

property. In 1889 Mr. D'Aguiar was told by Rome that since the Chapel was his private property he was free to close it down or sell it, but it would be better to place it under the Bishop of Damaun as it might be useful to the faithful of Kalyan. Mr. D'Aguiar died on May 30, 1901 and he as also his sister were buried in St. Andrew's Church, Bandra.

On August 28, 1907 the plot of land on which stood the D'Aguiar Chapel and on which stands the present church, was purchased by His Grace Dom Sebastian Pereira, Archbishop-Bishop of Damaun. At that time, the Katemanavli Chapel was the only Catholic place of worship in Kalyan and was commonly known as "The Kalyan Church."

In 1918 after the first World War, there were about 300 Catholics living in the GIP (Great Indian Peninsular) Railway quarters at Kalyan. These attended religious services at the Katemanavli Chapel which was ministered to by Msgr. L.C. Pera of Gloria Church, Byculla. In one of his communications to the Chief Engineer of the GIP Railway, Msgr. Pera noted:



"there is but one very small Catholic chapel at Kalyan in which the Catholic Railway Employees worship. The plot on which the small chapel stands is rather far (30 to 40 minutes) from the Railway blocks and specially during the monsoon it is somewhat trying for ladies and children to attend the services there. It is situated to the East of the Railway Yard whereas the blocks are to the West, and as there is no direct road, people have to walk along and across the rails. On account of these inconveniences and as the chapel will in a short time prove to be far too small for the fast-growing Catholic Railway Colony at Kalyan, the building of a larger chapel in a more convenient locality is under consideration."

From 1918 to 1929 (the year in which the church on the west side was built) the Chapel at Katemanavli continued to function as the place of Catholic worship in Kalyan. From 1932 onwards, however, when the parish on the west was created and had a resident priest, the Katemanavli Chapel sank in significance and was closed for public worship.

Appeals from the local Catholics of Katemanavli that the Chapel be re-opened began from the early 1950s, as the number of families there had increased to almost a hundred. As a result Mass was celebrated in the Chapel between 1955-1956 and 1965-1968 by Assistant Priests of the westside Kalyan Church. Then in 1968 Fr. Ross Fernandes was appointed to work towards the separation of Katemanavli from the Kalyan parish. He became the first Parish Priest of OL of Lourdes, Katemanavli, when it was erected as an independent parish on June 2, 1969. The primary school at Katemanavli which had been closed by the Vicar of Kalyan in November 1966 was re-opened by Fr. Ross in June 1969.

Fr. Ross was succeeded by Fr. Francis D'Sa in 1976 and by Fr. Zachary Fernandes, the present Vicar, in 1977. Fr. Zachary extended the old Chapel on three sides and the renovated church was blessed by Auxiliary Bishop Longinus Pereira on February 11, 1978.

On January 23, 1978 while the workers were removing the marble flooring of the Chapel they struck a seven-foot deep hole, neatly cemented on four sides and measuring 8' x 4', with the following words in bold relief along the three sides and a small cement cross: "Mater Dei memento me In te + Domine speravi filli Dei miserere mei" (Mother of God remember me; I have hoped in you, O Lord, Son of God have mercy on me). At the bottom of the hole there were what seemed to be some cement bags and a tin container. Nobody dared go down and examine the items. A worker touched the open container with a stick and it seemed to be filled with hard stones or bones. The hole was believed to be a tomb and the sacks to contain the relics of a deceased person or salt or other preservatives. The hole was filled up and the new flooring of the present church covers it.

OUR LADY OF LOURDES, Kalyan (1932)

Till the early 1920s the only place of worship for the Catholics (mostly Railway workers) of Kalyan was "the Kalyan Church" situated on the east side of the Railway lines at Katemanavli (cf. the Note on OL of Lourdes Church, Katemanavli). Because of the ever-growing population on the west side of the Railway lines, the Katemanavli Chapel was not only felt to be too small, but also very much out of the way and of difficult and dangerous access on account of the many railway tracks that had to be crossed in order to get to the Chapel. Thus as Msgr. L. C. Pera's letter indicated (cf. Note on OL of Lourdes Church, Katemanavli) already in the 1920s thought was being given to the building of a new church at a more convenient site on the west side of the Railway lines.

Near the Kalyan Mamlatdar's Office along the Kalyan-Murbad road lay a square piece of land on which stood a cross. This plot had been in the possession of the Catholic community of Kalyan as far back as anyone could remember. Tradition had it that it was once used as a burial ground for the Catholics of Kalyan. But somehow it came to be entered in the City Survey records as Government land. This the Church Authorities learnt in 1922. Appeals from the Bishop of Damaun that the land be transferred back to the Catholic community of Kalyan began from January 1925 and this was achieved on March 5, 1926 at the time when Fr. Orphino de Sa was Vicar of St. John the Baptist Church, Thane. On April 1, 1927 Fr. de Sa was appointed Chaplain of the Katemanavli Chapel with the instruction that he was to work towards the construction of a new church on the westside plot along the Murbad road.

In 1927 itself the foundations of the church were laid and by April 1929 the major work on the church was accomplished. During all this time, Fr. de Sa supervised operations while he continued to be Vicar of Thane, from where he used to visit Kalyan.

In 1930 the GIP Railway closed down Lonavla as a station of residence for the Railway Staff (Guards and Drivers), and the Staff was moved to Kalyan. As a result the number of Catholics in Kalyan greatly increased. Fr. De Sa celebrated Mass in the westside Church on Sundays and on other important days, but this arrangement was increasingly felt to be inadequate to meet the everyday

spiritual and other needs of the Kalyan Catholics. A resident priest became urgently necessary. Thus, when the parochial house was completed in January 1932, the parish of Kalyan, dedicated to OL of Lourdes (its name being taken from the old Chapel on the eastside which was absorbed in the new parish) was erected on January 31, 1932 with Fr. Francis Xavier Loriandro Fernandes as its first Parish Priest. The parish was created by separating the four talukas of Kalyan, Bhiwandi, Murbad and Shahapur from the parish of St. John the Baptist, Thane.

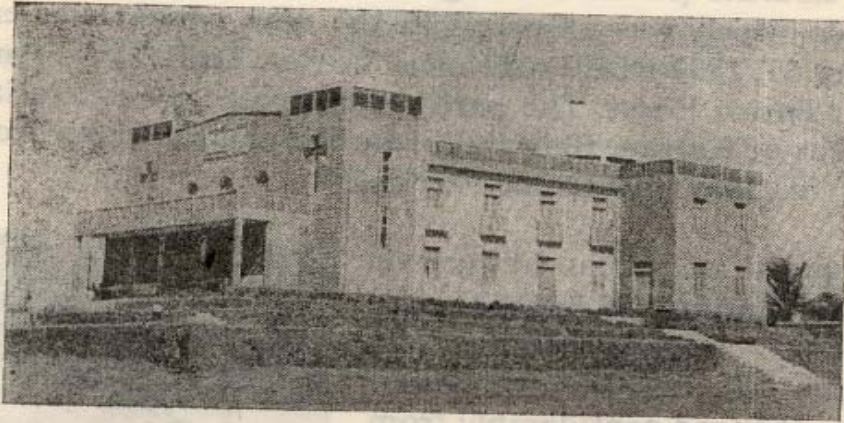
The parish of Kalyan has grown enormously during the last 50 years (about 6,000 today); further, the complexion of the Catholic population has changed considerably from the old Railway population. From the extensive parish territory have been carved out in recent years the parish of Katemanavli (1969) and the parish unit of Infant Jesus at Dombivli (1974). Today other units in the parish include Mohone (4 miles away from the parish church), Tata Camp (2 miles away), Kalyan Camp (3 miles away), Bhiwandi (two and a half miles away) and the Birla Rayon Factory (two and a half miles away).



OUR LADY OF FATIMA, Ambernath (1951)

Lying at a distance of 60 kilometers from Bombay and once falling within the vast parish of Kalyan, Ambernath used to be served in the years before the middle of this century by priests coming from other parts of the Archdiocese: from Gloria Church, Byculla, or from the Thane Church, or from the Karjat Mission, or from Kalyan. The first Priest-in-charge appointed for Ambernath resided at Kalyan church as there was no residence at Ambernath itself. Separated from Kalyan, the parish of Ambernath dedicated to OL of Fatima was entrusted to the Fathers of the Society of St. Francis Xavier, Pilar in May 1951. Fr. Joseph Albuquerque SFX was its first Parish Priest. They rented a house and began to reside in the parish. At first, Mass was celebrated in the rented

house on weekdays and in the school on Sundays. In 1954 the school building was inaugurated and blessed by His Eminence



Valerian Cardinal Gracias. A part of this building was enclosed and used as a chapel. Today the parish has a church of its own.

INFANT JESUS, Thakurli (Parish Unit since 1974)

This is a parish-in-the-making. Thakurli-Dombivli was a small village in the midst of forest land. The Power House built in 1954 at Thakurli started the development process. A few Catholic families attended Mass at Kalyan from Thakurli. In the 1960s the Catholic Association was started to organize the Catholics of the area. In 1972 Fr. Victoria bought a Protestant church which had been deserted; till then Sunday Mass was said on the premises of the Rotary Club or in the Railway quarters. Fr. Joseph Vincent was appointed the first Priest-in-charge of Thakurli in 1974, and he was succeeded by Fr. John Machado in 1977, and by Fr. Leslie Miranda in 1978. This parish unit was entrusted to the Jesuits and Fr. Claude D'Souza SJ took over from September 15, 1980.

FILIAL CHURCHES

HOLY CROSS, Matheran (1853)

The church at Matheran, a hill resort off Neral Railway Station on the way to Pune, was originally built in 1853 by Catholic workers who were employed in large numbers in building activities and in hotels at Matheran. The church was re-built in 1906 with an attached

House. Till 1947 this church had a resident priest. After that, as the Catholic population had decreased, the church was served by the priests of Gloria Church, Byculla. From 1959 the adjoining for the secular clergy of Bombay. During the summer months, the Poor Sisters of house served as a Holiday Home for the secular clergy of Bombay. During the Summer months, the Poor Sisters of Our Lady ran the Home for the benefit of the clergy, but this arrangement came to an end about a decade later.

The church presently has a resident priest who mainly attends to the spiritual needs of the Sisters and school students of the St. Francis Xavier's High School run by the Carmelites of Trivandrum in Matheran.

OUR LADY OF FATIMA, Karjat (1936)

Karjat was a very important railway centre during the period of the steam engine. But it lost its importance when the Bombay-Pune railway line was electrified. The Catholic population at Karjat decreased when this happened, so that today this centre counts very few Catholics.

Very near the Railway Station of Karjat a plot was acquired from the Railway authorities and on January 12, 1936 the construction of a church was begun, with contributions coming in from the Catholic Railway Staff. The church was one of the first shrines in India to be dedicated to Our Lady of Fatima, and has a statue of OL of Fatima brought from Portugal. Even today, a pilgrimage to Karjat is organized every year in the month of October.

As several villages in the plains near Karjat had colonies of Katkari tribals, it was thought that Karjat could also be an ideal centre for a Mission station. For this purpose a bungalow was built in 1940 by the Jesuits on top of the hill overlooking the Railway Station. A resident priest lived in this bungalow until 1947 when the Mission station had to be closed down because of lack of personnel.

Today the church at Karjat is looked after by the Pilar Fathers of the Church of OL of Fatima at Ambernath.

III PARISHES FOUNDED ON THE MAINLAND TO THE SOUTHEAST OF BOMBAY

OUR LADY OF THE PURIFICATION, Uran (Before 1585)

When the Portuguese got possession of Karanja in about 1534, it was an island lying close to the mainland east of Bombay harbour. Besides the island of Karanja, there were also the three islands of Nevem (Hog Island), Seveon (Butcher's Island) and Elephanta. The Franciscans were the first to settle on Karanja, but it is not possible to determine exactly when they did so. According to Meersman (1971: 235), "it is certain that they were settled there by 1575 and by then had an established community and that by 1585 the work had progressed to such an extent so as to warrant the appointment of a Pai dos Christaos."

During the Portuguese period several churches were built on the island of Karanja. Among these churches may be mentioned:

- (1) Our Lady of the Assumption, built by the Franciscans before 1585, and most probably the forerunner of the present church of Our Lady of the Purification.
 - (2) The Secular church of the Dean established before 1621, and administered by the Secular clergy. This was the principal church of the island.
 - (3) St. Bernardine also built by the Franciscans, around 1623.
 - (4) The Franciscans also put up before 1604 a devotional chapel dedicated to Our Lady of the Rock (NS da Penha) on the top of the hill.
- Besides their conversion work on the island of Karanja the Franciscans also made converts of the inhabitants of Elephanta, Nevem and Seveon islands (cf. Meersman 1971: 236-238).

Karanja was lost to the Marathas around 1739; the

Franciscans were expelled, all the churches seem to have been destroyed, and the Catholic population reduced considerably. Only from now on do we hear of the church of Our Lady of the Purification being in use. From the investigations of Fr. Humbert (I:144) we learn that a Friar from Chaul, further south, was a Vicar of this parish and that in 1761 the parish was handed over to the secular clergy. The present church of OL of the Purification seems to have been re-built in 1852 on the ruins of the old church of OL of the Assumption. (Hull, I:10). There are the ruins of a church at Kot, and those of OL of the Rock on the top of the hill.



OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL, Korlai (Before 1713)

In one of the first years of the governorship of Afonso de Albuquerque (1509-1515), the Portuguese were allowed, as a result of an alliance with Nizam-ul-Mulk, to settle at Chaul, the modern Revdanda, and to set up a trading-post or factory on a grant of land allotted to them. In 1521 this factory was converted into a fort. Chaul lay on the mainland much further south of Karanja.

Within the area of the Fort and outside it several churches came to be built by the Portuguese missionaries in the course of the 16th century:

- (1) St. Barbara (Franciscan) built before 1570 (Humbert, I:6)
- (2) Mother of God church and Friary (Franciscan), built in 1584 (Meersman 1971:447)
- (3) OL of the Sea (Secular), built before 1523 (Humbert, I:2).

- (4) OL of Guadalupe (Dominican), built before 1581 (Humbert, I:6).
- (5) OL of Grace (Augustinian), built around 1585 (Humbert, I:6).
- (6) College of Sts. Peter and Paul (Jesuit), built before 1552 (Humbert I:17).
- (7) St. Sebastian (Secular) (Humbert, I:4).
- (8) St. John (Secular) (Humbert, I:31).

Special mention needs to be made of two chapels which the Franciscans built at the promontory on the other side of the river, opposite Chaul, overlooking the entrance to the harbour: one to minister to the garrison at the top of the Morro (literally, "mountain"), and another to minister to a group of native Christians who lived in a village at the foot of the hill. Meersman informs us (1971:243) that till 1697, "mention is made of a Rector of the Morro, not of a Parish-priest of the Christian community below. Hence it seems reasonable to conclude that the Rector continued to reside on the Morro and that from there he cared for the Christians residing at the bottom of the hill." But by 1713 the arrangement had changed, for in the Report of that year we read: "There is still another parish, at the Morro of Chaul, where a Religious resides who at the same time is the Chaplain of the fort of the said Morro." What was the name of this church at Morro? It is hard to say. Subsequently, it was moved to another place, but by then it had the name of OL of Carmel.

With the Maratha invasion of 1739, Chaul was surrendered to them. It would appear that all but two churches were destroyed by the Marathas: the two exceptions being the Mother of God Friary and OL of Carmel. While most of the Catholics migrated to Goa, a small group of the poorer classes remained in Chaul and Morro. The Franciscans were allowed to remain in Chaul, and they continued to be in charge of the church of the Mother of God and OL of Carmel till 1839 when these two churches passed into the care of the secular clergy (Humbert, II:68). One year later, it appears that the Vicar at Korlai (the old Morro church) was also in charge of the church at Chaul (Humbert, II:68).

Since 1839 the secular clergy have been in charge of the parish of OL of Mt. Carmel at Korlai. They were joined by the Helpers of Mary on December 21, 1973, who opened a Dispensary on November 21, 1976. Under the guidance of the present Vicar, Fr. Frank Britto, the parishioners have contributed material and labour towards the construction of a building which houses the Primary and High Schools. The parish primary School had been there for many years; but the high school (Std. VIII) was opened only on July 16, 1981. The blessing of the new school building by Archbishop Simon Pimenta took place on December 11, 1981.

SACRED HEART, Vashi (Parish Unit since 1978)

At Vashi sprawls the first residential Township that one meets as one crosses the new bridge that spans the Thane Creek from Mankhurd to New Bombay on the mainland. It was to relieve the congestion and the concentration of administrative offices, industries, markets and residential complexes in Bombay City, that CIDCO (City and Industrial Development Corporation of Maharashtra, Ltd.) was entrusted with the enormous task of planning "New Bombay" on the opposite side of the Bombay Harbour.

Built in sectors of about 200 families each, this Housing Estate has gradually developed into a fair Township. Officially, Vashi and the Catholics who resided there belonged to the parish of St. John the Baptist, Thane. Vashi is some 20 kilometres south of St. John the Baptist church, and so it was not very long before the Catholics of Vashi began to ask for Church services in Vashi itself. The first priest to minister to the Catholics of the area was Fr. Osborne Pereira, an Assistant at Rosary Church, Mazagaon, who celebrated the first Mass at Vashi on February 3, 1974 in one of the housing tenements.

In January 1978 a plot of land, admeasuring 1500 sq. meters, was purchased by the Archdiocese for the construction of a church. From 1974 to early 1978 whenever possible Mass was celebrated on the terrace of one of the buildings of the Housing Estate. In February 1978, 350 families asked for a resident priest and thus in June that year, Fr. Francis D'Sa was appointed as Priest-in-charge of the new parish unit at Vashi. He took up his residence in a flat in Sector 6, the ground floor of which was used for Mass,

the Sacristy and Office, while the first floor served as his living quarters.

Plans to open an English medium school in Sector 7 had been initiated with the CIDCO Authorities as early as January 1975, and all arrangements had almost been concluded by June 1978, when the Church Authorities learned with dismay that the future school had been handed over to the Satara Education Society (the Rayat Shileshan Sanstha). Work towards the construction of a church began when the land, after reclamation, was finally handed over to the Church by CIDCO in 1980. Now with the appointment of Fr. Ross Fernandes as the Priest-in-charge, plans for a school have been undertaken once again.

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