



Dominican Month for Peace

CATHOLICS IN INDIA ~ DOMINICANS IN INDIA

Malankara Nasrani are an ethnoreligious community of Indian Syriac Christians from Kerala India, who trace their origins to the evangelistic activity of Thomas the Apostle in the 1st century. According to tradition, Thomas came in AD 52 to a community of Jews in Cochin, India, oldest group of Jews in India, with roots that are claimed to date back to the time of King Solomon. The earliest known source connecting the Apostle to India is the *Acts of Thomas*, likely written in the early 3rd century. A number of 3rd and 4th century Roman writers also mention Thomas' trip to India, while Eusebius of Caesarea records that St. Clement of Alexandria's teacher Pantaenus from Alexandria visited a Christian community in India using the Gospel of Matthew in Hebrew language in the 2nd century.

In the tradition - *Thomma Parvam* - Thomas is described as arriving in Maliankara and founding Seven Churches. A few Jews were converted, along with many natives, and the local King at Kodungallur. The narration further describes St Thomas's mission in the rest of South India and his martyrdom at Mylapore

Although Catholics represent only 1.6 percent of the population, India is so big that this works out to a sizeable Catholic community of 17.6 million. The Church is divided into three rites: Syro-Malabar, Syro-Malankara, and the Latin rite. Local tradition credits the apostle Thomas with the introduction of Christianity, and believers who trace their ancestry to him are known as "Thomas Christians." Missionary efforts in the South, centered on Kerala and Goa, followed the Portuguese conquest of Goa in 1510.



Outside its traditional base in the south, Catholicism is also expanding in the northeast. In the state of Arunachal Pradesh on the eastern border with China, where Catholicism arrived barely 25 years ago, there are today 180,000 Catholics out of a total population of 800,000.

Catholicism enjoys wide respect for its network of schools, hospitals and social service centers. When Mother Teresa died in 1997, the Indian government afforded her a state funeral, only the second private citizen after Mahatmas Gandhi to receive the honor. Her casket was born by the same military carriage which carried Gandhi's remains in 1948.

Yet as the 21st century dawns, Indian Catholicism also faces three major headaches.

- First, India has acquired a reputation for some of the most adventurous theology in Catholicism today, especially in "religious pluralism" which has been controversial because of the various ways in which positive theological values are given to non-Christian religions causing alarm for evangelical Catholics.
- Second, a noteworthy point about Catholic demography in India is the disproportionate share of Dalits, or untouchables. Estimates are that somewhere between 60 and 75 percent of Indian Catholics are Dalits, who often see Christianity as a means of protesting the caste system and of affiliating with a social network to buffer its effects. Beginning in the 1970s, the Catholic Church took up the Dalit cause in Indian society.

- Third is the rise of aggressive Hindu nationalism. Radical Hindu movements often claim that Christians engage in duplicitous missionary practices in an effort to “Christianize” India. Though by most accounts the Hindu nationalists represent a tiny fraction of the population, they have the capacity to create tremendous grief.

The History of Indian Dominicans is almost as old as the Order. In 1291 a spirited Dominican from the Roman Province named Nicholas of Pistoia reached India in the company of a Franciscan friar and preached the gospel in Mylapore, Tamil Nadu for over a year. Their preaching in Tamil Nadu was such a resounding success that fr. Nicholas discarded the original plan to go to China and decided to stay in India. However, the first Dominican presence lay buried in Mylapore as fr. Nicholas succumbed to an illness in 1292.

Jordanus(Jordan of Severac/Catala), an Iberian Dominican friar reached India around 1321 along with four Franciscans and preached the Gospel in parts of Maharashtra and Gujarat. He was appointed as the **Bishop of the Diocese of Quilon**, first Roman Catholic Diocese in the Indian subcontinent. Jordanus attained martyrdom around 1330 to bring the curtain down on the first phase of Dominican activity in India.

After a gap of 200 years, in the mid-1500’s, during the reign of the Dominican Pope St. Pius V, Dominicans returned to India. Friars numbered in excess of 300. They established a University in Goa and large convents existed in Kerala and Goa. The suppression of religious communities within the Portuguese empire in 1835 caused the dismantling of convents and dispersal of friars to end Dominican presence that spanned over 300 years.

The present Indian Dominican Province grew out of an invitation in 1959 by Archbishop Eugene D’Souza of Nagpur to Irish Dominican Province to take charge of St. Charles seminary, Nagpur. The establishment of a house of formation in Nagpur, a novitiate in Pachmarhi, Madhya Pradesh in 1967, and the rapid increase in the number of friars caused the establishment of Vice-Province of India on 8 December 1987. The seed that was planted in 1959 bloomed into the Province of India on 8 August 1997. Today there are 18 communities and 153 religious, 110 of whom are priests.

Staying true to the idea of Bl. Jordan Of Saxony *discere et docere* (to learn and to teach), the Indian Province is at the forefront in imparting education. The Province runs two seminaries that train 190 secular brothers moulding them into future priests and leaders of our Church and world from more than 50 dioceses across the nation. The province continues to have a vibrant youth ministry with several friars involved with the Jesus Youth Movement. Indian Dominicans also serve in parishes and campus ministries, international missions, special ministries for evangelization, prayer, education, and service to the poor and sick; as well as many friars are involved in teaching in schools.





Dominican Sisters of Charity of the Presentation

Communities in India - 2017



Dominican Sisters of the Presentation, an international community is responding creatively to human needs today and there are about 3000 sisters serving the people each according to her own gifts and talents. Through Charity, the binding force of our lives, we are united in our service to the love of God and humanity. In 1971 the seed of the Charism of Blessed Marie Poussepin was sown in the Indian Soil. It took root and branched out to 8 states through Education, health ministry, pastoral care and social services.

Indian sisters from International mission speaks... "We live in a world that is more and more globalized, rapid, pluralistic and connected. Our internationality makes us sensitive to the wealth of each culture. Our unity is based on respect and the recognition of each one's identity as well as our capacity to enter into relationship and build together. This is a great opportunity, and at the same time a real challenge." (54th General Chapter document Page.31) **Sharing by Sr. Suchita – PDF**

OTHER DOMINICAN COMMUNITIES

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- Union of St Catherine of School Missionaries – 8 local communities
- Dominican Sisters of the Holy Trinity – 11 local communities
- Dominicans of Santa Maria of the Rosary – 10 local communities
- Dominican Sisters of Pompei – 2 local communities
- Lay Dominicans – 6 chapters
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Dominican Nuns In India

FOUNDATION IN INDIA INITIATED IN 2002

At the end of the year 2001 , Dominican nun, Sr. Maria Luz, from a convent of contemplatives in Northern Spain (the Monastery of the Incarnation, in Cangas de Narcea) unexpectedly had to travel to India. After this trip, the idea arose very strongly in her community of establishing in India the first house of the contemplative nuns' branch of the Dominican Order. There were several conversations and agreements with the Master of the Order, Fr.Carlos Aspiroz Costa, with Fr, Manuel Merten, Promoter of the Nuns of the Order, and with Fr.Quirico Pedregosa, Assistant to the Master for the Asia Pacific Region of the Order.

Who are We We are a group of Contemplative Nuns, dedicated to the glory of God, remaining in the love of Jesus, and living in a community... like an island cast off into the middle of an ocean. When we were like you...we chose this life in Jesus, with Jesus and for him only. Sisters came from Spain in the year 2001 and began this foundation in India. Though we began only a few years ago, already many young girls from India - in answer to their call - have joined us courageously to glorify God. We live a life of happiness, peace and serenity, with contented hearts immersed in the love of Jesus.



What do we do here? Our main apostolate is prayer. We pray for the entire world. We do not run any schools and hospitals or have other forms of active apostolate. Many should know and love God: that is our great desire. For this purpose, we are here.

Centenary Celebrations of the **Dominican Missionary Sisters of the Rosary**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pY34jpNcK9k>

Through this writing we wish to pay homage to the congregation of Dominican Missionaries of the Rosary, who fulfill 100 years of foundation, 100 years of transcendence in their evangelizing task and in their educational work, both in our country (Peru) and in different Places of humanity.

Archbishop Stanislaus Fernandes, SJ of Gandhinagar, India, was in contact with the Dominican Sisters to open a centre in the Archdiocese and start some Socio-Pastoral work in the area that came under Kalol Parish. The Sisters from Peru have taken up pastoral, education, social and health care ministries from Sept 2010.

RESOURCES

<http://dominicannunsinindia.blogspot.com/>

<http://presentationopindia.org/>

<https://archgandhinagar.org/institutions-schools/communities-of-religious-women/dominican-sisters-of-the-rosary/>

<https://dominicans.in/about-us/our-province/province-history/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cochin_Jews

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Thomas_Christians

<https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/india-rising-catholic-power-too>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pY34jpNcK9k>

<http://vijaymacwan.blogspot.com/2015/03/60-years-of-dominican-missionary.html>