CHAPTER V
THE MALTESE JESUITS’ CONTRIBUTION TO LANGUAGE, CULTURE AND RELIGION

Linguistic Contribution to Santali

Language is essential for communication and when it is communicated properly, human relationships emerge in the society. It is the same case with Santals and their language, Santali. When it is expressed well, it is easy to come in contact with them and relate with them. The Jesuit missionaries came and established their relationship with them by fluently speaking and writing in Santali. They even went further to teach Santali to the non-Santals and to write books to enrich the Catholic literature in Santali.

The Literary Contribution of Fr. George Muscat, S.J. (1929 -2005)

Fr. George Muscat served in Islampur, Rajibpur and Majlispur in various capacities and after suffering a mental breakdown in 1974, he was appointed an assistant parish priest in Talbaria before the mission was shifted to Mariampahar. There “he was spreading his activities in all directions, what with regular touring, teaching Santali to Sisters and helping in the school. He gave a ‘Bapla Dhorom Cet’ (Marriage Preparation Course) at Torai organized by Fr. Gauci Sacco.”2 He conducted an Adult Literacy Course at Talbaria and a pre - marriage catechumenate at Asanbani. He gave a two-month crash course in Santali to a group of Jesuits and Holy Cross Sisters at Sitapahar.3 He directed a retreat to 100 catechists of the Northern Sector gathered at Raiganj on the 3rd October 1975.4

He started teaching Santali to seminarians, priests and sisters who came to work among the Santals. For 20 years he taught Santali to over 800 students and wrote a grammar for them. Among his students of Santali were Bishops and Religious Superiors. His original approach to the study of Santali made it easy for the students to master a working knowledge of it in a month-long crash course at Catechetical Training Centre, Torai. His Grammar, “Santali, A New Approach” is
Since 1978 he began to teach History of the Society of Jesus, English and Santali to the novices of Jisu Jaher, the Jesuit novitiate in Dumka. He wrote a book in Santali, titled, “Dinam Din Sonot Hor” (A Saint for Everyday) and contributed numerous articles to the Santali monthly ‘Marsaltabon’ (Our Light). He initiated many people in the Santali language and culture to do the missionary work in various North Indian dioceses.

Fr. George Muscat authored a number of 10 minute short radio plays on specific Santal problems. They were called: “Cet’ em mena?” (What would you say?) They were meant to be listened to and then followed by a discussion on the topic. These plays were recorded on tape and were used especially during the Marriage Preparation Courses. He also wrote short radio plays on the Sacraments. Another radio play was the Christmas story and this was also recorded on tape. The two audio cassettes of ‘Cet’ em mena?’ (What would you say?) of Fr. George Muscat contain short conscientization plays in Santali meant to lead to discussion in small groups. The first volume of Cet’ em mena? contains the following plays: Dandom (penalty), Raebacic (Match maker), Bar Katha Jumi (Land for two words), Jawae Bae Hijuk’ (Bridegroom doesn’t come), Or Agukedaeae, (forcefully bringing) Bar Pae Caole (two three rice) and Ca Bapla (Tea marriage). The second volume of Cet’ emmena? contains the following plays: Eken Bes Oktere (If you are good), Sipahiren Bahu (soldier’s wife), Kolej (College) and Dokan (shop).

During his stay at Jisu Jaher (Sacred grove of Jesus) from 1978, he taught many groups of novices various subjects with great dedication and inspired them with his simplicity, committed life and friendliness. He had special interest for gardening and planting trees. He was interested in exploring new and interior Santal villages in Dumka district during his long holiday walks. He always showed a special concern for the progress among the tribals in education. He was able to communicate with any type of people because of his outgoing and friendly nature and his mastery of Santali, Bengali and Hindi. He had a special love for little children. His last home visit was made 30 years before his death and he was really a man who identified himself with the Santals in the spirit of detachment and poverty.
Santal Religion and Culture: Joseph Troisi’s Work on Santali Religion and Culture

Joseph Troisi, a Maltese Jesuit Scholastic of the Santal Region was staying in Pangro, a Santal village within the Damin-i-koh, where he was busy preparing the field work for his Ph.D. thesis on Tribal Religion. In 1972, he was initiated and accepted in the Santal tribe and was known as Joseph Marandi.

He authored ‘The Santals: A Classified and Annotated Bibliography’ (1976) a scholarly work for those interested in Santali anthropology, language and culture. This volume is the first comprehensive bibliography of books, monographs, articles and reports on the tribe in English, Italian and Santali. Fruit of four years of research, it covers whatever was written on the subject starting from the earliest mention of the Santals in Asiatic Researches in 1795 till the end of 1974. It contains 487 annotated items with as far as possible, accurate and complete data on each one of them. After the release of his book, he was busy with his dissertation besides helping in the editing of “Social Action” and in the Research Department of the Indian Social Institute, Delhi.

J. Troisi’s Doctoral dissertation, titled, ‘Tribal Religion: Religious Beliefs and Practices among the Santals’ was published in 1978. This is the first full – length systematic study of Santal religion as manifested in its beliefs and practices. He spent more than sixteen months in the area in which he did his field work, living with the Santals as one among them. He learnt their language and participated in all their religious ceremonies and everyday activities. He identified himself closely with the Santal way of life and transformed himself from Joseph Troisi to Joseph Marandi so that he was able to amass the wealth of material on which this study is based.

The author bases on the empirical data and the interpretation of the existing literature on the subject and examines how the Santal society is maintained through the interaction of religion with other institutions in the Santal social structure. After describing the Santal society, he brings out the close link between the Santals and
their spirits which is manifested in the rites and festivals centred on the different stages of agriculture and human life. Santal religion is such a powerful force that the social and religious identity of the Santals is kept intact in spite of their interaction with Hinduism and Christianity. Though he himself is a Roman Catholic, he is aware of the difference in orientation between his religion and theirs. But he has not allowed his faith to obscure his appreciation of the Santal way of life. Rather, he has put his own religious sensibilities to use in exploring the inner recesses of Santal religion and in explaining its nature and significance to his readers.12

A notable feature of the study is that where similar religious traits are found among the Santals and the Hindus, the author does not automatically conclude that the former have borrowed them from the latter; it is at least plausible that the flow might sometimes have been in the opposite direction. Though the focus of the study is on Religion, it is based on an understanding of Santal life as a whole. Thus this study gives a fair idea of major groups and categories of Santal society and of the economic and other institutions that hold them together.13

J. Troisi’s another significant literary contribution on Santals is ‘The Santals: Readings in Tribal Life’in 10 volumes published in Delhi on 3rd September 1979.14 He meticulously collected the various resourceful articles and research essays on Santals written by many eminent scholars and critics in several journals, reproduced them and compiled them in 10 volumes under different headings, such as, Religion and Magic, Marriage and Kinship, Myths and Folklore, Material Culture, Education and Tribal Polity, Social Organization, Language and Physical Characteristics, Social Movements and Change, Government and Other Reports, and General. The comprehensive work on the life of the Santals in ten-volumes contains more than 3000 pages and the copies of this mammoth work are available at Indian Social Institute (I. S. I.), Delhi.15

According to J. Troisi, “This work in ten volumes, the first of its kind in India, was funded by the Jesuit Provincials of Bihar and West Bengal. The material in this work has been gathered from various libraries and archives in India. This work contains 332 items written about the Santals, the India’s largest homogeneous
tribe, covering the period 1795 – 1979. Encompassing such a vast amount of material systematically organized in 10 volumes, this work is intended to serve as a tool for scholars and researchers and should prove most useful to social workers and government officials working among these tribals. It is also hoped that these ten volumes would serve as a useful model for attempts to produce similar works on other tribes in India thus enhancing our knowledge of the people in the sub-continental.

The second volume, titled, ‘Marriage and Kinship’ contains 30 studies of valuable data on these subjects. It contains nine studies which deal mainly with the family size, fertility rate and population growth. Of the seventeen studies carried out by Indian scholars, ten deal with the Santals of West Bengal and only one with the Santals of Santal Parganas.

He wrote articles on ‘Tribal Leadership in Bihar’ and ‘Social Movements among the Santals’ and attended the 10th International Congress of Sociologists held in Delhi. He gave two courses at Jnana Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune, one on ‘Sociological theories and principles’ and the second on ‘Sociology of Religions’. Both courses were very much appreciated and he repeated the same courses to the theology students at Vidyajyoti, Delhi.

**Cultural Seminar for Santal Students**

In December 1967, two much appreciated Seminars were organized in Torai by Fr. Robert Wirth. The first one was for the High School girls of Dudhani and the theme was: “The Santali Girl and Motherhood.” The second as for the High School boys of Guhiajori and the theme was – logically enough! – “The Santali Boy and Fatherhood.” Among the speakers in both seminars was Dr (Mrs.) Thompson of Hiranpur who was friendly with the Jesuit missionaries among the Santals. There were workshops and discussions as well as a cultural programme in both seminars.
An Inter – School Meet and Festival for Santal Students

An Inter – School Meet and Festival was organized at Guhiajori for Santal Students. Among the activities there were a Football Tournament, a Debate and a Cultural Entertainment. Boy students from Guhiajori, Tinpahar, Porreya Hat, S.P. College, Dumka, and girl students from Dudhani participated.21

A Leadership Camp for Santal Catholic College Students

A three-day leadership Camp on “The Santal Catholic College Student and the Social progress of the Santal People” was organized at St. Xavier’s School, Sahibganj, for Santal Catholic College Students, both boys and girls, from five different Colleges. Talks were given by Frs. Agius, A. Murmu, S. Murmu, T.O.R. and O. Scerri and Sisters Agnes and Emmanuel of Dudhani Convent helped in the running of the Camp. Fr. R. Wirth was the Convenor and Organizer of this first venture in the Santal Region.22

Leadership Course for Santal Girl Students

A leadership Course for 45 Santal School-leaving girl students of St. Teresa Girls’ School, Dudhani, was organized by Headmistress, Sr. Emmanuel, at the C.T.C., Torai, in the beginning of December 1981. The Resource persons were Frs. Jos Gauci Sacco and A. Mallia and Sr. Matilda.23

Santali Summer Course Camp ‘Santali Ghar’24

In 1970’s, the Scholastics of Santal Region and the Seminarians of Dumka diocese were systematically introduced and exposed to the Santali language, Santal culture, Santal customs and traditions, Spirituality of the Santals and the adaptation of the Liturgy according to their customs and practices, through an annual summer programme, namely, ‘Santali Ghar’(Santali house) by the eminent missionaries working among the Santals. The Scholastics and seminarians from other provinces and dioceses joined them sometimes. As it was planned and announced, a three-week Santali Summer Course Camp known as Santali Ghar was organized by Fr.
Aquilina at Guhiajori in May – June, 1973, for all the Scholastics of Santal Region and the Seminarians of Dumka diocese as well as the Seminarians from Jamshedpur diocese.  

Thirty five Scholastics and Seminarians, including seven from Jamshedpur diocese, attended the first Santali Ghar at St. Joseph’s High School, Guhiajori, under the able direction of Fr. P. Aquilina assisted by Rev. Elias Tete. One of the Jamshedpur participants, writing about the study course in the “Jamshedpur Newsletter” had this to say: “The Santali Ghar has opened our eyes to many aspects of Santal culture and their way of life. We really had useful classes at Guhiajori. There were a series of lectures on about the Santals. Fr. J. Milanes spoke to us about his experiences with the Santals. Fr. A. Mallia spoke on Santal customs and the possibilities of adaptation of our Liturgy according to their customs. Rev. E. Tete talked on the spirituality of the Santals while Rev. Vincent Tudu spoke to us about the notion of creation according to the Santals. The last day we had a concelebrated High Mass offered by Bishop Tigga followed by a grand thanksgiving ceremony. It was all very well arranged and very profitable for us.” This report would be incomplete without a special word of thanks to Br. Birendra Prasad who spared no effort in arranging delicious meals. Br. William Tirkey was always obliging to drive the participants.  

Once again in 1974, a Santali Ghar was organized at St. Joseph’s High School, Guhiajori, from Sunday, 19th May in the evening till the 1st June 1974. The success of the camp was due to the cooperation of the participants who hailed from Santal Region (18), Dumka Diocese (25), Hazaribagh Region (2), Jamshedpur Province (1) and Jamshedpur Diocese (7). Both the scholastics and the seminarians were well exposed to the socio-economic, political, cultural, religious and linguistic sectors of Santals in preparation for their future mission among them.  

**Inculturation**

Catholic missionaries have been trying to incarnate the Christian message into the Santal milieu by blending the Santal tribal customs with the Christian liturgical rites. An attempt is also being made to integrate a number of traditional
Santal festivals connected with agricultural activities like the *Baha Porob* (flower festival), the celebration indicating the new life in nature, *Erok*, the celebration of offerings in view of sowing seeds, and *Hariar*, the celebration of offering for sprouting of seedlings, into the Christian annual festival cycle. In this manner, the Santal Catholics are not only allowed but encouraged to express the Christian reality through their own life and culture. This adaptation process, though still in its infancy, has met with considerable success. This can be seen from the fact that there are more Santal Catholics in the district than Protestants. Besides, in the last few years, there has been a steady flow of Santal Protestants into the Catholic Church.\(^{31}\)

On the one hand, Christianity has brought about an intra-village fusion in so far as the convert is to a certain extent alienated from the village community into which he was born. On the other hand, it has promoted inter-village cohesion of Christian groups. This cohesion among Santal Christian groups is also extended to Christians from other tribes. This sense of belonging, however, is stronger among Catholics than among Protestants because of the latter’s sectarian nature of their religious allegiance.\(^{32}\)

According to Rev. Dr. Timothy Hembrom,\(^{33}\) “Catholic missionaries who have great respect for the Santals’ traditional festivals, musical instruments and their community singing and dancing during the festivals and who do not make abstinence from drinking a pre-condition for accepting Christianity but who keep discouraging the consumption and habit of using it through sustained moral teaching have been receiving good response from the Santals for their evangelistic work.”\(^{34}\)

Rev. Dr. Timothy Hembrom further says, “Protestant missionaries also failed to incorporate Santal festivals and rites of passage into Christianity they preached. The Santal festivals of ‘seed sowing’ (*Erok*), ‘sprouting of seeds’ (*Hariar*), ‘The harvest festival’ (*Sohrae*) and the celebration of new life as witnessed by the nature (*Baha porob*), all these festivals whose rituals were supplications and thanksgiving to the supernatural beings were just ignored and discarded. So also the initial rites of the passage of the community, e.g., ‘baby naming rite’ (*Janam chatiar*) and the ‘rite of a person’s full-fledged confirmation into the community’ (*Chacho chatiar*) could
not be incorporated into Christian rituals.”

According to Troisi, “The missionaries tended to identify Christianity with their own particular culture and often evaluated various Santal laws and customs against this background which they tried to impose on the Santals. Change was, therefore, unidirectional and adaptation, if any, was indeed minimal.” However, the Maltese Jesuits of the Santal Region put their constant efforts to adapt and inculturate the Santal festivals and the rites of the passage of the Santal community in the expression of Christian faith.

**Introduction of Santali Mass**

19th June 1965 marked a new page in the Liturgical life of the Santals of the Parishes in Santal Parganas. Sporadic news from them showed much the Fathers and Faithful had taken the introduction of the Santali Ordinary of the Mass to heart. The Liturgical and Catechetical Advisory Board held its first meeting at St. Xavier’s, Sahibganj on 5th August 1965 and the Secretary of the Board, Fr. S. Azzopardi made the copies of the Santali Ordinary of the Mass available for the Liturgical purpose.

**‘Sohrae’, the Harvest Thanksgiving Feast**

Fr. S. Calleja Gera was in the process of celebrating the ‘sohrae’, the Harvest Thanksgiving Feast of the Santals in different places throughout his Parish. An eye – witness reported: “To see so many people coming literally in their hundreds from so far away carrying baskets full of rice, wheat, etc. to lay down at the foot of the altar during the Mass Offertory and singing songs of thanksgiving, was an overwhelming sight…” Fr. Zerafa in Asanbani, started a new venture with the help of a local artist two Indian style statues of Our Lady and the Child Jesus. Many local Hindus have been going to his place to admire them.

**‘Nawai Porob’ or Harvest Festival**

Nawai or Harvest Festival was observed fully this year (1972) by all the people of Tinpahar parish. Celebrations were held in three areas of the parish. On all three occasions it was a picturesque and colourful sight with all the villagers
carrying either a basketful of new paddy or a bundle of newly harvested rice straight from their fields to the altar. Each time, efforts were made to put more of the customs of the people in the Liturgy, like the washing of the feet of the Priest when he reaches the altar, offering of flowers and incense sticks at the altar, etc., in an effort to make the Liturgy a living experience of the people. In 1975 again, “Nawai Porob” was celebrated in Tinpahar Parish with a greater concurrence of the people. The Parish Priest, A. Camilleri reported that attendance for this feast had been good and it was clear that the people appreciate the significance of their offering a basket of rice or a sheaf of paddy. The “Nawai Porob” (Harvest Feast) at Asanbani, and the processions and ‘melas’ at Talbaria, Kundli and Torai have been a growing attraction for the Santals this year. In 1981, ‘Nawai Porob’- the annual harvest festival was celebrated on a grand scale. The feast at Torai drew more than 2000 people. There were about a thousand people at Asanbani. In Dudhani parish, the festival was celebrated in the different villages. Madhupur celebrated the festival the festival on the feast of Christ the King.

Inculturation and Native Elements of Santals in Liturgy

As per the Report of the Meeting of the priests working among Santals held at C.T.C., Torai, on 22nd – 25th September 1977, the following points about Inculturation and other native elements of Santals were brought out: “Inculturation is fundamental to evangelization as an aspect of the Incarnation.” The Nawai Porobis celebrated in Tinpahar: Shieves are brought in procession before Mass and offered to the priest during the Offertory during the Holy Mass as sign of gratitude to God for the good yield of the field. Bhandan Misa(Requiem Mass): In Tinpahar, Mass is celebrated in the house of the deceased. The gifts offered during the Mass are given to the family to help in the community meal. Blessing of the graves and a community meal follow the Mass. According to the Santal belief, the soul of the dead person waits somewhere at the back of the house till the community Bhandan meal is over when it joins its ancestors. Bhandan masses are very popular among Christians and many pagans attend. Santal Feasts: Fr. Mallia has been working to adapt Santal Feasts for use in Christian celebration. He feels the work is not yet perfect and needs the cooperation of some knowledgeable Catechists from other
areas to clear up some points. It was suggested that he should circulate cyclostyled copies of his work among the Santal parishes and institutions that the clarifications are made before printing. Holy Water: The use of holy Water is in great demand among the Santal people to bless the sick, ailing animals, chase evil spirits, etc. many preferred the use of the old ritual in blessing the water since it reflects perfectly the Santals’ beliefs and practices on this subject.

Ayup Dhara (Evening Worship): has been introduced in Asanbani parish with satisfactory results. A catechist and his wife stay in a village and pray with each family before a small house shrine. The Act of Contrition is said. Then the catechist’s wife takes the ‘aharbati’ (burning incense stick) or a flower through all the rooms of the house saying, “Glory be to the

Father…” In the meantime the catechist and the family remain near the family shrine reciting the Creed expressing their faith in God.

Catechumenate:

During the Catechumenate, each Catechist should be given a specific subject to teach the catechumens. One could teach the Old Testament, one the New Testament, one the Sacrament, one the Commandments, etc. Some are holding the Catechumenates in the parish for fifteen days. Others are sending the Catechists to give eight day missions in each village. These consist of instructions, Rosary processions, the Way of the Cross with pictures in the village streets. On the eight day, the Father goes for Mass and visits each family. May devotions, where the statue of Our Lady visits each house, are found to be very fruitful. The blessing of houses, seeds, etc, brings happiness to the people.

Fr. Said found the slide-shows during the catechumenate very useful. He used the Holy Hour on the eve of each First Friday for spontaneous prayer and meditation on the mysteries of the Rosary. Fr. Zerefa has prepared a four page “Girja Dhara” (Worship in the Chapel) which follows the structure of the Holy Mass. He collects the names of all the parishioners who die during the year and the list is distributed to the catechists so that the dead would be remembered on
appropriate occasions.‘Sunday Girja’ (Sunday Holy Mass) should be attractive to the people. The fittingly composed Santali songs could be used to explain the catechetical pictures in teaching Catechism. The stress was given on the week-long stay of the Fathers, Sisters and Catechists in the villages for catechetical and religious updating of the people in their own life situations. During the week-long stay in a village, Father could visit the neighbouring villages for Mass.‘Pech Hor’ (Catholics who fall off and leave the practice of their faith): The following reasons were identified for the relapse of the faith of the people, social and family pressure, withdrawal of financial help and lack of family visits from the Church authorities, bad marriages and the influence of the ‘Ojha’ in the time of sickness.

The discussion on the ‘Catechetics’ brought the following to the limelight and they are valuable guidelines in the faith – journey of the people, the usage of the “Kuli Ror Ruar” (The Dialogical Method) in the primary level of the Catechumenate, the usage of pictorial Bible stories to make the children acquaint with the Bible, the use of Catechetical visual aids, the fixation of the age between 12 and 14 as the favourable age for the Sacrament of Confirmation. The children should be taught concern for others during this age by means of work camps, charitable works, etc. In view of better involvement of the children in the Holy Mass, the four Eucharistic Prayers for Children have been translated in Santali by Fr. Borg. The promotion of Sodalities, Crus Vir (Crusaders), St. Vincent De Paul Societies (SVP) and Leadership programmes in the mission stations.

The following deliberations were made clear while discussing the significance of the Catechists in the mission work: A Catechist must have a vocation. A person acquires a vocation especially if the priest shares the life and the work of the Catechist. When the Catechists are trusted, they become more useful and laborious. Head Catechists are absolutely essential to the continuity of the parish. Touring of the Sisters in the Catechetical work is much appreciated in the diocesan level.

The discussion on Education brought out the following facts: The Catholic children should get ‘dhorom’ (Catechism) from the Mission Schools. The vast
number of illiterate young people could be educated if the Catholic people are properly motivated. The relationship between the diocese and the government should be cordial in the educational sector. Practical training could be made available for those who cannot complete High School. Agriculture and similar useful and practical subjects could be introduced. Medium of instruction in vernaculars should be encouraged. Opening a college hostel for girls in Dudhani by Dumka diocese. Non-formal education with conscientization is more helpful than mere literacy in adult education. Stressing on agriculture and literacy, some courses could be started for boys similar to Grihini schools for girls. Many Catholic children study in non-Catholic schools due to high fee structure. Fr. Agius’ readiness to extend the scholarship scheme to any number of children in Rajmahal area.  

Fr. Micallef asked for scripts of 7 minutes radio plays to be recorded on topics like drunkenness etc. This would be played on tape recorders and used in small group meetings on a topic for discussion. Competitions were suggested as a means of involving students in writing these scripts. This competition could be advertised in Marsaltabon, Santalica or directly by cyclostyled sheets. Fr. Milanes nominated Fr. G. Muscat as the official script writer. The arrival of the Santali types Fr. Agius ordered from Italy would speed up the Santali publications.  

Santalica could be used as a Catechist, teacher, cook, etc, employment bureau or for exchange of ideas, Santali cultural training of the persons of the region, information about Santali publications, etc. Many felt that more editorial control of controversies and stories and the updating of some of the contents in Marsaltabon are desirable. Fr. Bingham of Jamshedpur views that Marsaltabon is doing a good job in letting the laity express themselves. ‘Bapla’ (Marriages): Bapla school should be compulsory (10 – 15 days) and people usually accept it as a tradition within a few years. In Santal Parganas there are common rates for ‘gonon’ (Bride – price) in Catholic marriages. In new areas the pagan rates are followed till they get into the Catholic traditions because the pagans feel we are creating another jat. ‘Opol’ fees are hereby fixed at Rs. 2/- per party and marriage fees at Rs.5/- per party.
In case of a ‘Ghar Jawe’ (A permanent serving son-in-law who works for good in his father-in-law’s house) marriage, the father of the girl should sign a legal paper making over the land to his daughter and her family. It is advisable to have a legally safe formula for this document. In case of ‘dandoms’ (penalty) the Fathers should uphold the village panchayat, but they should discourage partiality and excessive fees. Some suggested that 25% of the fines should be deposited in the parish for the uplift of that particular village. ‘Tunki Dipil Bapla’ (a type of poor man’s wedding) takes place in the house of the boy for people who cannot afford the full marriage expenses. Stability in marriage is not a strong point among the Santals. A childless wife is easily divorced. At least a two month interval between ‘nepel’ (betrothal) and the wedding is highly advocated. It was suggested that the Fathers in the mission stations should act quickly when there is trouble in the family. Medical help could be given to childless couple.

In some places, Grihini schools function satisfactorily and in some places girls find it hard to stay long.

Family Planning: Fr. Mallia is translating a book on Natural family planning in Santali. Fr. Zerefa offered to publish a leaflet on the same subject.

Vocations: Exhibitions on vocation day would show what the Church is doing and give a challenge to our youth. Photos of Santal Seminarians and religious should be used. It was suggested that girls should be encouraged to join the religious congregations.

Chatiar Mela (Purification Festival) at Barharwa - Sitapahar

Chatiar mela was celebrated at Barharwa – Sitapahar Parish. In Santali, ‘Chatiar’ means purification. The feast of the purification of Our Lady – now the Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple – was celebrated at Atgaon village for all the Christians of Barharwa Parish. In order to be able to have a mela on this occasion, the traditional 2nd February feast was by-passed and the Sunday nearest to the full moon of February – Magh – is widely celebrated in the locality as – ‘Ganga Um’ – bathing-in-the-Ganges day. For the occasion a statue of Our Lady was prepared by a local artist. Mass was celebrated in the afternoon by Fr. Francis Marandi of Tinpahar while Fr. Borg helped with the confessions. After Mass
fourteen babies were presented in the chapel. After the church service various groups presented dances. There was also a competition for flute and village violin players.\footnote{On 2\textsuperscript{nd} February 1982, the Titular feast of Mariampahar, adapting the Feast of the presentation of Our Lord in the Temple, during the Mass, many mothers offered their child to the Lord together with a pair of pigeons.\footnote{Fr. Joe Borg writes from Cilimpur about the presentation of the Santal babies: “On the last Sunday of January, we celebrate the feast of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} February, ‘the Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple’, we invited the mothers with babies and tiny tots to come for a special Mass to have their children blessed and prayed over. As we expected many people for this occasion, we held the Mass in the open by the side of the church. About 70 mothers with babies and a considerable number of chickens set right in front during Mass and we had quite a happy celebration – incredible as it may sound we had no crying babies during the service.”}}

**Christ the King Procession and ‘mela’ for Santals**

The annual Christ the king procession was held at Kundli and was well attended. For the procession at Talbaria between 800 and 900 persons took part. The Mass was followed by a big *mela* and a lottery. The *mela* was conducted in real adibasi style with several big groups of dancers rigged up with feathers and jingles. The dances were held in front of and in honour of a very Indian looking Madonna and Child, the *Jaher Era*(Lady of the Grove). Late in the evening a drama about Raja Job was successfully staged till late in the night.\footnote{In 1973, at Talbaria on the Annual Eucharistic Procession Day, a *mela* for the Santals was organized. An unprecedented crowd of about 10,000 was reported to have participated.} Biblical Themes in Santali Traditional Music

Mr. Francis Hopna Hembrom of Rajibpur Parish, the Santal troubador, has met with astounding success. He has given performances about the Old Testament to appreciative audiences in Jiapani, Kundli, Torai and other places. His songs have been recorded. He is now working on the New Testament themes.
As per Fr. J. Borg’s information, a Bible song composed and sung by Sri Francis Hopna Hembrom of Rajibpur parish was recorded on tape. The 120 minutes long recording dealt mostly with episodes taken from the Old Testament and about the birth of Christ. There was also a ten minute recording concerning the wandering of the Santal people in the time of Madho Singh. Fr. J. M. Gauci Sacco of Catholic Church, Torai, P.O. Pakur, Santal Parganas, consented to reproduce these songs for anyone requesting them on his own tape, spool or cassette. Sometime in 1983, on the occasion of the blessing of the village chapel at Gokhul village of Cilimpur Parish by Fr. Mallia, over a thousand people gathered for the celebration. On the eve of the celebration, in the night, Francis Hopna took over the stage and went on non-stop for five hours singing ballads (kobi-gan) in Santali, centred on themes of salvation history, and Santal history and traditions. In the early morning, Fr. Mallia offered Mass for the congregation and blessed the chapel. There is no doubt that ‘song’ is the key to the Santal heart.

In Lagdum, a developing substation of Cilimpur Parish, a big mud chapel was blessed in 1982. On 23rd October 1983, Frs. Joe Borg and A. Mallia solemnized the feast of Christ the King with an impressive procession with the Blessed Sacrament. After the Mass, Procession and some film shows, around eleven o’clock at night, Francis Hopna, the Santali Religious Singer, who was much admired and eagerly listened to, began his programme of songs which he kept up for several hours. The crowd kept on getting bigger and bigger and might have numbered three thousand at its peak.

Inter-Diocesan Santali Liturgical Commission:

The Commission met at Guhiajori in May, 1974 and the meeting was attended by Frs. J. Borg, Mangal Das, J. Jimenes SDB, J. Gauci Sacco, A. Mallia, S. Murmu TOR, and Rev. Charles Soren. Frs. A. Agius, S. DeRaffaele and J. Zerafa attended some of the meetings. The items for the betterment of the Santali Liturgy discussed were: Village Feasts: An adapted translation of some material recommended by Fr. J. Deeney (Jamshedpur) from his ‘Ho Koejon Puthi’ was presented by Fr. Borg. It was decided that this material and any other material on
village feasts that we might collect on our own could be published in a small booklet to be used ‘ad experimentum’ for a few years. Fr. Mallia also presented a version of ‘Baha Porob’ (Flower Festival). Santali Mass: A report of the reactions and impressions of people and catechists in older catholic communities to the Santali Mass as shown by Fr. Hans Hendricks (Hazaribagh) at Bandel was given by Frs. Borg, Said and Gauci Sacco. Initial Catechesis: The Fathers present gave a brief survey of the method they follow in their respective parishes. All the Fathers reported that they use Bible History as the framework of their instructions. However, each course is adapted to the audience, teacher, location and time available. It was recommended that Fathers would send a copy of any manuscript material they have, especially songs, to Fr. Borg who is making a collection of such material. Fr. Gauci Sacco undertook to tape a copy of Santali catechetical songs. ‘Sohrae Seren’ (Harvest festival songs): is a small booklet of catechetical songs for dancing prepared by Sri Francis Murmu of Talbaria, and is available from Fr. Borg, Catholic Church, Talbaria, Barharwa P.O., Santal Parganas District. ‘Koejon Puthi’ (Prayer Book), a booklet with the most important prayers is in the press at Benagaria and it would be available from Fr. Jimenez, SDB, Azimganj. Santalica: Santal missionaries are requested to send items of liturgical, cultural and social interest to the Editor of Santal Newsletter, St. Ignatius’, Sahibganj, Santal Parganas District, Bihar – 816109.

The Meeting of the Liturgical Commission

A meeting of the Liturgical Commission was held at Bandel on 21st August, 1974. The meeting was attended by the members of the Commission: Frs. J. Borg, H. Hendricks, J. Gauci Sacco, J. Gimenez SDB, S. Murmu TOR, A. Said and C. Soren. The following were also invited as observers: Bishop U. McGarry of Bhagalpur, Rev. Fathers A. Ramanattu TOR, A. Agius, R. Tudu and V. Tudu.

The resolutions taken by the Commission were: Course in Cultural Anthropology: In view of helping the priests to come to know more the Santal people among whom they are working, this commission recommends that the Bishops and the Major Religious Superiors concerned organize a short Course in
Cultural Anthropology for priests only, at a convenient time and place.\textsuperscript{82}“Durup Misa” (Sitting Mass): It was felt that before “Durup Misa” (Sitting Mass) as demonstrated at Bandel could be approved for general use, a comparison of Santal customs over a wider area was necessary. Hence this Commission recommended to the Ordinaries that this “Durup Misa” be allowed “ad experimentum” (on trial) in certain selected parishes, so that a meaningful comparison and consultation might be possible about the various details of this Mass, as for example: sitting and kneeling postures of the priest, when and how; vestments; Shape of ‘khond’ (sacrificial altar); ‘sindur’ (vermillion) on what to apply it; ‘bakhar’ where to have it, etc.\textsuperscript{83}

**The Bandel Meeting and the “Durup Misa” (Sitting Mass)**

Summing up the discussion on the experimental Mass, demonstrated at Bandel in 1974, Guest Theologian, Fr. P. DeLetter, remarked that it was obvious that there was a wide division of opinion among the members present. The sharp reactions of most of the Santal priests and sisters themselves against the demonstrated Mass points to the fact that much more study has to be done before one proceeds further experimentation. It was felt by many that Santal priests, brothers and sisters have a more intimate knowledge of their own people and so, all things being equal, are better qualified than others to say what should be done in this matter. Besides, experimentation in public before adequate preparation and education brings confusion in the minds of the people.\textsuperscript{84}

On the other hand, as Fr. Godwin, SVD, an anthropologist, pointed out that the priest is not a mere follower of the wishes of the people. He is a leader among his people. It is his task to educate himself first of all and then lead his people, in this case in the adaptation of the liturgy, taking into consideration the susceptibilities of the concrete situation of the flock entrusted to him.\textsuperscript{85}

**Annual Christmas Get-together on ‘Evangelization’, 1974**

As customary, the Christmas get-together in the Santal Region was always coupled with a seminar and the Jesuit Fathers, Brothers, Scholastics, diocesan priests and seminarians participated in it. In 1974, about 30 Fathers, brothers and
scholastics gathered at St. Xavier’s, Sahibganj for the get-together. The Seminar was on “Evangelization” and so Fr. Agius, the Regional Superior, gave a review of the work done during the year in the Region and spoke on the following points: the vocation work, the training of the candidates and the Apostolic School in Guhiajori; Santali literature and the annual Santali Ghar; the question of liturgy; the progress of the C.T.C. at Torai and the offer by ‘Vikas Maitri’ to train men for village projects and rural development.86

Liturgical Publications:

“Dihatre Girjak’ Dhara”(Prayer Booklet for Village Chapels)

It is the contribution of Fr. Calleja Gera. This was the first work of the Book Depot.87 A must for the catechists, the booklet contains the rubrics, prayers, hymns and explanation of the various parts of the Sunday Service without the priest.

The Missal(The Altar Book)

The Missal Santali in cyclostyled form was complete, thanks to the efforts of Fr. J.B. Panepinto, his typist and the printers.88 Later, the Santali Altar Book was printed at the Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, and published by Fr. Boniface Bonk, T.O.R., of Bhagalpur Diocese. The imprimatur carries the signatures of Bishop Urban McGarry, T.O.R., of Bhagalpur Diocese and Bishop Leo Tigga, S.J., of Dumka Diocese as evidence of inter-diocesan cooperation for Santali Liturgy. Fr. J. B. Panepinto did some of the translations in this book. 89

‘Sonot Hapta’(Holy Week) Services:

‘Sonot Hapta’ (Holy Week) Services in Santali became complete after much preparation. This 90 paged cyclostyled work contains the prayers, scripture readings and rubrics for Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday and the whole of Holy Week up to the Paschal Vigil.90
The Santali Sunday Lectionary:

It was edited and published by Fr. Panepinto as a supplement to “Marsaltabon” has four sections: All the important feasts and solemnities recurring every year. Sunday Readings for year 1 (1971 – 1972), Sunday Readings for year 2 (1972 – 1973), and Sunday Readings for year 2 (1973 – 1974).91

The Rite of Baptism of Children:

Thanks to the initiative of Fr. P. Aquilina, S.J., the Vicar General of Dumka Diocese, this 50 paged ‘The Rite of Baptism of Children’ booklet was published and made available in Santali.92

“Bapla Jion” (Married Life):

It is a booklet in Santali which serves as a guide for the marriage catechumenates and for married couples, written by Fr. Charles Soren.93

Collectio Rituum – Dhorom Kaj Korom ar Bhor Asirbad Puthī (Ritual Prayers and Blessings):

This book is a great help to the catechist in his work as it contains many prayers and forms of blessings for all occasions. All catechists could have a personal copy.94

Sonot Johone Olakat Leka JisuKristak’Bhage Sombat (The Gospel of St. John):

Beautifully printed, the book can serve as a text-book in the class room or it can be given out to catechists and friends.95


A useful book in the hands of the catechists for their own inspiration in the apostolate. The book can be used as text-book in higher classes of the schools in the Region during the catechism hour.96
Kulirorruar pahil puthi and Kulirorruar dosar puthi—Katholik dhorom Sikhauna
Reak’ Kulirorruar: (Catholic Faith in Diological Method in two volumes)

A complete explanation of the Catechism in question and answer form or dialogical form which is suitable for catechists, high school students and educated people.

Sonot Dangua Maria Sabharenkoak’ Beohar Puthi: (Sodality Prayer Book)

A booklet which contains the practical tips and rules on how to run a Sodality group, what topics to talk to the members, methods of the examinations of conscience and so on.97

Plays in Santali:

Plays have always played a significant role in educating people as well as entertaining them. Parish priests, Principals, Headmasters, Headmistresses and the youth Animators will find handy a wide range of plays for both boys and girls.98

“Etahop” (Story of Salvation):

The publication of “Etahop”, the first illustrated booklet about the story of salvation was welcomed by all and has been almost sold out. Fr. J. Borg took the initiative and directed the translation in Santali made by his catechists. Fr. G. Muscat prepared the text for similar illustrated booklets about the life of Christ, St. Dominic Savio and others.99

“Ekrar Disom” (Pictorial Pamphlet of the Bible):

The third pictorial pamphlet of the Bible for the Catechetical purpose, entitled “Ekrar Disom” is available from the Santali Book Depot at the C.T.C., Torai.100
Santali Book Depot

The Santali publications of the Santal Region were obtainable from Santali Book Depot, St. Ignatius’, Sahibganj and the same Book Depot was shifted to Catechetical Training Centre (CTC), Torai, Via Pakur, Dt. Santal Parganas, Bihar. The orders could be placed with the Director of CTC, Torai.

According to Fr. Paul Aquilina, the first Director of CTC, Torai, “The Santali Book Depot was established at CTC, Torai, at the time of its inception in 1976. Since CTC was a sort of hub where Santal Catechists gathered for formation from different parts of the country, it was thought an ideal place for the purpose. The Book Depot was meant to provide religious, liturgical and devotional books in Santali for use in the local churches with a sizeable Santali Catholic Community. Some of the books published in its address where Koejon Puthi, which went through innumerable prints, and the same with Nawa Rar Puthi. In course of time the centre for selling these books shifted to Dumka, the capital of Santal Parganas where it was more accessible to other dioceses.”

Mass Media

Fr. Jos. M. Gauci Sacco’s Contribution to Mass Media

Fr. Jos. M. Gauci Sacco was the Parish Priest of Cilimpur from 1970 to 1972, Fr. Gauci Sacco was very enthusiastic to meet the Catholic Santals and others both in the main station and in the villages. He was able to attractively approach them and catechize them through regular slide shows in Santali and the people also began to appreciate the re-creative method of showing Christianity to them. In my personal interview he said, “In 1970, when I was parish priest in Cilimpur, I started using Bible and Religious slide shows both in the parish and in the villages. I prepared commentaries in Santali in drama form which were recorded on tapes and played along with the slide shows. These were much appreciated both in the villages, and also in the mission. I had regular slide shows on Sundays for which about a thousand people used to gather.”
When Fr. J. M. Gauci Sacco, S.J., was the parish priest of Torai from 1973 to 1980, Fr. Anthony Micallef, S.J., became his Co-Pastor in 1973. Both of them began to take interest in the mass media. They prepared slides with commentaries in Santali, and also prepared Santali commentaries for available religious filmstrips.106

In 1974, Fr. J. M. Gauci Sacco was appointed as the Regional Mass Media coordinator for JESCOMIND (Jesuits engaged in social communications in the Indian assistancy). He was nominated together with Fr. A. Micallef, as the Dumka Diocese representative for Mass Media in the eastern region of the country.107 He expressed that he was the fitting candidate to be the Regional JESCOM coordinator, when he said casually and definitely: “In 1974 someone had to be appointed in each Region or Province for JESCOM, since I was the only one at that time doing this work, I was appointed as JESCOM coordinator.”108

He further said about his Media Ministry: “When Biblical and religious materials were available on Super 8, I acquired a Super 8 projector and a number of Biblical and religious films and started showing them in the villages. As the materials were in English, I used to give a running commentary in Santali. Since I had no four wheelers, I was carrying all the materials for the slide and film shows on motor cycle, using a jeep battery.”109 The vehicle for the Catechetical Mobile Unit was driven from Calcutta to Torai by Frs. S. Calleja Gera and J. Gauci Sacco.110 “In 1978 we acquired a mobile unit. So we could carry also a small Honda generator to power the equipment. Also in 1978 with the help of Fr. A. Micallef, we started “Sademarsal”, a recording studio and media Centre at Dumka. We also recorded a number of Audio tapes in Santali. Super 8 eventually gave way to Video films and now CDs and DVDs. I converted a number of Video films to CDs and started supplying these to those who needed. As I was engaged in Pastoral Work, I could not give enough time to the Media apostolate.”111 Fr. Gauci Sacco said this with a sense of satisfaction.
The Slides Prepared by Fr. Gauci Sacco

Fr. Gauci Sacco acquired slides on various themes and though they were in foreign languages, he was able to present to the people in their own mother tongue, Santali in a simple and appealing way.¹¹² Fr. Gauci Sacco prepared ‘Sakramentko’ (Sacraments) in slide format in Santali. He was showing film in the villages on ‘Life of Christ’ and stories from Old Testament through Super 8 Projector. When he was in Cilimpur (1970 – 72), Torai (1973 – 80), and Soharhati (1983), he used different media materials in his ministries. He was in ‘the Diocesan Faith Formation Team’ in Dumka, a branch of Social Development Centre (SDC), and he used media materials to a maximum extent in the faith formation of people. He was assigned a judge or official in the marriage Tribunal for Dumka Diocese.¹¹³

Frs. Antony Micallef and Gauci Sacco began ‘Sademarsal,’ in SDC, a recording studio and media Centre at Dumka in 1978. In Sademarsal, silk screen printing was used to prepare Biblical pictures mainly for the classes on Dhoram Cet’ (Catechism) and marriage preparation courses. An Audio tape, ‘Marang Din’ by Samuel Kisku and 3 audio cassettes by Fr. Varkey Chena on social themes were recorded in Sademarsal.

“Sademarsal” (Communication Centre)

The Centre for Mass media functioned temporarily at Torai chalked out a two – day meeting at CTC, starting on 18th April 1979, on the theme: ‘The Media and Evangelization’ for specially invited participants and the Convener of the programme was Fr. A. Micallef.¹¹⁴ He took a course in Communication to the first year novices of Dudhani at Torai.¹¹⁵

The Communications Centre of Dumka Diocese was a project that started when Bishop Leo Tigga was at Dumka. He encouraged the humble beginnings which were mostly the initiative of Frs. Joe Gauci Sacco and Anthony Micallef who had been trained at Manila and at London respectively.¹¹⁶ Bishop Telesphore approved of the Centre and sent an application to Missio for the building grant for

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the Centre at Dudhani, in the compound of the Social Development Centre. Other agencies were contacted for the equipments required.  

In June 1981, Fr. Micallef was appointed a member of the Faith Formation Team and In charge of the Department of Group Media for Evangelization. Together with Fr. Gauci Sacco, he saw to the setting up of the Centre which will be mostly a production centre to produce tapes, film-strips, flannels, etc. On the second day of the Senate of the Priests’ Meeting, on 8th October 1981, Bishop Telesphore celebrated Mass in the S.D.C. and then blessed the Centre. In a few words before the blessing the bishop said that the Centre was a joint venture between the Diocese and the Jesuits.  

When Fr. Jos. M. Gauci Sacco, S.J., was the parish priest at Torai, and Fr. Anthony Micallef, S.J., was the Co-Pastor, they began to take interest in the mass media. They prepared slides with commentaries in Santali, and also prepared Santali commentaries for available religious filmstrips. With the encouragement of Bishop Toppo they prepared a plan for a Mass Media Centre at Dumka. This Centre which belongs to the Dumka Diocese and serves the Santali-speaking dioceses was blessed on 8th October 1980. It is run with the collaboration of the Jesuits. The Centre prepared many charts for catechetical, educational and medical instruction. A number of Santali music cassettes were produced, and a number of radio plays on social matter, written by Fr. George Muscat, S.J., were recorded at the Centre.  

*JIVAN* salutes Fr. Joseph M. Gauci Sacco, S.J. who celebrated his Golden Jubilee in the Society in 2003. Here are excerpts from the Congratulatory letter of Fr. General, Peter Hans Kolvenbach, S. J.:  

“You may certainly recall with satisfaction how you have been engaged in the twin apostolates of pastoral and communication ministries. Your service as pastor and your efforts to form your flock in the faith with regular visits to their villages for this purpose you are fondly remembered.” Of particular significance has been the great care you took to choose suitable catechists and to train them to become your effective collaborators. It was obviously your pastoral concern that led you to acquire a good command of the Santali language and use it to produce liturgical and devotional material, as
well as audio and video cassettes for faith formation and health care. As Province coordinator of Social Communication for the past 25 years and co-founder of SADEMAR’SAL, the Audio Visual Centre of Dumka diocese and an official of the Diocesan Marriage Tribunal, you have rendered significant service both to the diocese and Province.”

Fr. Gauci Sacco’s Report on Sademarsal

“The Audio-visual unit held 161 shows in different places in the diocese of Dumka during 1984. We showed Super 8 Biblical films, 16mm films and slides/filmstrips. Most of the shows were for groups of about 50 people attending different seminars: faith, health and social development. Hence in most of the shows there had been preparations and follow-ups. The Recording Studio has released eleven new cassettes, two of Santali plays, two of commentaries on filmstrips, six of Santali songs and one of Hindi songs. Our silk screen printing has also been very active and many posters, charts, flash-cards and Christmas cards have been produced. The flannel graph set on the life of Christ is now in its second phase: making negatives for each of the colours of all the sets. We have also taken and printed about 2500 photos of school children for sponsorships.”

Santali Music

Bro. Peter Marandi, S.J., of Santal Region is an exponent in traditional Santali music and Hindustani music. He composed many new Santali religious songs. They were played and sung during the Santali Ghar at Guhiajori in 1974.

Santali Hymns in cyclostyled form meant for Holy Week were available at C.T.C., Torai, All those wanting copies could contact Bro. Peter Marandi, the composer of those songs.

A Course in Santali Church Music

A course in Santali Church Music at the CTC (Catechetical Training Centre), Torai, was conducted by Bro. Peter Marandi from 12th to the 26th May 1984. He
wanted a limited group of twenty and he got it even with little advertising and all the twenty places had already been booked.127

In spite of the limit to twenty participants, twenty six took part in the course and they came from the following dioceses: Dumka 12, Calcutta 6, Raiganj 6, Bhagalpur 1 and Jamshedpur 1. Apart from 1 priest, 2 brothers and 2 sisters, the rest were catechists. The content of the course was a mixture of theory and practice. Hindi music notation, different musical beats and rhythms, direction of choir and composition of new hymns were part of the programme. The participants showed great enthusiasm and produced a lot of harmonious noise. At the end of the course, they all felt that they learned more than they expected and they were full of praise for the course and for the music guru. A repeat performance was surely expected next year and for many years to come.128 The Santali Church Music Course took place for the second successive year at the C.T.C., Torai, from 6th May to 20th May 1985. There were sixteen participants: thirteen catechists, two Sisters and one Seminarian.129

The main purpose of the course was to prepare choir-masters to lead the singing in the churches. The course covered a wide range of areas. In the beginning, the beat and rhythm of Santali tunes were stressed, then the actual singing of the hymns, followed by the reading of the Hindi music notation. Later the conducting of the choir and the playing of the harmonium and other instruments was taken up. Lastly, the concentration was on hymn composition. The hymn composition was quite admirable and some hymns were used in the liturgical celebrations.130

At the end of the course, the students appeared for a practical test which was taken seriously and the students were keen to exhibit their newly acquired skills. The students were also very enthusiastic about the course and very eager to make use of what they have learnt in their apostolate.131

**Fr. Joseph Portelli’s Contribution to Santali Catholic Literature**

Fr. Joseph Portelli132 was appointed as Parish Priest of Majlispur after completing his training as a Jesuit. He was not new to the place because he had
already spent two years there as a regent during which time he managed to gain a
good grasp of Santali language which has served him ever since.133

After his Tertiarship Fr. Portelli was appointed parish priest at Guhiajori and
in 1942, he was transferred to Tinpahar, where he was to remain as Parish priest for
the next 15 years.134 Here he spent his time touring and increasing his flock, and
when touring season was over, by consolidating the apostolate of the word, with the
apostolate of the pen.135

Fr. Portelli, a Renowned Santali Writer

Fr. Portelli began his lifelong apostolate of pen during his scholastic life at
St. Mary’s College, Kurseong. From the beginning he was aware of the significance
of providing the Santal Catholics with fine religious books. “The Santal Christians,
those who know how to read, are in need of Catechisms, of Prayer books, of books
of religious instruction, books of apologetics, books of Christian Morality, books
which put them on their guard against the absurdity of the superstitious practices of
the pagans and against the solemn lies and the insidious errors of the protestants. All
these books, to be read by all, must be in Santali.” 136

With this conviction, without delay, he started working on such books. While
doing his Theology at Kurseong, he had already written a catechism book in Santali.
During his tenure as parish priest at Guhiajori, he started publishing his books. His
prolific pen produced many valuable translations, Catechisms, the Bible History,
Lives of Saints, Books of the New Testament, the Roman Ritual in Santali, and the
Prayer and Hymn Books, all of which have gone through a number of editions.137

Fr. Portelli started in June 1946 the publication of ‘Marsaltabon’ (Our Light),
a Santali monthly magazine of Catholic news and information for the Santal
faithful.138 The main aim of Marsaltabon was to strengthen the Catholic family and
to enlighten both the Catholics and non-Catholics. Therefore in every issue, besides
Catholic and secular news and items, there was always a variety of articles and
stories not only on religious but also on social and profane matters as well as on
Santal folklore and customs. 139 He was the editor of the same till 1956 when he was
appointed the first Regional Superior of the Santal Region. He would write most of the articles himself in simple and lucid language. His style of expression was direct and attractive. The style was direct and appealing. ‘Marsaltabon’, which has completed more than six decades of publication and is read by Santals scattered in various parts of India and abroad, will remain a memorial to Fr. Portelli’s vision, initiatives, singleness of purpose and his enduring contribution to Santali.¹⁴⁰

In recognition of his qualities, capacity as a missionary and as a writer, Fr. Portelli was called by Fr. Pedro Arrupe, S.J., the Superior General of the Society of Jesus on 2nd February 1968 to join the ranks of the Solemn Professed Jesuits.¹⁴¹ In his personal letter to Fr. J. Portelli, dated 3rd September 1973, the same Superior General Fr. Pedro Arrupe, S.J., appreciates him who completed fifty years as a Santal Jesuit missionary in the following words:

“...The earnestness with which you took up from your scholastic days the study of the vernaculars, particularly Santali, bear witness to your zeal for souls. Not only did you acquire proficiency in Santali, but you have also used it in the service of the Church. Your translation into Santali of the Ritual and various books of the Bible have been of immense help to your fellow missionaries and the people, as have also the Prayer Book and Hymn Book which have seen several editions. The Santal monthly Marsaltabon which you have founded and edited for over a decade is, I am told, in its 27th year of publication and continues to do much good.”¹⁴²

**Fr. J. B. Panipinto’s Contribution to Santali Catholic Literature**

Fr. J.B. Panepinto was assigned as assistant parish-priest to Majlispur after his priestly ordination in 1942. Here he developed deeply into the study of Santali and eventually became a pundit. In 1950 he was transferred to Tinpahar and became the assistant of Fr. Portelli. He began helping him in the editing of Marsaltabon. However in 1953 he was transferred to Guhiajori and in 1954 to Dudhani where he was to remain for the rest of his life.

Fr. Panepinto became Editor of *Marsaltabon* when Fr. Portelli was appointed Regional Superior in 1956. He remained the Editor till he died of cancer in 1990. He ensured that the magazine came out every month without fail. The magazine which
is concerned with religio-cultural and social affairs saw during his tenure a number of articles on popular scientific matters like the Sputnik, first man in space or the moon landing, etc. He also published serially parts of the New Testament which eventually became the book of the New Testament. There were also lives of saints and stories brought out serially. One important feature was the Supplement which saw every month a play meant for the schools on a variety of subjects like good and evil, poverty, etc. Eventually some twenty-two such plays were published in book form.

Along with the editorship of Marsaltabon, he translated and published the liturgical books that came out after Vatican II, especially the three-volume Altar Lectionary. He published a short History of the Church, \textit{Krist Panjaye} (The Imitation of Christ). The New Testament in Santali, done by Fr. Panepinto was from the original Greek. He published a book containing the Deutro-canonical Books of the Old Testament. In his work as Editor and translator he had a very valuable assistant of many years, Mr. Gubin Soren of Sibtola village, who settled at Dudhani. Both Marsaltabon and other works in Santali were printed with great care at Catholic Press, Ranchi.

Fr. Panepinto, besides editing the monthly Santali magazine \textit{‘Marsaltabon’}, successfully completed the new Roman Missal in Santali. This Missal has been cyclostyled with the help of the Sisters and is now in all the parishes of Dumka Diocese as well as in those of Bhagalpur. Other Dioceses, Daltonganj, Krishnagar and Dinajpur in Bangladesh, where there are Santals have also acquired the Missal.\footnote{143}

In January 1972, Fr. Panepinto published in cyclostyled form the New Holy Week Services in Santali language. These liturgical publications, so needed for the liturgical life of the Church, are diffused to several dioceses wherever the Santals have large groupings, such as, Calcutta, Krishnagar, Bhagalpur, Jamshedpur, Daltonganj, besides Dumka.\footnote{144} From August 1972, the Sunday Lectionary in Santali was published by Fr. Panepinto as supplement to the Santali Monthly paper \textit{Marsaltabon}.\footnote{145}
Faith Formation: Catechists’ Training Centre (CTC), Torai

In any mission territory, where the parishes are very extensive and the faithful live in many villages scattered far and wide, and where roads and means of public or private transport are not available, the catechists are the indispensable co-workers of the parish priests.

On account of the low rate of literacy in the area, it is not always possible to find a suitable person to be appointed as the parish catechist. The method adopted to train these catechists was that on the eve of every First Friday of the month, they would gather in the parish centre. They report to the parish priest about the happenings in the village or in the area, give him a list of people who wish to be received in the church and of those who have died, and seek his advice about any problem in the village or in some family. Afterwards the priests in the parish give the catechists religious instruction and an explanation of the Gospel passage for the coming Sundays, so that they could communicate the same during the Sunday service in the village. For a long time the need was felt that the catechists undertake a longer and deeper formation. The Bishops of other Santali-speaking dioceses requested the Jesuits of the Santal Region to open a catechists’ School. Many years ago, Torai Parish had acquired a plot of ground, known as ‘Bagan’ (garden) for its mango trees. It was earmarked for a convent but eventually the convent was built on its present site, near the church. The Bagan lay neglected for many years.¹⁴⁶

Even before the erection of the Diocese of Dumka, the need of a Catechists’ Training Centre was strongly felt by the Jesuits of the Region. In the Regional Meeting held on 28th December 1959, it was discussed that “Some beneficiaries might be willing to subsidise the building and upkeep of a Training Centre for Catechists. Choosing and training our catechists well is an urgent problem. Torai was suggested as a suitable place.”¹⁴⁷ With the formation of Dumka Diocese in 1962, the need for the Catechists’ Training Centre was stressed at the annual Missionary meetings. It was in 1969 that the Fathers gathered in the Missionary meeting passed a resolution to have such a Catechists’ Centre at Torai. Bishop Leo
Tigga, S.J., kept this resolution in mind, hoping for the opportunity to begin this much needed service.\textsuperscript{148}

In the Senate Meeting of Priests of Dumka diocese held on 25\textsuperscript{th} April 1973, the Bishop said, “the Fathers had decided to have a Catechetical Centre at Torai, which is central and where there is a property available. The only reason no start had been made was lack of personnel. If the Society can provide the personnel, a start could be made even now.”\textsuperscript{149}

In a meeting of the Senate of Priests of Dumka Diocese in April 1974, the item of the agenda on starting a Catechists’ Training Centre was keenly discussed and a conclusion was reached. The Bishop reiterated that it would be situated in Torai and that it would be entrusted to Jesuits to erect, manage and direct this centre. For this purpose the Bishop made over to the Society of Jesus the ‘Bagan’ and whatever money he had obtained for this purpose.\textsuperscript{150} When the Bishops from Bihar and West Bengal met for the first time at Bandel in 1973, in the first Santal colloquium, one of the main resolutions taken by them was to set up an inter-diocesan training centre for Catechists in Dumka Diocese.\textsuperscript{151} Hence the decision of the Senate and of the Bishop in 1974 met this wish for inter-diocesan collaboration.\textsuperscript{152}

When Bishop Leo Tigga made over the ‘Bagan’ to the Society of Jesus to start the CTC, Fr, Alfred Agius, S.J., the Regional Superior of the Santal Region, with the assistance of Fr. Joseph Gauci Sacco, S.J., the Parish Priest of Torai acquired more land adjacent to the Bagan. At the same time, Fr. John Scicluna, the Secretary to the Regional Superior, applied to Miserior for funds to build the Centre and went to Germany on the same errand.\textsuperscript{153} The plans for the CTC were made by Fr. Stegmann, S.J. of Patna Jesuit Province and Fr. Lawrence Caruana, S.J. was entrusted with the construction of the new Centre. Fr. L. Caruana reached Torai on 5\textsuperscript{th} June 1974 and took up the building of the well and compound wall. The foundations began to be built in November 1974. The work went on very fast so that all the buildings were complete by the time Fr. Caruana was given a warm farewell by Fathers, Sisters, workers and school children on 8\textsuperscript{th} April 1976.\textsuperscript{154}
Fr. P. Aquilina, till now the Parish Priest of Dudhani and Bro. Stephen Nellievilla were appointed to CTC. On 15th September 1976, the inauguration and blessing of the Centre took place. Bishop Leo Tigga blessed the Chapel while other Fathers blessed the other blocks. Later seventeen priests, including Fr. A. Agius, the Regional Superior, representatives from Bhagalpur, Krishnagar and Patna dioceses, concelebrated Mass with His Lordship who also gave the homily. The twenty four catechists, who were that day starting the first training course, also participated in the Holy Mass. The choir of the Torai girls’ school was also in attendance.

After the Mass, everybody gathered in the Centre’s Lecture Hall where Fr. A. Agius, the Regional Superior traced out the history leading to that day’s event. Fr. P. Aquilina, the Director of the Centre, thanked the various people who were instrumental in getting this Centre started and then explained to the assembled guests, the objective of the Centre, Catechetical Vocation and the main divisions of the training course.

At a buffet lunch, very well prepared by Bro. Stephen Nellivilla, the Fathers, Sisters and Catechists mixed freely and all were happy to see some of the veteran catechists of the Santal Mission. Around 9.00 p.m., Fr. J. Gauci Sacco showed “The King of Kings” the newly acquired film for the Mobile Unit with Hindi soundtrack.

**Courses Followed the Inauguration of the C.T.C.**

The first course for Catechists (15th September – 14th November, 1976) had 24 catechists from the following dioceses: Dumka (10), Bhagalpur (6), Krishnagar (3), Calcutta (2), Jamshedpur (2) and Daltonganj (1). The second course for Catechists was from 15th January 1977 to 14th March 1977. The applications for 27 seats should reach the Director by 15th December 1976. The third course also was for catechists from 14th April 1977 to 13th June 1977. A five day seminar on the use of the adapted Hindi version of the Bangalore series of the NEW CATECHISM for Class I – V from 17th December 1976, in the evening till 23 December 1976,
morning. All those engaged in or responsible for teaching Catechism in Classes I - V were requested to attend.159

Formation of Catechists: Full – Time Catechists

Since the primary aim of the inter – diocesan training centre was the in-service training of Catechists, it was decided to carry out meaningful programmes for a suitable period of time. Hence a full course of six months, divided in to three parts of two months each, was devised for the full-time Catechists. In between each part, the Catechists would return to their parish to practice what they learnt. During the six months course, different priests or religious would give class on the articles of faith, Bible, Catechism, moral problems, Liturgy, the Sacraments, homiletics, Methodology, Catechetics, audio-visuals, singing and pastoral care. Other subjects found their place in the curriculum as the years went by. Hundreds of full-timers have benefited from the course.160

According to Fr. Paul Aquilina, the Director of the C.T.C., “It is the aim of C.T.C., Torai to help Parish Priests in the spiritual, doctrinal, and pastoral formation of their catechists, whether they are full timers or not. Formation is an on-going process for everybody. As leaders among the People of God, the catechists need it all the more. C.T.C. helps by providing freely such an on-going formation to Santali speaking catechists.”161 The catechists, who are for the most part married men, leave their families for two months, which is really a great sacrifice for them, in order to concentrate on the training. It is an intensive course followed by a return to the field of apostolate, where they apply their newly acquired techniques and vision. Then they go back to the centre for another two-month period, which is again followed by field experience for ten months. When they complete the third period of two months, the full-time catechists will have to spend in all six full months of training at the centre.162 On 10th November, 1979, Bishop Telesphore Toppo gave the ‘MissioCanonica’ and a Diploma to the first batch of catechists who completed the three year cycle course at CTC, Torai.163
**Village Catechists**

Many dioceses are unable to give the faithful, the Sunday Mass in remote villages. Moreover, the need of having local community leaders is always present. Hence another type of course of one month duration was devised for Village Catechists and Animators. The Sunday Service without a priest is the focal point of this course. Many skills are required of the Catechist who conducts the Sunday Service: reading intelligibly, singing, homilies, leading prayers and caring for the community. All these are integrated in this course. Hundreds of Village Catechists or Animators who attended courses at CTC brought a qualitative change and improvement in the life of the faith communities as well as village communities.

Women, who are the major force in any human society and who shape the destinies of families and societies alike, are taken care of in the CTC programmes, particularly through the yearly month long course reserved for them, usually after the transplantation season.

In 1981 alone five such courses, including one for women, were conducted with participants totaling around 150. The Sunday-service without a priest is one of the main items of the curriculum for this group of catechists. CTC has become a favourite and welcome place for Santal Catholics from all over North-East India. Here they meet and learn about the life of the Santals in different contexts and places. They speak their own language and follow their customs. They feel at home.

The CTC has also played host to the Santal Colloquium in the eighties and kept it alive. It houses Catholic religious books in Santali language. Every year, since its inception, CTC organizes month long course in Santali language for priests, religious, seminarians and candidates to religious congregations who opt for working among the Santals. It was conducted by Fr. G. Muscat, S.J. As an inter-diocesan centre, CTC continues to pursue the purpose for which it was set up, that is, to train and animate Catechists, who are co-workers of pastors. In carrying out its formation and training programmes, the primary concern of CTC is the spiritual
formation of the trainees, centred on the Person of Christ and nourished by His Word and the Eucharist.

The Collaborative functioning of the CTC

In consultation with Bhagalpur Diocese, CTC has devised a full course of six months training for full-time catechists. This course is divided into 3 periods of 2 months each. At the end of the course, the catechists will receive the ‘Missio Canonica’ and a Diploma. The courses are free of charge, thanks to the help given by Missio and Propaganda for the training of catechists. During 1978, there were two courses of two months each, covering periods A and B for full-time catechists. It is hoped to complete the course by having the last period C of two months in September 1979. The catechists who attended the courses came from the dioceses of Dumka, Bhagalpur, Raiganj, Daltonganj, Jamshedpur and Krishnagar.

For the Girja Catechists, during 1978, there was one month course for all the catechists of Kalna Parish of Calcutta Archdiocese; 3-week course for the Girja catechists of Dumka-Raiganj Diocese; 3-day retreat for the catechists of Azimganj parish of Krishnagar Diocese; and 3-day retreat for the catechists of Kundli parish.

When Fr. P. Aquilina speaks of the impact of the CTC on the Catechists, he says, “What really makes an impact on them, apart from the primary fact that the Holy Spirit is at work in their hearts, is the use of the Santali language, their mother tongue, and the Santal milieu in which the teaching is situated. The apostolic field is limited Santal life, customs and situations. Catechists and faith-formation thus incarnated become through the action of the Holy Spirit the vivifying principles of Santal Society.”

Catechism Classes in the Schools of the Region

As per the decision taken in the Regional meeting held on 27th December 1957 at St. Xavier House, Sahibganj, the Fathers themselves should look after the Catechism classes at least twice a week and check the daily work of the class teacher.
in this respect too.\textsuperscript{172} In order to promote and organize religious instruction in all the schools of the Region, it was suggested to hold every year during the Puja holidays at Sahibganj, a regional inter-school catechism competition for four groups of boys and girls, such as, of the Lower Primary, Upper Primary, Middle School and High School. For this purpose, a common syllabus would be sent to all the schools in January. Fr. Panepinto would set the syllabus and the examination questions. The competitions for boy and girl students would be conducted separately on different dates. For the Catholic day scholars who were not attending catechism class in our schools, a Sunday catechism class for them should be introduced. The Regional Superior would give eight prizes to the best competitors of the whole region independently of the class catechism prizes.\textsuperscript{173}

**The First Regional Catechism Contest in Sahibganj**

On 3\textsuperscript{rd} December 1957, the Feast day of St. Francis Xavier, after the Solemn High Mass in the morning celebrated by Fr. J. Portelli, the Regional Superior who was assisted by Fr. A. Summut and Fr. A. Scicluna in St. Xavier’s School, Sahibganj, the First Regional Catechism Contest was held in which the winners of the parochial competitions made friendly brains tussle of their catechism knowledge to get the much-coveted title of “Raja” or “Rani”.\textsuperscript{174}

Torai, Guhiajori, Tinpahar and Dudhani accompanied their hopeful representatives with their best wishes for success. There were four sections for boys and girls of different grades. But St. Paul’s observation that in the race only one gets the prize, held good here as well, though not so literally for Tinpahar bagged two first prizes in the 3\textsuperscript{rd} and 4\textsuperscript{th} sections, while Dudhani and Torai got first in the first and second sections respectively.\textsuperscript{175} A well prepared debate by the Santal Catholic Students attending the Sahibganj Government College, on ‘How to spread Religion?’ followed the Catechism competitions.\textsuperscript{176}

In the afternoon, the parents and friends of the children of Xavier School, Sahibganj, were entertained to an enjoyable programme which opened with a speech by the Principal on the meaning of Education.\textsuperscript{177} The children’s choir helped to
enliven the show by musical items in between the plays – all of which were very well received by the appreciative audience. The choir brought the programme to an end with “Goodnight, parents”, followed by the National Anthem. The representatives of Majlispur for the Regional Catechism Contest found the trip across the Ganges to Sahibganj somewhat out of the range of their journeying ambitions. So they had a contest “magna cum pompa” at Majlispur where they had to pass the exacting standards required by the Director – Fr. Grech Cumbo. It was a very successful and well-attended Contest.

The Inter – School Catechism Contest

The Inter – School Catechism Contest for all the Parish Schools in the Southern part of the Diocese of Dumka was held at Guhiajori on 3rd October 1965, the Feast day of St. Theresa of Child Jesus and the winners from each of the Primary School Section, Middle School Section and the High School Section were awarded, besides a Medal, Scholarships for their education by His Lordship Leo Tigga, the Bishop of Dumka Diocese as announced well in advance by Fr. A. Sammut, the organizer of the Contest.

In the Primary School Section, Margaret Marandi (Dudhani) and Mariam Murmu (Tinpahar), in the Middle School Section, Catherina Tudu (Dudhani), Paulus Besra (Guhiajori) and Lucia Kisku (Torai), and in the High School Section, Assunta Basko (Dudhani) and Benedict Murmu (Guhiajori) became the winners. Sr. Cecilia of Torai was one of the Judges on the Board. The results of the contest reveal that the performance of the girls was much better than that of the boys.

A Summer School for Girls at Guhiajori

“It is true that St. Joseph’s high School is not a Girls’ School, but last summer, Fr. Mallia Milanes, the zealous Parish Priest, filled it with about sixty girls. He sent out a hundred invitations to girls belonging to his parish, to come over to Guhiajori and spent a few days there to get a refresher in religion. Some sixty of these turned up. Two Sisters of Charity of SS. Maria Bambina came from Dudhani to run the show. The girls were divided into three groups graded according to the
knowledge they had of their religion, and fifteen of them made their First Communion. Besides religious instruction they were also taught a little how to stitch and mend their own clothes. The whole show was quite a success, but, says Fr. Milanes, it was more expensive than he had reckoned!”

**Catechism School in Guhiajori:**

During the holidays a catechumenate was held for the children of the villages. Some one hundred and twenty eight assembled to be prepared for confession and first Holy Communion. It was quite a hard job, said Fr. Mallia Milanes, to keep these children attentive and make them repeat their prayers, especially when the temperature was marking 112°F. “As it is customary in the parish, during the summer holidays, Rev. Fr. J. B. Milanes organized a ‘dhorom cet’ (Catechism School) for the boys and girls of the parish. This year more than 130 boys and girls and some adults attended the refresher course from May 27th to June 3rd 1962. Two Bambina Sisters from Dudhani mission station, two head catechists and one high school boy worked very hard during that week to teach the boys and girls, religion and discipline. 30 made their First Holy Communion and others had the opportunity to receive Holy Communion several times. Every morning a commentary was given during Mass.”

**Catechumenate at Tinpahar**

“How about 50 boys, girls and adults attended the Dhorom Cet’ at Tinpahar from the 7th to the 15th of June 1962. On the last day, 35 children made their First Holy Communion.”

“Over sixty persons attended the Catechumenate at Tinpahar organized by Fr. J. Borg and assisted by two Sisters and two Catechists from the 6th to the 14th October 1962.”

**Catechumenate at Cilimpur**

“A three weeks’ Catechumenate was held at Cilimpur, where there were two Santal Daughters of Saint Anne (DSA) helping in the instructions.” From the 2nd to the 15th October 1962, a good number of families that have asked for Baptism
gathered for the Catechumenate at Cilimpur. Two Santal Sisters from Morapai helped Fr. J. Portelli. In September, two Catechists made a house to house visit to enlist the Catechumens willing to come over and make sure of their real motives.\textsuperscript{188}

**Catechism in Majlispur**

The experimentation in Catechism after Sunday Mass and in Pre-Nuptial Courses was proving successful. The three-day-retreats involving Mass, Sermon and Lectures with slides daily in the villages of the Parish proved to be successful in strengthening the faith of the people.\textsuperscript{189}

**Refresher Course for Catechists**

A Refresher Course for Catechists of the Southern side of the Diocese of Dumka at Torai from 23\textsuperscript{rd} to the 29\textsuperscript{th} May 1966, is being held under the direction of Fr. J. Portelli as per the circular has already been sent around to this effect. Among the religious books which the catechists are asked to take along with them, besides those explicitly mentioned in the circular, are Dhorom Galmarao (I & II) and Dhorom Itihas.\textsuperscript{190}

During the Puja holidays in 1972, a three day retreat cum refresher course was conducted by Fr. P.Aquilina, the Vicar General and Fr. J. Portelli. In all 62 Catechists attended from Mundli, Kundli, Talbaria and Sahibganj. The Catechists had to write a summary after each explanation of some event in the Gospel. Some did well; others struggled through; a few could not hold the pencil firm enough to scribble anything The evening cinema and slide shows were well appreciated and by the third day, when all the villages around knew what was going on, it was hard to control the crowds. Fortunately it was an open air show. All the catechists expressed the hope that such a course will be an annual occurrence.\textsuperscript{191}
Marriage Preparation Course at Dudhani

Dumka Unit of the Diocese held the first inter-parochial course for marriageable boys and girls. Altogether 10 boys and 30 girls attended the week-long course held in Dudhani.192

Marriage Preparation Course at Torai

In January 1975, a Marriage Course was held at Torai under the guidance of Fr. J. Zerafa. The 47 participants, who came from Torai, Talbaria, Tinpahar, Kundli, Sahibganj and Azimganj appreciated Joe’s talks which covered all aspects of married life. Joe later conducted a similar two-week’ course in his parish at Asanbani where a catechist from Torai helped in showing the slides and filmstrips.193

Marriage Catechumenate in Majlispur

During his six years at Majlispur, Fr. G. Muscat regularly organized Marriage Catechumenates and introduced the Grihini School which had given very solid results. It is reported that the gangs of thieves and other unsocial elements had been effectively dealt with. The begging philosophy had been kept in control.194

Spiritual Renewal Courses at Jiapani

On the occasion of the Golden Jubilee (1925 – 1975) of the Santal Mission, refresher courses were being organized by Fr. A. Mallia at Jiapani for all those who were preparing themselves to receive some sacrament. Also to help the faithful in the villages to experience the joy of the Jubilee and be filled with zeal, week-long courses of spiritual renewal in every local church had been organized. The course concluded on Saturday with a Eucharistic celebration followed by tea and khajari (buffed rice) and village sports with prizes.195
A Seminar for Catholic Teachers

A four-day Seminar for the Catholic teachers of Dumka Diocese was held at CTC, Torai, from 4th to 8th January 1979, to make the teachers of Catechism aware of their duty and responsibility in making Christ active and alive in the lives of the children. This evaluating seminar was the first of its kind in the Diocese. There were 54 participants in all. In spite of his indisposition, Bishop Telesphore Toppo directed the seminar to the satisfaction of all. In giving the lectures and model classes, Fr. Charles Soren and Sr. Angeline, H.C. of Sitapahar ably assisted the Bishop. Fr. J.M. Gauci Sacco gave a class on the use of audio-visuals in the teaching of catechism. A survey on the teaching of catechism in the Diocese was also conducted.

Vocation Camp for Santal Boys

From 26th May to 30th May 1980, more than 60 boys from Guhiajori and Tinpahar high Schools as well as from other schools in Santal Parganas and Raiganj Diocese gathered at Loyola Hostel, Tinpahar, for a Vocation Camp. The Santal Scholastics, Bernard Murmu, Charles Tudu and Sunil Marandi assisted by John M. Chandran directed the Camp which the boys appreciated very much. Fr. John Scicluna, the Regional Superior was present throughout the Camp and he addressed the boys twice. The response from the Santal Catholic boys was encouraging. in Santal Mission.

The Protestants came much ahead of the Catholic missionaries to work among the Santals. Initially, the relationship between the Protestants and the Catholics was much stained and so the Protestants went to the extent of approaching the authorities to stop the missionary Fathers, their associates and their missionary ventures among the Santals. Due to the spirit of toleration and ecumenism among the missionaries, many efforts were put in jointly both by the Pastors and the Fathers in the form of Bible sharing and prayer services to bring unity and peaceful co-existence among the Santal Christians and their leaders.
Ecumenism with the Protestants

At the invitation of Fr. J. Cachia, the Principal of the (Protestant) Santal Theological Seminary at Benegaria, the Rev. Krogh, and two of his Santal students visited St. Mary’s, Kurseong for the second time running. This time they arrived early to attend a concelebrated Mass. The rest of the day he spent enjoyably in the company of our Scholastics whom he likes to call “Santal Fathers”.

Protestants in Catholic Priestly Ordination

The Priestly Ordination ceremony of Fr. A. Mallia went off well due to the organizing capacity and hospitality of Fr. A. Grech and the liturgical sense of Fr. J. Schembri, the M.C. in Torai Church which was packed to capacity. The two Protestant Pastors of Pakur as well as some Protestant Christians from Hiranpur also attended.

Ecumenical Service in Rajmahal area

The first joint Ecumenical Service in Rajmahal area was held on Sunday, 22nd January 1973. It was a Bible Service for Catholics and Christians of Mundli and Taljhari parishes. The venue of the Service was the 114 years old massive and spacious church conspicuously perched on the top of Taljhari hillock. The attendance was beyond expectation. Besides the Christians, a few non-Christians from neighbouring villages came “to see”. The combined service before a packed church was led by Rev. Benjamin Murmu, Pastor of Taljhari, and Fr. A. Camilleri, Parish Priest of Mundli. Rev. Francis Marandi, the Vicar of Mundli was the commentator and led the readings of the Psalms while the congregation repeated the response. The Taljhari choir sang beautiful songs at the entrance, during the offering of the gifts and in between the Scripture readings which were read by the Head Catechists of Taljhari and Mundli respectively. At the offering the boys of St. John’s high School, Mundli, and the girls of Nirmala Convent, Mundli, sang appropriate hymns in Santali tune and again they did the same at the end of the service. In a short homily delivered by Fr. Camilleri, the congregation was reminded that it was
the first time that they met together to pray for unity. It was an occasion of great joy and gratitude to God.\textsuperscript{202}

The prayer for Christian Unity was led by the Pastor of Taljhari and made a deep and lasting impression as both the communities knelt and prayed together. The first hesitation experienced when this combined ecumenical service was first thought of, was soon dispelled with the success it had in the attendance of members of both the communities, many of whom trekked all the way from as far as ten miles. The friendly and festive atmosphere it created was truly consoling and rewarding. Many expressed the desire to have more such ecumenical services on different occasions of the liturgical year.\textsuperscript{203}

**Ecumenical Prayer Meeting at Torai**

An ecumenical prayer meeting was held at Torai. The meeting was organized by Fr. J. Gauci Sacco and was attended by the CNI Pastor of Hiranpur and three Methodist Pastors of Pakur with their respective congregations.\textsuperscript{204}

**Ecumenical Service at Mundli**

In 1974 also an **Ecumenical Service** was held in conjunction with the C.N.I. brethren of Taljhari. The function, which was held at Mundli itself, was attended by more than 1000 people, evenly distributed between Protestants and Catholics who filled the square in front of the church. Both the choirs of Taljhari and Mundli sang during the Bible Service. The Pastor of Taljhari preached the sermon. Fr. Francis Marandi was the commentator and the leader of the Service. Fr. A. Camilleri read the different prayers. The one complaint heard that one service in the year is too little and we should try to have more such ecumenical meets both at Taljhari and Mundli during the year.\textsuperscript{205}

**Ecumenical Service at Barharwa – Sitapahar**

It was the turn of Barharwa – Sitapahar Parish in 1974 to host the ecumenical service for the Christians of Barharwa area. The Prayer Service was held at
Sitapahar on the top of the hillock, the site of the future shrine of the Santal Parganas. Canon B.B. Murmu, who was the Sabha Mukhiya, opened the service and gave the concluding blessing while Rev. Marandi, the Pastor of the Good Shepherd Church, Dhorompur, gave the sermon. The lessons were read by Fr. J. Gauci Sacco and Rev. David Jha, pastor of Dhorompur church. Fr. J. Borg, the parish priest of, led the 1500 strong congregation in praying the way of the Cross. After the service the people of Sitapahar, with songs and dances, led the parish priest from Sitapahar to Talbaria.\footnote{206}

**Inter-denominational Meeting at Bandarjuri Mission**

In March 1975, an Inter-denominational meeting took place at Bishop’s House, Dudhani under the auspices of ‘Vikas Maitri’, Ranchi, with the intention of starting a branch in Santal Parganas to train men for village projects and rural development. Then on 18\textsuperscript{th} April 1975, at Bandarjuri Mission, a meeting was convened by Fr. P. Aquilina, S.J. and the following Churches took part in the meeting: W.E.L., Methodist, C.N.I. and R.C. The R.C. delegation consisted of Frs. P. Aquilina and A. Camilleri, Sr. Sophia, Mr. Peter Gubin Soren and Mr. Samuel Soren of Dudhani. A Branch Committee was set up with two representatives from each Church. In the voting of the Office Bearers of the Branch Committee, Fr. A. Camilleri was elected President and the other member on the committee was Mr. Peter Gubin Soren, the Marsaltabon Clerk.\footnote{207}

**Ecumenical Church Service in Mundli, Tinpahar**

In 1976, it was the turn of Mundli to be the venue for Ecumenical Church Service between the Catholics and the Christians of Taljhari. Pastors Benjamin Murmu and Stanislaus Tudu were present for the service along with a good crowd of their Christians. The Taljhari choir and Bro. John Chandran’s well trained group of small boys and girls sang suitable songs both in Santali and Hindi to the accompaniment of drums and accordion. Fr. Vincent Tudu ably conducted the service as M.C., while the young pastor of Taljhari, Rev. S. Tudu gave a stirring sermon about Christian Unity. After the service both choirs were given refreshments
along with the Fathers and Pastors in the bungalow. This was the fourth such Ecumenical Church Service and the attendance showed that this yearly feature of getting together to pray together was gaining in popularity. In 1977, the Ecumenical Services were held at Dudhani Cathedral and at the C.N.I. Taljhari Church thanks to the initiatives of Frs. A. Camilleri and L. Caruana respectively.

**Missionary Meeting, 1973**

“Our Mission of Evangelization among the Santals” was the theme of a meeting being organized at the Retreat House, Bandel, from the 6th to the 10th August 1973 for all those working among the Santals. Besides the keynote address on “The Task of Evangelization Today”, they planned to have a short paper each day on different aspects of the Santal apostolate, followed by workshop, discussions and general sessions. Subjects of the papers were: “The Santal people: their hopes and aspirations – the Church’s response to them,” “Our approach to the Santals, past and present – successes and failures” and “Looking ahead and planning for the future.” The contingent from the diocese and Region will be the biggest and will be led by Bishop Tigga and Fr. Agius and Fr. J. Borg will be reading the first paper.

**Regional Meeting on Santal Vocations, 1974**

In the annual get-together of the Jesuits of the Santal Region, the discussions focused on the review of vocations in the Region. “It was felt that if they wanted more vocations they had to put more Fathers in the hostels, they needed more middle schools, they should have more Catholics in the hostels and separate the middle and high school boys.” They all appreciated the fact that the parish priests wished to have as many as possible of their parishioners educated.

Fr. Charles Soren spoke about the direct role of the schools in evangelization. He referred to the cooperation that should exist between the parish and the school in an area since both parish and school are signs of the living Church. In the discussion the need of having spiritual fathers and communities of Christian living in our schools was pointed out. The senior boys could be organized to go to some village and help the people there or to make surveys.
Missionary Meeting on ‘Evangelization’, 1974

The theme of the Missionary Meeting of 1974 was ‘Evangelization’. Bishop Tigga of Dumka diocese welcomed the participants and reviewed the progress made in the year. He insisted on a common policy in view of the increase in the number of mixed marriages in the diocese. With the Bishop’s permission, the Sisters were allowed to take the Blessed Sacrament along with them for distributing communion whenever they toured to the distant villages.214

The parish priests and the curates present gave a review of the work in their area. The main ideas which could be gleaned were: our Catholics were interested in being visited; need for more dedicated, better qualified and trained catechists; the problem of the follow-up of the neophytes; the ceremony of regeneration is held and followed by a meal prepared by the people; schools are being organized in the villages; organize village feasts more than parish feasts; interest the people to join a cooperative and also develop a model village; leadership qualities of the boys in our schools; regular catechumenates in the centre and finally the question was asked whether clothes distributed to the people were a hindrance or a help to our apostolic mission.215

Fr. Charles Soren spoke about the direct role of the schools in evangelization. He referred to the cooperation that should exist between the parish and the school which are signs of the living church. In the discussion the need of having spiritual fathers and Communities of Christian Living in our schools was pointed out. The senior boys could be organized to go to some village and help the people there or to make surveys.216

Fr. Y. LaFerla spoke on the role of development in evangelization. He raised the following questions: Is social development part of the evangelization duty of the church? How far should priests get involved in social and economic development work? Has involvement in social work in the past been detrimental to spiritual work? Has priestly involvement been detrimental to the people helped?217

Fostering Marian Devotion
In fostering the Marian devotion among the Santals of the Santal Region, Sitapahar Mission Station plays an important role. The main attraction at Sitapahar is the artistic Marian Shrine on the top of the hill. In order to foster more devotion to Mother Mary, the following plans were made:

Henceforth the entire mission compound will be known as Mariampahar. Likewise the parish is known as Mariampahar, the School at Mariampahar and the Girihini School and small hospital will also be within the area of Mariampahar. Every first Saturday of the month special devotions in honour of Mary will be organized. On Sunday closest to 2nd February (the Titular feast of the Parish), there will be the annual presentation of babies to the Blessed Virgin. For this the cooperation of the Parish Priests is requested. Please inform your parishioners about this and invite them to go to Mariampahar to offer their babies to Our Lady and receive the special blessing. During the whole of the month of February “Johar Maria Johar” pilgrimages will be organized to Mariampahar from different parishes of the two dioceses (Dumka and Raiganj). A dhera will soon be prepared to shelter the pilgrims. The pilgrims can come to thank Mother Mary for some favour received or to intercede for some grace.

The pilgrims can walk any distance they choose. The pilgrims will preferably be dressed in white with a blue sash (the women in white sari with a blue border) and on the way they recite rosary. If the pilgrims are accompanied by a priest, he will offer Mass upon their arrival at the Shrine at Mariampahar. If no priest accompanies the “Johar Maria Johar” pilgrims, the Fathers at Mariampahar will offer Mass for them if prior notice is given.

**Crusaders (Katie’ Preritko): Children’s Rally at Guhiajori**

Under the inspiration of Bishop T. Toppo, a Children’s Rally was held on 14th and 15th November 1979, at St. Joseph’s High School, Guhiajori. Many children attended. The programme included Holy Mass, General Knowledge and Catechism Test, Bible Quiz, Cultural Programme, Competitive Games, Children’s Fair and was concluded with a Candle Procession. The bishop was the Chief Guest and presided over the function on both days.
It was a unique experience for the participants. The children had a feeling of oneness and of belonging to a big family – the family which needs them for its survival and progress.221

The inspiration and initiative of the Bishop in organizing the children emerged into a systematic feature, namely, Eucharistic Crusaders (Katic’ Preritko) and Bro. Francis Aind, S.J. was appointed as the Dumka Diocesan Director for the Katic’ Preritko (Eucharistic Crusaders).222 Even before he was assigned to this responsibility, on 2nd February 1981, he conducted the ceremony of the first solemn promise of the Crusaders of St. Maria Goretti School, Torai, during the Mass celebrated by Fr. M. Ambrose, the Parish Priest of Torai. After Mass, there was agape followed by sports.223

**Eucharistic Crusade Rally**

The first Rally of the Crusaders in Dumka Diocese was held at Tinpahar from 2nd to 5th October 1981. On 2nd October 1981, all roads led to Tinpahar. From distant Madhupur and from Purnea across the Ganges, young boys and girls were arriving carrying high the blue and white flag of the Eucharistic Crusade.224 Bro. Francis Aind, the Diocesan Director, had visited all the schools and had planned the first-ever Rally of the Crusade. The one hundred and ten young Crusaders reached by bus up to Tinpahar and others walked from the railway station to Mundli singing the Crusaders’ Hymn along the way. In the evening Bishop Telesphore accompanied by Fr. John Scicluna, the Regional Superior reached Tinpahar and was welcomed by the happy and smiling children.225 The Bishop was the main celebrant during the concelebrated High Mass the next day and in the homily he exhorted the “Katic’ Preritko” (Young Apostles) to be his arms and support through their prayers and sacrifices.226 After the inauguration of the Rally, the participants met in the School Hall and took part in a written Bible Quiz. In the afternoon the Crusaders heard a report from the Secretary of each of the eight units that were represented. The Bishop met with the Diocesan Director and the Guides and encouraged them in their very important task of forming young apostles.227 The evening programme included
games for all and film strips about the life of St. Dominic Savio and St. Martin Porres.

Fr. John Scicluna, the Regional Superior said Mass for the participants on the second day. After breakfast the Crusaders presented ten-minute skits based on Bible themes and the Torai contingent presented a drama on the meaning of a Crusader. The acting was of a high standard and it was difficult to choose the winners. The Crusaders and their Guides thanked God for this wonderful experience. While they were looking forward for a bigger Rally next year, the Animators of the Eucharistic Crusaders in the Schools in the Diocese gathered at the C.T.C., Torai, where together with Bro. Francis Aind, the Diocesan Director, they reviewed the past and planned for the future. 228

The annual Eucharistic Crusade Rally took place at Guhiajori from the 23rd to 26th October 1982. This year the whole programme was on a bigger scale than last year. 254 Crusaders with 28 animators were present for the occasion. Talks, playlets and exhibitions were the special activities of these days. The presence of the Bishop Telesphore was an encouragement to all. 229 The third Annual Crusade Rally held at Torai Parish from 13th to 16th October 1983. This year, 519 children from 14 parishes participated in the many and varied activities of the programme with great enthusiasm. 230 The fourth Eucharistic Crusade Rally took place at Tinpahar from 5th to 8th October 1984. There were 315 children from 11 units taking part in the Rally and for the first time there was a group of 17 crusaders coming from Gokhla parish in Bhagalpur diocese. The Rally was formally opened by Fr. E. Stellini, the Regional Superior, and Bishop Telesphore exhorted the crusaders to remain true and loyal to their ideals for the whole of their lives. Reading of the reports of the various units, Bible competitions, the Gospel playlets, the exhibition depicting the different religious congregations working in the diocese and the daily Eucharist and the Rosary with slides were the important items of the three-day programme. 231 All these events had a great impact on the Catholic Santal children to grow intellectually in the schools and spiritually in the Catholic faith.
Establishment of the Press

The Jesuits of the Santal Region felt the need of having a Printing Press in the Region to cater to the apostolate of the printed word in Santali for Dumka diocese and neighbouring dioceses. After due consultation it was decided to start a Press in the Santal Region and the Patna Jesuit Province readily came forward to send Bro. Chacko Perumalil who was trained in Bombay and remained till recently in Sanjivian Press, Patna, to start the Press and train one of the Brothers of the Region and some boys in the art of typography. This apostolate would involve the Brothers in another form of apostolate.232

Vinay Press, Sahibganj

In February 1979, a Printing Press, namely, ‘Loyola Chapasal’ (Loyola Printing Press) was installed in kundli, Tinpahar and was blessed by Fr. John Scicluna, the Regional Superior. Fr. A.R. La Greca who was willingly ready to execute the orders received for printing immediately. Bro. Chacko Perumalil of Patna Jesuit Province assured all ‘excellent service’.233 The Printing machine which was brought from Patna was primarily to print books in Santali. Though initially Bro. Benjamin Sarupurti was initiated to the work, he was sent to Gujarat in 1979 to qualify himself in Printing Technology followed by his tertianship. He spent some months at Anand Press to get more experience in typography.234 According to the Santal Region Newsletter of December 1979, “Bro. Benjamin Sarupurti continues his training at Anand Press, Anand in Gujarat Province. He is doing very well and is looking forward to his return to the Region well – trained.”235 In 1980, Fr. John Scicluna purchased a new printing machine, “Letter Press” from Delhi and the printing types were bought from Madras.

In January 1982, the ‘Loyola Chapasal’ was shifted to its new premises in the compound of Vinay Bhavan, Sahibganj, and came to be known as “Vinay Press”. The Jesuit Brothers of the Region led by Br. Benjamin Sarupurti manage it.236 When Vinay Press started functioning in Sahibganj, its first work was the neatly printed issue of the Eucharistic Crusade magazine in Santali, “Katic”
“Preritko”. The monthly Periodical, ‘Marsaltabon’ in Santali which has been published from 1946 onwards began to be printed in Vinay Press from June 1982 onwards.237 Every month 3000 copies of Marsaltabon were printed and the number of copies later increased to 4500.

Bro. Antony Lakra worked in the Press for one year. Mr. Jetha and Mr. Antony were employed in Vinay Press. In 1983, Bro. Andreas Hembrom joined Vinay Press to help Bro. Benjamin. He served the Press till 1984 and in 1985, Bro. Marcus replaced him. On 12th May 1985, Fr. George Camilleri brought “Multi Type Caster Machine” from Bangalore and the Cast types were on Santali type. The then workers, Jetha, Antony, Ramchander and Deva were taught to compose Santali types. On 1st October, 1985, Fr. La Ferla joined the Press community to look after the accounts.238 On 28th January, 1986, he was attacked in the night by some thieves very badly and he was taken to Bhagalpur Hospital and on 3rd March 1986, he expired. “Ruling Machine” was bought on 8th July 1986, from Calcutta by Fr. La Greca and installed in Vinay Press. From 1987 onwards the number of copies of “Katic’ Preritko” printed in Vinay Press increased from 2000 copies to 2800 copies as per the demand.

Books published in Vinay Press:

Besides the regular printing of ‘Marsaltabon’ and ‘Katic’preritko’ a short novel and a small catechism were printed. Innumerable registers, letter heads, cards and plenty of such other materials were also produced. The work kept on momentum. In this press standard printing was done in Santali, Hindi and English and produce work of high standard.239 They printed 3000 copies of Marsaltabon (Our Light) every month, prayer books, Bible, books on Santhali language and other related materials to support the mission.240 Apart from these books of Catholic literature in Santali, other works of secular in nature were also printed. These books have been sold in the subsidized rates and so many Santals could buy and read them. These books are kept in all the Santal Mission Stations so that they can reach the people easily.
Thus the Maltese Jesuits were able to contribute to the language, culture and religion of the Santals among whom they worked through the establishment of a printing press to promote Catholic literature in Santali by their own writings in the spheres of Catechism, Liturgy and Spirituality, teaching the language to the non-Santal missionaries, attempts to adapt and inculturate the Christian faith with the traditional cultural and religious heritage of the Santals. Their contribution to the Santal life in various stages starting from childhood till death and after death in a Christian way is praise worthy.

Endnotes

1Fr. George Muscat was born on 11th July 1929 in Gozo, a small island of the Maltese Archipelago in a large family. As a boy, he was very glad to help his father working in the farm. He used to join his father in his sport of fishing and hunting. At the age of 19, after finishing his secondary schooling, he joined the Society of Jesus at Naxxar in Malta in 1948 when Malta became a Vice Province. He came to India in 1952 to work in the Santal Mission. After his Philosophy in Pune and Theology in Kurseong, he was ordained priest on 19th March 1960, by Archbishop Ferdinand Perier, S.J., the founder of the Santal Mission
3Santal Region Newsletter, Vol.9, No.4, June 1975, p. 2; Santal Region Newsletter, Vol.9, No.5, August 1975, p. 4.
4Santal Region Newsletter, Vol.9, No.6, October 1975, p. 1.
5Fr. Paul Aquilina, S.J., Jivan, August, 2005, p. 27.
6Santal Region Newsletter, No. 168, October 1984, p. 5.
7Born on 2nd August 1944 in St Julians, Troisi studied at the Lyceum and the UM. He underwent further studies in India. He holds a BA (Hons.) with distinction (1967) and an M.Phil. (1968) from Juana Deepa Vidyapeeth Pune. In 1970, he obtained his Masters in sociology from the Delhi School of Economics. In 1974 he received his M.Th. magna cum laude from the Delhi Institute of Religious Studies. After four years of researching India's largest tribe, the Santals, he received his doctorate in sociology from the University of Delhi. In India, Troisi served as an assistant director of research and as associate editor of Social Action, a quarterly review of social trends. He also taught sociology at the universities of Delhi, Pune, and Madras in India, and of Singapore. He also served as visiting professor at the Ateneo de Manila, Philippines; the Jesuit University of Tokyo, Fordham University, New York, and the Gregorian University in Rome.
12Ibid., p. xi.
13Ibid.,
14Santal Region Newsletter, No. 131, December 1979, p. 4
15Santal Region Newsletter, No. 130, August 1979, p. 6
16 J. Troisi writes this in his Acknowledgements in the beginning of each of the 10 volumes of ‘The Santals – Readings in Tribal Life’, Indian Social Institute, Delhi, 1979.


18 Santal Region Newsletter, No. 128, December 1978, p. 5

19 Santal Region Newsletter, No.128, December 1978, p. 5; Santal Region Newsletter, No. 130, August 1979, p. 6


22 Ibid.,

23 Santal Region Newsletter, No. 144, December 1981, p. 6

24 Santali Ghar means ‘House of a Santal’.


27 Ibid.,

28 Ibid.

29 Santal Region Newsletter, Vol.8, No.2, April 1974, p.5

30 Santal Region Newsletter, Vol.8, No.4, July 1974, p.2


32 Ibid., p. 272

33 Dr. Timothy Hembrom, a son of a Santal village headman, had his education at the Keerabani Santal High School and at the Santal Theological Seminary, both situated in the Santal Parganas. After his higher theological education under the Senate of Serampore College, he took up teaching at the Santal Theological Seminary, Benagaria. His love for the Santal culture and traditions faced conflict with the Lutheran practices among the Santals which made him leave the Lutheran church. Since 1977, he took up teaching Old Testament at the Bishop’s College, Calcutta. He was ordained priest in 1985 at Calcutta for the Church of North India.


35 Ibid., pp. 74 -.75.

36 J. Troisi, Tribal Religion: Religious Beliefs and Practices Among the Santals, p. 268


38 Ibid.,


40 Boge Juda, Newsletter of the Santal Region, Vol.4, No.4, April, 1970.

41 Boge Juda, Newsletter of the Santal Region, Vol. 6, No. 9, December 1972, p. 4.

42 Santal Region Newsletter, Vol.9, No.1, April 1975, p. 5


44 Santal Region Newsletter, No. 144, December 1981, p. 4

45 Santalica, No. 4, Supplement to Santal Region Newsletter, No. 122, December 1977, p. i.

46 Ibid.,

47 Ibid.,

48 Ibid.,

49 Ibid.,

50 Ibid., p. ii

241

Boge Juda, Newsletter of the Santal Region, Vol. 6, No. 9, December 1972, p. 4

Santalica, Supplement to Santal Region Newsletter, Vol.7, No.4, November 1973, p. 5

Ibid.

Santal Region Newsletter, Vol.8, No.2, April 1974, p. 3.

Santal Region Newsletter, No.158, September 1983, p. 2

Santalica, Supplement to Santal Region Newsletter, Vol.8, No.4, July 1974, p.6.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.


Ibid.

93 Ibid.; Santal Region Newsletter, No.123, January 1978, p. 4
94 Ibid.
95 Ibid.
96 Ibid.
97 Ibid.
98 Ibid.
99 Santal Region Newsletter, Vol.10, No.5, October 1976, p.4
100 Santalica, Supplement to Santal Region Newsletter, Vol.7, No.4, November 1973, p.5.; Santal Region Newsletter, No.123, January 1978, p. 4
103 Reported by Fr. Paul Aquilina, the Founder-Director of the CTC, Torai.
104 “Fr. Jos. M. Gauci Sacco, S.J. was born at Hamrun, Malta on the 20th January 1937. He did his secondary studies at St. Aloysius College, Birkirkara. For a number of years he was an active member of the “Milites Christi Regis” Catholic Action Centre at Hamrun. For a year he was an instructor of the young members. He joined the Jesuits in Malta on the 2nd October 1953, where he stayed for his Novitiate and Juniorate. He was very much interested in teaching Catechism to young children and organizing meetings for them. In 1957, upon his arrival in India, he went to Sacred Heart College, Shembaganur for his philosophical studies and there he developed an interest in natural history. He was also interested in photography. After his theological studies at St. Mary’s College, Kurseong, he was ordained a priest on 19th March 1966.
105 Interview with Fr. Jos. M. Gauci Sacco on 15th September 2012
107 Santal Region Newsletter, Vol. 9, No. 2, March, 1975, p. 3
108 Interview with Fr. Jos. M. Gauci Sacco on 15th September 2012
109 Interview with Fr. Jos. M. Gauci Sacco on 15th September 2012
110 Santal Region Newsletter, Vol. 10, No. 3, July, 1976, p. 4
111 Interview with Fr. Jos. M. Gauci Sacco on 15th September 2012
112 The list of slides which are prepared on 15 September 2012 and available with him on different themes are (1) Church History - 3 parts of 36 slides each (2) Salvation History (3) The Holy Land (4) The Parables of Jesus - 2 parts (5) The Sacraments – 8 parts of 36 slides each (6) Passion and Resurrection – 2 parts of 36 slides each (6) Preparation for Confession (7) Preparation for First Communion (8) Fatima (9) Rosary - 15 decades – 3 parts 36 slides each (10) St. Vincent de Paul (11) St. Tarcisius (12) The Story of Tobit (13) Tibu: Catechism presented through the Story of a Tribal boy – 10 parts of 36 slides each (14) Health – 3 parts (15) Natural Family Planning.
113 Santal Region Newsletter, No. 141, August, 1981, p. 1
114 Santal Region Newsletter, No. 129, March, 1979, p. 3
115 Santal Region Newsletter, No. 130, August, 1979, p. 5
118 Santal Region Newsletter, No. 143, November, 1981, p. 3
121 Ibid.,
122 Jivan, November – December, 2003, p. 30
123 ‘We’ in Fr. Gauci Sacco’s Report on Sademarsal stands for Fr. Gauci Sacco, Fr. A Micallef and their three lay helpers.
125 Santalica, Supplement to Santal Region Newsletter, Vol. 8, No. 4, July 1974, p. 6.
126 Santal Region Newsletter, No. 129, March 1979, p. 3
127 Santal Region Newsletter, No. 164, April 1984, p. 2
128 Santal Region Newsletter, No. 165, June 1984, p. 3
130 Ibid.,
131 Ibid., pp. 2 – 3
132 Fr. Joseph Portelli, S.J. was born on 28th May 1904, in Qala, Gozo, Malta. He received a solid Christian faith from his parents who were farmers. After attending the local school, he joined the Bishop’s Seminary at Victoria. He joined the Sicilian Province and began his Novitiate at Bagheria (Palermo) in 1923 and he had a year of Juniorate at Catania. When novice Portelli saw Fr. Debono and his companions sailing for the Santal Mission in 1924, he strongly felt an urge to follow them and he offered himself for the Santal Mission. His desire was fulfilled when he sailed with Fr. Benjamin Cauchi, Scholastic John Milanes and Bro. Rosario Milito, the second batch to come from Sicily and Malta to reach India on 5th October 1926. He was ordained Priest on 21st November 1935.
135 Santaliland, Family Letter of the Maltese Jesuits of the Santal Region (Northern India), No. 46, January – February – March, 1961
139 Minutes of the Regional Meeting held on 27th December 1956 at Xavier House, Sahibganj.
143 Historia Domus, Dudhani, 1971.
144 Historia Domus, Dudhani, 1972
145 Ibid.,
146 Historia Domus (House History), The Diary of CTC, Torai, written by Fr. P. Aquilina, S.J., the Founder-Director of CTC, Torai.
Historia Domus (House History), The Diary of CTC, Torai, written by Fr. P. Aquilina, S.J., the Founder-Director of CTC, Torai; Santal Region Newsletter, Vol. 10, No. 5, October, 1976, p. 2.


Ibid., p. 68.

Santal Region Newsletter, No. 128, December, 1978, p. 4

 Ibid.,

P. Aquilina, “Torai Centre Serves Seven Dioceses”, in Jivan, Year 2, No. 4, October 1981, p. 4.

Santal Region Newsletter, No. 131, December, 1979, p. 5


Historia Domus (House History), The Diary of CTC, Torai, written by Fr. P. Aquilina, S.J., the Founder-Director of CTC, Torai; Santal Region Newsletter, Vol. 10, No. 1, March, 1976, p. 1.


Historia Domus (House History), The Diary of CTC, Torai, written by Fr. P. Aquilina, S.J., the Founder-Director of CTC, Torai; Santal Region Newsletter, Vol. 10, No. 5, October, 1976, p. 2.

Historia Domus (House History), The Diary of CTC, Torai, written by Fr. P. Aquilina, S.J., the Founder-Director of CTC, Torai; Santal Region Newsletter, Vol. 10, No. 5, October, 1976, p. 2.


Santal Region Newsletter, No. 129, December, 1978, p. 4

Ibid.,

Ibid.,

Ibid.,

Ibid.,

Ibid.,

Ibid.,

Ibid.,

Ibid.,

Ibid.,

Ibid.,

Ibid.,

Ibid.,

Ibid.,
The following were printed in Vinay Press: (1) Marsaltabon (Our Light) – 3000 copies every month (2) Koejon Puthi (Prayer Book) – 10000 copies were printed in 1981 (3) Seren Puthi (Song Book) – 1000 copies were printed in 1982 (4) Nawa Niam (New Testament in Santhali) (5) Book of blessings (6) Kuli Ror Ruar (Dialogue in question and answer) – 2 volumes (7) Kurus Hor – Nawa Dhara (Way of the Cross) – 1000 copies in 1989 (8) Santhali Grammar book by Fr. George Muscat – 2nd print in 2005 – 2000 copies (9) Santhali Baibel (Mare ar Nawa Niam) (New and Old Testaments of the Bible) (10) Isor do abo thene hijuk kana (God comes to us) – 4 Parts