

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN MALAYSIA to 1990 - *John Roxborough*¹

1. Introduction

The Roman Catholic Church is the largest in Malaysia comprising just over half the Christian population (estimated Catholics in the Peninsula in 1986, 163,000); it is also the oldest denomination having arrived with the Portuguese conquest of Melaka in 1511 and survived and grown through all the political changes of the last five centuries. From the late 18th century French priests and sisters made a significant contribution. Its long experience in Asia and its ability, from the beginning of the nineteenth century, to train priests locally proved a distinct advantage. Since the 1970s leadership has been securely in Malaysian hands.

2. Early contacts

The earliest Christian contacts in the region¹ go back to possible Nestorian settlements in the 7th century in the north west of the Peninsula and in north Sumatra. Catholic visitors and diplomats passed through the Straits of Melaka in the 13th century, but many of these were before the Sultanate of Melaka was established.

When Melaka developed in the 15th century, among its trading community were people from a range of countries and religions including Christians from the Eastern churches of West Asia, particularly Armenians and Persians. It is not known if any churches were built or worship conducted.

3. The Portuguese Church in Melaka 1511-1795

3.1 Early days in Portuguese Melaka 1511-1545

Albuquerque and his fleet of 19 ships carrying 800 Portuguese and 600 Indian troops arrived at Melaka on 1 July 1511, the year following the conquest of Goa. There had been an earlier encounter two years previously and this time things began with negotiations and a preliminary skirmish. To Albuquerque it seemed that since the Sultan was prepared to fight, 'Our Lord is blinding his judgement and hardening his heart, and desires the completion of this affair of Malacca.'² It may now seem a fair question whose heart was being hardened.³

In a sense the exercise was a continuation of the crusading mentality which had seen the pushing back of Islam first from the Portuguese and Spanish homelands and then around the world to the sources of the coveted spice trade. It was no accident that Albuquerque came under the flag of the Military Crusading Order of Christ, yet overall Portuguese motivation was complex. While religion was necessary, it was in practice often secondary to military and economic

¹ Published in Robert Hunt, Lee Kam Hing and John Roxborough, *Christianity in [West] Malaysia, a denominational history*, Pelanduk, Petaling Jaya, 1992, 1-33.

considerations. Whenever priests tried to check the lifestyle or impinge on the economic and political concerns of the administrators there was little doubt which interests would prevail. In the minds of those displaced and conquered as well as the Portuguese there was an understandable lack of differentiation between the religious and the political interests of the invaders. Being a Christian and being a Portuguese were essentially the same in the eyes of both communities, although closer examination of the Portuguese would have revealed some differences in outlook.

Along with Albuquerque came eight military chaplains - six Franciscans, one Dominican and a secular⁴ priest. After the conquest on 24 August 1511 Albuquerque had a church built, Our Lady of the Annunciation which was completed by December. The first church to be built on the hill was erected in 1521 and came to be called 'Our Lady of the Mount'. The present ruins on 'St Paul's Hill' are of a church built by the Jesuits and completed in 1590.⁵

In the failed negotiations and subsequent battle for Melaka the various trading communities took differing positions. The Gujaratis counseled fight and as a result had to flee with the Sultan on his defeat, the Chinese tended to favour the Portuguese, the Javanese whoever was likely to win and Hindu merchants, compromise. Afterwards the Hindus in particular returned and became the most powerful community in the trading colony.⁶

It was from this group especially that converts to the new faith came. Their role was strong, socially, economically and politically, particularly during the first half of the century. By mid-century a considerable number had become Christian.

In 1515 Fr Alfonso Martinez arrived and spent 34 years as the parish priest of Our Lady of the Annunciation apart from when he was on a return visit to Portugal from about 1525 to 1530. During his ministry there was built a Pauper Hospital and a Misericordia - the Church of Our Lady of the Visitation - for the poor, widows and orphans. There were some converts early on, especially Hindus and slaves⁷ but on the whole there was not much to show for his efforts. When he lay dying in 1549 he was very depressed about the lack of results of his ministry and believed himself damned. It took all of Francis Xavier's considerable persuasion, including the promises of many masses for his soul and reassurance of the infinite mercy of God, to enable him to die in peace.⁸

3.2 St Francis Xavier 1545-1552

The ministry of Xavier marks a distinct era in the history of Melaka. Francis Xavier (1506-1552) was one of the seven founders of the Jesuits, part of the original band who joined with Ignatius Loyola, and not for nothing is regarded as one of the greatest missionaries of Christian history. Even he found Melaka something of a challenge although (as was often to prove the case for others) Melaka was not so much a destination as a stopping off point en route to further East. In the case of Xavier it was first the Moluccas, then later Japan and eventually China. His visits to Melaka were:

25 September 1545 - 1 January 1546⁹

July 1547 - December 1547¹⁰

31 May 1549 - 24 June 1549¹¹

December 27-30, 1551¹²

31 May 1552 - 17 July 1552¹³

In mid-century the Portuguese population of Melaka was not large; about 70 *casados*¹⁴ and 200 soldiers surrounded by a non-Christian native population of some 20,000. Slavery was widespread, with some households reputed to have hundreds.

Xavier took steps to prepare himself for the Moluccas by working on a translation of the Ten Commandments and some prayers in Malay, but he had limited opportunities for using them locally. His main concern was the sad state of the Christian Portuguese. On 10 November 1545 he wrote home.

Since my arrival in Malacca ... there has been no lack of pious occupations. Every Sunday I preach ... and I am not as happy with my sermons as those who have the patience to listen to me. Every day I teach the children their prayers for an hour or more. I am living in the hospital; I hear the confessions of the sick poor; I offer Mass for them; and I give them Holy Communion. I am so besieged by those going to confession that it is impossible for me to satisfy all. My chief occupation is to translate the prayers from the Latin.¹⁵

There were a number of events which seemed to be signs of a brighter future, but they remained isolated. In 1549 Jose de Castro, having just been ordained in Goa, offered his first mass 'with solemn music and all full ceremonies'. Later, in April 1550, four Japanese sent by Xavier were baptised; but before his next visit in 1552, Melaka had been attacked and burnt by the Acehnese, many people had died from the plague and the town was in ruins.

While Melaka shared many of the characteristics common to Portuguese settlements in the Far East, on the one hand it lacked the efforts of the Viceroys and Bishops of Goa who were determined to make their territory Christian at any cost, and on the other it equally lacked the generally more gentle and less politically compromised proclamation of the Gospel which won some response further east. Melaka in the event had the converts of neither.

In fact, to Portuguese visitors, Melaka seemed hardly Christian at all. The Christians were not very Christian and the place appeared swamped by other religions. The immediate need was to do something about the nominally Catholic. When Xavier arrived he discovered that

preaching was neglected, and the teaching of Christian doctrine had lapsed completely into oblivion. ... many of the New Christians who had come from Portugal lived again openly as Jews or Mohammedans. Most of the Malayan wives ... retained their ... superstitions or their worship of pagan divinities ... Very rarely did they come to church ... their husbands gave a bad example and stayed away from Mass and sermons. It thus frequently happened that many of these women and their sons and daughters ... were Christians only in name and said that they were Portuguese in caste and not in religion.¹⁶

His last visit was to be that on his journey to China where he died within sight of the Chinese coast on 3 December 1552. There is some debate as to whether or not he put Melaka under a curse as he was leaving; certainly it was an unhappy departure. The governor refused to recognise Xavier's authority and hindered his preparations - not withstanding Xavier's reluctant use of a power of excommunication held under his previously undisclosed authority as a papal nuncio. It is said that when he finally left he shook the dust of Melaka from off his feet and some of the devotion shown to him subsequently - especially when his body was brought back on 22 March 1553 - no doubt arose out of guilt about this unfortunate farewell. The governor in question came to a sad end and stories were also told of Xavier's body being uncorrupted in death.¹⁷ Whatever the truth of the matter, he was the sort of person about whom such stories could be told and believed. There is other evidence of Xavier's sense of frustration with Melaka. He once wrote to a departing priest

I most positively order you to adhere resolutely to your determination of leaving Malacca and I expressly forbid you to let yourself be persuaded to remain in that place by any entreaties however pressing, or by deceitful promises from any one. You must not continue wasting your labours ... on a town so ungrateful and unworthy of your help as has sometimes been the case.¹⁸

3.3 The decline of Portuguese power 1552-1641

Physical insecurity was a permanent fact of life through all the years in which Melaka was held by the Portuguese - a bitter legacy of the failure to obtain a peaceful settlement in 1511. An effect of this was that Melaka was always at its most religious when under siege, and this continued in the years after Xavier's visits. Between 1568 and 1576 there were about five major attacks either by the Acehnese or by Johore. At one stage the governor was insane and the bishop was left to direct the defence of the town.

The process of conversion among the local community continued after Xavier. Despite the distances from Goa and Rome, this was helped by the greater energy and confidence of the Church after the Counter-Reformation and the Council of Trent. On 4 February 1558, Melaka was raised by Pope Paul IV to a suffragan see¹⁹ under Goa,²⁰ and the arrival of new missionary orders also made a significant contribution: in 1554 the Blackfriars, in 1582 the Greyfriars, and in 1587 the Augustinians.²¹ The Hindu Bendahara was converted in 1564, and his successor after 1573 was a Muslim convert to Christianity who was later made a knight of the Military Order of Christ. By the end of the century one estimate was that there were about 7,400 Christians in Melaka, most of the converts being Indian or Chinese, particularly Indian.²²

From 1590 Dutch and English ships were beginning to appear in the area contributing to a steady weakening of Portuguese control. A major siege by the Dutch in 1604 left the town in ruins except for the fortress itself and all the churches and chapels were destroyed. In 1629 there was another siege by the Acehnese and from June 1640 to January 1641 the sustained attack by the Dutch aided by Johore²³ which eventually resulted in Melaka's fall. Of a population of 20,000 only 3,000 survived and sickness and fighting took as big a toll of the attackers as of the defenders. Of those who remained, half were deported by the Dutch. There had been 19 churches or chapels; all except St Paul's were destroyed or converted to secular use.

3.4 Suppression under the Dutch 1641-1703

By the end of 1641 there were only 1600 Portuguese living in or near Melaka²⁴ and the only church in use, St Paul's on the Hill, converted to Dutch Presbyterianism. In 1645 regulations were issued to forbid Catholics from holding public religious meetings and in the following year orders given to deport those who refused to abandon their old faith. There were also prohibitions on priests, but in the end the efforts of the Dutch were more frustrating than effective.

The Catholic community proved itself adept at finding ways of keeping their traditions alive during these difficult years. Some sources give more emphasis to the priests who risked exposure in their secret visits to hold masses up-river in the jungle,²⁵ and others to the initiative of lay groups such as the Confraternity of the Holy Rosary.²⁶ Both were important and the resilience of the faithful in adverse circumstances was striking.²⁷ By 1712 there were six times as many Catholics as Protestants in Melaka and many had Dutch names.²⁸ As a diocese Melaka continued to exist, although the bishops resided in Timor or Flores, the last to take up the position being appointed in 1747.²⁹

3.5 Restoration under the Dutch 1703-1795

Some sixty years after their conquest of Melaka, the war of Spanish Succession brought the Dutch into an alliance which Portugal joined in 1703 and hence it was necessary to be more lenient towards the Portuguese in Melaka. Land outside the town was allowed to be used for a new church and the present St Peter's Church was completed in 1710. Although the hostility of the Dutch was well remembered into the 19th century, the enforcement of the ban on Catholic services was already weakening by this time. The ruins of the chapel Ermida do Rosario built by the Confraternity of the Holy Rosary on the earlier site of the old parish church of St Lawrence are said to date from 'about 1700' and indicate a substantial building.³⁰ This says something about the strength of Catholicism at the time which is easily overlooked.

As the eighteenth century progressed Melaka was not much of a threat to anyone and became very much the sleepy hollow of its later reputation. The Dutch had their main economic interests in Java at Batavia and their religious interests were there as well. The Catholic community was poor, but capable of sustaining itself, and in its blend of Malay and Portuguese culture and its colourful festivals it could be said to have become a Malaysian church in Malaysia. This may have more significance than is recognized. The priority of survival was not as severe as in earlier decades, but although it was still not a church particularly concerned for outreach, others were nevertheless still converted. The land on which St Peter's was built had been given first to a Dutch convert who had then given it to the church, further evidence of the ability of the church to extend itself even during a period of repression. This example may not be unimportant.

4. The Church in the Straits Settlements 1786-1874.

4.1 Introduction

The period between the arrival of Francis Light in Penang and the signing of the Treaty of Pangkor saw the establishment of a British presence in the Straits Settlements and with that the possibility

of a greater Christian presence generally. French missionaries were the first to take advantage of the situation and although they quickly ran into conflict with the Portuguese, by the 1870s they had helped ensure the growth of the church among migrant Chinese and Indians with some work begun among the Orang Asli.

Although Catholic Emancipation did not come in to Britain until 1829, relationships with the British authorities in the Straits Settlements appear to have been cordial, shown not only by the welcome given in Penang in 1786, and help given there with churches and schools, but also later by the way in which the Governor in Singapore in 1860 disciplined an Anglican chaplain who had distributed anti-catholic tracts while doing his rounds in the government hospital.³¹

4.2 Conflict over jurisdiction

The question who had jurisdiction, the Portuguese or the French Société des Missions Etrangères de Paris (MEP), caused major conflict in Malaya as in many other parts of Asia as the Portuguese government became increasingly unable to fulfill its obligations under the Padroado,³² while at the same time being utterly intransigent in insisting on the traditional rights and privileges of the Portuguese crown. It was a long standing issue between Rome and Portugal which affected many parts of the world. The creation of the Propaganda Fide, papal encouragement of the MEP, and the appointment of Vicars Apostolic instead of Bishops in disputed areas were all ways in which the Church sought to take advantage of opportunities of evangelization which otherwise seemed to be going begging.

In the Malayan version of this international ecclesiastical drama there was to be a long struggle before it was resolved. The conflict was not without irony - Catholics from two European powers arguing over who should run a mission to Chinese, Indians and Eurasians in a Malay part of the world under British rule. This 'regrettable polemic was to last for years to come to the detriment ... of the work of evangelization,³³ and while it did it was a much more serious question than any threat from Protestants who from 1815 were also sending missionaries and building churches. In the Singapore government cemetery there were even separate sections for Catholics from each jurisdiction.³⁴

From the time of the Dutch conquest the bishops of Melaka had been based in Timor or on Flores and the last appointment had been made in 1781 although the position was not taken up. In 1818 the Diocese of Melaka was dissolved into that of Goa. In 1838 Malaya was placed under Burma and then two years later, in 1840, under Thailand. In 1841 by a decree of Pope Gregory XVI the whole came under the Paris Foreign Mission as an independent mission as the Vicariate Apostolic of the Malay Peninsula.

Eventually the Portuguese churches managed to remain under the patronage of the Portuguese government and in 1886 were allowed to be a separate jurisdiction under Macao while the diocese as a whole was French.³⁵ In 1888 the Diocese of Malacca was restored, though it was soon placed as a suffragan under the Archbishop of Pondicherry.³⁶

4.3 New openings in Penang

French Catholic missionaries had been in Thailand from about 1662 but were obliged to leave around 1779. Two of these priests, Father Coud, and Father Gernault went first to Pondicherry and then in 1781 to Kuala Kedah where they found a surprisingly large Catholic community of about 80 persons. Some were other exiles from Thailand, others had come from Melaka. Good relationships were established with the Sultan of Kedah who made a house available as chapel which was dedicated to St Michael. The following year Coud, was able to return to Siam and in 1786 with the arrival of Francis Light Gernault took most of his flock across to Penang.³⁷ Gernault was regarded as the less promising of the two priests, but he dedicated himself to learning Malay and saw a number of converts.

He was a *fac totum*: setting up a small college where he taught philosophy and grammar, founding a community of young women to teach children and teaching those women Malay so that they could instruct catechumens, composing prayers and catechisms in Malay. ... Gernault was not one for mass baptisms, requiring, rather, a real conversion before acceptance into the Church. ... He seeks ... advice concerning the baptism and conversion of opium addicts and gives examples of how he has handled the matter.³⁸

Catholic services were thus the first regular Christian services to be held in Penang and there was soon a growing parish. In 1788 and 1791 two local Eurasians were ordained after training. The parish priest of the Parish of the Assumption (Fr Rectenwald from 1790 until 1822) had responsibilities extending to Burma and Kedah. By 1827 the Catholic population of Penang was said to be about 1,200 though how this relates to the likely figure of about 700 from the 1833 census is difficult to say unless it incorporates a wider area. In 1819 it was possible to get some government assistance for the repair of the church and by 1827 the government was subsidising the schools.

The Church of the Assumption became in many ways the mother church of the French mission. It was from here that visits were made to Singapore in 1821 and work started in Matang Tinggi in 1850, Bukit Mertajam in 1856 and a Tamil mission at St Francis Xavier's Church in Penang in 1858.³⁹

In 1807 and 1809 two French priests, Lolivier and Letondal, brought 11 Chinese seminarians from Sichuan and Fujien and obtained permission to transfer the major seminary from Thailand (where it had started in 1665) to Penang. Hence was founded in 1810 the College General. By 1932 it had trained over 500 national priests for the countries of Southeast Asia, including over 50 martyred for their faith.⁴⁰

In 1852 the Sisters of the Holy Infant Jesus began their work on Penang. A number of the sisters are buried in the Northam Road cemetery.⁴¹

4.4 Melaka under the British

The Portuguese community suffered along with the Dutch in the confusion and changes which took place in Melaka from 1795 onwards as it moved from Dutch to British to Dutch and finally back to British administration, though they valued the greater freedom they enjoyed when it was

eventually decided that it should be British. Although Melaka was basically a Portuguese area the church was still affected by the conflict over jurisdiction with the French. In 1845 Father Dastugue was among the first French missionaries to Melaka, soon followed by Father Favre and the new parish of St Francis Xavier was organised attracting about 300 of the Eurasian community. In 1849 the present church with its distinctive twin towers was built on the old site of the church of Our Lady of the Rosary which had been built in 1553 and destroyed by the Dutch. Some donations came from as far away as Brazil and Peru.⁴²

4.5 Beginnings in Singapore⁴³

In the early 1820s French priests were among the visitors to the Island who recognised its potential and who took steps to try and arrange something for its religious needs, but until 1827 it was officially outside French ecclesiastical jurisdiction and it was the Portuguese who were first to actually provide a ministry. Fr Jacob from Melaka served from 1822 to 1824 and then Fr Maria who arrived from Macao in 1825 and remained for 25 years. He built a small church, probably on land obtained by Fr Jacob. This was to be the centre of the Portuguese mission.

A French priest arrived in 1831 and in 1832 land was obtained for a church which was completed the following year. Fr J P Courveyzy who was involved in the building was later appointed Vicar Apostolic for Thailand and then Malaya ('Western Siam') while still based in Singapore. In June 1839 the first non-European missionary arrived. John Tschu was Chinese and had been ordained in Bangkok.

There was some risk for converts from the secret societies and in 1851 about 500 Chinese Christians, mostly Catholics living in the town as well as on estates, were killed by the Hong Brotherhood.⁴⁴ This is one of the unheralded martyrdoms of Christians in Malaya.⁴⁵ In the 1850s the naturalist A R Wallace admired the devotion of a French Jesuit who lived in poverty with his Chinese parish in Bukit Timah, sharing his home and food with them while also running a school.⁴⁶

The next phase in the development of the church occurred when Jean Marie Beurel (1813-1872) arrived in 1852 with a number of Christian Brothers and the Sisters of St Maur (Holy Infant Jesus). He was responsible for building the cathedral and two schools and set about making Singapore a centre of evangelization. After the coming of Methodists in 1885 and the rapid development of their education system, the Catholic schools had the function not only of providing a firm foundation in the faith for Catholics, but also to counter-act the 'seductions' of the Methodists.

4.6 Orang Asli Mission

In 1847 Father Borie obtained land through a Protestant friend at as a base for a mission to the Orang Asli. Later the mission was moved to Ayer Salak about 9 miles from Melaka where the government granted 1000 acres. The work continued until after 1871 when Father Borie retired to France. Later the Orang Mantra moved to Labu and Lukut in Negri Sembilan.⁴⁷

5. A century of change: 1874 to the 1990s

The extension of British authority after 1874 had immense implications for all churches including the Catholic. Although the Treaty of Pangkor in effect prohibited Malay outreach, as British administrative centres were set up in the different states it was possible for churches to be established and work begun amongst those who were already Catholic and those who were not.

Some Portuguese migrated to the new centres, there were often some Catholics among Chinese and Indians. Work was developed very much along linguistic and therefore racial lines. Like others, Catholics found themselves developing first in the north around Perak, then around Selangor and into Negri Sembilan. Today they are strongest on the West of the Peninsula and relatively weak on the East, although there as elsewhere churches can be found in places where there is no other significant Christian presence.

Two world wars, particularly the second, left their mark on the churches as on the nation, as did the events of the Emergency and the progress towards Independence in 1957. The effects of Vatican II from the early 1960s have not obliterated the continuities of ancient traditions, but the effects have been nothing short of revolutionary. By the end of this period the number of priests available was in decline, both from government restrictions on visas from those overseas, and from a drop in vocations. Those Orders not able to recruit locally in sufficient numbers face something of an uncertain future. However this has coincided with a fresh emphasis of the Church as the people of God and a significantly greater participation of the laity has become both possible and necessary. As the potential contribution of the Church to national unity is realised, the way in which the needs of different racial groups are met has shifted discernibly from parishes of just one race or language group to the smaller groups of the Base Ecclesial Communities. These have also facilitated the integration of new leadership and alternative patterns of spirituality and social concern into the worshipping and serving life of each church.

5.1 Following the British Flag

A considerable number of parishes date their beginnings from the last two decades of last century during which time the British extended their influence, stability returned to the Malay states and communications were greatly improved.

In Taiping, the first Catholic mission in Perak began in 1875 when Bishop Le Turdu sent Fr F. Allard to Taiping. By about 1890 the need was felt to have separate services for each racial group, but it is interesting to note that at that time Malay was being used by all.⁴⁸ The baptismal records have survived from this early period indicating that in the 25 years of missionary work to 1897 there were 245 Indian baptisms of whom only 30 were adults and most them on their death-beds. There were 225 Chinese of whom 115 were adults, and the Eurasians 120 baptisms. As well as indicating the relative size of each community at this time, it is also clear that the Chinese Christians were growing more by conversion, and the Indians more from 'biological growth.'⁴⁹ Fr Ol#omendy, later to be Bishop of Melaka, served at Taiping for nine years from 1927, during which time he baptized 905 people of whom 188 were converts including two convicts condemned to hang in Taiping jail.⁵⁰ Baptisms were also carried out by catechists. In Taiping

between 1905 and 1923 Ignacy Mutto had in the course of his regular visits to the hospital 'converted and baptised some 136 adults and children who were in serious condition.'⁵¹

The story of catechists is one which needs to be told far more than is possible here. Not only baptisms, but prayers in the home and also funerals sometimes fell to their responsibility. A good number had a very fluid role in the employ of the church, shifting from gardener to catechist to cook and handyman and back to catechist again depending on the needs of the situation and the inclination and availability of the priest in charge.

In Johore Bahru the Church of The Immaculate Conception was founded in December 1883.⁵² In that year, on August 11, the first baptism was recorded in Kuala Lumpur, though the precise date of the founding of St John's parish is not known. A feature of this generation of churches was the clear sense of racial separation. In 1903 the Church of the Holy Rosary in Jalan Brickfields was started as a Chinese parish, and St Anthony's in Jalan Robertson off Jalan Pudu begun as the Tamil parish for Kuala Lumpur.⁵³ Another well-known Tamil parish from this period is Our Lady of Lourdes, Silibin, Ipoh which was built in 1905.⁵⁴ St Michael's Alor Star traces its origins from 1915 and in 1927 work was resumed in Sungei Petani many years after Coude and Garnault had first ministered in the area (Kuala Kedah) before going to Penang in 1786.⁵⁵

In the case of the Church of Visitation in Seremban the beginnings can be traced to visits from Melaka priests from 1848 onwards. From 1885 these became more regular as Fr Letessier from Kuala Lumpur stopped off once or twice a year increasing to every two months as he went down to Melaka for his confession. The church was named 'more out of reference to Father Letessier's periodical stops than of deference to the Blessed Mother' and began life as a humble atap chapel. A proper building was put up in 1899 and electric lighting installed in 1922. During the First World War many clergy 'were recalled to Europe to join the mad inter-racial massacre.' But by the 1930s growth was such that another new church was required which was completed in 1935.⁵⁶ It was the sort of story that could be repeated in many places.

5.2 Lay Apostolate

Catholic Action appeared from the beginning of the century in the form of groups such as The Legion of Mary and the Society of St Vincent de Paul. These organisations which were both lay and apostolic were tremendously important not only in the outreach and pastoral care of each parish, but in providing a more active role for laity. The Society of St Vincent de Paul was founded in Paris in 1833, but despite the strong French connections of the Church in Malaya was not brought here until it was established in association with the Cathedral of the Assumption in Penang in 1934. In 1983 it was reported that 'activities consist mainly of visits to the poor families in their homes to offer them love and friendship and to investigate the family circumstances for periodic reviews and distribution of food and cash relief.' There was also a clinic which provides free acupuncture.⁵⁷

5.3 New orders

As could be expected a large number of different religious orders and congregations⁵⁸ have shared in the work of the church in Malaya. The Brothers of Christian Schools (De La Salle Brothers) came first to Singapore in 1848 closely followed by the Sisters of the Holy Infant Jesus (St Maur)

who arrived there in 1854 and also had a work in Penang (1852) and Melaka (1859) before coming to Kuala Lumpur and Taiping in 1899.⁵⁹ Canossian Sisters began in Singapore in 1894 and Melaka in 1905. In 1935 the Little Sisters of the Poor began in Singapore and the same year Australian Redemptorists responded to an invitation from Bishop Deval and quickly settled into an intensive routine of retreat and mission leading which extended beyond Malaya. The Brothers of St Gabriel arrived in Singapore in 1936.

5.4 World War II.

When the bombing started in Singapore on 8 December 1941 at the same time as the Japanese invasion began in the north, there were large numbers who came to confession. Bishop Deval 'counselled that midweek devotions not be multiplied.' The Redemptorist Fathers in Singapore were probably not alone in shortening their sermons in the circumstances.⁶⁰ As the fighting reached Singapore the situation steadily worsened. One later recalled what it was like before their house was hit.

During this very disquieting time the community exercises were continued according to schedule and special prayers for protection were added. During the raids the rosary was said. True one might begin one's meditation in the chapel, and end it under the table in the parlour, or begin to examine one's conscience in one place and finish one's spiritual accountancy 'plane spotting.'⁶¹

After the fall of Singapore some such as Bishop Deval, because of their nationality, were not interned in Changi, others were along with other expatriates. In the camps the discipline of those in orders who knew what to do on retreat was a valuable asset and services were maintained, although there seems to have been little sense of ecumenical fellowship. About 50 attended the daily communion. Food was smuggled into the camp with the aid of a reusable coffin. In the camps and on the death railway in Burma priests distinguished themselves in sharing in and relieving the sufferings of others. There was something to be said for the fact that in extremis, 'the Catholic padre can always do something.'⁶²

In the case of Catholic schools, the effects of the war were very serious, and the work was all but totally brought to a halt. Several schools were converted to Japanese secular use such as St Michael's, Ipoh which became the offices of the state government. St George's Taiping became a government hotel. Some of the La Salle brothers were allowed a measure of freedom because of their nationality, although they quickly had to apply themselves to learning Japanese and only a few, such as the St Xavier's community in Penang, were allowed to teach. Many were interned in Changi Prison or in the Taiping and Pudu gaols.⁶³ Most however had to concentrate on survival by getting involved in basic things such as vegetable farming or fishing.⁶⁴

One particular experience of survival which involved a large number of priests and brothers, particularly from Singapore, was the Community of Bahau in Negri Sembilan. This farming community was set up as a catholic colony in the jungle in 1943 in the hope of some greater freedom in the struggle for subsistence while the war lasted. Here Bishop Deval also came to reside and there he died in January 1945.⁶⁵ There were many different orders who joined the community and the La Salle brothers recalled it as an experience of 'mixing and openness and contact, relating to people in all kinds of situations'.⁶⁶ Here four priests were ordained late in 1944

as at the critical time Bishop Deval was not allowed to travel to Penang where ordinations were usually held.

The fact that a good number of priests shared in the general suffering of the population of Malaya and were able to continue their ministry in a limited way under difficulty was a great asset to their credibility. What was said of the Church of the Visitation in Seremban is quite significant.

It was to the everlasting credit of the Catholic church that her ministers did not flee in the face of onslaught. Seremban parish suffered least, comparatively; still caution was the watchword and the lack of transport plus the gruelling restrictions of the police reduced activities to a minimum. ... the scores of converts netted at that time serve to show that God can always draw good out of evil.⁶⁷

5.5 Reconstruction.

When the Japanese surrendered, parish and school life reverted to normal surprisingly quickly. Friends, priests and brothers were released from prison and regained their health. Property was reclaimed from occupation use and restored. A full range of parish activities became possible again and the healing of people's lives could take place.

The La Salle Brothers returned to their schools. Their post-war recovery was guided by a special Visitor for as long as nine years, and Bro. Barnabus Kennedy (1879-1965) brought brothers from Ireland and Australia for the task. He also took the necessary steps for 'the phasing out of the old style missionary and his replacement by the locally trained brother.' The Brothers Training College in Penang was very important in this and Kennedy lived to see handing over of authority completely to Southeast Asians including Lawrence Robless, Casimir L'Angellier and Alban D'Rozario.⁶⁸

The immediate post-war years were but a lull before another storm as from 1948 the country found itself the subject of communist insurrection and dislocation as the Emergency was declared.

5.6 The 1950s : Emergency and Merdeka.

As the Emergency developed the British government made strenuous efforts to encourage China missionaries of all denominations including Catholic to come to Malaya to help win the 'hearts and minds' of the thousands of Chinese moved into the 'New Villages' which began as little more than concentration camps for rural Chinese squatters.

The anxiety of the British was obvious, but neither Rome nor the Bishop of Melaka were easily moved. The Colonial Office forwarded Templer's requests to Rome through the British Ambassador. In September 1952 the following cypher was sent to be passed on to the Holy See.

The 500,000 people, mainly Chinese, grouped in upwards of 400 new villages, are in urgent need of welfare, medical and educational care. Amongst these, and others there is work for virtually any number of missionaries with Chinese experience that can be sent. Missionaries capable of teaching or training in welfare or medical work would be particularly valuable. Europeans will be admitted freely ... Chinese [must be] vouched for

by Church authorities and vetted by the Security authorities. Normal Government financial aid to missionary bodies engaged in educational or medical work would be available.⁶⁹

These proposals were made to all the church authorities the British could think of, but the approach to the Vatican quickly bogged down. Templer was informed that Rome would not do much 'until they hear from their man in Malacca' and that 'unless Diocesan authorities at Singapore are shaken up by you this useful project may be strangled at birth.'⁷⁰ Whereas the College of the Propaganda was willing to say that 40 MEP missionaries were available, after three months there was little to show for British efforts and attempts were made to get a papal audience to try and speed things up.⁷¹ The apparent problems were an evident lack of enthusiasm at the Malayan end, and difficulties with French missionaries who had little English, though presumably good Chinese. The suggestion was made of a unified bishopric to cover overseas Chinese generally, and by April 1953 it was at last agreed that a Visitor be sent out to investigate and report. The idea of a special bishopric quickly ran into trouble. The British Ambassador to the Holy See, Sir Walter Roberts, telegraphed the Foreign Office in May 1953:

I understand the Bishop's appointment is encountering opposition from Bishop of Malacca and Internuncio in Indonesia both of whom resent encroachment on traditional preserves of Paris foreign missions. Bishop will therefore be faced with delicate task. I understand that he will probably not wish to have too close contact with civil authorities for fear of being accused of playing politics.⁷²

There were other sensitivities as well. The Hertog riots in Singapore in December 1950⁷³ had not just been about Muslim feelings towards the British judicial system which had favoured a Catholic parent over a Muslim husband, but about renewed sensitivities towards Catholics. The Visitor, Bishop van Melckebecke from Belgium, did not finally set off until August 1953, having made it clear that he was extremely cautious about any government contacts whatever. Meantime the Jesuits had been approached, but it was reported

Their aim was to keep in touch with the young intelligentsia, particularly those of university age, and they felt that in this way they could do more to combat communism than by sending priests into remote areas.⁷⁴

What was also very apparent was the continued reluctance of the Bishop of Malacca, Monsignor Olçomendy, to 'send priests at his disposal into the new villages.' It seems that the authorities in Rome were themselves more willing to do something. When on 30 September 1953 *L'Osservatore Romano* announced that 'the diocese of Malacca has been raised to an archiepiscopal See immediately under the Holy See' instead of being a suffragan bishop to Pondicherry, it was felt that here was a sign that Rome was prepared to ensure that more positive action might at last take place.⁷⁵

This whole episode indicates some of the sensitivities, including those of jurisdiction, which were still evident in the era before Independence. It was recognized by Catholics as by others that positive acceptance of the government initiative carried the risk of familiar accusations about the Church being the religious arm of imperialism. The sensitivities thus arose out of concern for the Malay community, the government of China and the accusations that had been made against the Church there; but they also included less worthy domestic preoccupations which greatly slowed

progress which might have been possible. When Templer wrote saying that whatever his concerns, he would like the Apostolic Visitor, Bishop van Melckebecke to stay with him in Kuala Lumpur, he hoped that he would be able to allay some of these fears. At the same time he highlighted a government policy which was of profound importance for all the churches.

Our policy is ... directed at creating a Malaysian outlook among the Chinese so that they will come to regard this country rather than China as their homeland ... it is particularly essential that the Bishop should regard the Chinese here not as 'overseas Chinese' but actual or at least potential Malaysians.⁷⁶

The Colonial Office file from which the details of this episode are drawn closes with the Bishop still being adamant that he did not want to meet Templer, and the present writer does not know the eventual outcome. The Catholic Church was not alone in being cautious about the British initiatives; but, like others, it nevertheless eventually brought in significant numbers of new missionaries.

In 1952 the Brothers of Mercy who had been expelled from China came to give medical service in the New Villages and eventually built Hospital Fatimah in Ipoh Gardens. In 1953 the Brothers of St Gabriel began their now renowned work at the Montfort Boys Home outside Kuala Lumpur, a project which from a shaky start has provided first class vocational training for thousands of boys from poor families. In 1957 the Congregation of the Disciples of the Lord, also with a background in China, began work at Bentong in the State of Pahang. In 1960 the Redemptorists were persuaded to take a parish in Ipoh. From the early 1950s Marist brothers have made their contribution to Catholic schools and the Good Shepherd Sisters in 1956 opened in Kuala Lumpur their first house providing care and vocational training for girls.

The Jesuits returned to Malaya in the early 1950s and in keeping with their intentions noted above in 1954 began work among students in Penang and Kuala Lumpur and founded St Francis Xavier Church in Petaling Jaya in 1961.⁷⁷ Franciscan Friars Minor came in 1957, Fathers of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary in 1960 and Fathers of the Scheut Mission in 1960. In 1963 Sisters of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary began a kindergarten and a hostel for working girls in Kelantan, thus helping provide a focus for the Catholic community in the area and an encouragement to the scattering Catholic groups on the East Coast. Aided no doubt by isolation and their awareness of being very much a minority, relationships with other Christians become close at a personal and not just an official level.⁷⁸

The number of different orders working in the country added variety though it did not always make for easy co-ordination. Some considered it a mistake 'to isolate each congregation to a particular parish'⁷⁹ but feasible alternative strategies were not exactly obvious.

Other events of this period were more mundane, and yet in their own way revealing of parish life. The mode of transport used by priests was changing. Foot, bullock-cart and bicycle were common for years and cars were starting to come in before the war when it was back to bicycles again.⁸⁰ Not all managed to equal Fr Aloysius of Taiping who had a two-seater sports car. Fr A Julien, Assistant Priest at the Church of Our Lady of Sorrows in Penang in the 1950s recalls getting around on a 'Matchless' motorbike for ten years (with only one serious fall).

Fr Julien was one of those who seemed to have come to Malaya from a background of Chinese work quite apart from all the high level negotiations which had taken place. He had come to Penang from Hong Kong and relearnt Mandarin as well as studying Hokkien. Later he recalled those days when 'Masses were still in Latin. Fortunately ... [we] agreed to have hymns in English and to start hymns and some prayers in Mandarin. This led to one Mandarin Mass every Sunday to the great joy of the small flock of Chinese speaking Catholics.'⁸¹

5.7 The 1960s : Vatican II and beyond.

The 1960s saw the early days of Independence, the coming in to Malaysia of Sabah and Sarawak and then the withdrawal of Singapore. At the end of the decade some of the unresolved tensions of Malaysian society erupted. The New Economic Policy and the political developments which followed raised questions about the role of the Church in society. For the Catholic Church the changes flowing from the Vatican II Council held from 1963 to 1965 were felt, and their influence was to grow stronger with the passing of time. Some changes were immediate, such as the replacement of the Latin mass by the vernacular. Greater lay participation took a while to develop. There were steady moves towards appointing more local clergy and bishops though the numbers of expatriates were still high. Some other changes were also visible, like developments in the habits of some of the orders, although the Sisters of the Holy Infant Jesus at least had already been changing gradually from a very formidable, if impressive, all-black with a train to a simplified all-white.⁸²

As well as a time of change this was also a time of growth. The Church of Our Lady of Sorrows in Penang was founded in 1958 and its first decade was noted as being a 'golden age of expansion.'⁸³

In May 1969 the country was shocked by racial riots and loss of life, particularly in Kuala Lumpur, and curfews were widely enforced. In St Anne's Bukit Mertajam July 26 was the time of the popular annual St Anne's Feast pilgrimage and the centenary of the founding of the Church. To comply with the curfew the 'pilgrims were locked in the old church compound from midnight till six in the morning.'⁸⁴

5.8 The 1970s: Aggiornamento and beyond.

It is not known how many clergy and religious, never mind the faithful, can pronounce, let alone spell, 'Aggiornamento', but the 'Priestless August'⁸⁵ of 1976 when the entire clergy of the Peninsula met in retreat for a full month has left its mark on the whole Church not only as a severely radical step in itself, but in its impact in translating the mature implications of Vatican II into the life of the people of God. The process of renewal with its emphasis on territorial Base Ecclesial Communities and its efforts to reduce the traditional focus on ethnically defined parishes is still working its way through. The cohesion of the Church through the shared experiences of these developments has been marked. The leadership of the Catholic Church in the ecumenical movement has brought an important degree of balance alongside those traditionally involved with the Council of Churches and Independent Evangelical groups, but the striking thing about this ecumenicity is the willingness of Catholics at all levels to be more involved with other denominations and those of other faiths.

The Charismatic movement has brought fresh spiritual life to many and it has in time found its role within the total life of the Church. It represents one of a number of newer groupings which have been assimilated alongside older movements. Parishes have shown a remarkable facility for adding new concerns and groupings and leaving older ones to continue as they are able. The effect on the parish priest's spare time may be considerable - there never used to be all those meetings to attend. The days when Fr Cardon could collect sufficient butterflies to succeed in having some named after himself seem long gone.⁸⁶ Working seriously with lay participation and consultation is notoriously time consuming, but it does enable the Church to cope with both continuity and change without severe disruption.

6. Facing the future.

Although it is of the nature of the Catholic Church to be strongly aware of its history and traditions and to derive its authority from its continuity with the past as well as its ability to nourish the piety of the present in all its forms, yet there is also awareness, perhaps to a degree almost unique in history, that many of those forms of the Faith's expression, if not its actual substance, change with time and place and circumstance. Looking back many changes are apparent. Yet faith in Jesus Christ and confidence in Mary and the Saints has sustained soldiers of faith as of fortune, the poor as well as the more affluent, the educated as well as those deprived of such privileges ever since the century and a third of Portuguese rule when people prayed for those missing on expeditions, and tried to cope as they suffered from assault and pestilence.

Under the Dutch for many years the Catholic faith could only be practiced in private sustained by lay societies and occasional secret masses. Those who came in the nineteenth century to be part of new communities in Penang and Singapore or to work in tin mines and on estates had different visions and different needs. Often they were far from their homelands, and for a surprising number a faith they had first known there sustained them in a new country.

Since the Second World War Malaysia has become the focus of a new commitment as home itself and the concerns of the Church have broadened from preoccupation with its own life to a greater emphasis on the quality of life in the society of which it is part. While religious vocations have reduced, the role of the laity has increased beyond recognition. The centenary souvenir of St John's Cathedral, Kuala Lumpur contains some telling observations. As the chairman of the Parish Council in 1983 remarked.

Our ancestors were people of their time: they lived and believed in the society and the church of yester-years. ... They were simple folks and many had large families. They walked, cycled or travelled by rickshaw to Church which was western, Latin, in its structures, hierarchy, worship and thinking. Devotions to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Vespers and Benedictions, processions, veneration for the saints, indulgences coupled with the recitation of the family rosary and singing of hymns at home were among the favourite expressions of prayer ... Mass was of course well respected and attended, but it was mainly the kingdom of the priest, the organist and his trained choir.

We now see more committed parishioners assuming the role of Readers and Commentators in the Liturgy of the Word during Mass. A Liturgical Team now selects the

readings and hymns and prepares the prayers of the Faithful for the Mass. ... the Choir is now situated among the People of God sharing in praising the Lord⁸⁷

And writing of the years 1955-65, Fr E Limat, recalled

though we did already by then start some kind of Parish Council, we were still under the regime of pre-Vatican II when the faithful were mostly asked to obey, to pray and to pay!

In fact there is considerable variety in different communities around Malaysia, reflecting the social changes and in some ways the increasing social distances between different parts of society. In a sophisticated middle-class world it is important not to forget the needs, or the values, of those such as the parish of the Holy Name of Jesus at Balik Pulau on Penang. The work there dates back to 1854 and in the 1870s a church was built to replace the atap hut where it began. More recently what the parish priest describes of the parish is a reminder that in some places life seems to have little changed over the years.

What strikes me most in this parish is the simplicity of our parishioners. Balik Pulau is a hilly place and more than 90% of our Catholic population make their livelihood up the hills cultivating the rocky lands. Modern civilization has little effect on their traditional estate-life; their entertainment is next to nil; the external world influence can hardly penetrate their way of life. They are poor but honest; they are simple but sincere; they don't have much education but have a good nature.⁸⁸

With an assurance of faith which, in the religious society which is Malaysia today, even in towns and cities still seems relatively unscathed by the acids of modernity, the Church has been able to turn with confidence towards a conscious and responsible role in society. As with other churches, many parishes face problems of mobility. People move from rural towns to urban centres, those in urban centres themselves are often on the move from the centre itself to the new suburbs or from one town to another through government transfer or work promotion.

What has changed generally however is not just circumstance, but vision. As the Church looks more to society as the focus of its responsibility it is also aware that when applied to Malaysia the scope of its mission is limited in several ways. It may be important to realise that a vision may be valid when what can be done in a particular time in history is less than what would be wished and prayed for. It is hard to accept that it is difficult to serve all one's neighbours in the name of Christ. But the vision must remain.

In 1983 Tan Sri Dominic Vendargon retired as Archbishop of Kuala Lumpur at the age of 75 after 49 years of service to the Church, 28 of them as bishop and archbishop. A number of his emphases have been particularly relevant to Malaysia and given the increased involvement of the Church in ecumenical affairs, particularly the Christian Federation of Malaysia, it has meant that there has been a depth of commitment to issues of human rights and religious freedom which has strengthened the wider Christian community.⁸⁹ From such leadership the vision of the Church is still renewed. From the dedication of lay people who recognise the importance of their faith to their daily lives, the service of the Church to society will still continue.

Endnotes

- ¹ J C England, 'The earliest Christian communities in South East and North East Asia - an outline of the evidence available in seven centuries before 1500 A.D.', *East Asian Pastoral Review*, 1988(2), pp.144-152.
- ² Quoted by K Koyama, *Waterbuffalo Theology*, p.47.
- ³ Koyama, *ibid.*
- ⁴ A "secular" priest is one who works "in the world" and who does not belong to a particular religious order such as the Augustinians, Dominicans, Franciscans or Jesuits.
- ⁵ M J Pintado, *A stroll through ancient Malacca and a glimpse at her historical sites*, 1980, p.38.
- ⁶ L P Thomaz, 'The Indian merchant communities in Malacca under the Portuguese rule,' in T R de Souza, *Indo-Portuguese History. Old issues, new questions*, Concept Publishing, New Delhi, 1985, p.60.
- ⁷ Sometime in Martin's ministry 'seventy-five Christian women ... came for prayers on Wednesdays and Fridays. Many of the pagan Hindus had been converted and had become good Christians. ... Converts from Mohammedanism were less zealous and most of these became Christians because of their needs. Most of the new converts were, however, male and female slaves.' There were also 42 Portuguese orphans, most of whom Martin taught 'the Our Father, Hail Mary, Creed, Salve Regina, and how to serve at Mass.' G Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier. His life, his times*, Vol III, Indonesia (1545-1549), Jesuit Historical Institute, Rome, 1980, p.20.
- ⁸ Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier. His life, his times*, Vol IV, Japan and China 1549-1553, Jesuit Historical Institute, Rome, 1982, p.5.
- ⁹ Schurhammer, III, *ibid.*, pp.3-51.
- ¹⁰ Schurhammer, III, *ibid.*, pp.211-282.
- ¹¹ Schurhammer, IV, *ibid.*, pp.5-26.
- ¹² Schurhammer, IV, *ibid.*, pp.320-341.
- ¹³ Schurhammer, IV, *ibid.*, pp.581-608.
- ¹⁴ Married men, usually householders.
- ¹⁵ Schurhammer, III, *ibid.*, p.44.
- ¹⁶ Schurhammer, III, *ibid.*, p.22.
- ¹⁷ R Cardon, *Catholicism in the East and the Diocese of Malacca*, 1938, p.7f.
- ¹⁸ Cardon, *ibid.*, p.8.
- ¹⁹ "Suffragan" implies deputy; "see" means diocese.
- ²⁰ 1558 is the 'New Style' date; by the calendar of the time February was still in 1557, hence the different year given in different references.
- ²¹ Thomaz, *ibid.*, p.64.
- ²² Thomaz, *ibid.*, p.65.
- ²³ Article 11 of the Dutch treaty with Johore agreeing to co-operate in defeating the Portuguese stated 'Neither part interfere with the other's religion. Persons so offending to be punished.' This is an interesting precedent for the Treaty of Pangkor in 1874. T J Newbold, *British settlements in the Straits of Malacca*, London, 1839; Oxford University Press, 1971, p.453.
- ²⁴ F G Lee, *The Catholic Church in Malaya*, Eastern Universities Press, Singapore, p.43.
- ²⁵ Cardon, *ibid.*, pp.24.
- ²⁶ Bernard Sta Maria, *My people, my country. The story of the Malacca Portuguese community*, Portuguese Development Centre, 1982, pp.74-77.
- ²⁷ On Flores there were similar phenomena of Catholic communities keeping the faith for a long period without significant priestly support assisted by lay initiative through confraternities. J M Prior, *Church and marriage in an Indonesian village*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt, 1988, p.8.
- ²⁸ Lee, *ibid*, p.44.
- ²⁹ After an extended vacancy the see was transferred to the Vicariate Apostolic of Ava and Pergu (ie Burma) in 1838, and to Thailand in 1840. It was restored in 1888. Cardon, *ibid*, pp.24, 45. *Catholic Encyclopedia*, 'Malacca'.
- ³⁰ Pintado, *ibid*, p.69f.
- ³¹ Anglican Diocese of Singapore Records, 'Church Record No. 3 1838-1863,' p.185. The Vicar Apostolic J M Beurel had collected 24 of these tracts which referred to Roman Catholics as hypocrites. The Governor wrote to the Church of England chaplain, Rev A D Nicholson, that since it was a government hospital 'any attempt at conversion is necessarily prohibited.'
- ³² This was the system of royal patronage which allocated enormous parts of the "new" world to Spain and Portugal and made the King responsible for all church and missionary appointments.

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- ³³ R P Balhetchet, 'Metamorphosis of a Church. A study of the people of God in the Republic of Singapore: analysis and projection', Pontificia Studiorum Universitas A S Thoma AQ. in Urbe, Rome, 1976, p.12.
- ³⁴ Ibid., p.27.
- ³⁵ Williams, *ibid.*, pp.97-99. On 23 June 1886 a concordat was signed between the King of Portugal and Pope Leo XIII placing 'all the faithful living at Malacca or in Singapore Island and belonging to the old Portuguese Diocese of Malacca' under the Bishop of Macao.
- ³⁶ Lee, *ibid.*, 1963, p.44f. Cardon, *ibid.*, 23-35.
- ³⁷ Lee, *ibid.*, p.45f.
- ³⁸ Williams, *ibid.*, p.94f., notes 106 to 108.
- ³⁹ *Silver Jubilee Celebrations. Diocese of Penang 1955-1980*, 'We are the Church,' 1980, p.14.
- ⁴⁰ Lee, *ibid.*, p.46f.
- ⁴¹ D Ch'ng, "A study of the early Christian cemetery along Northam Road on Penang Island," essay, Seminari Theoloji Malaysia, 1984.
- ⁴² *Sunday Star*, 26 July 1987.
- ⁴³ Cardon, *ibid.*, p.23. W Makepeace, G E Brooke, and R St J Braddell, *One hundred years of Singapore*, vol.II, London, 1921, pp.243-259. C B Buckley, *An anecdotal history of old times in Singapore*, University of Malaya Press, 1965, pp.242-271.
- ⁴⁴ *The Burning Bush*, Dawn Publications, Singapore, 1988, p.15.
- ⁴⁵ Though it may be true to say that there were economic factors involved and not just religious. See Lee Poh Hing, Chinese society in nineteenth Century Singapore, OUP, Kuala Lumpur, 1978, pp.1-10.
- ⁴⁶ Alfred Russell Wallace, *The Malay Archipelago*, 1869, Graham Brash, *Singapore*, 1983, p.18. C B Buckley, *An anecdotal history of old times in Singapore 1819-1867*, University of Malaya Press, 1965, p.611.
- ⁴⁷ Lee, *ibid.*, p.5. Ayer Salak remains a Catholic village of 184 hectares. It was settled by Teochew Chinese about the time Father Borie left. The parish is St Mary's. *The Star*, 2 July 1986
- ⁴⁸ Fr Paul Decroix, MEP, *A short history of the Catholic Church in Taiping 1897-1987*, p.6.
- ⁴⁹ Decroix, *ibid.*, p.9.
- ⁵⁰ Decroix, *ibid.*, p.23.
- ⁵¹ Decroix, *ibid.*, p.30.
- ⁵² *New Straits Times*, 19 November 1983.
- ⁵³ Edgar A Skelchy, 'St John's Parish - the past, present and future,' *Centenary Celebrations of St John's Cathedral 1883-1983*, Kuala Lumpur, 1983.
- ⁵⁴ *Silver Jubilee, Diocese of Penang*, *ibid.*, p.52. *Golden Silver Jubilee Souvenir, Church of Our Lady of Lourdes Silibin, Ipoh, 1905-1955*.
- ⁵⁵ *Silver Jubilee, Diocese of Penang*, *ibid.*, p.37f.
- ⁵⁶ The Church of Visitation, Seremban, 1885-1985, Centenary Celebrations, p.11f.
- ⁵⁷ 1958-1983. *Silver Jubilee of the New Church of Our Lady of Sorrows 33 Macalister Road., Penang*, p.12f.
- ⁵⁸ "Congregation" in the Protestant sense refers to the people worshipping in one particular place, in Catholicism it refers to a church organisation. A "Religious Order" is a group of people who have undertaken vows to live according to a certain rule in their work for the Church such as the Jesuits etc.
- ⁵⁹ Decroix, *ibid.*, p.13.
- ⁶⁰ K J O'Brien, *Redemptorists in Singapore-Malaysia*, Navjiwan Press, 1985, p.49.
- ⁶¹ O'Brien, *ibid.*, p.57f.
- ⁶² Lord Slim, quoted in O'Brien, *ibid.*, p.54.
- ⁶³ *A sign of faith. La Salle Brother's 300 years 1680-1980*, 1980, p.47. This has a list of the brothers at Bahau, in Changi and in Taiping or Pudu gaol.
- ⁶⁴ *A sign of faith*, *ibid.*, p.46.
- ⁶⁵ O'Brien, *ibid.*, pp.107-110.
- ⁶⁶ *A sign of faith*, *ibid.*, p.46.
- ⁶⁷ *The Church of Visitation*, *ibid.*, p.12.
- ⁶⁸ *A sign of faith*, *ibid.*
- ⁶⁹ Colonial Office Records, Public Record Office, Kew, CO 1022, SEA 307/3/02, no. 87, 27 September 1952.
- ⁷⁰ CO 1022, SEA 307/3/02, no. 86, 5 October 1952. Cypher to Templer.
- ⁷¹ CO 1022, SEA 307/3/02, no.82, 30 December 1952.
- ⁷² CO 1022, SEA 307/3/02, no.62, 12 May 1953.
- ⁷³ There are a number of recent publications on this case, but some of the British government concern for this and other matters of Muslim sensitivity can be found in CO 1022/434. This file reveals that the British maintained a

reading room in Mecca for Malays residence there because of the war, though 'for obvious reasons' they were themselves unable to visit Mecca and inspect it.

⁷⁴ CO 1022, SEA 307/3/02, no.27(?), Etherington-Smith, British Legation, Rome to Chief Secretary, Government Offices, Kuala Lumpur, 13 July, 1953.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ CO 1022, SEA 307/3/02, no.17. October 1953.

⁷⁷ *Jesuit Twin Celebration, 1491-1991, 1540-1990*, Society of Jesus, Petaling Jaya and Singapore, 1990, pp.52-55.

⁷⁸ *Diocese of Penang 1955-1980*, p.40.

⁷⁹ Balhetchet, *ibid.*, p.33.

⁸⁰ Decroix, *ibid.*, p.32.

⁸¹ 1958-1983. *Silver Jubilee of the New Church of Our Lady of Sorrows 33 Macalister Road., Penang*, p.5.

⁸² Decroix, *ibid.*, p.13.

⁸³ 1958-1983. *Silver Jubilee of the new Church of Our Lady of Sorrows 33 Macalister Road, Penang and of the priestly ordination of Rt Rev Msgr Raphael Kang, the parish priest*, p.2.

⁸⁴ *Diocese of Penang 1955-1980*, p.42.

⁸⁵ K Williams, 'A priestless August? 'Aggiornamento Malaysia' 2-31 August, 1976: a summary and evaluation,' mss.

⁸⁶ Decroix, *ibid.*, p.76.

⁸⁷ E A Skelchy, *ibid.*

⁸⁸ Rev Fr B Chu, in *Diocese of Penang 1955-1980*, p.41.

⁸⁹ *New Straits Times*, 30 October 1983.