THE DIOCESAN SEMINARY OF BOMBAY

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DIOCESAN SEMINARY AND RELIGIOUS
HOUSES OF FORMATION

THE DIOCESAN SEMINARY OF BOMBAY

Up to 1720, Bombay, Salsette, Bassein, and the whole coast
upto Damaun, belonged ecclesiastically to the Archdiocese
of Goa, and the priests working in these parts were normally
trained in Goa or came through Goa. The “seminaries” that are
supposed to have existed in Bassein, Thana, Bandra, Karanja and
Mount Poinsur before that date, were no seminaries in the modern
sense of the word.

In 1720, however, a far-reaching change took place. The
British, who since 1665 had been in possession of Bombay Island
expelled the Franciscan Fathers (the original missionaries on the
Island) and thus prevented the Archbishop of Goa from exercising
his jurisdiction here. In the place of the Franciscans, the British,
with the permission of the Holy See, invited the Carmelites to
take charge of the Churches on Bombay Island. Then, some seventy
years later, Double Jurisdiction was introduced in Bombay: the
area and party under Padroado in Bombay and its vicinity continued
to be supplied with priests from Goa, while the Churches under
Propaganda began to concern itself with the formation of its own
indigenous clergy.

We do not know exactly when the Seminary in Bombay was
first started; nevertheless, it was twice closed down; it twice revolted
against Church authorities; and in the two centuries of its fitful existence, it has been located in at least twelve different places!

During the first decades of their work in Bombay, the Carmelites Vicars Apostolic did not find it necessary or possible to train priests locally. The priests they had at hand were quite loyal, and besides, the British Government was none too encouraging. But from 1760-1770 there were intrigues and disloyalties among these priests, and the British, aware of these currents and anxious to prevent the re-introduction of "Goan rule", began to favour the Vicars Apostolic openly. This new encouragement, coupled with the pressing need for loyal priests, must have spurred the Vicars Apostolic to train their own clergy. The first recorded ordination to the priesthood under the Vicars Apostolic of Bombay took place in 1777; but no indication is given as to where and how these priests were trained. The three priests ordained in 1777, and the few students sent to Propaganda College in Rome, were the results of these early efforts.

The First Seminary

The year 1777 may be fixed as the year when Bombay had its first experiment at running an organized seminary. The candidates were lodged in a rented house near the old "Fort Chapel" and were directed by one Fr. Antonio Pinto da Gloria, who had been sent by Propaganda, after completing his studies in Rome.

The reversion of Bombay to the jurisdiction of Goa in 1789 and the expulsion of the Carmelites from Bombay, put an end to this first experiment. The total number of priests ordained so far was only eight.

A New Start

In 1794 the British Government divided the Churches on Bombay Island into the two jurisdictions of Padroado and Propaganda. After this division, most native priests, including Fr. Pinto, went over to Padroado, and the new Vicar Apostolic, Fr. Pedro d'Alcantara, found himself in a sorry plight. With characteristic energy, however, he set out to recruit and train his own clergy. This time the seminary was lodged in his own residence but it functioned more as a sort of day-school, for the students came
for their classes from home. Fr Pedro ordained one more priest in 1804, 5 in 1807, and 18 altogether by 1825. This success was largely due to his secretary, Fr. Raphael Cicela, of the Congregation of the Mission. This arrangement lasted for the whole first quarter of the 17th century.

A Proper Seminary

During the last decades of the 18th century and the first of the 19th century, the British spread their rule first to Salsette and Bassein, and later to the Konkan, the Deccan, Khandesh and Gujarat. Realising the immense possibilities that this opened for real missionary work, and seeing how few missionaries could be then expected from abroad, Fr Pedro thought of establishing a proper seminary for the training of missionaries in Bombay.

In or about 1826, he found it possible to start a sort of boarding establishment by placing all the students of his seminary in the house of a priest, one Fr. Agostinho do Rosario e Lourenco, from Goa. But the students still had to come to the Bishop’s House daily for their lectures, and their chief master was now Fr. Fortini later to become the Vicar Apostolic himself.

This arrangement, however, was still thought of as provisional, for Fr Pedro aimed all along at combining the boarding with the teaching work. With the help of Propaganda, he was able to raise, or recondition, a house somewhere at the back of the Fort Chapel (in the vicinity of the present Examiner Press). To that house the seminary was shifted in 1836, and placed under the direction of Fr. Agostinho. But only for a very brief spell. For in 1838, the Papal Brief, “Multa praecclare” threw the Goan world into a turmoil. The following year, Fr. Agostinho instigated some seminarians to send a memorandum to the Holy See, and later fled with them to Goa. The seminary, however, somehow went on and for some time continued in the Fort.

Dadar

Fr Pedro died in 1840 and his successor, Bishop Fortini, resided at Our Lady of Salvation Church in Dadar and not at the Fort Chapel. It is not easy to trace the whereabouts of the seminary during the decade 1840-1850. In spite of what Hull, Willy, and the
so-called “Green Catalogue” say to the contrary, it is quite probable that, as early as 1841, the seminary was transferred to the grounds of Salvacao Church in Dadar. Possibly all the Carmelite Fathers there and Bishop Fortini himself took turns or lent a helping hand in keeping the seminary going. When Bishop Hartmann arrived in Bombay in early 1850 the seminary was certainly at Dadar, though in a precarious condition. Between the end of Fortini’s regime and the coming of Bishop Hartmann, ruled Bishop Whelan—only for a year. Upon his recall to Rome, the seminary fell into the hands of the rebel priest, Fr. Braz Fernandes, whose sympathies lay with Padroado.

**Parel**

In 1850 itself, Hartmann’s very first year, Fr. Braz Fernandes openly revolted against the Bishop. Instead of closing down the seminary, Hartmann shifted it, early in 1851, to the “Bishop’s Villa” at Parel and appointed a Spanish Carmelite as its Rector. He hoped thereby to protect the students from the unwholesome upheaval of events in the Padroado-Propaganda conflict that wracked the island.

**Surat**

But it was too late. In October 1852, six senior students of the seminary sent him an impertinent memorandum demanding the removal of the two Carmelite professors and the re-instatement of Fr. Agostinho who had revolted 13 years earlier. Bishop Hartmann, in his characteristic no-nonsense style, immediately dismissed all the six students, and in that very year transferred the rest of the students to Surat, 160 miles north of Bombay. At Surat the staff and students must have been lodged in the little Carmelite Convent, just a stone’s throw from the modern park on the banks of the river Tapti.

**Bandra**

With the Bombay Vicariate slowly moving from the hands of the Carmelites and the Capuchins into those of the Jesuits, who had begun to arrive in Bombay, the seminary returned from Surat in February 1855 and was housed in the original St. Peter’s building at Bandra, which had been inaugurated two years earlier. The new
institutions was called "Seminary of the Sacred Heart". Its first Rector was Fr. Anthony Pereira a Goan who had joined the Society in Rome and had already distinguished himself as novice master elsewhere. The next Rector was the brilliant and resourceful Fr. Leo Meurin, later Bishop Meurin. Under these Rectors and the few other Jesuits that helped them, the seminary at Bandra became quite proficient, and is said to have had as many as 24 students.

Cavel-Mazagaon-Dhobitalao

Two years after he had taken charge of the seminary at Bandra, Fr. Meurin was called upon, in October 1862, to develop St. Xavier's which in the meantime had started at Cavel. The future of the seminary was again in the balance. Not only was Bandra still a place too far removed from Bombay (prior to the opening of the Western Railway) but with the growing needs of the Bombay Mission, it was not easy to secure an adequate and permanent staff. So the senior students of the seminary followed Fr. Meurin to Cavel in June 1863. The rest of the seminarians remained at St. Peter’s Bandra which was then used as a preparatory seminary.

This step was premature, for St. Xavier’s was not yet sufficiently developed just then, either to house or, in the absence of Fr. Meurin who was soon taken away for other work, to direct the seminary. Three years later, in June 1866, the six senior students moved to St. Mary’s at Mazagaon. The old stone building, which still stands today, housed the seminarians from 1867, and was called "The Seminary."

Early in 1869 St. Mary’s was recognized as a College in Arts by the Bombay University but under the name of “St. Xavier’s College of Bombay.” When in January 1870, the major portion of the St. Xavier’s building at Dhobitalao was ready, and the “College Department” and the Matriculation Class of St. Mary’s transferred there, the seminary at Mazagaon also moved to Dhobitalao.

For the next thirty years the Episcopal Seminary of Bombay was part and parcel of St. Xavier’s — from 1870 to 1891 in what is now St. Xavier’s High School, and from 1891 to 1900 in the front building of what is now St. Xavier’s College, facing the Azad Maidan. Owing to the small number of students and the shortage of professors, from 1884 on, candidates to the major seminary
were admitted only every 5 or (later) 6 years: a batch of students were taken up at a time, trained through till they were ordained, and then a fresh batch admitted and trained in the same manner. If candidates applied in the meantime, they studied in the School or College, or were placed as teachers at St. Mary’s or St. Stanislaus’.

The total number of secular priests ordained before the Jesuits took over, that is, between 1777 and 1855, was 43. This total, however, does not include Bishop Whelan’s ordinations, whose records are lost, nor Bishop Mata’s which were illegal, nor other ordinations of priests from other dioceses. The total number of priests partially or totally trained by the Bombay Jesuits from 1855 to 1900 was 38 secular priests and 19 Jesuit priests.

The disadvantages of combining the Seminary and the College were obvious from the very start. The professors, with their hands full with College work, could only give them classes in the morning or late in the evening; in the time between, each major seminarian was required to do two hours teaching in the lower schools. As late as 1896 the authorities in Bombay still vacillated between the idea of a Seminary in common with other dioceses and that of a Seminary of their own somewhere in Bombay. Then Rome took the decision for them. In 1899 the famous Kandy Seminary was completed and the Holy See, knowing the difficulties of Bombay, decided that the Bombay Seminary be closed and its students sent to Kandy. And so from 1900 Bombay seminarians went to study in Kandy, Sri Lanka.

Parel

In 1928 the wound of the Double Jurisdiction was healed. By an agreement between the Holy See and Portugal that year, the diocese of Damaum and the Archdiocese of Bombay were integrated into one strong and compact ecclesiastical unit. Once again the thought of a modern Seminary to serve the present needs and future development of this new ecclesiastical unit began to surface in everybody’s minds. When Archbishop Joaquim Lima SJ came to Bombay, as its first Archbishop after the integration, there was no dearth of well-informed people to brief him on the long-standing need for a Seminary in Bombay. It took him a full
eight years (the entire duration of his administration) to make this dream a reality. During those years, first St. Stanislaus Bandra, then Kushroo Lodge (opposite St. Mary’s High School across Nesbit Road) Mazagaon, and then a site somewhere midway between Malad and Kandivli to the east of the railway lines, were considered as possible locations for the Seminary. Finally, the grounds at Parel, originally known as “The Bishop’s Villa”, and once before the location of the Seminary in its many peregrinations, became the chosen spot. These grounds had been given to the Jesus and Mary Nuns in 1865, and on them they had built a Chapel, their Residence, and a Boarding School for girls. After prolonged negotiations, the Nuns agreed to vacate the premises. On June 13, 1936, the feast of St. Anthony, the Seminary at Parel was opened under the joint patronage of St. Anthony and St. Francis Xavier. The running of the Seminary was once again entrusted to the Society of Jesus.

Bandra

Soon after, in 1941, the Chapel attached to the Seminary was raised to the status of a parish church (of St. Paul) and a parish school was also started on the same grounds to cater to the growing Catholic population in the neighbourhood. Parish, School and Seminary developed at such a rate in the following years that it again became imperative to move the Seminary elsewhere. For after much discussion, the Theology Course had been started in the Seminary from June, 1943.

A plot of ground was bought near Andheri Station and plans were drawn up which Auxiliary Bishop Valerian Gracias himself explained in “The Examiner” of October 25, 1947. But for various reasons these plans had to be abandoned. In the meantime, the Seminary continued to grow and Parel continued to grow more congested. Then in 1953, from an unexpected quarter, temporary relief was generously offered. Through the beneficence of Msgr. Eddie Fernandes, then Rector of Mt. Mary’s Shrine at Bandra, the “Pilgrim’s House”, which had very recently come up, was offered to the Seminary. Thus it was that in June 1953, only the Theologate of the Seminary moved from Parel to Bandra. The students of Humanities and Philosophy continued to reside at Parel.
Goregaon

The search for a plot, "outside the city that would be suitable for the Seminary" continued. This effort was finally rewarded when a site on a hill was obtained in Goregaon East, a little over 30 kilometres north of Bombay by the west side of the sprawling Aarey Milk Colony. Building operations began in August 1957, and by June 1960, both the Parel and the Bandra wings of the Seminary were able to move into the present E-shaped building. On July 2 His Eminence the Cardinal celebrated Mass in the new building and inaugurated the Academic Year. The official blessing and inauguration, however, of the Goregaon Seminary, now placed under the patronage of "St. Pius X", were conducted by His Eminence Cardinal Agagianian, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith, on October 5 the same year, in the presence of three other Cardinals, several bishops, hundreds of priests and nuns, and thousands of enthusiastic Catholics from all over the archdiocese.

THE PAST CONTRIBUTION THE SEMINARY (1936-1981)

During the 45 years of its existence, in this century, that is, from 1936 to 1981, the Bombay Seminary has contributed to the formation of bishops and priests who today work not only in the Archdiocese of Bombay, but also in several other dioceses of India and abroad.
Bishops: The following Bishops have done all their studies for the Priesthood in the Bombay Seminary: Archbishop Simon Pimenta (Bombay), Auxiliary Bishop Ferdinand Fonseca (Bombay), Bishop Ignatius Lobo (Belgaum), Bishop Gilbert Rego (Simla-Chandigarh), and Bishop Dominic Abreo (Aurangabad).

Bombay Priests: Of the present total of 327 Secular Priests who are incardinated in the Archdiocese of Bombay, 228 (nearly 70%) did all their studies in the Bombay Seminary! A more detailed break-down of the seminary-background of the Secular Priests of Bombay is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secular Priests who did all their studies in Seminaries other than in the Bombay Seminary</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secular Priests who did part of their studies in the Bombay Seminary</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secular Priests who did all their studies in the Bombay Seminary</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>327</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of those who studied partly or fully in the Bombay Seminary, after Ordination: 12 Priests have opted to be incardinated and to work in other dioceses in India and outside India; 4 Priests have joined Religious Institutes; 9 Priests have died; 14 Priests have resigned from the Priesthood.

Priests for other Dioceses/Religious Institutes: Besides providing sacerdotal formation to young men for Bombay, the Seminary has also formed students from (a) the dioceses of Ahmedabad, Aurangabad, Baroda, Belgum, Delhi, Dibrugarh, Ernakulam, Indore, Kandy, Karwar, Pune, Rajkot, Simla-Chandigarh, and Verapoly; (b) the Religious Institutes of the Blessed Sacrament Fathers, the Fransalians, the Jesuits, the Norbertines, and the Missionaries of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

Till 1981 the number of clerics from other Dioceses/Religious Institutes who have completed their priestly formation in this Seminary is 65: Norbertines (18), Indore (13), Pune (8), Baroda (4), Belgum (4), Simla-Chandigarh (3), Ahmednagar (2), Ajmer (2), Aurangabad (2), Kandy (2), Verapoly (2), Delhi (1), Ernakulam (1), Goa (1), the Blessed Sacrament Fathers (1), and the Fransalians (1).
### Vocations and the Drop-out Rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Total (aver. no. per yr.)</th>
<th>Total (aver. no. per yr.)</th>
<th>Drop-out Rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1936-40</td>
<td>39 (17.8)</td>
<td>33 (6.6)</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941-45</td>
<td>45 (9.0)</td>
<td>27 (5.4)</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946-50</td>
<td>45 (9.0)</td>
<td>35 (7.0)</td>
<td>22.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951-55</td>
<td>70 (14.0)</td>
<td>48 (9.6)</td>
<td>31.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956-60</td>
<td>85 (17.0)</td>
<td>63 (12.6)</td>
<td>25.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961-65</td>
<td>147 (29.4)</td>
<td>57 (11.4)</td>
<td>61.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966-70</td>
<td>73 (14.6)</td>
<td>33 (6.6)</td>
<td>54.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971-75</td>
<td>41 (8.2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976-80</td>
<td>50 (10.0)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
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**GRAPH SHOWING NUMBER OF VOCATIONS TO AND SECULAR PRIESTS ORDAINED FROM THE BOMBAY SEMINARY: 1936 TO 1981**

**INDEX:**
- Vocations
- Ordained
THE PRESENT SET-UP OF THE SEMINARY

St. Pius College, Goregaon East, Bombay-400 063. Tel.: 69 12 17

St. Pius College is the Seminary of the Archdiocese of Bombay entrusted with the task of forming priests for the Archdiocese. Though a Diocesan Seminary, it has, however, from the 1940s, opened its doors to clerics of other Dioceses and Religious Institutes, so that today out of a total of 136 students, 57 belong to 9 Dioceses other than Bombay and to 3 Religious Institutes of Men.

The building houses both the Major and the Minor Seminaries. The latter is composed of young men doing their College studies. As a rule, only Graduates are admitted into the Major Seminary; exceptions, however, are made in the case of those who are "late" vocations. It is not necessary that a candidate first enters the Minor Seminary; he may seek admission directly into the Major Seminary after graduation.

Upon admission into the Major Seminary, the candidate does a year of "Orientation", which consists of programmes for his personal and spiritual growth. Then follows a five-year Integrated Curriculum of Philosophy and Theology Courses, interrupted after the second year by a year of "Regency" which the cleric spends assisting either in a parish or in a Church-related institution.

Staff

Students

Diocese/Institute | Major Seminarians | Minor Seminarians | Total Seminarians
--- | --- | --- | ---
Bombay | 57 | 2 | 59
Aurangabad | 2 | 2 | 4
Baroda | 2 | 2 | 4
Belgaum | 6 | | 6
Delhi | 3 | | 3
Karwar | 4 | | 4
Mangalore | | | 4
Pune | 12 | 1 | 13
Simla-Chandigarh | 15 | | 15
Verapoly | 3 | | 3
Blessed Sacrament Fathers | 2 | | 2
Missionaries of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary | | | 3
Society of Jesus | 1 | | 1

Total | 109 | 27 | 136

Vianney Ashram, Vasai

The most recent development in the Archdiocese in the matter of formation, and an extension as it were of St. Pius College, has been the opening of a Minor Seminary in Vasai, an area of the Archdiocese which in the last two decades has been the source of the largest number of vocations to the priesthood. Situated in the compound of Our Lady of Remedy Church, Remedy, and catering to young men from Vasai, Dharavi, and the mission areas to the north of Vasai, this Seminary was inaugurated by Auxiliary Bishop Ferdinand Fonseca on August 4, 1981. Under the supervision of Fr. Barthol Machado and Fr. Michael D’Souza, the Seminary admits boys who have passed High School, with a view to helping them complete their Junior College Education (upto Std. XII), before entering St. Pius College, Goregaon.
REligious Houses of formation in the archdiocese

Religious Institutes of Men

1. Blessed Sacrament Fathers, St. Francis Xavier Chapel, 130 N. Parekh Marg, Bombay-400 005. Tel.: 22 21 33  
Juniors: 3; Novices: 5; Postulants: 2

2. Society of Jesus, Vinayalaya, Mahakali Caves Road, P.O. Chakala MIDC, Bombay-400 093. Tel.: 57 21 62  
Juniors: 12

3. Society of St. Paul, 58/23rd Road, T.P.S. III, Bandra, Bombay-400 050. Tel.: 53 33 12  
Juniors: 14; Postulants: 18

Religious Institutes of Women

1. Canossian Daughters of Charity, Nirmalashram, Mahakali Caves Road, P.O. Chakala, MIDC, Bombay-400 093. Tel.: 57 48 45  
Novices: 14; Postulants: 11

2. Carmelite Missionary Sisters, Prithi Kunj, 271 Carter Road, Bandra, Bombay-400 050. Tel.: 54 48 33  
Novices: 4; Postulants: 7

3. Carmelite Sisters of Charity (Vedruna), Dil Pazir, Society Road, Irla, Bombay-400 055. Tel.: 56 23 22  
Novices: 9; Postulants: 7

4. Daughters of St. Paul, 143 Waterfield Road, Bandra, Bombay-400 050. Tel.: 53 25 47  
Novices: 0; Postulants: 10

5. Daughters of the Cross, St. Joseph’s Convent, 64A Hill Road, Bandra, Bombay-400 050. Tel.: 53 30 99  
Novices: 10; Postulants: 1

6. Daughters of the Heart of Mary, Nirmala Niketan, 38 New Marine Lines, Bombay-400 020. Tel.: 29 26 15  
Novices: 12; Postulants: 9
7. Discalced Nuns of the Order of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel, Carmel Monastery, Mahakali Caves Road, P.O. Chakala MIDC, Bombay-400 093. Tel.: 57 53 03
Novices: 3

8. Franciscan Hospitaller Sisters, St. Joseph Training Institute, Pahadi Estate, Goregaon East, Bombay-400 063.
Novices: 6; Postulants: 10

9. Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Dilkush Convent, Church Road, Juhu, Bombay-400 049. Tel. 57 85 61
Novices: 3; Postulants: 4

10. Missionary Society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Monteville, 115 St. Leo Road, Bandra, Bombay-400 050. Tel.: 54 83 06
Novices: 5

11. Poor Sisters of Our Lady, Holy Family Convent, Sir. M. Vasanji Road, P.O. Chakala MIDC, Bombay-400 093. Tel.: 57 25 03
Novices: 3; Postulants: 2

12. School Missionaries of the Union of St. Catharine of Sienna Society of St. Catharine, Juhu Road North, Bombay-400 049.
Novice: 1; Postulants: 3

13. Sisters of Charity of St. Ann, St. Anne Convent, Lokmanya Tilak Road, Borivli, Bombay-400 092. Tel.: 66 23 85
Novices: 40; Postulants: 11

14. Society of the Helpers of Mary, Shradha Vihar, Veera Desai Road, Andheri, Bombay 400 058. Tel.: 57 75 46
Novices: 12; Postulants: 12