Fort of St. Sebastian" at the place where now stands the Deputy Commissioner's office. The Portuguese also had trade links in Kanara and Malabar and as such they built a factory for curing, storage of spices and other condiments prior to shipment. Since they felt the necessity of a church for their spiritual welfare they built a church (Holy Rosary Church) referred to as the "Factory Church" of

Bolar. The Royal stone emblem of the Portuguese king is lying at the entrance of the Cathedral as insignia of their landing in 1568. The Cathedral now stands in the same place where the Portuguese built their first church after capturing Mangalore on 5th January 1568. They opened three churches namely 1) Holy Rosary at Bolar 2) Our Lady of Mercy at Ullal 3) St. Francis Assisi at Farangipet. In the year 1570 Fr. Vincent who was at the time the Provincial of Jesuits in Goa sent a fresh batch of missionaries into Kanara. The Archbishop of Goa exercised his ecclesiastic jurisdiction over the coast. On December 3rd 1609 Pope Paul V extended his jurisdiction along the coast as far as Dharmattam. The Italian traveler Pietro Della Valle visited Mangalore in 1623 and he mentioned about the existence of these 3 churches mentioned above. The Holy See appointed Thomas De Castro a native of Divar in Goa Vicar Apostolic of Kanara on 30th August 1675. He later died on 16th July 1684. The venerable Fr. Joseph Vas played an important role in the history of the Rosario Church in the year 1681. Archbishop Brandao of Goa assigned him this task. Venerable Fr. Joseph Vas repaired the existing Bolar Rosario Church, which was known as the "Factory Church".



## **Age of Agony:**

The period from 1784 to 1799 forms a turbulent and sad page in the history of the Christians in Kanara. On 30th January 1784 the British surrendered to Tippu Sultan's forces. Tippu Sultan was enraged with the Christian community as he suspected their fidelity, as his subjects and issued orders to his Commanders to arrest all Christians in Kanara, confiscate their lands and valuables and destroy their churches and lead them as captives to Srirangapatnam. This catastrophe took place on the fateful night of Ash Wednesday February 21st 1784. These cruel orders were carried out and several thousands of Christians in his domain were lead as captives to Srirangapatnam. Their fate was sad and gloomy and many perished through starvation and fatigue on the way. The survivors who reached Srirangapatnam were rounded up and by torture forced to embrace Islam.

During this period Tippu's forces desecrated and destroyed 26 out of the 27 churches in Kanara and Rosario Church was one of them. Thus began their long suffering and bitter lent for 15 years to follow.

Srirangapatnam was besieged and fell to the British forces in 1799 commanded by Colonel Arthur Wellesley, the future Duke of Wellington, who was destined to defeat Napoleon Bonaparte at the battle of Waterloo. Colonel Arthur Wellesley was the brother of The English Governor-General of India, Richard Wellesley, Second Earl of Mornington. Thus ended the torture and captivity of Christians.

## **Return from Captivity:**

After return from the captivity, in 1813 the help of various sources rebuilt Rosario church. The British Government contributed Rs.4,000/- towards the building of Rosario Church and Milagres Church in the same place as they formerly stood before 1784. The new Milagres

Church was built in the year 1811 and the Rosario Church in the year 1813. The Rosario Church was raised to the rank of a Cathedral on 16th April 1850.

Rev. Fr. Urban Stein S.J. a German (1845-1888) was the first Parish priest of the Cathedral. He introduced the order of Ursuline Franciscan Congregation in the Cathedral in the year 1888. Mother Nymppa Paullina Fernandez daughter of John Francis Fernandez, deputy Collector, South Kanara was the first superior. During this time it was decided that those who would contribute Rs.200/- to Rs.500/- and superintend the work of the Cathedral for one year should be granted the honour of Principals or Founders.

On 12th May 1845 the Holy See appointed Bishop Bernardino of St. Agnes O.C.D. a Carmelite, Pro-Vicar Apostolic of Mangalore. He died at Rome on 13th March 1853. On 15th March 1853 the Vicariate of Mangalore was separated from Verapoly and on the same day Fr. Michel Anthony of St. Louis O.C.D Vicar General of Bombay was appointed Vicar Apostolic of Mangalore. Bishop Michel hailed from San Ramos, Italy. He was consecrated Bishop of Bombay on 15th May 1853. Bishop Michel invited the Christian brothers (known also as De-la-Salle Brothers) who opened St. Mary's English School on the Cathedral grounds in 1853. The sisters opened a school for girls on St. Ann's grounds in March 1859 at the behest of the Bishop. In addition the sister's managed a large orphanage. After some time their community shifted to Cannanore in the year 1868 at the invitation of Fr. Martello. Bishop Michel then founded a congregation of active Carmelite Sisters in the year 1867. These sisters commenced their work at St. Ann's school from the time the sisters of St. Joseph left Mangalore. From then onwards these educational institutions have

been rendering yeoman service to all the communities, irrespective of caste or creed. The St. Mary's school started by the De-la-Salle brothers is known as Rosario High School under the management of Catholic Board of Education, Bishop's House, Mangalore, which is a Registered Body.

The Carmelites too have played a great role in the history of Rosario Church. In the year 1870 the Holy See, asked Bishop Michel Anthony to resign his office, which he did with admirable humility. The Holy See appointed Bishop Mary Ephraim O.C.D. Vicar Apostolic of Mangalore on 3rd January 1870. Bishop Mary Ephraim arrived in Mangalore on 5th November 1870. Bishop Marie Ephraim was Lucian Garrelon in the world, prior to God's call. He was born in France in the year 1827. When he was 14 he decided to become a priest. He was ordained priest at the age of 23. He was received at Mangalore Port by a large number of Catholics and brought by procession to Rosario Cathedral where a Pontifical High Mass was celebrated and the "Te Deum" was sung. At the Cathedral Bishop Michel Anthony who left Mangalore for good in the year 1871 for Quilon, where he died on 18th December 1878, received him. Bishop Mary Ephraim had a short period as Vicar Apostolic of Mangalore as he died on Maundy Thursday i.e. the 10th April 1873. His mortal remains were buried in the Cathedral.

Later on Most rev. Nicholas Maria Pagani S.J. was consecrated Bishop of Mangalore on 25th October 1885. He had a brief incumbency and died in Mangalore on 30th April 1895 and is buried in the Cathedral.

On 2nd December 1895 Mgr. Abundius Cavadini S.J. succeeded to the

Holy See of Mangalore. He was consecrated on 28th June 1896 at Bergamo, in Italy. He died on 26th March 1910 and on 17th August the same year Mgr. Paul Perini S.J. was appointed his successor. He was the last Jesuit Bishop of Mangalore. (The diocese of Mangalore was transferred to the secular Clergy on 12th June 1923.)

### **New Church Building:**

In the year 1910 Rev. Fr. H.I. Busoni S.J. the then Parish Priest demolished the old structure and commenced the work on the large and beautiful church worthy of dignity of a Cathedral. Br. Divo S.J. (St. Xavier's) Bombay Mission was the master architect. Bishop Perini was consecrated here on 4th December 1910 when the sanctuary alone had been completed. This dome is a crowning work of architectural magnificence in the diocese. Fr. Busoni erected a belfry and installed 4 sonorous bells from Italy. Bishop Perini S.J. then Administrative Apostolic of the Diocese consecrated the main altar of the Cathedral on 3rd April 1924. He died in Bangalore on 28th June 1932 and interned at Calicut Cathedral on 30th June 1932.

### **First Mangalorean Bishop:**

On 28th February Fr. Valerian J. D'Souza was appointed as first Mangalorean Bishop of Mangalore. In 1930 when in Rome for his "Ad limina" visit he paid a visit to Ireland, where he died on 14th August 1930. On 16th May 1931 Fr. Victor Rosario Fernandez was appointed and consecrated Bishop of Mangalore. He administered the Diocese as Bishop for 25 years. He was a man of prayer, strength of character and

missionary zeal. He died on 4th January 1955. Bishop Basil Perris who died on 27th April 1958 succeeded him. He served a brief period as Bishop of Mangalore. Then Fr. Raymond D'Mello of Allahabad Diocese was appointed Bishop of Mangalore on 5th February 1959.

Subsequently on 20th April 1964 he was transferred as Bishop of Allahabad. On 22nd March 1965 Fr. Basil D'Souza was appointed Bishop of Mangalore. This period has seen the blossoming of many humanitarian institutions, Educational institutions, and welfare schemes for the poor and downtrodden in Diocese. Today this church is an official church of the Bishop of South Kanara and called as Cathedral Chair (Bishops Seat).

From the year 1866 territories belonging to the Cathedral have been bifurcated for administrative convenience. Last of all on 1st June 1935 the new Parish of St. Rita of Cascia was formed. The names of the Parish Priests who have served as guardians of the Faith in the Cathedral are recorded in the church chronicles.

All the Parish Priests who were also Correspondents of the Rosario High School have given their whole-hearted support and encouragement to the school. They along with the Headmasters of the School have been responsible for the spirit of dedicated service to the Catholic community.

### **Other Services of the Cathedral:**

#### **Rosario High School:**

By the blessing of Lord Jesus and Mother of the Most Holy Rosary this more than 100 years old Rosario School has always had dedicated

teachers and Headmasters. It is truly Alma Mater of the school "Men's Sane In Corpora Sano" means a sound mind in a healthy body befits this institution. As we look at the schools academic achievements we can find that the highest percentage secured in S.S.L.C Public examination was 97% in 1963 and this lofty standard has been kept up by the school ever since. The school has recently upgraded to Junior college level (Plus two). This school is especially for boys only, but due to amalgamation of other nearby schools it has absorbed girls from those schools and will be retained until that batch completes education in that school. There are more than 1400 students in the school up to High school standard. The school provides all opportunities for the all round development of its students by introducing various extra curricular activities such as music centre, gymnastic, NCC and also full fledged computer education section.

### **St. Vincent Paul Society:**

This 75 year old an international standard service organization specially meant for taking care and upliftment of poor of community and the society. Dedicated social workers of this society visits many poor and distressed people and help them in all aspect so that the distressed people find solace in their difficulties.

### **Miscellaneous:**

ICYM a Catholic youth organization is also founded in order to bring up the leadership and service qualities of the catholic youths.

In 1999 a Rosario Cultural Hall was built for facilitating cultural activities of the community and society.