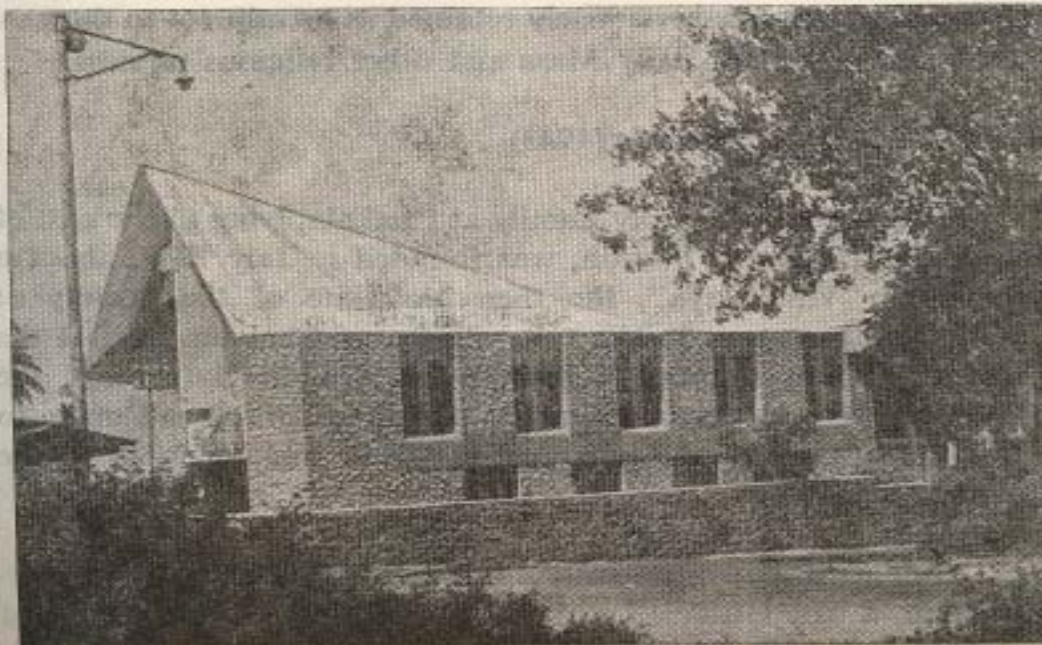


Passing mention must also be made of the chapel of OL of Calvary, commonly called "Calvary chapel", which, though no longer in existence, once fell within the boundaries of the parish. It was built in 1890 on the crest of Pali Hill, facing the east, by Fr. Manoel Anthony Fonseca and his brother Peter, for the convenience of the Catholics of the neighbouring villages.

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL, Khar (1943)

Beyond the villages of Kantwadi, Malla, Rajan and Sherly—northern coastal villages of the once extensive parish of St. Andrew, Bandra—lay the village of Chuim which also formed part of that parish for more than three hundred years. The same decree dated January 3, 1943 issued by Archbishop Roberts SJ, which created the parish of St. Anne (comprising the villages of Mala, Rajan and Sherly), also raised Chuim to the status of an independent parish. On January 9, 1943 Fr. M. M. Balaguer SJ, Vicar General of Bombay, blessed the lower floor of St. Elias' Primary School (previously known as Mount Mary's School) as a place of worship for the new parish which was dedicated to St. Vincent de Paul. The first Parish Priest of St. Vincent's was Fr. A. Remedios. He and five succeeding Vicars, from 1943 to 1963, were accommodated in the home of "Aunty" Letitia Fernandes, located very close to the School, and they ministered the parish from there.



During the Vicarship of Fr. Blaise Nazareth the School was shifted in 1963 to a newly constructed building on the border of Chuim village. The parish Fathers also transferred their residence to these premises, and Sunday Mass began to be celebrated in the School Hall. By 1969 Fr. Nazareth had put up a small church by the side of the School and this church functioned as the place for daily worship. Two years later, in May 1971, the old edifice which had served as the church-cum-primary school in the earlier days of the parish, was handed over to the Daughters of the Heart of Mary to be developed into a Community Development Centre.

The church at Chuim, from its very beginning, was too inadequate for the needs of the parish. With the arrival of Fr. Stephen Nazareth to St. Vincent's as Vicar in June 1976, the dream of the parishioners of a new and spacious church of their own began to take shape. The foundation stone was laid by Auxiliary Bishop Longinus Pereira on October 3, 1976; two years however elapsed, as plans awaited the sanction of the Charity Commissioner, before the simple ceremony of the digging of the foundation by Msgr. Nereus Rodrigues took place on October 22, 1978. From then on there was no looking back; financial contributions from resources within the parish and outside it finally led to the completion of the church, which was blessed by Archbishop Simon Pimenta on October 11, 1981. A novel feature of this construction is that the existing, small church was not demolished to make place for the new, but has been wisely retained as an adjunct to the new church; it is used for daily Mass and other religious services.

HOLY FAMILY, Chakala (1943)

The parish of the Holy Family at Chakala, lying to the east of the Andheri Railway Station, was founded in July 1943, about a year after "Vinayalaya", the then Novitiate of the Society of Jesus, was inaugurated. The two villages of Chakala (east of the present Western Express Highway) and Gundowli (west of the Highway) were separated from the parish of Marol and made to form the nucleus of the new parish, which was entrusted to the Jesuit Fathers.

At first, Mass was celebrated in a small shed loaned by a non-Christian, a Mr. Hiralal. Later, Fr. D. Keating SJ, the Vicar, had a bigger shed built on the grounds of Vinayalaya. On January 10,

1959 Cardinal Valerian Gracias blessed and laid the foundation stone for a proper church in a plot of land donated by the villagers of Chakala. Work was begun when Fr. H. Jimenez SJ was Vicar, and the fan-shaped structure was completed during the tenure of his successor, Fr. S. Marquis SJ. The church was blessed on March 5, 1962 by Cardinal Gracias.

The last twenty years have seen an extraordinary change in the face of the parish as housing colonies and industrial estates have sprung up within its boundaries. An example of the latter is the Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC). Further, more than 200 young families, unable to secure adequate accommodation in the Housing Societies that are mushrooming everywhere in the suburbs, have settled in chawls at several points of the parish. This has inspired the Jesuit parish fathers to experiment: since 1976, Fr. F. Sopna SJ and Fr. Philip D'Souza SJ have moved out of the Parish House and have taken up their residence in a chawl among the people,



the first at the northern end of the parish just beyond the Sai Baba Temple along the Mahakali Caves Road, the second at Kajuwadi, a settlement at the southern end of the parish. Sundays excepted, daily Mass is celebrated at these sub-centres of the parish.

ST. ANTHONY, Vakola (1945)

For more than three centuries the village of Vakola formed part of the parish of Our Lady of Egypt, Kalina which had been founded by the Franciscans between 1606-1609. Writing in 1630, Fr. Paulo da Trindade does not explicitly mention Vakola by name but alludes to it when he noted that the parish of OL of Egypt had "two villages, the first being Kole-Kalyan, the other near it."

It was only in 1914 that through the initiative of Fr. C.A. Abreo an Assistant priest at Kalina, a chapel was contemplated

in Vakola. With the generous assistance of friends and well-wishers, Catholics and non-Catholics, the chapel was finally completed and dedicated to St. Anthony on a plot of land donated by Mr. John (Jamboo) Rodrigues. But it took seven years to do so, because of the First World War which broke out soon after the construction was undertaken. The chapel was blessed on January 1, 1921 and was filial to the Kalina Church. Prior to this, Mass was offered in a small hut in the village for the benefit of the predominantly farmer population.

With the continuing growth of the Catholic population in the following years, the need to respond more adequately to the spiritual and cultural welfare of the people of Vakola led first to the appointment of Fr. Mendes as a resident priest-in-charge in 1937, and then to the separation and erection of St. Anthony's Church as an autonomous parish on July 1, 1945. Its first Parish Priest was Fr. Cyril Pinto, and the parish population then comprised 400 Catholic families.



During the Vicarship of Fr. Ayres Fernandes the large pond in front of the church was filled up (1958-59) and the small church extended and renovated (1960) to meet the needs of the growing population. A further extension of the church, conducted in 1967 when Fr. Alfred Aguiar was Vicar, doubled the size of the existing church and brought it to its present dimensions. Thus the present church at Vakola has seen three stages of development: the original chapel of 1921, the extension of 1960, and the larger extension of 1967. Fr. Aguiar was also responsible for the building of the present two-storeyed presbytery in 1963 (previously the priests resided in what are now class-rooms between the church and the presbytery). The latest modifications in the church building were executed during the tenure of Fr. Nelson Mascarenhas, when in 1977 the interior of the church was remodelled to suit the changed liturgical

norms and to promote an atmosphere of greater prayer and worship.

Today St. Anthony's, Vakola is the largest parish in the Archdiocese in terms of its Catholic population which numbers over 18,000! This has necessitated the creation of two sub-centres, one at Yogiraj Ashram near the new campus of the University of Bombay, the other in Prabhat Colony between the Highway and the Railway Station. And there are plans of extending the parish church still further.

ST. THERESA, Bandra (1946)

The configuration of the present parish of St. Theresa, lying between Pali Hill on the west and the Western Railway lines on the east, is largely the product of the Town Planning Scheme (TPS) that was put into operation from the 1950s. No one looking at the imposing modern church of St. Theresa today will suspect that about sixty years ago the site of the church was part of a large expanse of paddy and vegetable fields, "Bunds" divided one field from another with irregular, muddy, paths that wound their way across mango, coconut and chikoo groves. At the eastern foot of Pali Hill lay the village of Pali and touching the Ghodbunder Road (today, renamed Swami Vivekananda Road) lay the village of Khar. The Pali Road of today was then also called the "Monkey Road," as the Pali-Danda road passed through a thick growth of trees that were inhabited by monkeys.

The decree of January 1, 1943 issued by Archbishop Roberts, which created the parish of St. Anne, Pali, also provided that the parishes of St. Theresa of the Child Jesus for the Khar-Pali area and of St. Vincent de Paul for the Danda-Chuim area be erected "as soon as the necessary arrangements can be made." While St. Vincent de Paul's started functioning as a parish in 1943 itself, "the necessary arrangements" in the case of St. Theresa took a whole three years to materialize. In those three intervening years the pioneering work of Fr. F. X. Whitely SJ needs mentioning. He started in mid-1944 elementary education in English for the Gujarati migrant community who lived in the hutments off Turner Road. The following year he put up a makeshift chapel in the present compound of the Fathers of the Society of St. Paul.

The parish, however, was really born when Fr. Theophilus