

THEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES

MTh IN CHURCH HISTORY

THE HISTORY OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN LESOTHO:  
1862-1989

RESEARCH WORKER REV S M SEKOATI O M I

SUPERVISOR DR J A MILLARD

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### The summary of the dissertation.

This dissertation titled *The History of the Catholic Church in Lesotho 1862-1989* has three chapters. The first chapter deals with the formation of the seventy-seven missions in Lesotho, and the establishment of the four dioceses of Lesotho the seventy-seven mission had all been formed during the period mentioned in the title, and those formed after appear in the appendix.

The second chapter deals with the socio-political involvement of the Catholic Church in Lesotho, this part deals with the authority of the bishop and the Church government and again with the role of the bishop and his relationship to the Oblate authority. In this part four bishops are taken to illustrate this point, and this covers the period from 1930 to 1966. In short this deals with the internal affairs of the Church, and its finances. And we go on to deal with the involvement of the Church in the party politics which led to independence of the country.

The last chapter deals with the church under the indigenous clergy, which actually is inculturation its problem and attempted solution.

### Key terms:

The Church, Father Gerard, the bishop, Catholic, Banta, BCTU, obedience, community, inculturation, formation, establishment of schools , erection of churches establishment of the diocese.

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## INTRODUCTION

### Part one

As a student of history I have been aware that as yet nobody has devoted his/her time to the comprehensive study of the history of the church in Lesotho, which seems to have been the nucleus of the Catholic Church in southern Africa. For this reason I have chosen in this dissertation to deal specifically with the history of the Roman Catholic Church in Lesotho. I will point to the development, the ups and downs of the Catholic Church from the time it came to Lesotho and try to give explanations, according to my view, for what happened. In this dissertation I will continue from where J.B. Brain the historian stopped.

In my research I have discovered that it is difficult to say anything about the history of the church in Lesotho without saying something about Father Gerard, as it is well known that he was the pioneer to this country in as far as the Catholic church is concerned. Before I start my chapter one, of this dissertation, let me say something about the last days of Father Gerard in Natal. Father Gerard arrived in Natal on the 21 January 1854. He found bishop Allard already laboring in vain in the Natal Province; and BRAIN has already discussed the details of their labor. From p. 21-49 I want to examine the causes of their failure in that province.

According to my view, the first cause of their failure must have been social, as we know the Zulu were conquered by the white man in the days of Dingaan and still did not trust white men even if they were preaching the message of peace. This is in contrast to the Basotho who invited the missionaries to their country and who were not conquered but asked the white man to come and protect them against other white men (the British colony of the Cape against the Boers of Free State). This, according to my view was good soil to plant faith for the Basotho who already trusted some white men.

The second reason is cultural. The Catholic church spoke out too strongly of against polygamy which was the common practice of the Zulu people and it still exists in some places while the Protestants in Natal were more lenient in this matter, as we can see from Allard's journal when he says:

*"There is not, nor can be the spirit of Christianity but only an exterior form, to assemble the people on Sunday, to preach them, singing some canticles, to say some prayers but not to insist on them abandoning polygamy, clothing themselves or suffering any inconvenience."<sup>1</sup>*

*(Catholic Beginnings in Natal and Beyond, J.B. Brain, p69)*

I agree with Brain when she says: "finally Bishop Allard, no doubt anxious to achieve an obviously successful mission among the activities of Natal and to send a satisfactory report to France, was in too great a hurry to see results and too ready to give up when these were not forthcoming...(ibid. P69)

Bishop Allard's personality was also a contribution to the lack of success. He seems to have possessed all the virtues of piety, humility, prudence, obedience and industry etc. but lacked those qualities that make for ready and easy communication with others, particularly affability and humor; so that to the uninhibited, cheerful, noisy native clans, the mission house may have appeared as a place of perpetual drudgery and gloom.

He also had a strong antipathy towards Protestantism. This caused him to avoid the advice and help, which he could have obtained from his neighbor Dr. Henry Callaway at Springville mission. Callaway was a man who had more experience than Allard, and who was also against polygamy. And finally, he was too severe with the neighboring natives who stayed next to the boundaries of the mission; as we see in the cases, which he used to lay before Captain Lloyd, the local magistrate. Maybe he was aware of his errors and took care not to repeat them in Lesotho (Basutholand). He might also have been aware that Father Gerard was different, this is why he usually took him as his companion on his missionary outings.

To show that he did not want to repeat his errors in Basutholand Allard treated Moshoeshoe with the same respect and formality that he would have shown to the emperor of France or the governor of Natal. In Natal he had tended to treat the Zulu chiefs as temperamental children, requesting the Secretary for Native Affairs to reprimand them when they proved recalcitrant. In Basutholand his attitude was quite different. In general the Catholic missionaries kept clear of political matters, concentrating on their religious and educational functions.

They acted like Catholics as seen by father Mathuvin Guilleme when he instructed his missionaries "to show by deeds more than by words that the catholic missionary is primarily a man of God, dedicated to the cure of souls, that he is always and everywhere respectful of the lawfully constituted authority and ready to give to all irrespective of nationality his dedicated and zealous co-operation". (I. and J Linden, Catholics, peasants and Chewa resistance in Nyasaland 1889-1939,p.89) This gave them an advantage over the Protestant missionaries who had become too involved in politics so that to a large extent Moshoeshoe had withdrawn from them.

Bishop Allard took great pains to explain to Moshoeshoe the beliefs and aims of the catholic mission hoping to convert the paramount chief to Catholicism in the belief that by converting the chiefs he could bring about the conversion of the entire nation. When this hope did not materialize the missionaries changed their methods and learning from their Zulu experience they began to practice what Father Gerard called his "line fishing", that is, concentrating on the individual and accepting the fact that they were engaged in a long and slow task.( Brown, Catholic Church, p.216)

## Part two

Before we come to Lesotho, let us cover briefly the journey from Natal to Lesotho. Bishop Allard, Father Gerard and Brother Bernard left Pietermaritzburg in the 19th of August 1862. These missionaries were three in number as we know.. They had about three tons of luggage pulled by their ox-wagon. On their way, they visited some Christians and baptized several children. As a result the journey took a long time. As they climbed the Drakensburg Mountains, they encountered a very serious problem; some of the oxen ate poisonous herbs and they all became sick. Three of them died. Those, which remained, were very weak so they had to wait there for ten days, even though there was not enough grass, for it had been burned. Another problem was that, there was no road and they had to stop because of this. When after fifty days they came to Thaba-Bosiu, half of their oxen were dead, but they took it as a sacrifice, which would be a blessing from God in the future. (From the letter of Fr. Gerard dated 6 Nov. 1862)



When the missionaries arrived at Thaba-Bosiu they were encouraged by the fact that the Basotho had not changed their attitude towards them and Moshoeshe was concerned about their personal welfare. Every day he wanted to know if they had any problems. He told them to teach the whole of his nation. This meant they had to install missions every where in the country. He was happy to hear that they were satisfied with the site they were given at Tloutle, which was to be known as Ha 'MaJesu. They arrived at Thaba-Bosiu on 11 October 1962 and spent ten days there. Moshoeshe wanted to keep them near him but it was impossible because the Protestants were already there so they had to go to Tloutle. What impressed them about Moshoeshe was that even though he was not a Christian, his mind was that of a Christian. In other words he was a good man to them. When the Catholics came, the Protestants had already been there for about thirty years. As a result many Basotho, even some women, knew how to read and write, but Moshoeshe seemed not to be satisfied with this. He wanted something more. He wanted the missionaries to change the way of life of the people, that, they should be honest and obedient. The impression is that, he did not realise this was happening through the work of the Protestant missionaries.

## Chapter One

### THE PERIOD OF CONVERSION FROM "PAGANISM" TO CHRISTIANITY

In the first part of the dissertation reference will be made to the conversion of the people and the formation of the mission stations. At present there are seventy-eight missions in Lesotho. I am going to discuss the formation of some of them, especially the bigger ones, bigger in the sense that they are the older ones, which gave birth to others which were the outstations. This will go together with the conversions, which led to the formation of the missions in such places. I will also discuss the problems the missionaries encountered. Let me mention here that all these missionaries, from 1862 to 1930 will be the Oblates from France.

### THE FORMATION OF THE MISSIONS

#### A. ARCHDIOCESE OF MASERU

The Archdiocese of Maseru was established in 1961. But we should remember that previously Basutoland (until 4 October 1866) was a portion on the Natal Vicariate. It became a Prefecture on 8 May 1894, comprising the whole territory then known as Basutoland. It was constituted a vicariate on 18 February 1909, by a decree of Pope Pius X.

On the establishment of the Hierarchy in Southern Africa (11 January 1951), the Vicariate became known as the Diocese of Maseru. On 1 December, 1952 the northern section of the Diocese was detached to form the new Diocese of Leribe. On 25 January 1961, by Papal Bull, Pope John XXIII established the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy in Lesotho and raised the Diocese of Maseru to the status of a Metropolitan see, with the suffrage see of Leribe. On 30 April 1961, the Diocese of Qacha's Nek was detached from the Archdiocese of Maseru, and on 2 April 1978, the diocese of Mohale's Hoek was also detached from the Archdiocese of Maseru, which comprised the civil districts of Maseru, Berea and part of Thaba-Tseka. The first archbishop of the diocese of Maseru was Emmanuel Mabathoana, and the area was 7739km<sup>2</sup> while the population was 445.137 and the Catholic population was 254.508. (Catholic directory 1988 .25)

## 1. Roma Ha 'M'ajesu: (21.10.1862)

We have already mentioned in the introduction that the missionaries Bishop Allard, Father Gerard and Brother Bernard came to Lesotho to start their work and arrived at Thaba-Bosiu on 11 October 1862, and stayed for ten days and on the 21st they left for Ttoutle, where they arrived the same day. From Thaba-Bosiu they were accompanied by Matsoso and Ntsane, and also Khaboliso Maiane from Ha Sekonyela. All these people were men sent by Moshoeshe to accompany the missionaries to Roma.

They pitched their tent at the place where the village of Mafefoane is now built. I have already mentioned that they were three in number, Bishop Allard, Father Gerard and Brother Bernard. They began building their first house which was twenty feet long by fifteen wide but they were satisfied that it was going to accommodate them and their possessions. Their intention was to build this house first and they were going to hold church services outside, and when they had a little number of converts they would begin building the church. While they were building, they were also learning Sesotho, so that when they began teaching, it would be in Sesotho. (Records from 1864-1866: 9)

Actually, they did not wait for any converts before they began building the church. As soon as they had finished building what we can call their presbytery, they began the chapel which was 70ft by 16ft and which they hoped would accommodate up to nine hundred people. They took only one month to build it and in the second they began putting on the roof. They began teaching and holding services even before they finished and even before they could speak Sesotho. Father Gerard taught in Zulu. Qhobosheane Tau was his interpreter. The opening of the chapel was supposed to be on the 1st of November, 1863, but it seems that this date passed, because Brother Bernard had gone to Natal to meet brother Terpent. Anyway, the date seems not to be important. On the opening day Moshoeshe was there together with some of his ministers. It was a great feast which left an impression on the minds of the chief and his people, many of whom had come to see whether what had been said by the Protestant missionaries was true and some had been discouraged by the Protestants missionaries from attending. (P.E.M.S)

The Bishop said mass, and Father Gerard preached for the first time in Sesotho and Moshoeshe was given a chance to make a speech in which he encouraged his people to attend the Sunday services so that it should not be in vain that the chapel had been built. He asked the chiefs to

protect the mission for he was going to punish severely, those who destroyed anything. The statue of the Madonna impressed him more than anything else. Before he left the following day he went to look at it again and held it in his hands.

While we are still at this mission at Roma let me mention the increase in the personnel. When Bishop Allard saw the hospitality of the Basotho, he left the mission of St. Michael in Natal and in 1863 he ordered Father LeBihan to come to Lesotho, but unfortunately his journey became too long because he did not know where Lesotho was and he was deceived by a Boer merchant so that his journey, took him a year from Pietermaritzburg to Roma. He left the former on the 6 June 1863 but only arrived at Roma on the 6 June 1864. (Albert Nqheku, Mohale oa Lesotho, Ntate Le Bihan, O.M.I. 1833-1916 p. 26-36).

On the 17 February 1864, Fathers Hédien and Bartholomew left France for Lesotho. There were two priests, two brothers and six sisters whose superior was Sister Mary-Joseph Aigot. They arrived in Durban on the 26th May of that year and went to Pietermaritzburg to await the bishop who was to fetch them to go to Lesotho. However they stayed there till February 1865, a full year! They left Pietermaritzburg on 18th February in two wagons. The nuns had one and the priests and brothers the other. Those who left for Lesotho were six sisters, the bishop, fathers Bartholomew and Lebihan and brother Morand and five Basotho guides. At night they had two tents pitched. The Guides had their own from which they could see everything that was going on; the idea was to disprove the lies of the Protestants who said that they were lying when they said they are celibate, the sisters were their wives. (From the letter of Bishop Allard dated 4 February 1865 to the general of the Oblates)

They arrived at Roma only on the 26 April 1865. On their arrival they went into the chapel to thank the Lord for having spared them on such a long journey of 64 days. For the details of this journey I refer those who are interested to the letter of bishop Allard to the Oblate superior general of 10 June 1865 and the diary of Sister Mary-Joseph. Let me mention here that in the absence of the bishop and Father Lebihan, Father Gerard received the first three converts in Lesotho. They were Puleng who was baptised by the name of Mary, Catharine Moi and Michael Qobosheane. The details of their conversion can be found in the book: "Naleli ea Tloutle" chapter two. The first conversion happened on the 24 June 1864. They were baptised on the 8th of October 1865. It was ten years and five months after the ordination to the priesthood of father Gerard. When I speak of

conversions I do not include the two sick people who were baptised by the priest on their deathbed.

When the sisters came to Roma, they found that their house was already built. They had two rooms; and were satisfied with this. On the first Sunday after their arrival Moshoeshoe paid them a visit. He attended mass at the mission and made a very long speech. The sisters gave him a uniform of a French Admiral. It is the one that we often see him wearing in pictures. In return Moshoeshoe gave them the garment of a leopard skin which belonged only to the chiefs. We can deduce that relations were very good between Moshoeshoe and the community at Roma. A good example is on the occasion of the first baptisms in Lesotho on 8th October 1864. In the procession to the chapel, Moshoeshoe and his grandsons were present. This is how the procession was organised from the sisters convent: Father Bartholomew carried the processional cross and opened the march; he was accompanied by the two of the grandsons of Moshoeshoe who acted as acolytes and who each carried a banner on which was painted the image of saints, then came the candidates for baptism, then the pastors of the mission vested in their ornaments, then the bishop in his mitre and crosier and Moshoeshoe marched on his left, in the uniform of the French admiral. To me this shows how Moshoeshoe was working hand in hand with the missionaries. There is a very great difference with Moshoeshoe II. He seems to ignore the Catholic Church. It is not surprising that he was not even present at the mass during the papal visit to Lesotho 125 years later.

The second example is when father Gerard risked his life during the war by passing the Boers who had surrounded Thaba-Bosiu. He was carrying bread and coffee for Moshoeshoe. On these occasions, Moshoeshoe remarked to his people that, if it were not for the missionaries he would have died. Later on the occasion of the jubilee celebration, Moshoeshoe II said "...the church has been sent to the poor not to the king and the chiefs..." (the speech of the King at the silver jubilee of the scholasticate) I am not going to go into detail about what was done by the missionaries, in the time of the 1865 war between the Basotho and the Boers. I will just mention that the Catholic Church was popular in the eyes of the people at that time. Many began to favour it, and the many conversions made at this time are a proof of this.

Before I come to the formation of the second mission, St. Monica let me mention a few incidents, which are of great importance in the history of the

church in this region. In 1872 Bishop Allard was invited by the superior general of the Oblates to withdraw. He handed in his resignation and was replaced in 1874 by Bishop Jolivet. Familiar with the English language and younger than Bishop Allard, Jolivet was able to visit his immense vicariate more frequently. He brought back the vicar Apostolic from Roma to Pietermaritzburg because he was told while in Rome that he was not to close himself up in the mountains of Basutholand and that he was to organise the church among the Europeans as well as to attend to the African population. (We should remember that Allard was told by Bishop de Mazenod not to look to the European population but to the African population as well). On his arrival in the vicariate, Bishop Jolivet sensed a feeling of discontent and dissatisfaction among the European people. It was not an easy task to organise and develop the church in all the places at once. Nevertheless, he succeeded in bringing many new missionaries to South Africa. He started to build schools and churches and opened new missions. When he visited Roma for the first time in July 1875, the mission had registered more than 300 baptisms. However there was only one central mission station at Roma with the two outstations of St. Michael and St. Joseph (Koro-koro). The buildings consisted of a very poor church, the residence of the vicar Apostolic, the house of the missionaries, the convent of the sisters and the two schools with 40 girls and a smaller number of boys. He took nearly two months to reorganise everything. On each of his subsequent visits, he encouraged his missionaries not to give up. Fathers Gerard and Bartholomew opened the mission of St. Monica in 1876. Father Biard opened Gethsmany in 1883, Father Le Bihan Mount Olivetti in 1882 and Father Porte Sion in 1886, while a site was obtained to start Nazareth.

In 1885, Bishop Jolivet requested the Holy See to divide his vast vicariate. This was done in 1886 when Pope Leo XIII subdivided the vicariate of Natal into Natal proper and the vicariate Apostolic of the Diamondfields and Orange Free State, which included Lesotho and the prefecture Apostolic of Transvaal.

## 2. Gethsmany: (1882)

In those days Basutholand was divided into three parts or districts. Letsie in the south, Molapo in the north and Masupha in the middle. Roma mission was in the district of Letsie and St. Monica in the district of Molapo and the third mission was meant to be in the district of Masupha. Chief 'Mota who was under chief Masupha wanted the mission in his area and Masupha encouraged him. Father Gerard chose the site in the place which used to be the house of Lehleli. When he delayed the site was

taken by other people, we are not told who. On the 24 May 1880, Masupha gave Father Gerard another site at the place called Tebe-tebeng, and Father Gerard started building immediately. On the 24 June of the same year, the corner stone of the church was blessed. Everything was going well. Unfortunately the gun war began; they could not build during the war and Father Biard, who was in charge, had to go back to St. Monica until June 1881.

After the war when Father Biard started again, there was a disagreement among the Fathers at Roma. Some said it was not wise to build a mission on such a bad site. However, Father Porte said they had not come to Lesotho to be farmers and the quality of the site was not important but the number of people around was. The Bishop supported him so everything continued. On the 15 August 1882 the church was officially opened. The name Gethsmany came as the result of the difficulties encountered in the formation of this mission and which continued even after the sisters had come to stay on the 25th February 1889. Father Biard stayed there for seven years without a single conversion except the baptisms of sick babies and sick old people which Father Biard called dry bones of the devil. (Votre Guide; ie pere Francois Mairot p. 28)

In 1888, Father Biard was given an obedience to Koro-koro, (an obedience is a transfer of religious) and Father Rolland took his place and stayed for 21 years performing 1, 100 baptisms. ( Ibid. p. 30 ). This does not mean that Father Rolland did not meet difficulties. It was not very long after his arrival at Gethsmany that the delegate of the Oblate superior general, Father Goullier, arrived in Lesotho for the canonical visit. He was not happy with the site of the mission (of Gethsmany) and the lack of conversions after such a long time. He said there were too many sacrifices made for what did not pay. He advised Bishop Gaughren, who was now the Vicariate of Lesotho to close the mission. The sisters were to go back to Roma and Father Roland was to go to Mapoteng to stay with Father Porte. But these were the plans of men and not of God. Father Rolland had to obey. Luckily enough, because of lack of transport, the execution of this order was slow. Some of the causes of the delay were that, in that year (1889) there was a good wheat harvest at Roma and the two wagons belonging to the mission had transported wheat to Bloemfontein. So there was no way for the sisters to leave Gethsmany. Winter came before they were collected.

During Christmas in 1889, a miraculous conversion happened at Roma but

nobody took any notice of it. It was the conversion of 'Mamathe, the daughter of Letsie who was then the regent in the district of Masupha. Chief Maama of Roma had invited other chiefs including 'Mamathe to the feast of the baptism of his two children. 'Mamathe was by then a pagan well known for her dislike of the Catholics. Nevertheless, she had come at the invitation of her brother. In the church she was very impressed and she felt she was not worthy to be there. She remained to the end of the services after which she wanted to talk to the priests but they were not willing to talk to her because she was notorious and her village was called the village of the devil. (Ibid. p. 30) Father Deltour who was the priest of Roma told her to go and see Father Rolland at Gethsmany. But Father Rolland delayed her request of conversion till June 1890 when he visited her and found her teaching another catechumen. She was accepted to catechumanate, she and many of her people. After her conversion Father Rolland and the sisters wrote to the bishop about the new state of the mission. This is how Gethsmany was saved from being closed and it is one of the biggest missions in Lesotho today.

### 3. Sion: (1886)

It was two to three years later that chief Peete expressed his wish to have a mission station at his place, Mapoteng. He told this to Father Deltour and in 1886 he said the same to Father LeBihan who had passed through his village from St. Monica to say some prayers in Peete's village. Fathers Deltour and LeBihan saw the need of having a mission in this place. But the final decision lay with the Bishop.

During Easter 1886 there was a feast at Roma mission. Twenty-four people received the sacrament of baptism and 90 received the sacrament of confirmation. It was a big feast and the bishop was there. Chief Peete was also at the feast. There he met Bishop Jolivet and expressed his desire so eloquently that the Bishop granted his wish and promised to go himself to choose the site for the church. After Easter the bishop left Roma for St. Monica. He took three days to arrive at Gethsmany because of rain, which made it impossible for his car to go faster. At Gethsmany too, he was going to hold Easter services, which did not go very well because of rain. (Ibid. p.217)

From Gethsmany the Bishop was accompanied by Fathers Deltour, Biard and Porte. The Bishop was going to Chief Peete to affirm the promise



made at Roma. Peete was expecting him and he sent four men to prepare the road for the car of the bishop. But they were not successful because they had no tools. When the Bishop came, they had to carry the car across some dongas until they came to Peete's village where the chief met them. In their discussion, they agreed that Peete was to help in the building of the church and presbytery. The Bishop chose the site on the following day, which was 1 May 1886. After this chief Peete asked the Bishop three questions; the name of the mission, to which the Bishop said it would be Sion, the priest who will come to stay in this mission to which the Bishop replied it would be Father Porte, and finally, when does would the priest arrive? to which the Bishop replied, at the beginning of August. After this Peete asked for the blessing of the Bishop, for him and his family ( Mofumahali oa Sione Mapoteng 1886-1986 p.8)

On 7th August 1886 Father Porte arrived and took one week to build his house of 24 by 14 feet. He said his first mass on the feast of ascension. The church of Sion was built within months, for on the first Sunday of advent of the same year, 1886, the church was opened officially by Bishop Anthony Goughren of the Free State, the new vicariate to which Lesotho now belonged. It was the first visit of this new Bishop to Lesotho.

We can sum up the speech of chief Peete at the opening feast with these few words: "I was a sheep without a shepherd, but now as a member of the Catholic church I have a shepherd; I was a Chief without advisers, but now the church has given me clever people; I was a stranger who did not know the way, today the church, has given me the light, to enlighten my way." (Ibid. p. 15)

#### 4. St. Joseph Koro-Koro (1888):

The history of the mission of Koro-koro has many stages, which we are going to summarise as follows even though the formation of the mission of Koro-Koro is said to be in 1888. We can trace its history as far back as 1868, for it was then that Koro-Koro was visited by the Roma priests as an out-station. Fathers Gerard and LeBihan and even Bishop Allard visited it in turns. ( Suivez Le Guide s'IL vous plait p.38)

In 1868 there were government police who were stationed at Mokema, where Bishop Allard used to say mass for them. It was at this time that the people of Koro-koro wanted a mission at their place. The Bishop wanted

a mission at Mahlelebe's village. Moshoeshoe gave permission but there was a problem over the site, which was near Chopho's place, and Chopho refused.

Mahlelebe had to appeal to Moshoeshoe. Again Moshoeshoe told Mahlelebe to go with the Roma priests, Fathers Gerard and LeBihan, to survey the reeds valley (sekhutlo sa lehlaka), and he would give them the site they chose. They chose the place where the mission is today, because there was enough water at that time and they began to build the first building of the mission. But Chopho again fought over that site saying it was too near to the reeds. Mahlelebe had to appeal to Moshoeshoe for the second time; this time Chopho and Mofoka were there. Moshoeshoe had to speak severely to them, telling them that they had no right to refuse with what he had granted, for the reeds were his and not theirs.

The building continued till it was finished. Because of the lack of personnel, two women Eugenia and Perpetua, were given charge to visit the Christians there on Sunday and took turns to travel from Roma. In 1869, Bishop Allard gave Father Anatole Hidién an obedience to be in charge of Koro-koro, but because of community reasons (religious do not stay alone but with the members of the community) he was serving Koro-koro from Roma visiting the place regularly. But in 1871 Father Hidién was given a new obedience in the Transvaal. From this time to 1888 the mission of Koro-koro was under the care of the priest at Roma.

In 1872, the first chapel of Koro-koro was officially opened, and the mission was put under the protection of St. Joseph. Hence, this was the name of the mission. In 1873 the sisters of the Holy family went to stay at Koro-koro. They were Sister Pierre and Sister Melanie. In 1874 Sister Alphonse took the place of Sister Melanie who was sick and had to go back to Roma. In 1874, Father Monginoux was introduced by Father Gerard to the Christians at Koro-koro as the replacement for Father Hidién, and it was as early as 1874 that the first Christian marriage was solemnised at Koro-koro.

In 1875, Bishop Jolivet, who had taken the place of Bishop Allard, visited Lesotho for the first time and went to Koro-koro, on 1 August. He went again on 5 September to baptise 14 catechumens and gave the sacrament of confirmation to four Christians. On 19 September 1875, Father Deltour was introduced to the Christians of Koro-koro as their new priest, while Father Monginoux was in charge of St Michael and Father Gerard at Roma.

They all stayed together as a community at Roma. On 25 December 1875 Father Deltour held the night Christmas service at Koro-koro and received two people to catechumenate.

The feast of St Joseph was on 7 May 1876 and two masses were said by Father Deltour, the first one at seven o'clock and the second at ten. The same month on the feast of the Holy Trinity, the first big church was blessed in the presence of chiefs and many people. This promising Mission had some difficulties; the visions of the woman prophet (probably Mantsopa) brought down the attendance of the church services even though this did not affect the school. (Mantsopa had prophesied the church was not going to last at Koro-Koro)

The death of Sister Eulalia at Roma on 25 July resulted in a transfer of Sister Pierre to Roma and a Mosotho Sister, John Thomas, took her place. In 1877 the Bishop saw that things were not going well at Koro-koro and Father Deltour was labouring in vain. He was transferred to Roma to work with Father LeBihan, for Father Gerard was already at St Monica, and Father Monginoux who was in charge of St Michael had to take both St Michael and Koro-koro. In the same year the priests agreed that it was no longer necessary that the Christians of Koro-koro and St Michael go to Roma for services, but to their respective missions. Since there was only one priest for the two missions in early 1877, they had to go to Koro-koro; Seventy Christians for the two missions received the Eucharist. After Easter, there were some backsliders among the Christians of Koro-koro, even those who were faithful were no longer zealous.

In August 1878 Father Barthelemy was sent to Koro-koro and his place was taken by Father Biard at St Monica. In the beginning of 1880 there were problems, which led to the withdrawal of the sisters from Koro-koro, and Father Barthelemy was left alone, Mahlelebe wrote to the Bishop on behalf of the Christians of Koro-koro pleading for the return of the sisters, but the post was slow. It was only after five months that the Bishop received the letter. In 1881 the Bishop visited Lesotho again. Seeing that the problems of Koro-koro were not solved, he sent Father Porte to Koro-koro, and Father Deltour was the superior at Roma for Father LeBihan was going to start a new mission at Mount Olivet. On 14 November 1881, after a year the sisters were back to Koro-Koro.

In May 1883, there was a war between Mahlelebe and Chopho, and Mahlelebe was defeated and expelled from his village. He ran away with other families among who were Christians. The Fathers decided to close

the mission since it was causing them too much sacrifice for too few results. This decision was carried out on 26th December 1883, and the Bishop agreed to the closing of the mission but the sisters were left and they had mass once a week. On Sundays they had to go to St Michael or Roma. They continued their pastoral work till 1888 when the mission was reopened by the assignment of Father Biard from Gethsemany. We should remember that the conversion of Chopho, the man who was against the formation of this mission, happened when there were only sisters left at Koro-koro and this was the first son of Moshoeshoe to be a Catholic.

#### 5. ST. MICHAEL (1899):

We have already discussed St. Michael while we were discussing Roma and St. Joseph Koro-koro. The beginning of St. Michael mission may be traced as far back as 24 July 1864 when the first Mosotho woman, Puleng declared her conversion to Father Gerard. Before that unforgettable occasion, Puleng had fallen sick. She had tried in vain to get help from the sorcerers and the Protestants at Thaba-Bosiu to whom she had been taken by Nthoto, the wife of Sekhonyana. Eventually Lihlong, the daughter of Nthoto, after some negotiations led her to the whites of Tloutle who she (Puleng) resented deeply. No sooner had she arrived than she felt an extraordinary calmness. She went straight to Father Gerard and said to him, "I am converted... to the Lord of heaven ". (Suivez Le Guide s'IL Vous Plait p.35)

Puleng, Lihlong and some women from Ha Monyane were admitted to catechumenate on 25 December 1864, and were later presented for baptism. . At Ha Sekhonyana, the Christian community was growing rapidly and Nthoto was also baptised on 6 January 1866 and adopted the name of Helena. This same group formed the pillars of the future mission of St. Michael. As in other places, Father Gerard founded a house of prayer at Ha Sekhonyana in February 1867. He got a site to build a chapel at Matsikeng and on 2 April 1867 Bishop Allard accompanied by three other priests and sisters laid a foundation stone of the chapel in honour of St. Michael. A few months later on 26 July 1867 on the feast of St. Anna in the presence of Chief Moshoeshoe Father Hidién blessed the new chapel and Father Le Bihan was in charge of St. Michael from Roma.

To the dismay of Father Gerard, the Christian community was harassed by apostasy in 1864. Some of the converts left the Catholic faith to join

the Protestants. One of the causes of this was that they wanted a residential priest at St. Michael. On 20 September 1869, the house of the sisters was opened and the following year on 28 March, the Blessed Sacrament was left there permanently making continuous adoration possible. St. Michael was given Father Hoffmeier in 1902 as its first resident priest. He stayed until 1913. He was replaced by Father Paul Bernard who stayed for 23 years. The first local priest to be in charge of St. Michael was Father John Ntaote Letsie in 1961, about hundred years after the arrival of the Catholic Church in Lesotho.

## 6. LORETTO (1905):

The mission of Loretto was born out of St. Joseph, Koro-koro mission, as early as January 1890. At this time the house of Dorothea 'Mantsebo, the daughter of Joseph Tsiu was used as the house of prayer. It was within the boundaries of what is today the Loretto mission.

The first Christians went to St. Joseph, Koro-koro on Sundays for mass and the first catechumens to be baptised were the family of Rasethuntsa. Even though it was Father Biard's intention to start the mission at Qoaling, his intention was only realised in 1895 by Father Monginoux, the Apostolic Prefect who laid its foundation and it was completed by his successor, Father Bandy. In August 1896, Father Biard looked after the construction of the mission from Koro-koro. This mission was already dedicated to our Lady of Perpetual help. After Easter 1897, Loretto fell under Roma mission as an out-station, so it was visited by Fathers Gerard, Huguouenc, then by Father Deriennic from Nazareth. In 1904 when Father Dirienic left to found the mission at St. Gabriel, Loretto was placed under the pastoral care of Father Hoffmeir of St. Michael.

On 8th September 1905, Father Philippe was appointed the first priest residing at Loretto mission. During the first year he baptised 100 people and received 90 catechumens. He built a modest convent for the sisters who arrived in 1907. Then he built a school big enough to take 100 people. In 1914, Father Philippe was elected to the general chapter to represent the Missionary Oblates of the then Basutoland. Because of the First World War, (1914-1918) he returned only in 1927. He was sent back to Loretto but he resigned soon after, due to ill health.

## 7. Massabiella (1910):

In 1890, on the route from Koro-koro to Mount Olivet there was an old sympathetic man who voluntarily accepted the passing missionaries in his house. He was an old Calvinist, but now at the age of 80, a convinced Catholic. The name of this old man was Tsiu. He wished to have a priest residing in his village. In April 1890 Tsiu gave a site to the fathers to build a chapel. This was done and it was a small, beautiful chapel made of bricks. In September this great work was over and what was left was to adorn the interior and to finish a small apartment for the priest - Fr. Biard.

The feast of the opening of this new mission was on 9 November 1890. It was really a religious celebration. On the same day 23 people were baptised before a big crowd. The statue of Our Lady of Lourdes was given by a French benefactor to Sr. Damase. It was a little marvel to the people of the place, Everybody admired it and it is this that determined Father Biard to give the new mission the name of Massabiella.

On 1 May 1892, during the feast of the Good Shepherd, a school was opened. At this epoch, the church could not contain more than half of the people coming to the church. Since relations with South Africa were not good, it was impossible to think of building. In 1891 at the feast of all saints there were already 150 people receiving Holy Communion. On 13th November 1892, Malesujana, the Chief of the place was baptised together with 9 women following her. On 1st September 1895, the daughters of Lehloenya and Leuta, two influential chiefs were baptised. On 8th August 1897 Lehloenya too was baptised. His time of catechumenate was shorter because of his sickness after conversion. In conformity with his desire, the people and the chiefs had been called and his baptism was an opportunity for a very interesting feast for the whole village. The representative of the paramount Chief Lerotholi made a speech and a very good one. Lehloenya got a new name, Simon Peter. His conversion and that of his daughter and Malesojane and other Chiefs of Massabiella at Easter 1899 opened the door for many others to join the church.

In 1903 the sisters of the Holy family arrived at Massabiella with Sister Marie de Jesu as their superior. In 1905 a big church was constructed and Bishop Mesherny of Grahamstown blessed it on 21 April 1907 in the presence of Fathers Biard, Cenez, Bourdin, Thomas, Laydevant, Fouloneau, and about 2 500 people. This big church of Massabiella once

again became too small, and in 1958, Fr. Klein built another larger one. It was blessed on 15th August 1959.

In 1907 there was no resident priest at Massabiella. The successors of Fr. Biard came to visit this place regularly from Koro-koro. They were Frs. Pennerath 1901-1903, Bernard 1903-1905, Bourdin 1905-1908 and Valet 1908-1910. The latter went to Samaria to replace Fr. LeBihan who came to Massabiella as its first resident priest from 1910 to 1913. During the 3 years of his stay he visited villages regularly and became acquainted with the people, thus conversions multiplied.

In 1913, Fr. Valet came to Massabiella as Fr. LeBihan's successor. From there he started a mission at St. Louis. In 1934, Fr. Dulude came to assist Fr. Valet for a year and replaced by Fr. Guilcher until January 1939. On his return Father Dulude left the place to young priests: P. Dubois (1939), A. Gerard (1940-43), Ameye (1943-48), R. Jacques (1948), L.G. Hamel (1949), Levail (1950-56) and Klein (1956-59) who was 50 years of age among the young fathers. (Suivez Le Guide S'IL Vous Plait P. 44)

#### 8. Bethany (1911):

Justinus Sechefo, who was a catchiest and a teacher at St. Michael, was not on good terms with Seeiso the new chief of the district. He came to St. Michael to tell his parish priest about it. His parish priest was Fr. Hoffmeir at this time. He told the latter that he was obliged to quit the region and to go to 'Matholoana to start a school. The parish priest responded positively and pointed out that there was already a house of prayer that could serve as a school. Apart from that, he could not help materially to realise this project. He then referred him to the Bishop. That took place in 1909. Sechefo came to see Bishop Cenez who had no objection to the starting of the new school.

Unfortunately the Bishop was unable to support this work because he was building a house for sisters at Nazareth and had to build two churches, one at St. Theresa and another at Phamong. Moreover, he had no intention of founding a mission at Ha 'Matholoana for it was very near the mission of Bethlehem at Thaba-Bosiu where there was mass every Sunday. Justinus was not discouraged at all. On Sunday December 11, 1909 after the mass at St. Michael, he set off on foot to Ha 'Matholoana. Matholoana the Chief accepted the idea of the school with

enthusiasm, then presented him to her son, Chief Masupha II who was also happy to hear about the matter. He called a meeting and presented the teacher who taught him at Roma to the people. Masupha told them that Sechefo had come to start a school there; he asked them to accept and respect him. The crowd cried out with joy. Filled with hope Justinus Sechefo ran back to St. Michael the same evening to fetch his books and belongings and on Thursday 15th December he opened his school with 16 pupils though the holidays were about to begin. He also worked with zeal with catechumens, and when it rained and made it impossible for Christians to cross the flooding Phuthiatsana to go to Bethlehem he would assemble them in the prayer house for prayer and then instructed them. His audience consisted of pagans and Protestants. (Voix du Basutoland no-7 p. 230)

In 1911, Justinus invited Bishop Cenez to see his work. The Bishop accepted the invitation and decided to pass through there on his way to Gethsmany. He admired this work and was happy with it. When he wanted to leave, Chief Masupha II held him and made him a gift of a large piece of land. The Bishop could not refuse such a gift and that is how Bethany was founded. The new mission was dedicated to our lady of the Holy Rosary, which from then on prevailed over Bethlehem

The two missions were too close to each other. In the beginning, the people of Ha 'Matholoana continued to go to Bethlehem every Sunday. But very soon, Fr. Hoffmeier came to Bethany once a month at the request of Justinus. Little by little the mission at Bethlehem diminished in importance and then closed.

In September 1913, Justinus was called to Matsieng by the paramount Chief Griffith as to act as his secretary. He gave his work over to Ernest Marole as the new teacher. Bishop Cenez hastened to build a church of stones on the site given to him by Masupha II. At the successive direction of Frs. Hoffmeier, Closset, Hentrich, Guilcher and Bernard the private school of Sechefo became the great flourishing mission of Bethany. Fr. Hubert was the first resident priest in 1925. Soon he had to knock against the objections of many, thanks to the great generosity of Masupha II. He wanted to fence the land, which belonged to the mission.

This caused him a lot of trouble; and criminal vengeance on his horses, oxen and his field people began stealing the property of the mission because they thought he was stubborn when he fenced the mission. But finally he succeeded to win over everybody by the strength of his



perseverance. He accustomed his Christians to attend not only Sunday mass but also during the weekdays.

Fr. Hubert also gave public penitence to his Christians who had participated in the sorcery acts of the old man called Khobai. Khobai himself was converted soon afterwards. In 1925, Fr. Hubert won another victory over sister Damase who had promised him a group of sisters for Bethany, but afterwards wanted to call off the promise. Hubert for his part had promised to preach at the retreat to the sisters in July on condition that the promised group of sisters come to Bethany. Seeing no possibility of finding another preacher, the reverend mother had accepted, but at the last moment wanted to cancel the promise. However, Fr. Hubert had decided to stand by his condition. Then sister Damase surrendered. In July, the sisters came to Bethany and they found 87 children. By Christmas, the number had doubled.

In 1933, Fr. Hubert was succeeded by Fr. Cary who began the foundation of the big church, which was finished by Fr. Ameye, who in his turn was succeeded by Frs. Charbonneau and Jean. Then in 1937 Fr. Brisson arrived and remained there for 5 years. In 1940 he registered 69 000 communions in comparison to 25 000 in 1936. Frs. Garant, Sylvain and Brothers Klinkaet and Horace Rainville and others came in turn to help the parish priest of Bethany. In 1942, Fr. Brouillet succeeded Fr. Brisson and managed the mission and developed it materially. Then Fr. Chicoine in 1945-1951 came and built a school; Fr. Nehling 1951-54, who fell sick and, Fr. Ameye 1954-59 who died at Roma hospital in 1960. It is since then that Fr. Desnoyers took responsibility. There were more than 8 000 Catholics produced by the small school of Justinus Sechefo. (Suivez Le Guide s`IL vous plait pp.233-234)

### 9. Nazareth (1912):

In 1883, Theko, the son of Letsie I, was placed on the plateau of Ratau. This place was reserved for pastures and thus uninhabited. Theko wanted to have some people in his new domain. He requested Roma mission to put some Christians on the plateau. He promised to give a vast tract of land for the site of a mission. Everything went well. On 6th January 1884, the foundation of the mission was decided upon at Roma. On the 14th, chief Theko showed the Fathers of Roma the land. On August 2, 1884 the chief came again to the place of this new mission which was to be called Nazareth. He gave the Fathers some big fields so that they could

distribute them to their Christians who came to stay next to the mission. On 12, April 1885 the Fathers of Roma proceeded with the distribution. The first settlers were Peter Mafuoa-fuoa, Thomas, Tobias, Ratsosane, Stanislas, Joakim, Francis and Anatole. (Suivez Le Guide s`il Plait p 58)

The mission was officially opened on 30th May, 1885. There was nothing except a small house of 30ft by 15ft, which served all purposes. Despite this, the feast was good. Chief Theko was not present, but he sent his wife who paid the expenses of the feast. In 6, January 1889 Bishop Jolivet visited the mission of Nazareth from Roma and received the first 13 catechumens of this mission.

For his part Father Deltour sent his Catechists who were at times not acceptable. Meanwhile, the ordination of Fathers Rousseau and Affray on January 26, 1890 renewed the zeal of the Catechists and the people of Nazareth had become soft and the Christians appeared to be more fervent. At this time the mission of Nazareth was next to Ha Majoro where the village of Ha Lekhale is. In 1903, Fr. Deriennic who was in charge of Nazareth advised Fr. Cenez, the apostolic prefect, to transfer the mission next to Ha Phaloane. The last mass to be celebrated in the old church was on the last Sunday of advent in 1903. On Christmas day Fr. Deriennic was already on the new land of the mission. (ibid. p. 59 )

This mission was served by Frs. Lebreton, Hentrich, Klein and Bossart. Conversions multiplied so much that a new big church was necessary which was finished in 1942. Brother Ndeau put up the ceiling while Brother Lambert helped in plastering. The women assumed the task of bringing sand, not because they were forced to but because they wanted their own church. On 5th December 1943, Bishop Meysing who had come to ordain Fr. Bonaventure Lelimo, visited Nazareth and made the gift of a magnificent way of the cross, the inauguration of which took place at the midnight mass of Christmas 1943. On 18th May, 1944, 40 adults were baptised. This was a good sign that a majority of the population was converted for such big baptisms had disappeared.

#### 10. St. Louis (1913):

For the formation of the mission of St. Louis, Matsieng, it is important to recall that in 1913 Letsie II, the brother of Griffith, died and he had no son who could take his throne. So Griffith, his younger brother had to

succeed him. Griffith was baptised in the Catholic Church while still at Phamong, four years earlier when he took the throne of his brother. At this time the nearest mission to Matsieng was Massabiella and Griffith was attending Sunday services at Massabiella, about six miles from Matsieng every Sunday. One day when he came from the church, the horses that were pulling his cart went out of control; they ran to the donger but were controlled before his cart overturned. From that time in 1913, he thought of having a church at Matsieng. He and Fr. C. Valet went to the Bishop about the matter. It was agreed and very soon they began building the church. The Basotho were helping to break stones, it was done so quickly that in June 1915, and it was officially opened. On that occasion the Chief is reported by Fr. Laydevant to have organised the greatest feast ever seen in Lesotho; he slaughtered 50 heads of cattle and 300 sheep and bought 110 bags of Maize meal, 20 bags of sugar and all the women of Matsieng helped to cook for the feast. On the feast day Bishop Cenez presided while almost all the catholic priests of Lesotho were concelebrating.

The conversion of Chief Griffith brought many advantages to the Catholic Church among which we can say, many people converted to the catholic church and it was easy to obtain the church sites in Lesotho and schools. .

#### 11. Paray (1924):

In his first and second visits to Mokhotlong, in 1906 Fr. Lebreton slept at Khomoliileng, which is one of the present outstations of Paray. There was one Christian at this area named Anacleta Cholo. One day Anacleta told him that her sister, who was the wife of Ntaote, the chief of Thaba-Tseka, wanted to be converted and Fr. Lebreton went to Ha Ntaote. It was April 1908 and it was very cold and snow was beginning to fall that night. He asked for accommodation and was accepted with hospitality, for both him and Fr. Roullin with whom he was travelling.

The first wife of Ntaote was converted. When she was baptised the two other wives converted one after another. Ntaote showed that he had converted even though he was still staying with his seven wives. All his children were baptised. But when Fr. Lebreton asked for a site to build a school, the Chief employed a delaying technique for nine years. Ntaote was always accepting him with hospitality and killing a sheep for him, but when it came to the site, he always made promises, which were not

fulfilled. When Fr. Lebreton came six months later, the chief apologised and renewed his promises until Fr. Lebreton was angry when he found the chief not there, even though he knew that Fr. Lebreton was supposed to come.

In his anger Fr. Lebreton told the wives of the chief that he had decided to take away his Catchiest. When the chief came all his wives shouted at him because of what he was doing to Fr. Lebreton. The next morning Chief Ntaote went to Fr. Lebreton and asked him not to do what he had threatened and asked him never to report to his wives anything wrong against him. From that day the promises became true. On the feast of "All saints" i.e. on 1st November 1920 every thing was well and the site was given. But Fr. Lebreton did not start the mission immediately for at this time many things were happening; the first world war came to an end, and this increased the personnel of the priests in Lesotho for those who were held prisoners by the Germans were released. There was also a dilemma because Fr. Lebreton wanted to start a mission at Mashai, Mantsonyane, Lesobeng and Marakabei and he did not know which one to begin with. Finally he decided to start with Paray and on 10th November 1924 he and his assistant Fr. Gerard Martin who later became bishop, established the mission. (Suivez Le Guide S'IL Vous Plait pp.197-200)

## 12. St. John, Ha Tlali (1927):

Fr. Biard who had arrived at St. Joseph, Koro-Koro at the beginning of 1888 and 8 years after had put the first landmark of the then future mission of Massabiella, St. Louis and Loretto, in August 1896 entered into negotiations with Paramount Chief Lerotholi for establishing a chapel somewhere in the valley of Makhalaneng. Negotiations took a long time until Fr. Biard told Lerotholi that if there was no money, there was no mission.

In 1899 Fr. Miller, the canonical visitor, passing Koro-Koro noticed the urgent need for a church at Makhalaneng. Fr. Biard looked for the site, but the Protestants (Paris Evangelical Missionary Society.) came and put their tent right on the place he wanted to use. Fortunately, the village next to which they established themselves became Catholic and they had to leave. After the baptism of his wife chief Tlali asked Fr. Biard for a church. The apostolic prefect, Fr. Cenez, chose a place on the side of Setleketseng, but Paramount Chief Lerotholi refused to allow it because it was in the middle of the fields. Fr. Biard proposed another one at Popanyane but

the apostolic prefect refused saying that the place was in the district of Roma. Disappointed and intimidated, Tlali proposed the present site, which no body could refuse.

In 1901 Makhalaneng already counted about 15 Catholic families and more than 100 baptisms and 20 catechumens. On 12th April 1903 'Matsoana, the local chief of the valley was baptised. The following year the first church of St. John was opened by Fr. Biard. Nothing was lacking except a priest to say mass there. There were 150 baptised people and catechumens. The years passed and St. John gave up any hope for the future. Fr. Biard went there once a month until he got an assistant. From 26th February 1910 Fr. Henri Thommerel visited St. John every Sunday. The mission was then to all intent and purposes founded on September 18, 1912. Until then the feasts and baptisms were done at Koro-Koro, but the rapid progress of the mission rendered impractical this way of doing things. Because of the distance and the large number of catechumens, it was decided that from then on baptismal feasts would take place at St. John. On that day 60 adults were baptised. Fr. Galldas of Johannesburg baptised the men and the two fathers of Koro-Koro baptised the women.

The new mission had to wait for years before it could be given a resident priest. In 1914 after a month in the concentration camp at Maritzburg, Fr. Hentrich, a parish priest of Nazareth, took charge of Tlali as well. He was there till 1919, when the mission of St. John again became an outstation of Koro-Koro, then Roma. Fr. Closset built a big church there, which was finished by Fr. Lachance.

Finally, at the time of the founding of the neighbouring mission of St. Rodrique, Fr. Dulude was nominated the parish priest of both missions, but he stayed at St. Rodrique and regularly visited St. John. After so many years without a resident priest, St. John got its first resident priest Fr. Damphousse on 2nd October 1936. He only spent four months there. Then followed Fathers Fortier, Mousseau, Morin and Victor Gueguen.

### 13. St. John the Baptist (1929):

In 1906, in their first journey to Lesobeng, Frs. Pennerath, Bourdin and Lebreton slept on the way at the village of Jerome Lesaoana, who had recently arrived at the place and whose home was still being built. They were accepted with hospitality by him and his wife Adolphina. On the following day, they slept at Ha Penane. At that time there were no Christians at that place. On Sunday they held the services at Chief Marakabei's home. Adolphina, the wife of Jerome received the Eucharist and the three other

women were converted. On the second journey, on November 1906, Fr. Lebreton was alone. He passed Molikaliko to see Francisca Matsoai whose husband was a leper. Again he was received with hospitality by Chief Marakabei and he had few other converts. It was at this time that he asked the chief's wife to be converted, but the chief's wife replied that if they were given a church at Marakabei and a priest, only then would she be converted for if she was converted there was nobody who was going to teach her. ( She converted only 15 years later on 19th August 1921).

At this time Fr. Lebreton visited his outstation twice a year. He had the first outstation at Ha Jerome and the second at Ha Penane. He decided to choose between these two places for a mission. He chose Ha Jerome. Letsie II was ready to give the site on condition that people were asking for it. But the people were afraid of him and there was nobody who was ready to go to him. Fr. Lebreton changed his mind and decided that Ha Marakabei was the best site for the mission station. This pleased chief Marakabei very much; but he, like chief Ntaote played a delaying technique when it came to giving a site. He delayed till his mother who was a Protestant came to stay with him; and she wanted a Protestant church.

One day in 1916, Fr. Lebreton met chief Griffith who had taken the place of Letsie II and he told him about his intention to build a church at Ha Marakabei; but to his surprise Griffith told him that chief Marakabei had already asked for the site of the church for his mother. However, Griffith promised him to see to this matter, and he did. Marakabei had to give him a site too.

The mission of Marakabei was officially opened on 21st December 1929. Fr. Gerard Martin was the first priest to live there but only remained a year, because in 1930, he was chosen as the administrator of the vicariate of Basutholand in place of Bishop Cenez. In his place, Fr. Martin sent Fr. Joseph Walter Rousseau and Fr. Victor Quequen who was known to the Basotho by the name of Rasekoabetlane. Unfortunately Fr. Rousseau died at Ha Marakabei on 9th March 1933. (Suivez Le Guide S'IL Vous Plait p. 208)

#### 14. Mazonod (1931):

In 1930 bishop Cenez submitted his resignation. He left 50 000 baptised and 10 000 catechumens, 200 schools and 23 central missions. In the

same year, the ecclesiastic and religious administrations of Basutholand, till then joined in one person namely the apostolic vicar, separated. The religious (i.e. Oblates) were attached to the Oblate province of Canada with Fr. Henri Lebreton as the first vice provincial of Basutholand. Brothers Rainville, Horace and Ovila arrived in Basutholand in 1930.

In 1930 the question of founding a regular house for the oblates was posed for the first time. Since 1862 the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate were not preoccupied with founding any work of their own. All they did, they did only for the church. At that time there were two Basotho Oblate novices and there was the hope of developing the noviciate. But it was not agreed upon as to whether this noviciate should be placed on the site belonging to the oblates. Nevertheless, it was considered in one of the old missions, St. Monica. But reflecting on, the matter the oblate authorities found that it was better to find a new place to avoid any difficulties which could arise in the future regarding to property belonging to the church and to the Oblates.

In February 1931, the oblate provincial council of Basutholand studied two possibilities for the establishment of the future oblate house: Maseru and Thota-moli. The discussion was long, for both places had advantages as well as disadvantages. Finally it was decided that Thota-moli 10 miles from Maseru was the right place, The province of Canada encouraged the project and promised its support. In the meantime, Mr. Meyer a businessman and a friend of the Fathers donated 700 pounds and the house was constructed.

On 25 November the day following the feast of Christ the King in 1931, Leonard Leloko and Davies, the plenipotentiaries of paramount Chief Griffith were at the house. They had come to fulfil the mandate of Griffith, the one who for 15 years never ceased to favour all that could promote the catholic religion. The speech of Leloko was brief and precise. He said,

*"You Paki, and you all know that the paramount chief gives this land to the fathers. He does not ask your opinion, this land belongs to him. He simply let you know what he does and appeals to you like witnesses". (Suivez Le Guide s'IL Vous Plait, p241)*

This is how Mazenod was founded at Thota-moli; one of the historical places of Lesotho; where formerly the great national assemblies took place, where the national interests were debated and chiefs promulgated their ordinances. It is at this place that a quite considerable establishment

was to be built, comprising the provincial house, noviciate, different workshops directed by the brothers, finally and above all, the printing press. In short, an apostolic home.

After the feast of All Saints, the work that was intended began. A truck from Roma was bought for 100 pounds to transport stones for building. Bros. Sauver, Dupras, Lambert and Pilon had to work hard. They were living at Loretto and every day came to work at Mazenod, until 9th March 1932 when they agreed with Fr. Lebreton that they should stay at Mazenod. They made an altar and Fr. Thommerel placed the tabernacle there, Bishop Martin gave the necessary ornaments, Bro. Lambert was for some time in charge of the kitchen. In two days a kitchen and the refectory were built in brick. Brothers Phillip Polisa and Benjamin came to join the team of brothers; on 12th April 1932, sisters Cecilia and Perpetua of the Holy Family took charge of the kitchen and laundry. On 27th May they bought a cow for milk and a mare. Thus, what was necessary for the community was provided.

The priority objective was the printing press. There was a real need for a Lesotho catholic journal; and the first issue of "Moeletsi oa Basotho" was printed in Ladybrand at the beginning of 1933, then at Mazenod with Fr. Cary as the editor, Bro. Robin as the photographer and Bro. Pilon as printer. In the beginning, 1 000 copies were issued and the subscribers to "Mo-Africa" the newspaper of the Spiritan Fathers were inherited by the new journal. At the beginning of the year, 1 500 copies were produced. A second photographer was needed, as well as builds the office for the editor. The work continued under successive editors, Frs. Philippe, Laydevant, Paquet, Romestaing, L.G. Hamel and J. Thomas until the night of Wednesday, 19th June 1946, at 11:30 PM when a terrifying fire completely destroyed the house of the press, book depot, book binding room, linotype room and the accounts office. It was a loss estimated at between 15 000 and 20 000 pounds. Above all the moral and social loss was beyond all estimation: the newspaper and the books. The propaganda and expansion of the catholic influence was affected and paralysed. ( Suivez Le Guide S`IL Vous Plait p.243)

Everybody took courage under the direction of the provincial, Fr. Des Rosiers and the bursar Fr. Labresques. Bros. Chabot and Boulin went to Bloemfontein to publish the newspaper. The things that had been destroyed were repaired and Bro. Lambert began the construction of the new printing press, which would be more beautiful and bigger than the first. Bros. Viens and Boutin finished the building, which Bishop Des Rosiers



blessed on 30th June 1948, the day following his Episcopal consecration.

Moeletsi oa Basotho then developed. Besides the newspaper, the printing house produced a large quantity of books; commercial papers and reviews among which we can mention the "Voice of Basutholand" founded by Fr. Chicoine. Fr. Steffanus presided over the destiny of the catholic newspaper as editor for nearly four years and assured its success.

Engines supplied electricity for the workshops under the vigilance of Bro. Viens, mechanic and builder. Bro. Joseph Hlabanyane was in charge of the linotypes; Bro. Pius, of the "composition" which was the work of Bro. Parent for a couple of years. By composition here is meant the arrangement of letters in the linotype machine to form words. Bro. Parent went to Canada for holidays and left his work to Bro. Langlois under the responsibility of Bro. Dens Baboutlwelwe, but he soon returned and assumed his work at the press and was occupied with his football club, Swallows (Les Hirondelles). Bro. Morin was the specialist in heavy press and at the same time, a reporter and photographer of "Moeletsi oa Basotho". Bro. Enoch Makwelo was generally responsible for the printing. Bro. Aloysius Phate was busy with the distribution of the newspaper while Bro. Joseph Ntaote was the storekeeper and Chabot was doing the binding.

Until the late 50's, Bro. Pepin and Morsette as well as Bros. Coumoyer and Peterosi did carpentry. This carpentry shop was closed to give place to the bookshop in order to run the printing press. Chabot was also selling transistor radios. He sold more than 200 of them and went on to sell others to 1 000 catholic teachers. It was after this that Fr. Gareau, the secretary for schools, could begin weekly transmission to the teachers. (Suivez Le Guide s'il Vous Plait, p.242).

In the administration office, Fr. Rondeau was struggling to look after the finances. Every morning from 7:50 Bro. Picard went to the transmitter to broadcast news to the missionaries in the mountains and the lowlands to comfort them in their solitude. Every Sunday Bro. Picard left the microphone to his superior Fr. Ferragne who gave a talk in French on the life of the church during the week. It is this Fr. Ferragne who founded the catholic centre, i.e. the office of the Sesotho edition, the catholic library, a shop with the objects of piety and paper manufacture which was not thought of at that time. He came from the catholic centre of the University of Ottawa. He founded a branch at Roma on February 7, 1946 with the encouragement of Bishop Bonhomme and lived there for seven years. Then he came to Mazonod to establish his work near the printing press on

2nd February 1952. This centre was also served by Conrad Blais. It was a humble centre whose influence was clear. For some time it organised courses of preparation for marriage, the centre of the "Mater ET Magistra" organisation with its aim to promote the social realisation of catholic missions and the centre of social courses for adults during the holidays.

The workshops of Mazenod led to the establishment of the mission which in 1962 counted 3 500 Catholics. Fr. Lerotholi was the parish priest after Fr. Therault. Many of the fathers who came to this parish often occupied several posts like being the superior and the editor. But with the growth of the catholic population, the priest in charge was uniquely charged with spiritual things. In fact the mission started in September 10, 1932 with the laying out of a chapel in one section of the printing press. Then in May 1933 a school-church was built which quickly became too small, but could not be replaced by a bigger one. The present church was built by a couple of brothers, in particular by Brother Dyonisius who built the walls, and Bro. Boutin who put the tiles, etc. On May 21, 1961 the day of the centenary of the death of Bishop De Mazenod, the founder of the Oblates, Bishop Phakoe received his Episcopal consecration from Pope John XXIII, Bishop 'Mabathoana solemnly blessed the church of De Mazenod dedicated to Mary, the queen of the world.(ibid. p.247)

On the 11th of July 1934, the sisters of the Holy Names came to replace the sisters of the Holy Family who for 29 years had worked at the school, dispensary and the support of the Oblates. They began with 11 consultations in the first days and 128 children at school at the opening of the classes on January 28, 1935. From then until 1962, they took care of 154 288 patients at the dispensary and pulled 7 864 teeth.(Mazenod dispensary records 1935 p.6)

In 1946, Fr. Labresque built a monastery and rebuilt the printing house after the fire. Fr. Thommerel directed the noviciate until the opening of the new noviciate at Villa Maria on 17th January 1938. Fr. Gravel stayed at Mazenod as the bursar and vice superior for more than 8 years.

The house of retreat is the work of Fr. Pageau. It also served as the provincial house, missionary noviciate for the young fathers who came there for 6 months of pastoral orientation under the direction of Fr. Rondeau.

## 15. St. Leonard (1934)

Before 1920, the valley of 'Maletsunyane had no village. It was only the pastures and the shepherds who lived there. In 1921 this place was given to Chief Leloko to start his village. In 1923 a few villages began to be built around Leloko's village. This part of the highlands was under the charge of Fr. Laydevant from Emmaus. Like Fr. Lebreton, he visited his Christians twice a year. He had two outstations the one of Ha Khotso near Mantsonyane river and that of Ha Solomone. He started St. Leonard in 1925. But later these three outstations were taken over by Paray mission and later by Marakabei.

Fr. Martin opened the school of Semonkong in September, 1928. From the beginning, the school had 120 pupils, and in 1929 more than hundred people were converted. Frs. Gravel and Gueguen from Marakabei were able to visit St. Leonard three or four times a year and each time they went, they were surprised at the good will of the people.

On 26th May 1934 Bishop Bonhomme, who had heard of the growth of this outstation, went himself for the feast of baptism and confirmation. He saw that at St. Leonard, there was a great flock without a shepherd and he felt pity for it. He accepted the request of Chief Leloko who wanted a priest for those people. On 8th November 1934 he sent Fr. Gravel as the first priest to live at St. Leonard.(ibid. p. 185)

## 16. St. Rodrique (1935):

Let us go back as far as 1914. Alphonsina Maseteli, the wife of Makibitla, the first son and heir of Shoaepane was converted. Her father-in-law asked Fr. Lydevant for a church for her at Emmaus. That is why he founded the station of St. Felix at Thaka Makena. A school was then founded at the home of Damasina 'Nyane at Ha Raleqheka. In 1919 a true school was built at which Conzales Scout taught until 1936 when the sisters of the good shepherd from Quebec arrived. Though founded by Emmaus, this branch of St. Felix was dependent on Koro-Koro, then Tlali. Frs. Closset, Dubach and Lachance later worked there. Many conversions came about from the epidemic of the Spanish influenza in 1918, which unfortunately swept Makibitla. Chief Shoaepane, insisted on having a mission with a church and a priest. In 1926, seeing that only promises were

made, he grew impatient. But despite his good will Bishop Cenez could not do anything; at that time he had seven churches to build, as well as a convent and a seminary. Shoaepane had to be patient for 9 more years.

On May 18, 1935 Frs. Hentrich, Laydevant, Martin and Dulude went to a big feast for the baptism of 150 adults at Ha Shoaepane and afterwards met Chief Mamakibitla and her men to speak about the site of the mission. They announced the coming of a priest and religious women.

In October 18, 1936 about three thousand people stood by the side of the church with cries of joy when Fr. Jacques Gilbert escorted by 35 horsemen went to meet two cars. It was Fr. Lecompte the bursar of Mazenod, driving the car of Bishop Bonhomme and inside was sisters Sr. Pierre, Sr. Odile and Cecile of Agnes. Then came Fr. Gerard Martin in an old ford with sisters Sr. Theresa, Sr. Viateur and all the luggage. The sisters of the Good Shepherd had come to work in Basutholand, thanks to Cardinal Rodrique, archbishop of Quebec .

Without any delay, the sisters got to work. Some trees were planted and they reared rabbits. The school developed and a dispensary was opened. A noviciate was opened and now St. Rodrique is the provincial house of the Good Shepherd sisters. Fr. Dulude was replaced by Fr. Boissonnault who lived there for 9 years; then by Fr. Mousseau and finally by Fr. Lavoie in 1957. The beautiful church we see there was built during the time of Fr. Mousseau by brother Robert Morissette who also built the convent of the sisters.

#### 17. St. David (1935):

At the request of chief 'Mota to the principal Chief, Masupha who gave his consent, the catholic church was founded in this territory. Fr. Biard built the church of Gethsmany in 1880. The family of Masupha, which was catholic, found that the church of Gethsmany was too far and thus asked for a mission near them. In 1930, therefore, Bishop Cenez, Fr. Guilcher and Masupha II concluded an agreement and chose a site next to the village of Ntsabane. After some time Masupha changed his mind and gave them the actual place. The school, which was already built on the old site, was transferred later to the mission.

According to the intention of Bishop Cenez, the mission which was founded

was supposed to be called the Good Shepherd, but having found a relic of St. Theresa of the child Jesus, he gave it to Fr. Guicher for the mission of Masupha. Thus he changed his mind and designated St. Theresa as the patron saint of the mission. After the departure of Bishop Cenez, Bishop Bonhomme, who then blessed the first stone of the church on August 9 1936, promised chief Masupha to baptise the mission with the name of his grand father Masupha who was called David. That is why this mission, also known by the name 'Mamathe, is called St. David.(Suives Le Guide S'IL Vous Plait p.222)

On 26 March 1933 Fr. E. Dupuis, the new parish priest of Gethsmany celebrated mass at Ha Masupha in the small hut. He then came every month. About 50 Christians of Kolonyama also profited, for it was nearer than to go to Gethsmany.

The proximity of a Calvinist ( P.E.M.S.) mission of Kana provoked rivalry; and despite the lack of resources, the mission of Masupha was founded with a resident priest at the end of 1936. It was Fr. Garant the assistant of Sion who had worked at this mission, though the visiting of the sick remained the charge of Gethsmany. This provisional solution did not last for long. In October 23, 1935 Fr. Garant was made priest in charge of St. David but lived at Sion. In December of the same year, he was removed and sent to Ha Masupha.

On August 9, 1936 Bishop Bonhomme blessed the first stone and the construction commenced. Bro. Phillip Polisa, Nadeau and Sauve worked with eagerness. On June 19, 1937 the roof was completed and on September 10, the interior part was finished. Now the church was used while waiting for the solemn opening.(ibid. p.222)

Masupha II could not assist in this big feast. He was present at the midnight mass on the 25th December, but died in January 22, 1938 after having been baptised with the name of David, by the new parish priest Fr. Saint Jean. More than 10 000 people were present, at his funeral.

On May 4, 1938 his excellency Bishop Bonhomme blessed the big church of St. David. He was accompanied by seminarians and 12 priests. Two oxen were slaughtered for the people, a sheep for the fathers and one for the seminarians. Among the priests was the founder of the station, Fr. Guilcher who had the honour of preaching a sermon about how the mission had been founded.

Fr. Fortier replaced Fr. Saint Jean in 1937. There were 1 500 Catholics at

St. David at that time. Fr. Jacques who succeeded Fortier in 1939 remained there for 6 years; then Fr. Boissonnault for 11 years. Before he left the mission he had the joy of seeing the child of the mission, Fr. Ignatius Bale, being ordained a priest in 1959.

#### 18. Sebetia (1937):

In 1896, the first son of the third wife of Peete, Alexander Nkutu, came to settle in this region. He was baptised by Fr. Porte; he escaped from school to circumcision school and afterwards he lived a pagan life taking one wife after another. Poli, a very respectful man despite his apostasy sometimes helped Fr. Dahon who came there to visit the catholic family of Justine Lekhoba who later moved to Ha Shoepane.

Towards 1917, this region became more populated and the conversions became numerous. From then on Fr. Dahon thought of giving a school and a church to this area. In the meanwhile, Marcellinus Ratomo, a catholic of Sebetia came to Fr. Dahon to ask for work at Sion. In 1919 Fr. Dahon agreed and sent him to follow some courses to improve himself as a teacher for 6 months at St. Monica. Then Fr. Dahon and Marcellinus went to visit Chief Nkutu who gave them the site they wanted without worrying that he had already promised this place to Lechesa Sekoele, a Protestant pastor of Likoeneng. Standing up for his rights, Lechesa built a hut there. But one morning the hut was found demolished. The pastor went to Nkutu to report and find out who was guilty. But Nkutu refused to investigate saying that the land belonged to Fr. Dahon. On January 1920, a school was opened with 10 children and Marcellinus as a teacher. In spite of difficulties this school prospered so much that Fr. Dahon had to found other schools at Mapheleng, Liotloaneng, Nokong and Phororong.

Fr. Dahon worked alone at Sion and could not visit Sebetia regularly. When the Christians came to Sion to fulfil their religious duties they had to walk for 7 hours. In these conditions Christian life developed with difficulty. In 1933 Fr. Cornellier became Dahon's assistant and little by little began to go to Sebetia. The Easter communion of the sick gave an occasion for the priests to say mass at the school. Then Dahon went once a month remaining for 4 or 5 days giving communion to 200 Christians. He said mass under a shelter covered with some thatch while the people remained under the sun. Then he spoke of building himself a small house

and a school-church. He submitted his plans to the authorities but in September 1935 he was sent to Butha-Buthe to replace Fr. Klein.

Fr. Garant succeeded Fr. Cornellier and continued his work while he was serving St. David. In November 1935, Fr. Larour arrived. From 1936 every 15 days he went to Sebetia on horseback. Bishop Bonhomme gave Our Lady as the patron of this new mission and the church was built. On September 14, 1939 Fr. Villeneuve came from St. Martin to settle there. The sacristy served for his lodging until 5 November 1940.

This is how the mission of Sebetia was founded. Frs. Chicoine, Bechard, Milot, Dulude, Brisson, Lerotholi as well as Bros. Philip Polisa and Camberland stayed there for some years before Father Conrad Blais who would work there for 10 years with his brother Joseph Blais. There have been some sorrows and disappointments at Sebetia. Such as the fire in the sacristy on November 29, 1948 the cause of which could not be explained.

#### 19. St. Benedict (1938):

The mission of St. Benedict was founded by Fr. O. Chevrier on February 5, 1938. This was an outstation, which was served regularly by Pennerath from Roma or the priest from Nazareth. When Chevrier arrived at this place he only found some huts. His wish to establish a mission here came after the extension of the site by Chief Michael Khanyetsi who gave him two big fields. Chevrier built a presbytery and a big church of zinc whose roofs were blown off by the wind. When Menard arrived, he built a decent and comfortable school-church with cement while Chevrier planted trees in large quantities to prevent wind.

When Chevrier arrived, he found the catchiest Evaristus Thaanyane already there. For 20 years he had awaited for the foundation of the mission. It was he who was the pastor to the Christians who already numbered 2 000. His zeal was effectively supported by an excellent Christian, Felix Sepehane, to whom a good number of the Catholics of the region owe their conversion. This brave man is laid to rest in the cemetery of the mission. On his grave was planted a magnificent cross, which came from France on August 1939 on the occasion of the beginning of catholic action.

On July 15, 1941 Chevrier was replaced by Desrochers who, after having

shown what he could do in five and half years at Makhalleng, was sent to the difficult mission of St. Martin. Fr. Gauvin, from St. Martin took his place at St. Benedict. At that time it was considered by the Catholics founding a Presbyterian school at St. Bernard attached to St. Benedict. Unfortunately this project did not succeed after 16 years. But it was spoken of under another form, since the sacred heart brothers intended to establish a Juniorate there.

On January 21, 1950 Fr. Turgeon succeeded Gauvin who went to Canada on holiday. After having settled the good shepherd sisters at St. Benedict, he was transferred to Auray. Menard took his place for 10 years and also took charge of the quasi mission of St. Bernard and other stations. He built a big school at St. Bernard, a new school-church at St. Benedict and a bigger presbytery. When he left for Canada, Fr. Rigaud replaced him after waiting for Fr. Petje, who in turn was replaced by Fr. Mehlala. After this the mission remained without a priest for about 7 years. It was visited by the Fathers of the scholasticate till Fr. G. Cousineau came and developed the mission extensively.

#### 20. St. Bernard (1939):

The history of St. Bernard is included in that of St. Benedict. What we can add is that Fr. Klein is one of those who was there, who developed the mission. There is a mother and child clinic in this mission. At the moment, there has been no priest for more than 10 years. The priests of the Scholasticate visit the mission on Sundays.

#### 21. Auray (1939):

In 1906 there was only one Christian around this area, Bernice 'Matli. She lived on the eastern side of Mantsonyane River. It was at her home that Fr. Lebreton used to sleep on his way to Lesobeng. It is true that at this time there were few other catechumens and Chief Mafa of this place belonged to the Protestant church at Marakabei.

In 1912 there was a quarrel in the Protestant church and Esther 'Mathokolosi, the wife of 'Nyane the chief, Ernestina 'Malefojane the wife of Tomo and Rebecca, the wife of Khotso turned against the Protestant church. They retaliated by joining the Catholic Church. They were



accepted as catechumens at Easter 1912 and wanted an outstation at Ha 'Nyane. In 1906 these three women insulted Fr. Pennerath. Lebreton did not trust them and he promised them without interest that he was going to have a station at Ha 'Nyane.

When Lebreton came to Ha 'Nyane in November 1912, he found that Esther had worked and he received ten catechumens. Chief 'Nyane asked for a church on their behalf. There was another Christian from the lowlands that had come to stay there. She was Anna 'Moso. Lebreton learned that this was God's hand at work. Chief 'Nyane gave the site and the first church was built which was opened in 1923. At this time, chief Benedict Thabo Lerotholi was made the principal chief and he came to live near 'Nyane's village. The first priest to live at Auray was Fr. Gauge. He arrived on 30 August 1939.

## 22. Montmarte (1940):

In January 1906 Frs. Pennerath, Bourdin and Lebreton decided to visit Lesobeng. They wanted to visit Simeon Ramphutsoe whose two sons were attending school at Roma College. He was the only Christian at Lesobeng. They also wanted to see the Le Bihan falls. They began their journey accompanied by Frederick Moteaphala and Augustinus Sello. In that year there had been heavy rain and the rivers were in flood. On the way they passed Marakabei and Mantsonyane Ha 'Nyane. When they passed Methalaneng, they were caught by hail and this delayed their journey. They crossed the Lesobeng River at night; and they could not see anything. They came to Simeon Ramphutsoe at 10:00pm. Simeon was very happy to see them, for the Protestants were mocking him about their priests who never visited them. The next morning Simeon gathered the people and they came in a great number to see the catholic priests at Lesobeng. Fr. Lebreton said mass and Pennerath gave an eloquent sermon. They had a few converts among whom we can name Ramokheseng and Rasupu and a few other women. Lesobeng then became the first outstation. Lebreton was visiting this outstation three times a year from Roma; and he visited it for 18 years till 1924 when Paray was opened as a mission; then Lesobeng was an outstation falling under Paray. In 1930 when Marakabei was opened, Lesobeng fell under it; in 1936 it fell under St. Leonard, Semonkong; and again in 1940 it became the outstation of Paray for few months for on the 22nd August 1940 Fr.

Gagon arrived at Lesobeng as the first priest to stay there. He stayed for 15 years.(Suivez Le Guide S`IL Vous Plait P.192-193)

### 23. Cathedral Maseru (1943):

On August 15, 1895, three people of Maseru converted and went to Koro-Koro where Fr. Biard was. Loretto was founded for them, and they had to wait for 50 years before anything could be done in the capital. The parish priest of Loretto had to look after the Botsabelo leper settlement and later on Maseru prison. The war provided the occasion of getting a foothold in the capital.

Mobilised as the officer in charge of the social service of the army, Fr. Jean Louis Benoit profited from this time to exercise his ministry in the hospital, prison and among the whites. The people continued to go to Loretto but more and more they became aware of the need of being settled in Maseru. On November 26, 1944, Benoit inaugurated the temporary chapel of St. Bernadette and came to live there on December 4, 1945. Fr. Pageau began with the big church of our lady of victories, which in those days was customarily called "the church of the soldiers" in recognition of the amount they subscribed for its construction during the war. The building of this church is the work of Bros. Paul Mofokeng, Jean-Marie Morrissette, George Meunier, Raymond, etc.

Bishop Des Rosiers blessed it on June 29, 1955, on the 10th anniversary of his episcopal consecration. Then 2 big schools were built and the offices of the Catholic schools secretariat, a big building which will serve as a social and cultural centre. The parish priest of the cathedral Fr. Jeneau at that time was thinking of the presbytery and the convent of the religious women who taught in the school.

### 24. St. Peter Claver (1945):

This mission was founded by Fr. Valet with the moral and financial support of the paramount chief Griffith who gave 50 pounds saying that it was a stone that he put for the chapel. Dedicating it to St. Peter Claver, Valet wanted to show his recognition of the missionary society of St. Peter Clavier, which helped the poor mission.

For 20 years Valet alone visited regularly this mission. At Easter 1945 Fr. Albert Gerard became the first resident priest but he did not remain for a long time for he retired in September 1944 and was sent elsewhere. On March 8, 1945 Fr. Fernando Lalumiere came to live there as the parish priest but he soon left for Canada. St. Peter Claver now became an outstation of Matsieng, then Massabiella, Mazenod and Samaria. Finally in 1951 Fr. Tsubane arrived. He was succeeded by Fr. L.G. Hamel who did not stay there but at Matsieng. Fr. Rodrigue came to break this instability for 3 years. In December 11, 1957 the mission found a pastor, Fr. Raymond Fortier. Fr. Petje also came, but at present St. Peter Claver is again the outstation of Mazenod.

The population of St. Peter Clever was sympathetic and well disposed but the catholic influence was very weak there. Is very difficult to explain why there were no priests sent to this mission except, the lack of personnel, and the fact that Fr. Menad was murdered at this mission in 1966.

#### 25. Fatima (1948):

Our lady of Fatima is the national sanctuary where since 1946 thousands of the Basotho assemble every year from all comers of the country to renew their consecration and their trust in the one they call "Mofumahali oa Lesotho" - "The Queen of Lesotho". The Oblates of Mary Immaculate who for years have been evangelising this country of Moshoeshoe have established many missions and stations dedicated to Mary. Here they wanted to build a small chapel consecrated to Our Lady of Fatima and the monument, which could perpetuate from generation to generation, the memory of the official consecration of the whole nation to the immaculate heart of Mary on August 18, 1946. On February 2, 1868 in the evening, the baptism of 9 adults took place, and at the end of the procession with the statue of the blessed virgin, Bishop Allard consecrated Roma valley, Moshoeshoe, and the whole nation to the Virgin Mary, asking her to put an end to the wars, that ravaged the country. At that time 1868 there were about 2 Christians. Then after 78 years it was agreed that the Christians in Lesotho which by now counted 165 000, renew the gesture that Bishop Allard made on their behalf in 1868.

Pope Pius XII had consecrated the universe to the immaculate heart of Mary on October 31, 1942. On 18 October, the following year, Fr. Emile Thomas, in the absence of Bishop Bonhomme who was in Canada, consecrated the church of Lesotho to the immaculate heart of Mary and in

all the missions the same gesture was repeated. But they had to do more and it was agreed upon that the nation itself, in the person of its chiefs, be consecrated publicly, following the example of the Pope and the Bishops.

The country was in growing distress because of the drought that lasted for years, the exodus to the mines, Basotho soldiers returning from the war and who were now without work, increases in tax, the power of the chiefs becoming limited and, the war to safeguard schools from being closed, especially those in the mountains were all new difficulties which appealed to the return of trust in the protector of the country.

On April 30, 1946 Bishop Bonhomme went to Matsieng to talk to the governor about the consecration of his country to Mary. The date was fixed and this great day was announced everywhere and on Sunday 18 August, while in all the missions the chiefs renewed the same gesture, before the cathedral of Roma, Amelia 'Mantsebo Seeiso consecrated all his people to Mary. At sunset every family consecrated itself to the immaculate heart of Mary.

The following day, Monday 19 August, all the people were invited to Ha Ramabanta to kneel around a cross on the place of the future basilica for the first pilgrimage of what was to become "Fatima". Bishop Bonhomme was at the head of the procession followed by about 100 priests, brothers and sisters and 4 000 faithful Church members.

Makopoi API, a widow, who was Calvinist and one of the chiefs of Basutoland, was praying on October 2, 1944 crying aloud while reading a passage from the gospel of Luke on the annunciation. The following Sunday without informing her friends she went to St. John, Ha Tlali to Fr. Mousseau to convert to Catholicism. Two years later, on 24 May 1946 she was baptised by Bishop Bonhomme with 75 of her subjects who had followed and escorted her. She was given the name Maria Fatima; and the bishop decided to erect a new parish for her that would be called Fatima.

What made this place even more popular was the double tour with the statue of our lady of Fatima in the lowlands in 1949 and in the mountains in 1950.

In October 13 1949, 10 000 people came to the sanctuary of Fatima. That was not the end, because every year in October, thousands of the Basotho make such pilgrimages.

The beautiful chapel we admire there was built by Bro. Patrick Voyer. It is this brother who first came to reside at Fatima and soon was joined by Fr. Moringi in 1946. After him came Fr. Gauvin with Fr. Tessier; then Fr. J. Blais was stationed there for many years as the chaplain of the pilgrimages and built a big school and embellished this mission. His successor was Fr. L'Hour; but the altitude did not suit his already sick heart, thus Fr. Houle came to direct the pilgrimages. He built the present church, which helps the pilgrims during bad times. (Suivez Le guide s'il vous plait!..., p. 289). Other successors were Fathers Cote, Faucher and Matsoso who is still working in that place. On 29 September 1990 Brother Lefeko Bernard Seleke was ordained the first priest from this mission by his grace Archbishop Ambrose de Paoli, the apostolic pro-nuncio to Lesotho.

#### 26. Assumption (1954):

Already in 1928 Fr. Guilcher, the parish priest of Gethsmany had found a place next to the camp of Teya-teyaneng for a school. Chief Masupha himself had given the site. Unfortunately the lack of resources caused him to delay building on this site. It was also impossible to open a school because of the regulation of the distance between schools, which was three miles.

In 1949 the camp was developing; a big hospital, prison and shops were opened where many Catholics were employed. They needed to be ministered to. Fr. Boissonnault struggled for years before he could obtain land for that cause. Finally in May 14, 1951 the assistant magistrate himself gave a site of 10 hectors in the presence of Fr. Boissonnault, St. Jean and Le Bihan who was representing the paramount chief. It was fenced the following day. The site was the old property of Dr. Hoffmeyer near the hospital.

In June 7, 1951 the second gathering was held; bishop Des Rosiers with his councillors, Fr. Thommerel vicar general, Labresque, oblate bursar and Damphouse diocesan bursar met around the site. Frs. Juneau, Denoyers, Boissonnault were there too, as well as Brother Joseph Blais and many Basotho whom the bishop blessed. The mission of the camp of Teya-teyaneng was then opened in 1954 and was called our lady of Assumption. In 1955 Fr. Boissonnault announced the completion of the walls of the

church on which the roofs were completed in September. Fr. Boissonnault celebrated his first mass in the camp on January 30, 1954. It was raining but that could not stop the feast; for the Basotho, rain is the sign of benediction and prosperity. The presence of the Magistrate, Mr. Hennessy, a fervent Catholic pleased the population, which was proud of its big church.

In June, 500 communions were distributed. After that Fr. Boissonnault could not say mass there without neglecting his parish of St. David. So, he asked for permission from the bishop to continue serving both missions. The bishop refused saying that, it was too much for his health. On the contrary, the bishop proposed that one of the two fathers of Gethsmany come to say mass at the camp once a month. This solution was not satisfying for the fathers at Gethsmany were already over worked; beside that how could one station be served by two different missions! In August 1954, Fr. Boissonnault searched for another solution and Fr. Labresque arrived as the first resident priest. From that day it can be said that the mission was solidly established, though some small problems did occur.

On February 27, 1956 a racehorse rushed over the car of the priest and a legal case followed. On 5 of June of the same year, the priest fell from the horse and broke his left ankle. In November 11, 1958 lightening struck the presbytery and fortunately it caused more fright than damage.

Never in the memory of the missionary, was a school opened so rapidly in Basutholand as that of Assumption. Only six months elapsed between the request being presented to the government and the acceptance and four days between acceptance and the opening. On 26 January, the district council for school matters signed the recommendation for the establishment of a catholic school at the camp. On the same day by telephone, the director of education approved the school. The following day, Fr. Blanchard, the secretary for catholic schools and Fr. Labresque went to Roma to see the sisters from St. James who were supposed to come to Assumption. They were not there but that did not matter, for the mother superior of the major seminary and one of her companions took their place while awaiting their return.

## 27. Leper Settlement (1957):

At the time of Marian year the catholic lepers of Botsabelo asked Bishop

Des Rosiers for a priest to reside with them. In November 1957 their request was finally fulfilled when Fr. Bechard who for some time had already been residing at Loretto, settled at the leper settlement. There is a beautiful church at the settlement and a presbytery, which were built with the help of the benefactors, even though we are not told who were they.

As such, the leper settlement was founded by the government in 1913; and from the beginning took charge by the priest of Loretto starting with Fr. Philippe and his successors.

A school of St. Damien was built there. At the present time the leper settlement is one of the most prestigious places in the town. There is a school for nurses and a nurse's home even though they belong to the government.

#### 28. St. Cecilia (1960):

The younger brother of chief Leshoboro had a wife called Francina who was a catholic. When she arrived at the village of her husband there was not even one catholic there. Francina did not hesitate to start witnessing and she became an instructor. Her parish priest Fr. Philippe of Loretto soon received 5 catechumens, the fruits of Francina's apostolate. After some time the priest baptised the first born of Francina before many people. Unfortunately the child died afterwards. At the burial of the child, Francina through the man who was speaking in her name took the chance to teach the crowd that "those who are not born of water and the spirit will not enter the kingdom of heaven" (Jn3: 3). As it was foreseen, this unusual and mysterious declaration to the pagans provoked many questions. Francina responded to all explaining everything to do with her faith. Conversions multiplied and her house became the house of prayer. Thus St. Cecilia was founded, and Francina became the catchiest respected and loved by all. This station was put under Bethany.

On January 25, 1938 Fr. Brisson, Belanger and Trevisol arrived there to baptise 90 catechumens. On 28th August 1941 Brisson who came to spend 4 days at St. Cecilia found that there were already almost 2 000 Catholics. There was a need for a church and a priest. They began with the church and 13 years later on June 23, 1949 the church was blessed solemnly by Bishop 'Mabathoana.

In September 10, 1955 Bishop Des Rosiers came to the mission with two trucks transporting stones. On 13 March 1956 the foundations were cast. Fr. Milot directed the work with his 20 men and women who brought water and sand. In May 1956 a team of builders began the work. When the construction was over, Milot was sent to Mountolivet and left what he had begun to the care of others. In June 1959 Brothers Viens, Picard, Morrissette and Parent put on the roof. The following month the sick Fr. Ameyer was sent to St. Cecilia. His assistant, Desnoyers visited all the villages around the mission. In October 12, the new church was inaugurated with the baptism of 40 adults, 100 babies and 70 people who were admitted to the catechumenate. Fr. Boissonnault arrived on April 9, 1960 as the parish priest. As he was a doctor, he immediately built a dispensary. The name of the place changed and became Ha Buasono; the Sesotho name of Fr. Boissonnault, who died there in 1981.

#### 29. St Magdalen 1964

In 1964, St. Magdalen had a catholic population of 10 000, but was still an outstation of Gethsemany. A new parish was long overdue. So, Archbishop Mabathoana decided to give it a resident priest and obtained from the Oblates a holy and devoted man, Fr. Zenon Ethier. Unfortunately he died the following year. Fr Ethier never complained to anybody about his health and since he was only 35 nobody could imagine he would die so early. However he died of heart failure while he was making his annual retreat at Mazenod. Fr Rosary succeeded him but did not stay long.

Fr Houle replaced him and remained there for 22 years. He built a spacious church and a high school that was named Zenon after the patron saint of his predecessor. Fr Israel Ralethoko replaced him and is the actual pastor. Fr. Houle upgraded the schools and even started a secondary school at Ramothamo, which is one of his 5 outstations. The catholic population is now 12 000, three of whom have been ordained to the priesthood, they are, the late Fr Albert Senekane who died one year after ordination along the road to Auray; and Fr Felix Molumeli and Fr Tihomola.

#### 30. 'Ma Molimo 1977



The mission of Bethlehem at Thaba Bosiu had disappeared after the foundation of Bethany, but there was a community around Mosalla that was at a disadvantage. Bethany was very far. Their chance came when Fr Jodoin, a professor of theology at St Augustine's Seminary, wanted a break. He volunteered to start a mission of Mosalla. He gave it 'M'aMolimo as a patron. He had a very small amount of money, but he and the local artisans managed to build a church using a very simple plan of his own design, that was surprisingly practical and attractive. After a few years his health was deteriorating. He had to go back to Canada. He is suffering from a blindness that cannot be cured. His successor and actual pastor is Fr Nkotsi. He took charge of the mission in 1985. He did a lot to upgrade the schools. The catholic population which was 2 000 at the time of its foundation is now more than 6 000 of which 2 have been ordained priests, that is, Frs. Abel Tlali Phohlo and Lucian Phokojoe Tshehla. The growth may be accounted to the growth of the population and the migration of people from other parts of the country to this place.

### 31. St. Leo (Ha Makhoathi) 1983.

What is surprising about this mission is that there is no foundation stone for the church. The people there say that the mission had been the outstation St Damian the leper settlement from 1967, and the registration of the first Christian points to this fact but there are no records of this mission. Maybe the reason is that there has never been a resident priest even after the church was built in 1983 by Fr. Labreque. However the sisters were there since 1977 even before there was a church. What can be mentioned is that there have been different Priests visiting. They were FRS, C. Tholoana, P. Nkunyane, and J. Pitso S. C. P. and presently Fr. Ramaema.

### 32. Maria Ma-Basotho 1984

In the provincial council of 18-01-81 it was voted that many Oblates were not satisfied with the involvement of the oblates in the community of Maseru. The two reasons which were put forward were a lack of organisation in pastoral care and the increase of the population at Botshabelo and Khubetsoana. The council resolved to make a sociological survey of the situation and Fr Matoane was given this task. On 14 January 1982 Fr

Matookane reported back to the council. The conclusion of his inquiry was that Sebaboleng was the suburb that was the most in need of spiritual help at that time. On 10 March 1982, the provincial council decided unanimously to establish an Oblate Operational Centre among the poor of Maseru north in the Khubetsoana-Motimposo area, in which the Oblates were to put emphasis on specialised ministries with particular attention to the National Teachers Training College (NTTC,).

Fr Matookane was again asked to elaborate on the model of pastoral care, which could be developed and later followed at this Operational Centre. The Provincial was advised to start the necessary process towards the realisation of the project. On the same date it was reported that the Archdiocesan council had approved the project and the Bishop had written a covering letter for the various organisations to be conducted. But the site was not yet been given. On 10 June 1982, the provincial council was informed that the general administration had accepted the project and on 9 September 1982, the eventual site was visited and the first sketches of the plan were made.

On 10 March 1983 the provincial reported on the project after which there followed a long discussion and the members of the council were asked to express their views on the general orientation of the project. It should be noted that the site at Morena Molomo's field was given on 27 June 1983 and on 30 June 1983 the provincial thanked him for the gift with the letter entitled, Kabelo ea Ts'imo ea Morena Molomo ho MaOblata a Kereke e Katholike; meaning the gift of chief Molomo's field to the Oblates.

When the project started, two houses were built, one of which served as a presbytery while another one was a storeroom and the school of Motimposo which was used as the church on Sundays. The community of Cenez was not happy with the site for the mission. Their reason was that they were the older outstation, and they did not consider the fact that in the population of Cenez the Catholics were not in the majority. It is not suppressing that the Cenez community under the leadership of its catchiest, Mr Mokwena sometimes passively resisted the activities held at the site.

The church and the actual presbytery of Maria MaBasotho and the hall were constructed at the same time. The church has the capacity of accommodating 900 persons, and the hall, 500 while the presbytery is a two-storey building with three garages under it. All these buildings took about a year and a half to complete.

According to the plan of the centre, there was no intention of establishing a mission here, but only a pastoral centre with three priests residing there, but this never materialised, maybe because of the lack of personnel or because of the lack of understanding by those assigned to work there as they were used to serving in the missions. They did not know any other structure of pastoral work except parish work. As a result, MaBasotho has become a parish like any other with the exception that it has the potential for being inculturated more easily than other parishes as it started in this era of inculturation. Again people who were assigned there were very interested in inculturation. The first resident priest was Fr A Pula. He was succeeded by Fr I. Selialia who was succeeded by Frs. Ntoane, P. Maboloka, both of whom were assisted by P. Ntebele, M. Ndjezula, M. Lekarapa, and E. Pheku.

## B. DIOCESE OF LERIBE

This diocese of Leribe was established on 1 December 1952. It was formerly a part of the diocese of Maseru and now comprises of the civil districts of Butha-Buthe, Leribe, a part of Berea in the northern part of Lesotho and also a small part of Thaba-Tseka district. The diocese of Bethlehem is to the East and it is bounded to the North by the Matsoku River (Diocese of Qacha's Nek); and in the south by the Archdiocese of Maseru. The first Bishop of this diocese was Bishop Emmanuel Mabathoana. The area was

5.215 km<sup>2</sup> ,and the population was 309.527 while the Catholic population was 134.930. (Lesotho Catholic Directory 1988 p. 31)

#### 1. St. Monica at Leribe: (1876)

In July 1875, Bishop Jolivet, who had succeeded Bishop Allard as vicar Apostolic, made his first visit to Basutholand. This was celebrated by a procession of the faithful. He spent the month there enquiring into the work of the missionaries and visiting the convent, the boarding establishment and various outstations. He found that there were 500 baptised Catholics and many catechumens under instruction. He continued his predecessor's policy of friendly contact with the chiefs. Major Bell, the magistrate at Leribe gave the bishop a recommendation to chief Molapo. Father Gerard travelled to his house to call on him, though he had not met him on their arrival in 1862. The visit was successful and Molapo gave him a site for a new mission station.

After his return from Molapo's village, father Gerard travelled to Natal to see to the printing of his Sesotho translation of St. Luke's gospel and a short history of the Christian church, which he had written. He left Natal on the 11 May 1871 and when he returned to Basutholand, he brought two young men from the Phillipstown reformatory with him to assist on the mission, but unfortunately their names are not mentioned.

In June 1876, since all was well at Roma, father Gerard set out with father Bartholomew to open St. Monica's mission on the site granted by Molapo. The two priests made the journey on horseback with 13 pounds in cash and were followed by a wagon on which all their equipment and supplies had been loaded. The bishop had insisted on their taking enough of everything to make them reasonably comfortable since it was bitterly cold, as is always the case in June. They anxiously awaited the arrival of the wagon so that they could set up camp. The wagon however, was involved in an accident and badly damaged. It took it a month before it arrived. They gratefully accepted the hospitality of some friendly Basotho and began visiting neighbouring homesteads and explaining their mission.

When an Irish man, V.O. Ryan, visited them, they had nothing to give him except coffee without sugar or milk. Ryan immediately sent his servants to the nearest store for supplies which he presented to them.(Gerard codex historicus July 1876 p. 7) They were very grateful but what was most

painful was that they could not say mass for a month because of the delay of the wagon. In July, brother Mulligan arrived and they began to build a chapel and a cottage.

They had been advised not to build a chapel of mud soil and therefore, began to make bricks assisted by volunteers who were paid 60 pence per 1 000 bricks. Soon afterwards another Irish benefactor of the mission, Mr. Moran, arrived to help and donated half the cost of their 50 000 bricks.(O Hara, Father Joseph Gerard p. 43.)

The official opening of St. Monica took place on 11 February 1877 with Bishop Jolivet presiding. After the ceremony, hundreds of guests were invited to a feast at which all the local dignitaries were present. The next day, the bishop made a formal call on chief Molapo to thank him for the site. The following year St. Monica was the scene of a gathering of the clergy, nuns and converts from all the other stations for the celebration of the feast of the assumption, presided over by the Bishop and father Mangninoux.

## 2. St. Theresa Bela-Bela (1895):

This mission of St. Theresa of Avila (Bela-Bela) was founded in 1894 by Father Philippe, who was then the assistant of father Deltour at St. Monica's. It was started as an outstation of St. Monica's in 1895. The original site had to be abandoned due to the poverty of the soil and frequent thunderstorms. In 1912 Father Thommerel who was the parish priest, obtained a new site where the actual mission is presently located. This second place provoked a controversy between chiefs Mitchel and Seshophe, which interrupted the building of the church for five months. From St. Monica father Thommerel supervised the building of the church, which was opened in July 1916. From the beginning of 1915 Father Rinderman had charge of both St. Theresa and St. Ann until his death in 1918, but it was at St. Monica that he lived.

After him came Father Dahon who began the secondary school which became Dahon High School, and the Fathers Romestaing and Jacques who continued the work. Father Perriens, who had arrived at St. Monica on 2 December 1925, became the first priest to stay at St. Theresa in 1926. The sisters of Holy Names arrived on 1 October 1931. Father Perriens stayed on at St Theresa till 1932 when he was recalled to Holland, his

original province, leaving a flourishing mission.

### 3. St. Paul (1923):

The beginning of St. Paul as an outstation of St. Monica dates back to the 10th October 1913. At that time the priest in charge of St. Monica was Fr. Thommerel. He was strongly encouraged by chief Mopeli to build a church at his place. The Christian community was growing very rapidly there and in February 1918 the school was opened and Simon Ramohano was sent from St. Monica as the first teacher. On 9 June 1919, 52 people were baptised at the first feast for adult baptism, among whom was Chief Mopeli's first wife. In 1923, Fr. Romestaing was sent at St. Monica as assistant to Fr. Thommerel. In 1920, a house was opened at St. Paul from where the northern outstations were served. This part of Butha-Buthe was one of the areas, which were dedicated to the traditional way of life and traditional religion. This was one of the problems at this mission.

In 1928 Fr. Romestaing left St. Paul for Pontmain, Pitseng and Fr. Bussant took his place but he only stayed one year. Fr. Klein took over and stayed there about 6 to 7 years. The sisters arrived at St. Paul in 1935. The church which was built in 1926 by Brother Debs was big enough to accommodate 1 000 people.

### 4. Pontmain, Pitseng (1928):

In March 25, 1913 Fr. Thommerel and Hentrich went to see chief Tau about the site for a new mission 25 miles east of St. Monica. On 5th June of the same year, the boundaries of the site were marked and a mission dedicated to our lady of Pontmain was born. Some years later in May 1916, Chief Jonathan tried to close this mission but was not very insistent and quickly changed his mind.

Immediately Fr. Thommerel built a poor hut there and then another one of 30ft by 16ft. It was a humble basilica; the statue of our lady touched the roof of the church for it was so low. On 13th October, Fr. Thommerel opened a school at the village of old Victoria, the daughter of Moshoeshoe I, with Laurenti as the first teacher. In the first weeks 28 pupils registered. In 1921, 8 years after it was founded there were 200 children making four classes and in 1946 they were more than 1 000. (Suivez Le Guide S'IL Vous

Plait p.167)

The district that was served by Fr. Thommerel then became too big and did not allow him to visit Pontmain as regularly as he desired. However, he made an effort to go there every month.

In 1921 there were already 900 people baptised and 400 catechumens. From June 6, 1924, Fr. Romestaing was in charge of Pontmain and St. Paul. He resided alternatively at both missions, though he spent more time at St. Paul.

In 1928, Fr. Bossart took over St. Paul and the outstation of Our Lady of Laghetto and then Fr. Romestaing established himself at Pontmain and developed it considerably. He built the school of Bolahla and succeeded in opening two others at Chabatsane and Likileng despite the government prohibition on the creation of new schools.

After Fr. Romestaing, Fr. Dubach stayed for a year at Pontmain, Fr. Lachance two years and Fr. Kieger arrived in December 1932, while the sisters, the grey nuns, had arrived on 9 November 1931 and opened their noviciate on 20 February 1934. They admitted the first Basotho novices on the 11 November 1936.

Father Kieger worked there for 5 years and only left some months before the blessing of the big church of Pontmain which had been built in less than two years. Fr. Pennerath, the superior of the seminary blessed its foundation stone, which was laid on the feast of the sacred heart on July 21, 1935.

The builders came from Roma and completed their work on 17 of August 1936. The readers of the "French oblate review" contributed largely to pay for the cost of construction. Bishop Bonhomme paid for the windows and the roofs, and it is he who blessed the church on 2 October 1938. Later in 1943, Fr. L'Hour helped by Brother Phillip Polisa and Sister Marie du Calvarie embellished it on April 21, 1945. Finally he put the statue of our lady of Pontmain on top of the altar.

When Fr. Kieger left Pontmain to go to found Christ the King mission in 1938, he left behind him the reputation of a man of God. Like him, his successors, Frs. Belanger, Fortier, Benoit and L'Hour multiplied baptisms and registered 300 catechumens. In 1948, they counted 4017 baptised people.(Baptismal Register from 1945 to 1949)

## 5. St. Rose, Peka (1931):

While he was the assistant of Fr. Thommerel at St. Monica, Fr. Renderman had obtained certain promises from chief Mathealira, for the foundation of a mission. Unfortunately the chief died and Fr Renderman in 1918. Fr. Thommerel tried in vain to renew their negotiations and nobody spoke of the foundation of a mission anymore. In the meanwhile, the conversions multiplied and the Christians were attending the neighbouring outstation of St. Ann once a month.

On May 16, 1926, Fr. Thommerel organised a sensational feast at St. Monica. It was the golden jubilee of the foundation of St. Monica. Thirteen oxen were slaughtered and the feast attracted many people. Among the chiefs who were present was 'Malihotetso the widow of Mathealira who asked that her daughter Tholoana be baptised. In less than a year 'Malihotetso spoke of her conversion. Fr. Thommerel and Perriens visited her. Fr. Thommerel preached a sermon and the chief converted with a good number of her people. It was 28 of April 1927 that the true history of St. Rose began.

Every 15 days the catchiest, Constantinus Khalapa came from St. Monica to hold Sunday services in the absence of the priest. Then the catchiest David Mokhameleli resided at Peka. He was lent a little house for the Christian assemblies. In the meantime the priests were looking for a site for a mission. (It must be understood that at that time there was no dialogue between the denominations, so we should not be surprised by the language of the sources, which is not our feelings). The Protestants (P.E.M.S.) raged and began to be difficult. They tried by all means to make their chief turn against her conversion. But the chief answered them and won over them. They changed the method and did all they could to make the project of founding a mission fail. (Suivez Le Guide Vous Plait p.176)

It was relatively easy to find a favourable site for the mission. Before the negotiations began, the site had already been chosen. In the course of 1930 the site was obtained and the boundaries marked. Fr. Perriens came to fence it. That was enough to begin a dispute between the two chiefs. He had to wait until Palm Sunday of the following year before the fencing could be finished.

In 1932, Fr. Lachance from St Monica was nominated as the priest in charge



of St. Ann, St. Marguerite and St. Rose. He came to say mass between the wall of the church without the roof at St. Rose every 3rd Sunday of the month. Finally in 1932 brothers Dupras and Sauve put the roof on the church. Then on 8 April 1934 Bishop Bonhomme blessed this new church. But they had to wait until 1938 before they could see a resident priest at St. Rose because of lack of personnel.

Father Maxime Charbonneau arrived there in July 1938. The long tours, cold and solitude of St. Martin were over. To start off with he was disappointed. He was surprised by the slowness of his builders and learned that he needed patience in the mountains and in the lowlands. The outstation of St. Ann was better than the mission of St. Rose on which it depended, thus Fr. Charbonneau passed one week at St. Rose and another at St. Ann. On October 28, 1935 Anna 'Malihotetso extended the site and it was decided to build the noviciate of the sisters. Then things moved rapidly. From then on, the mission developed normally. In October 1940 Fr. Charbonneau recorded many conversions without any apparent natural cause; grace worked in the souls of men.

Soon there were 2 priests at St. Rose because of the sisters of the noviciate who wanted a chaplain. Fr. Guilcher, Laydevant, Kieger and Chevrier devoted their time to the sisters while Fr. Lajeunesse, Brouillet, L. Dupuis, Sutha and Tsubane saw to the missions in turns.

Father Lajeunesse developed some buildings and opened an evening school for the shepherds. On July 30, 1934 Fr. Lachance opened a school with 110 pupils and one teacher. Fifteen days later there were 165 children and they needed another teacher. For 25 years up to 1962 the government refused to recognise this school and did not pay the teachers salaries possibly because of influence of the P.E.M.S. The schools of St. Rose are what they are today, thanks to the generosity of the sisters of the Holy Names.

#### 6. 'Mamohau (1938):

Fr. Fortier opened this mission on August 7, 1938. Chief Lejone gave him a site the same year. But we should not forget that it was formally an outstation of Paray, which was founded by Lebreton and Thommerel. Fr. Fortier stayed only one year and was succeeded by Fr. Ovide Mousseau. It was during his time that Doctor Berthe Hadegger began to come regularly from Paray riding for 9 hours to work at the dispensary. Fr. Mousseau helped by Gerard Sylvain who replaced Leverdure, succeeded

in establishing a new station at Liqalaneng at the source of Malibamatso River. They had an immense and very mountainous territory to cover, very cold in winter. In 1943, a dense layer of snow killed about hundred oxen in the surrounding places. However, the Christians were fervent; such as the brave and saintly Alina Polina who was struck down by tuberculosis and died in September 8, 1943 at the age of 40 after having set a good example all her life, by being a Christian in word and deed.

Fr. Mousseau, confident of the future, made some projects for the development of schools and the mission in general. But on November 2, 1943 he was sent to Ha Tiali and left Sylvain. After a year he too had to quit for the new university college of Roma which was being organised needed him. He left no one to replace him. The personnel were reduced in numbers and it was spoken of sacrificing 'Mamohau for six months. The unhappy Christians had occasional visits from Frs. Legendre, L.G. Hamel and Jalbert. The latter became their pastor on July 1, 1945. Jalbert built a grading mill that was installed by Bros. Meunier and Lemay. The whole population was very happy with this development.

On October 12, 1946 Jalbert officially established a post office at the mission that lasted for 15 years. They had to fetch the post on mules from Pontmain every week. After 3 years on August 9, 1948 Jalbert went to Canada for a holiday. Montgrain helped by Philippe Boisvert took his place. They enlarged the school. In May 1 1949 the local Chief Lejorie was converted. Before the end of the year 4 sisters of St. Joseph arrived. In January 1951 Fr. Montgrain was transferred to St. Leonard and Boisvert took over.

## 7. Mount Royal (1942):

Mount Royal is in the camp of Hlotse in the Leribe district. This mission was founded by Fr. Chevrier. To found it, he played villain to the Christians of St. Margreth. This is the history:

Fr. Thommerel had founded a station of St. Margreth at Qoqolosing. Fr. Fouloneau had built a school and on July 1, 1935 Fr. Mohasi became the first resident priest. In 1944 Chevrier who had replaced Mohasi

succeeded in buying a house at the camp. Chevrier had long been waiting for to get settled in the camp. He could not resist the temptation and too often began to absent himself from St. Margareth; taking with him every thing, a chair, a table or any other object that had space at the camp at Mount Royal. He left without saying anything to anybody to cover up susceptibility of the Christians who knew about it later when their priest was definitely settled at the camp. We do not know why he did this but we can only guess that he liked the camp better than St. Margreth did. When Fr. Chevrier left for Canada Fr. Benoit replaced him. Then came the moment of the foundation of the diocese of Leribe, which gave over the mission to Fr. Lelimo who was replaced by Fr. Maimela in 1961. Mount Royal was officially made the cathedral of Leribe at that time but unfortunately in practice the cathedral is St. Monica.(ibid. p.164)

#### 8. St. Charles (1944)

The first Christians of this place were converts from outside the country. Alphonse Tlelima from Mechachaneng was baptised at Marianhill where he studied and converted in 1905. Because of his ignorance of the existence of St. Monica he went to the church at Harrismith for five years. Around the same date another man, Joseph Hlabana was converted in the Cape. Only they and their wives were Christians. But in 1917 at the big feast of baptism at St. Monica two brothers of Alphonse, Elia and Raphael as well as their wives Marcellina and Pascalina, became Christians. At the same time the future catchiest of St. Charles, Gabriel Tumisi was baptised.

In 1916 a man by the name of Justinus Mohlolo left St. Monica to visit the north in the name of Fr. Thommerel. He is the first catchiest whose ministry led to the conversions in the north. From that time Fr. Thommerel and Romstaing visited the north, saying mass for Tumane Letsika, Mantlobo, Matumane, the wife of the principal chief of the Makhoakhoa at Mochachaneng Qhobela etc.

The masses were held in the houses of the Catechists until 1927 when Gabriel Tumisi with the help of the Christians built a small chapel at Ha Ntlobo, which would serve for the services until 1932, when the school at Ha Seboche was finished. Meanwhile, from 1918, 3 schools functioned regularly: Maris stella at Ha Rasekila, St. Peters at Ha Molapo and St. Francis at Ha Jane. The other schools: St. Lambert at Ha 'Mutlanyana, 'Moteng, St. Thomas at Ha Paramente, St. Henry at Ha Lepatoa and St. Theresa Mechachaneng were founded in 1930. Let us now go to Ha

Seboche.

In December 1920 Fr. Thommerel asked Levi Matela chief of Seboche for the land for the school. The land was agreed upon. After Christmas the teacher began teaching. The chief had forgotten that he belonged to the sect of the "apostles". Eight days later, after having met his minister he called off his decision.

The following year Seboche again gave the land but the government had just prohibited the establishment of new schools. They waited until 1930, when the new parish priest of St. Paul obtained two schools from Seboche and Paramente. That was too much at one time for the principal chief of the Makhoakhoa, Thaabe, hostile to the "Romans," closed the two schools and fined Paramente 5 oxen. Seboche avoided having to pay by alleging that Thakabanna, the father of Thaabe had obtained permission from him. Fr. Klein made the paramount chief Griffith intervene. Griffith obliged Thaabe to revoke his decision, for he rejected the schools under the pretext that they were catholic and that was an attack on the paramount chief himself. Paramente got his school St Thomas back, and on top of that Seboche gave the actual site of the mission on January 6, 1937 and the school was built in 1932. The first teacher at the school was Masupha, the brother of Chief David Masupha II. In 1939 Fr. Menard the parish priest of Butha-Buthe fenced the site. In 1940, Fr. Brouillet, the vicar of Butha-Buthe thought of staying with the Makhoakhoa. He then decided to pass a week there every month.

Fr. Brouillet left Butha-Buthe for Loretto on September 30, 1941. His successor Fr. Dupuis had to remain in the central mission; thus the foundations of St. Charles were slackened. On September 11 1942 Fr. Emile Thomas came to confirm the people there. Now the hope of getting a resident priest was alive again until 1946 when Fr. Bechard came.

The Grey nuns arrived on January 12, 1946 and on 16 April of the same year bishop Bonhomme blessed the school. In February 1949 the question of a hospital followed. The project provoked new disturbances with the chiefs who gave the land and then took it back and tore away the fence. The parish priest did not give in to their threats.

On 27 October 1957 Fr. Brouillet returned as the parish priest and built a big hospital. Doctor Cloutire and the grey nun nurses were devoted to this hospital. In 1962 the Christians of St. Charles numbered 3 000 as recorded in the baptismal register.

## 9. St. Anna (1953):

In 1890, Fr. Gerard founded a branch in the pass of Qhamo, not very far from the route from St. Monica to Sion and dedicated it to the blessed Margreth Mary. In the same year Brother Charles built a chapel there under the direction of Fr. Aufray. In 1892 there were the first 7 communions and two baptisms. But one day Fr. Philippe transferred this mission to the village of chief Mokhoru. The new place was dedicated to St. Ann and was more successful. But there was still no resident priest. In 1913 Fr. Hentrich, who was then the assistant of Fr. Thommerel, at St. Monica tried to serve this mission but could not succeed because of a French lay missionary Eugenie Betouille who was teaching there. She was extremely devoted to her work but was high-spirited. People did not like her. One time she tried to poison a man called Michael and she was reported to Hentrich Thommerel who was at Clocolan at the farm of the bishop of Kimberly visiting some Catholics. Immediately he went to Ficksburg and hired a cart pulled by four horses to look after the sick at St. Ann. Fortunately they recovered. This event did not favour the development of this mission.

When Fr. Charbonneau came to settle at St. Rose, he also took St. Ann. In 1940 and 1941 he enlarged the church there. Later on the old Fr. Dahon came to develop this mission; but he found it difficult. Now the fathers of St. Rose occupied themselves with this mission until 1953, the date on which Fr. Marole was nominated first resident priest.

## 10. Maryland (1954)

One day in 1954 Fr. Chevrier who was residing at St. Margareth visited the village of Molapo and decided to found a mission there. That was in July. On August 15, of the same year he celebrated the feast of assumption at the house of Jonathan before 700 people; Fr. P. Aime Morin preached a sermon during which he announced that from then on, that place would be called Maryland. Though dominated by the Protestants and pestered by his wife, who was a catechumen, chief Letsie ended up by giving the land just below the village on August 25, 1941. Fr.

Chevrier purchased on top of that; the house of Jonathan, which he later gave back to the chief. In December 8, 1941 the school began with 72 children in the house of Motsoane. The station of Maryland was served by St. Margareth and then by Mount Royal. In 1954 Chevrier came to reside there. Since then, the mission of Maryland has been entrusted to the Oblates. Fr. Col and brother Jutras built a big monastery there. Many priests worked in this mission.

What is most important is that in 1987 it became the first pre-noviciate for the oblates with Fr. Chaka, as the pre-novice master He was succeeded by Fr. Letsepe and now is Fr. C. Ntlou is the pre-novice master.

#### 11. Lourdes, Mositi (1954):

This mission was founded when the diocese of Leribe was created. Fr. Benoit who was then at Mount Royal effectively served St. Margreth, Villa Crux, Maryland, Maria Goretti and our lady of Lourdes and was also sent to Gethsmany. He was succeeded by Fr. Lelimo who took care of all these stations with the exception of Mositi, which became a mission with Fr. Mokotjo as the first resident priest. That was in 1953. Since then the mission has progressed under the help of the grey nuns. But this mission has always been unfortunate for on many occasions it has not had a priest.

#### 12. Immaculate Conception (1954):

Fr. Emile Gilbert built this mission in 1954. Before that it was a small school built by Fr. Dahon on the boundaries of the missions of Sion, St. Theresa and St. Ann. No mass was said there except on very rare occasions for the faithful managed to go to one of the three neighbouring missions every Sunday. Nobody expected the creation of this mission.

In 1954, the little sisters of Jesus came to settle at Liphokoaneng among the people whom they attracted by their evangelical simplicity and communicative joy. Fr. Garant served them as chaplain. Unfortunately at the end of the year the little sisters of Jesus had to quit and never came back. Fr. Garant was sent elsewhere and Fr. Emile Gilbert who needed a ministry to refresh his boring occupation as diocesan procurator came from St. Monica to pass his weekends at Liphokoaneng. He did this for 7

years. During this time he built a school with 750 children and made play grounds, an orchard, a presbytery, a dispensary and a beautiful church. Then Liphookoaneng had become a mission, which has been taken care of by many priests.

### 13. St. Denis (1956):

It is two and half-hours to St. Denis from Butha-Buthe on horseback. Fr. Thommerel opened a school there on February 15, 1918 with Boniface Lelimo as the teacher. From that time on nothing special happened at this place. In 1962, there was nothing except the school-church and another school building. The problems of this mission were violence, the fence was often pulled off and the stable of the teacher was burned.

In 1956 when Fr. Alfred Rankaoane came to reside there it was a very poor mission. In the middle of 1962 he left, leaving many Christians and at Butha-Buthe and St. Paul. Fr. Sutha succeeded him. He also served the two outstations founded by Fr. Breault. Now it has three more.

Even though St. Denis was started with those problems, there are positive things about it today: it is the second in the diocese of Leribe in the catholic population; it has a dispensary, a clinic and a maternity. And in 1984 it also produced a priest, Fr. Pascalis Leoela, while Fr. Lelimo was already there long ago as the parish priest who was born there.

### 14. Little Flower (1959):

Formally Fr. Guilcher established Little Flower as an outstation of Gethsmany where Fr. Dupuis served from 1933. On September 24, 1934 there was a feast of baptisms with 53 adults and 20 babies. It was the intention of the parish priest of Gethsmany to come to visit his distant Christians from time to time, but Kolonyama was very far from the mission of Tebe-tebeng. That is why the Christians of Kolonyama were happy with the foundation of St. David. It was nearer than Gethsmany.

In 1939, the station of Kolonyama was entrusted to St. Rose mission. There were already many Christians there thanks to the catchiest Setsabi. But there was no school. Then the parish priest of St. Rose opened a school with 70 children on February 23, 1943. The little station then grew. By 1943 there were 775 Catholics. The question of a mission

establishment was then raised. Fr. Lajeunesse found some difficulty in obtaining a suitable place for he was placed between 20 Protestant schools. On December 18, 1945 he lost hope. He turned towards Mary and promised to call the mission Fatima and to consecrate it to the immaculate heart of Mary if the matter would successfully completed.

After a long time there was success and the mission was established under the protection of Little Flower because it was believed that St. Theresa of the Child Jesus came to the rescue. In 1960 Fr. Tsubane became the parish priest and Fr. Chevrier the chaplain of the sisters at St. Rose and his assistant.

Let us conclude that this mission later improved because it was now the home of the Prime Minister and it got a high school, dispensary and a clinic.

#### 15. St. Peter, Butha-Buthe (1960):

In 1918 Fr. Thommerel founded the station of St. Peter at Liphofung. At the beginning of the following year Joseph Khoabane who had followed some courses at the standard school for 3 months at St. Monica came to found a school. When Molapo came to settle at Motapane, the school was also moved. From 1923 to 1928 Fr. Romestaing, who was in charge of the district, visited it. In 1930 Fr. Klein removed the school for the second time to the actual mission. In 1939 Fr. Menard, foreseeing that his station would soon have its own priest, relying upon the promise of Bishop Bonhomme, opened a special baptismal register for the station. But he was in too much haste. He had to wait for another 20 years, for priority was given to the Makhoakhoa, and the founding of St. Charles. Then followed St. Denis at Ha Majara Molapo.

Fr. Dulude came to St. Peter in April 9, 1960 as the priest in charge of the mission. Just before he left the mission, Fr. Dulude had to pray a lot. At St. Peter conversions were too slow. Let us take, for example the school of 'Moteng with about 200 children in the school not even a quarter of them were baptised or catechumens. The school of St. Lambert of 'Mutlanyana too was no better. After Dulude, came Fr. Nelson who left in about 1972. From then on until 1975 when Fr. Hurtubise came the mission was left without a priest. He built the church we see there today and two



schools, one at 'Malefiloane and another at the mission. He literally built it with his own hands and with his Christians.

#### 16. Laghetto (Matsoku) Foundation 1967

This important outstation of 'Mamohau had been visited by Fr. Thommerel while still at St. Monica, in 1913.

His vast territory reached the Malibamatso and even a few mountains further till the Matsoku River, where a few Christians were living. The house of prayer was put under the protection of Our Lady of Laghetto, after the name of a French pilgrimage dear to Fr. Thommerel.

In 1938, when Fr. Fortier came to stay at Lejone, 'Mamohau, he visited it regularly and as the community increased, they helped Fr. Boisvert to build a school that was used for a Church. They would have deserved a Priest resident, but it only became possible in 1967.

Fr. Simon Rampeo was their first permanent Pastor. He came from St Francis Mission in Qacha's Nek in 1967. Dr. Bertta Hadegger who bought him two vehicles helped Fr. Rampeo, and helped him to build the Church, which was built by Brother Polisa. Brother Mothetsi built the school and the presbytery. People contributed with bricks, labour and sand. Fr. Rampeo says even the Protestants were happy with his arrival at Laghetto, but the Catholics were not all happy for they wanted a white priest for they believed that he was not going to develop their place so all he did came as surprise to them and some even came to tell him so. He was very fond of his dynamic congregation. He would have been ready to spend many years with them but he was recalled for other duties, and in 1970 Fr. Lapointe replaced him. Fr. D. Khoaeane was named to replace him and was later assisted by Fr J. Khutlang. They were succeeded by Fr A. Puia who was later joined by Fr B. Hlalele who in turn was succeeded by Fr G. Mahlatsi. Presently Fr F. Lemao serves the place.

#### 17. Lelapa la Lerato (1978)

Outstation of Pontmain, became a mission with a resident priest in 1990 Fr G. Truchon was the first pastor. This place can not be said to be a mission

but a retreat centre, which was founded by father Trahan in 1978. He was just back from France, where he had met an interesting community, founded in 1938 by Martha Robin; a wonderful lady, a mystic, blessed by the stigma of Jesus, and taking no food except the Holy Communion. She had had a vision asking her to found a community of men and women, living together, the way the first Christians did, as related in the Acts of the Apostles and whose objective would be the preaching of retreats. When Fr Trahan reported to Bishop Paul Khoarai, the bishop felt there was a need for such a community in Lesotho so Lelapa la Lerato was founded as the latest acquisition of the Diocese of Leribe.

#### 18. St. Luke (Maputsoe) 1980

The Salesians of Don Bosco arrived in Lesotho in September 1980, at the request of Bishop Paul Khoarai, bishop of Leribe. The Salesian fathers were keen to have a foothold in Lesotho, which already had the envious reputation of being a fertile land for religious vocations, so the request of the Bishop was welcomed. They started active pastoral work among the youth. A house of formation for their future members was established and their students could attend classes at St Augustine Major Seminary at Roma.

The town of Maputsoe was growing fast, and only the shortage of priests kept the Church from being established there. Fr. Mc.comber had been visiting the outstation from St Monica regularly, and Bishop Ignatius Phakoe, having a good church builder as councillor, Fr. Emile Gilbert, built a beautiful church. The arrival of the Salesians was of a great help. Fr. M. Augustnelli became the first resident parish priest. The Catholic population is now around 9,000.

#### C. DIOCESE OF QACHA'S NEK

The diocese of Qacha's Nek was established on 30 April 1961. It was formerly part of the Diocese of Maseru and now comprises the civil Districts of Qacha's Nek, Mokhotlong, Quthing and part of Thaba-Tseka. It is bounded on the north by the Orange River, on the East by the Kwazulu Natal Province, on the South and on the West the Eastern Cape Province. The area was 11.602km<sup>2</sup> with the total population of 272.282 and the Catholic population of 125.452. The first Bishop of the Diocese of Qacha's Nek Bishop Des Rosiers ( Lesotho Catholic Directory 1988 p. 33)

##### 1. St. Gabriel (1894):

We may recall that in 1881 after the gun war, Letsie had given Father LeBihan permission to choose a site for the church anywhere in the country as his reward for his performance during the war. Before the choice was made Father LeBihan travelled all over the southern part of Lesotho, and on his journey he discovered a very good place for a mission in Quthing where the Sebapala River meets with the Orange River, but he could not choose this site for a mission because there were few people at Quthing. Instead he chose Hellsport where he established Mount Olivet mission, even though Letsie and the commissioner were happy with the site at Quthing as Nehemia Moshoeshoe was supposed to go and build his village near this place and among his people there were Catholics. After 11 years, in 1894, Father Monginoux, who had been chosen as the apostolic vicariate of Lesotho, chose this place for a mission in the south. In October 1895 Father Rolland went to this place but there was no money to start a mission. So St. Gabriel remained an out-station of Roma till 1904 and for ten years the priests of Roma visited the place. The priests who visited this place regularly were Fathers Hugonene, Cenez and Deriennic. In 1902 Father Gerard who was now 71 years old, wanted to go himself. He left Roma on 21 April accompanied by Barthelemy Fobo. They returned to Roma on 17 May. On their journey Father Gerard gave Holy communion to 52 Christians, and received four people to the catechumenate, He came back very happy and convinced that a mission was necessary at Quthing.

In 1904, Fathers Deriennic and Guilcher went to stay at St. Gabriel. Father Guilcher returned to Roma after two years, and Father Deriennic stayed on for eleven years and died there on March 25 1915. Later, Father Hoffmeier died there on 7 November 1918 and Father Thomas later died there also on 25 August 1921. St. Gabriel is one of the big missions in Lesotho, as we will see later.

## 2. Hermitage (1922)

At this time the Trappists of Marianhill had the mission station at Mariazell and Fr. Huss who was in charge of Mariazell was visiting a few Christians who lived around the rivers of Tsoelike and the Orange in places like Mpiti and Ha Mapote. Fr. Lebreton also visited them from Mashai and Leseling, which were possibly outstations of Nazareth.

In 1923 in Easter, Fr. Kieger started the mission of Hermitage. He, like Fr. Picars who started the mission of St. James, was devoted to the outstations; his zeal was to convert people and to teach the catechumens.

On 21 November 1933 at his first baptism service at this mission he baptised 54 people. Fr. Lebreton preached at the retreat to the catechumens. Mr. Jonas 'Manteko was the only male Christian in this area and so he was the only sponsor of all the males baptised. (Suivez Le Guide S`IL Vous Plait p.119)

After three years Fr. Kieger had opened 24 outstations from this mission. In the same year, 1926, the sisters of the Holy Cross arrived and they were of great help to Fr. Kierger and his outstations by helping in the teaching of catechism. In 1927 he was given Fr. Ameye as his assistant for four years. Fr. Rousseau came after Fr. Ameye and stayed for one year. After him came Father Pageau. At this time there were 32 outstations for Hermitage. Fr. Kieger was in charge of the mission and 12 outstations, while Fr. Pageau was looking for the remaining 20.

In 1932 when Fr. Kieger left for Pitseng he had built the first church at Hermitage, the school and the sisters' house which is still there and the presbytery which has been replaced by the bishop's house and many schools at the outstations.

Fr. Pageau remained in charge of the mission. On 25 May 1937 Bishop Bonhomme baptised Chief David Theko Makhaola together with 303 catechumens. On that day there were 5000 people in the church of Hermitage. (Ibid. p.122) Since 1961 Hermitage is the cathedral of the diocese of Qacha's neck.

### 3. St. James (1923):

Fr. Lebreton visited Mokhotlong for the first time in 1906 and visited it for the second time on the 12 October 1907 and on his second visit he baptised one sick girl, with the name of Mary with the intention of putting his work under the care of the Virgin Mary.

The structure of Fr. Lebreton`s work was to visit the Christians and the catechumens at home and in this way his outstations were started and finally outstations included a school or a chapel. We should remember that at this time there were no roads. Everything was transported on horseback from Roma. It was also hard to get a teacher even when the intention to build a school was there.

Things continued in this way until 1923 when Fr. Picard arrived. Fr. J. Picard was not only zealous but he was from the first world war and was a very courageous man. He was a man who never complained of difficulty or

boasted of his success. He managed to stay at Mokhotlong in bad conditions. Because of his habit of never complaining, less is known of the problems of transportation, which he met at the beginning of this mission. His motto was to tolerate any situation. St. James is today one of the big missions.

#### 4. St. Martin (1926):

On 28th January 1931 a teacher called Rannoto left the mission of St. James after the blessing of Fr. Ameye, for Ha Raleomile where he had a mission to found a school. Fifteen days later Fr. Ameye and his friend Fr. Boissonnault presented themselves to Lelingoana, the principal chief of the Batlokoa. After the greeting and presentation, the chief began to complain to the fathers about founding a school too close to the Protestant school, which already existed. Then they agreed to transfer the school further away and commenced to build.

The Batlokoa were very slow to convert because of cultural reasons. It is for this reason that Fr. Labrecques decided to establish a mission right in the middle of their territory. On 12 September 1934 Fr. Labrecque went to Ha Raleomile to ask for a site of the mission. Mosuoe, the son of Lengau was present together with all the local chiefs and a crowd of men. He invited Nti, one of the local chiefs to show Fr. Labrecques the site he wanted to give him. Fr. Labrecques was not satisfied with it for it was only sufficient for a small school on an outstation but not for a mission. Five times Fr. Labrecques refused to accept a small site. Tired of this, Mosuoe rebuked Nti and told him that he himself was going to give the site and it would be clear as to who was the chief there. Indeed he went and enlarged the site given by Nti and showed the size of it to Fr. Labrecques. Fr. Labrecques thanked him in the name of the bishop and made a vow in his heart that he was going to give the name of "The Holy Name of Mary" to this mission. (Suivez Le Guide S`IL vous Plait pp.141-142)

On 20 February 1936, armed with enthusiasm and determined to live in the highlands for the rest of his life, Fr. Maxime Charbonneau arrived in the territory of the Batlokoa. On Palm Sunday the mission was founded and 15 days later he laid the foundations of the church dedicated to St. Martin. Contrary to the wish of Fr. Labrecques, Fr. Charbonneau called the church, St. Martin because he had asked and received some aids from his parish priest in his home parish called St. Martin of Laval, to help build a church

and had promised to call it St. Martin.

On 14 June 1938 Fr. Charbonneau was sent to Peka to found the new mission of St. Rose. The heroic period of St. Martin began as will be seen below. On 15 of December Fr. Merchand came for a canonical visit. He found the church collapsed because at the beginning of November heavy rains had played havoc with the walls.

Fathers Villeneuve, Laurent Dupuis, Gauvin worked hard for 8 years to finish this church of the mountain. They were helped in turns by Fathers Lalumiere, Laverdure, Bechard and Sanfacon and above all by Brothers Nadeau from the beginning and Lemay who for 7 years was a "factotum" of the mission. He was in charge of the transport, cooking, building, etc. Material conditions were excessively difficult. There was need of asses and oxen for transport. (Ibid. p.143) Rains and snow remain a problem to the present day.

All these priests were from Canada. Fr. Gauvin lived at St. Martin for 7 years and Fr. Garant for 2 persistently fighting to abolish "paganism" and the circumcision school. When Fr. Desrochers succeeded Fr. Gauvin at the end of 1946, the sisters of St. Joseph had already been established as a community at St. Martin. From then on life became less hard. The dynamism of Fr. Desrochers helped by fathers Turgeon and Houle developed the mission considerably. However, transport was bad and expensive. On September 7, 1949, the roof of the cattle shed was crushed under the weight of snow and the walls collapsed. The horses managed to run away. From 1950, the missionaries tried an aeroplane but it was not much better for that it needed patience and the running costs were high. Fathers Houle, Pouliot, Barbeau, Crouvezier and Parent succeeded each other at St. Martin. Fathers Therrault, Lucien, Rousseau and brothers Meunier, Jutras, Picard also worked there. We should not forget Fr. Beauregard who was murdered while he worked there in 1976 and Fr. J. Mpopo a Mosotho who enlarged the church in 1986 and who is still there.

##### 5. Villa Maria (1934):

This mission is known as Motutong, i.e. the corner of the fat cows, and was in the past a part of the camp of Quthing which was situated on the plain. During the gun war in 1880, the camp was evacuated to the top of the hill

where it is today for strategic reasons. The old camp was abandoned and given to the P.E.M.S. Who established the Leloaleng technical school? The rest of the land was rightly reclaimed (it had belonged to the government) by the chiefs and was at their disposal. So the little valley of Motutong was given to Doctor Volet by Chief Sempe. Since Doctor Volet was known by Sr. Nativite, he maintained friendly relations with the Catholic Church and the missionaries who when passing in that region never failed to visit him. Volet was an ex-Calvinist pastor( P.E.M.S. ). Father Laydevant dined in his house in 1905 when the big trees we see today were first planted. Fr. Thommerel also passed there in 1911 and some others after that. The doctor did not hide his sympathy for the Catholics and agreed that he wished his property to pass to the Catholics after his death, provided they in turn should take care of his grave. He died at the end of October 1927.

Father Julien Jacques, in charge of St. Gabriel mission, came from time to time to the camp of Quthing to say mass, and he was given shelter by Denis Volet who had become a doctor like his father and was living at the camp with his mother. One-day father Jacques told Denis about his worry of finding a place for a mission. The doctor responded: "I have what is your due, the property of my father at Motutong. He has always desired to give it to the Catholics after his death. I will be happy to realise his desire, which is mine too, on condition you would respect his tomb".(Suize Le Guide S`ILVous Plait p.108)

This happened in 1928. It did not take long for the project to become known and launched a true war of religion, understandable when it is remembered that Motutong is exactly between the Calvinist mission of Masitise and the technical school of Leloaleng. The cold war took five years until the day it was politically resolved. Griffith the Paramount chief intervened, strongly proclaiming that he alone was competent on the matter, given that it concerned the land and that the whole land of the country belonged to him. He profited from this occasion to manifest his incontestable right to the land. He asked Sempe to leave Motutong to him. The chief obeyed and the place was given to the Catholics. Then the government asked the Catholics to establish a hospital and a nursing school there. This was accepted by the paramount chief and the Catholics. But a little later, the government itself decided to establish a hospital at the camp and thus prevented the creation of a catholic hospital.

On July 4, 1933 Bishop Martin drew up a contract with Dr. Denis Volet who gave over the house of his father and the out buildings for 750 pounds.

In August the envoy of the paramount chief gave the land solemnly to Fr. Jacques before many witnesses. Fr. Jacques therefore, abandoned his provisional station at the house of Helena 'Mafantiri where he was accustomed to assemble his Christians. From then on he came to Motutong which he called the mission of Our Lady of Graces in remembrance of the old parish of Bishop Bonhomme in Hull.

On February 21, 1934 Fr. Chevrier took charge of the mission and called it Villa Maria, wanting to compensate for the first mission of Tloutle which Moshoeshoe and Bishop Allard named "the village of the mother of Jesus", but whose Protestant nickname of Roma had prevailed. The title of Our Lady of Graces was not forgotten because the magnificent church built by the Basotho oblate brothers was consecrated to Mary, the mediator of all graces. Fr. Chevrier gathered together his flock: 120 baptised, and 80 catechumens. On March 4, 1934 a great inauguration ceremony followed.

Roboam Fobo, the interpreter at the camp rendered service to the mission. The Catchiest Azael Makara whom Fr. Chevrier called, began a school in the dispensary of the doctor. In order to help the young mission, Chief Michael Soko of Holy Cross gave a cow with its calf as an allowance to Motutong. Just a little later, another cow arrived from Bethel from the charitable Father Paquet, which joined the gift of 15 pounds from his Christians. The two schools of Dilli-Dilli and Moorosi, formerly started by Fr. Jacques in old and abandoned villages, were restored and updated. Fr. Chevrier opened another new school at Ha Letsika. The one at Villa Maria progressed but only the Basotho attended it. The Bathepu of whom there were many, did not attend the school.

A relic of St. John Baptist of Sale was placed in the office of Fr. Hamel to assure the recruitment and the good functioning of the school. On November 11, 1941 the first Mothepu made his appearance at school and in no time, was followed by others. Fr. Dupuis learned Xhosa. Later on Fr. Legendre founded a school among the Bathepu whose conversions were quite slow. On September 16, 1949 the itinerant statue of our lady of Fatima was carried in triumph to the village of the great "pagan" chief of the Bathepu, who in his speech cited the words of Elizabeth: "From where does this honour comes that I be visited by the mother of my saviour". Lk. 1: 43 (ibid. p.110) then numerous conversions followed.

Villa Maria is a beautiful mission. The oblate noviciate is established there. Fr. Thommerel who for two and half years was the novice master at Mazonod came to Villa Maria and passed more than 10 years there. He



was succeeded by Fr. Lorenzo Bernier, Paquet and Hammond and others.

## 6. Christ the King (1938):

One day in 1927 a brave Christian lady called Maria of Marialiden induced four of her friends to convert. These four catechumens lived at Nkoko near Ha Sekake. On December 13, Fr. Kieger celebrated mass in the house of old Paulina Hooe and decided to build a chapel in honour of St. Anthony. On the same day they proposed a new mission on land at Ratsolo. Then the difficulties that lasted for years began. Finally on March 20, 1931 the concession was defined; the paramount chief himself had to intervene at the request of chief Theko, for his Protestant sons at Ha Sekake violently opposed the Catholic foundation in their territory.

In August 1931 a teacher, Simeon Letuka was finally able to open his school with 106 children from the first week. The building was very poor. In 1946 it was demolished and in its place was planted a cross. This poor house served as a school until 1939, then as the house for the sisters.

Some months after the opening of the school, on February 21 1932, there was a big feast for the baptism of 25 adults. On October 24, 1934 Fr. Kieger arrived at Ha Sekake as the first resident priest and on the next Sunday the mission was opened. It rained the whole day. In spite of that, many people come from as far afield as Ha Tihaku, 3 hours on horseback to the mission. The priest distributed communion to 80 people. The mission was consecrated to Christ the King. The people were very happy and sang from the heart: "Batho re thabile joale" (We are happy indeed!).

The new school-church, which was 120ft long, was under construction and soon the daughters of charity of Sacred Heart arrived to establish their noviciate, which would open its doors to the first novices on December 16, 1942. From then on there were 2 priests at Ha Sekake: one was the parish priest, the other assistant priest and the chaplain to the sisters.

In 1942 Fr. Kieger left his place to Fr. Beaulé. Like his predecessor, Beaulé visited his stations. Garant came to assist Beaulé. In his first rounds in the station he observed that the teachers did not know the catechism sufficiently and as a result the Christians did not know it for the teachers were also Catechists. So the two priests organised a 4-day retreat

to instruct their teachers on their duties as Christians and Catechists. This would later develop into a school for Catechists.

On January 24, 1944 the fathers decided to open boarding at the mission and they enrolled 27 boys and 12 girls. After that Beaulieu was called to the seminary at Roma, Louis George replaced him, but he fell sick and left after only 8 months. Fr. Garant was sent to St. Martin at the beginning of 1945. He was replaced by Fr. Albert Gerard, who remained there for 8 years assisted in turns by Montreuil, Desnoyers, Romoult Bernier and Julien Jacques.

Fr. Albert Gerard fought against circumcision schools; organised his stations and built new schools. Helped by Bro. Rousseau Gerard opened a route to allow the trucks to arrive at his mission.

It was a great joy on July 12, 1946 when "Maluti", the first truck made its triumphant entry at the mission of Christ the King. The neighbouring shopkeepers had betted that a truck could never climb the slope of Lesoli; but Bro. Rousseau made it. He was a driver. (Suives Le Guide S'IL Vous Plait p.116)

In 1952, Fr. Gerard opened the 20th station of Christ the King at the village of Ernest Ramashamole above Qabane and the catchiest and a teacher Alphonse Mphafi was placed there. At this time there were no Christians between the little Orange and Qabane Rivers whereas when Alphonse died in 1956 there were 10 stations and the great part of this work was his. In 1953, Gerard left the mission in charge of Steffanus but he fell sick and was replaced by Lefebvre; who was followed by Sevigny, then by Faucher, Pheku, Bane, Matlosa and Koneshe who is still in charge. Fr. Jacques in his chaplaincy was succeeded by Klein, R. Pouliot and Damane. The sisters look after the dispensary, maternity work and direct the high school.

#### 7. St. Francis (1940):

After some discussion with his provincial Fr. Labrecque at Roma College, during their annual retreat, Fr. Jean Baptist Rousseau voluntarily accepted to go to found the new mission of St. Francis. That was on January 10, 1940. The following day he went to the apostolic vicar Bishop Bonhomme for approval. The Bishop accepted and encouraged the foundation of the mission and also promised to send with him his brother, namely Bro. Paul Rousseau. On January 17, 1940 Father and Brother Rousseau as well as 8 sisters from Hermitage went to see the site of the mission of St.

Francis. Since it was an outstation of Hermitage, there was a small church, a small school and a bad kitchen. There were 85 children at school, 550 Christians and 70 catechumens. That was not all. The division of the mission of Hermitage gave Fr. Rousseau a lion's share of work: 33 outstations out of 36. He had to visit all the Christians before Easter, before he could think of getting settled. In 40 days, he succeeded in making his visits; but he was struck by thunder and had a terrible headache for four days at Leqooa. (Fr. Rousseau's Codex historicus 1940 p.3)

On March 8, 1940 he brought from Hermitage his packsaddle, 2 saddles, 4 horses, a pair of bed sheets and two blankets. He also found himself a stove, which he installed the same evening. The bed and the rest of his belongings were to follow later. The following day he went to greet the local chief and to conclude certain arrangements with him. On Monday 11, March 1940 after Passion Sunday, he replaced the broken windowpanes and repaired the windows. On Tuesday, he began to make a desk, which took him three days. On Friday, he manufactured 4 chairs and on Saturday he returned to the court of the chief. On Palm Sunday, March 17, 'Me Florina Moeti came to serve in the kitchen. On April 2, Bro. Rousseau received his obedience for St. Francis. That is how the mission of St. Francis Xavier on the Tsoelike river at Ha Matsoetlane started (The information is detailed because Fr. Rousseau had an extraordinary memory).

Let us say a little about what was happening to St. Francis as an outstation from 1919. At first Fr. Lebreton visited the outstation founded by the catchiest, Michael Sekoateng. In 1923 when Fr. Kieger came to reside at Hermitage, there were about 15 children in the school at St. Francis which was opened in 1921 but which was then directed by a Protestant teacher. The people-receiving communion was 20.

Later Fr. Goudreau and Jalbert came as assistants. Among many things Fr. Rousseau did at St. Francis was to establish a dispensary, build a big church and a big school, a boarding house for boys, and girls presbytery and the house of the sisters.

On January 17, 1944 one of the sisters, a Mosotho died after a month at the mission. On March 28, 13 people were converted. An interesting point to make about the origin of one of the outstations of St. Francis, at Ha Sefaha is that its history is linked to a teacher who organised a strike in

the Eagle's Peak College. He was expelled and bitterly rebuked. He came and asked for forgiveness; and Rousseau gave him as his penance the task of going every Sunday for two years, on a two-hour journey on horseback to his village to assemble Christians to organise prayer and instruct catechumens. When he finished his penance, a new outstation was born. It was given the name of this teacher: St. Tobias.

Let us remember finally that Fr. Rousseau stayed at this mission for forty-five years. He came in 1940 and left for Bethany in 1985. So far, in the history of this mission he has been succeeded by Fr. William Motenalapi who is still there. The assistants of Rousseau were many, among whom we can mention Frs. Petje, Rampeo, Ntoane, Kokoana and Khoaeane who became the priest in charge while Rousseau was there. Practically Rousseau was still in charge since Khoaeane left for St. Matthew and left Rousseau. The assistants of Motenalapi, are Frs. Mathibeli, Moorosi and Lijo. Motenalapi is at the same time the vicar of the Bishop of Qacha's Nek.

#### 8. St. Theresa, Mashai (1952):

In November 1906, Fr. Lebreton, coming from Ha Rafolatsane, was not happy with his journey to this corner of the country because of the difficulties he encountered. He slept on the bank of the Orange River next to Ha Mokotjo; he crossed Linakeng and Mashai and there he met Imelda, the daughter of Thomas and Felicity, an apostate like his parents. She told him that she is "still immature for the grace," meaning not ready to convert. Dominic, her brother, felt the same way. A man called Tihakanelo invited the father to stay in his house. There was only one catechumen in the region. Her name was 'Maletsatsi. On the next visit Fr. Lebreton, who spent some time without returning to Sehong-hong, found that "Maletsatsi was an apostate. Lebreton was not discouraged at all. In fact after Easter 1925 an old Protestant lady came and wanted to be received as the catechumen. That was old "Maletsatsi; her husband being dead, she thought that she was now free to abandon the Protestant religion that she had embraced because of her husband. What should be remembered is that from the beginning, it was not the question of founding a mission at Mashai. When Lebrecque was at St. James, he wanted to found one at Linakeng, Ha Solomon; but he had no time and became the provincial and could not realise his project. On the contrary, circumstances favoured the opening of the mission of St. Theresa of Child Jesus next to the Mashai river. Why?

On October 30, 1951 people were disappointed; bishop Des Rosiers did not arrive at St. James as had been expected. The Semena River was flowing strongly and made crossing impossible. The bishop was stopped by the river, which he could not cross. So he went to ask for hospitality at the store of Mashai. It is there that the manager of the store profited from this God given occasion. He demonstrated the advantages of a new mission in the area to his lordship; there would be an occasional residence for him, many conversions, and the people were sympathetic. Mrs. Crooks, the manager would do all in her power to help the foundation of the mission. The Semena River slowed down and the bishop went on his journey. When he left, he thanked the lady leaving her with a vague promise. The following year in November Fr. Montreal prepared for the foundation of the mission to the great joy of Mrs. Crooks, who had rendered an immense service to the young mission.

The mission developed; Fr. Pouliot succeeded Fr. Montreal and was himself followed by Frs. Albert Gerard and his cousin Jacques Gerard. They were succeeded by Fr. Leo. Cousineau, Montgrain, Kokoana, Ntaote and Monese, the present priests in charge with Brother Mofokeng and the sisters of St. Joseph.

## 9. Holy Redeemer 1962

The new diocese of Bishop Des Rosiers had a weak point in its organisation; that was the lack of proper representation in the towns. There were only three in the whole diocese, and none of them had a mission with a resident priest. He made it one of his priorities to remedy the situation commencing with Qacha's Nek, then Mokhotlong and Quthing. At Qacha's Nek Bishop Des Rosiers established his headquarters at Holy Redeemer, which was an outstation of Hermitage. There was a school and a hut used as an office for the priest when he came to visit the small catholic community. That was a sharp contrast with the decidedly more comfortable Episcopal residence at Roma where he had been bishop since 1948.

Bishop Des Rosiers knew that he had accepted a sacrifice in advance and Bishop Mabathoana who took his place in Maseru was his spiritual child. Thus he was very proud of having been instrumental in providing Lesotho with its first Mosotho Archbishop. Father Pageau, who had just finished building the cathedral of Maseru, came with him and was the first parish

priest. The Oblate provincial who was clever enough to understand the magnitude of what Bishop Des Rosiers had been doing, made a good choice in sending Fr. Pageau; he was really the companion he needed. He proved to up to the task. He built a good church and from there he directed the works of the building of the future cathedral being erected at the mission of Hermitage.

The tiny outstation of Hermitage, that is, Holy Redeemer, acquired a sudden importance in 1962 when the new bishop of Qacha's Nek chose it to establish his headquarters. The mission grew rapidly and the bishop was pleased to see that his decision to install a priest resident in every town of his diocese was conducive to the rapid growth of the Catholic Church. Frs. Gilles Jalbert, G. Laliberte and Tsoako followed Fr. Pageau. In 1981 the bishop who was suffering from Parkinson's disease, had to retire. Fr. Bitsoane was director of Eagle's Peak High School when he was chosen to replace Bishop Des Rosiers. He studied in Rome where he was ordained as a priest in 1964 and was consecrated bishop on the 11 October 1981. His diocese had a population a 100 000 Catholics in 13 missions.

#### 10. St Matthews (Mt. Moorosi) 1963

Chief Maseribana had been claiming a resident priest for his family and the growing population of the outstation of Bethel for a long time. He had good reason; the nearby Senqu River separated them from Phamong and he resented having to depend on the big mission of Bethel; because the road to Quthing was on his side and the bus service had been established in 1950. Even chief Qacha from Qiqita had to cross to his side for shopping; why could he not have a church on his side and a service every Sunday? He argued. The creation of the new diocese worked for him. The Senqu River that had been a handicap proved to be to his advantage; the river was the boundary between the two dioceses. A new mission had to be founded. Fr. M. Parent assistant of Fr. Bernier at Bethel was a happy choice. He started a high school. He was clever enough to call it Maseribana High School. The community contributed to the building of a beautiful church. The Sisters of the Holy Cross were in charge of a maternity clinic and a dispensary. They had been there since the foundation of the mission. FRS Matlosa, Khoaeane, Letsela, and Konesh succeeded Fr. Parent.

## 11. St Peter's (Mokhotlong) 1963

On 30 May 1963, Bishop Des Rosiers authorised Fr. R. Perreault to open a Bank account at the SH. BANK of S.A. and on the 7 June Fr. R. Perreault made his first deposit of \$635.00 Canadian money. He prayed that others that would permit him to fund the new mission that would follow this small amount.

On 4 June 1963, there was correspondence between the Catholic Schools Secretariat, The Education Department and the Bishop of Qacha's Nek about the formation of the mission. (Refer to the letter of Education Department to Educational Secretary of 19 June 1963; and the letter of Fr Perreault to the Bishop, of 11 June 1963: See Appendix 1)

On June 12, 1963 Fr. R. Perreault woke up to see 2 inches of snow. The children did not come to school. Bro. Pepin decided to stop the building work on account of the snow. He resumed again on the 17 June when the snow no longer held up the work.

On the 20 of June 1963 two envoys of "Advocata Comitium" of St Francis came for the first reunion of the "Monyako oa Leholimo Curia". The First meeting was at St Peter. They were Francis Jane and Emmanuel Pheku. Emmanuel visited the "Immaculata Curia of St James."

On the 16 of July 1963, Fr Perreault moved to St Peter's with all his belongings. 'M'e Paulina Mashalane was his housekeeper.

On the 25 July of 1963 he went back to St James to preach at a retreat for the male teachers, men of the Sacred Heart, Catechists, and legionaries of Mary from the 25 to the 28; and a second one for female teachers, the children of Mary and the Legionaries of Mary. There were 65 men and 165 women at the meeting. Both retreats were a success: a perfect silence was observed. Only two teachers had to be sent back home for not having observed the rules. They were Francis Sekoati and Mohasi. (Historicus Codex of St. Peters p. 2)

On the 31 July 1963, after these retreats at St James, Perreault returned to St Peter. On the 1 July 1963, Fr Benoit who was also at St James passed by (this is important because he was the first visitor to this mission which is

close to the airport of Mokhotlong) St Peter to take the plane to Maseru. On the 2 July 1963, surprise! the Superior, Fr Rivard arrived. He also was passing by to take the plane for LadySmith.

On the 31 July 1963, the mission of St James presented a gift of R1, 000.00 to St Peter's.

This is what we have recorded about the founding of St Peter's

## 12. St Pius X 1966

Fr. Hurtubise came to stay at this mission on 6 January 1966. In forming this mission he took two out stations from Sekake, they were Qoloane and Qabane, and one from St. Francis which was the mission itself he created Ha Mapote and Peppeneng, and also Matseka, Khongoana e Tsoeu, Sekitsing and Motsoanakaba. When he came the site was already obtained. The information about this mission is from Father Hurtubise who works at the Holy Trinity mission in Free State.

Fr. Hurtubise was the first permanent resident priest. In 1970 he was replaced by Fr Fortier who left in 1974 on account of ill health. Since then the mission returned to the status of an outstation. Again the Senqu River is a hindrance to the service of this mission since it is very hard to reach.

## 13. St Saviour 1970

Out of the founding of Churches in each of the three towns of the diocese of Qacha's Nek, St Saviour is the one that developed most rapidly. The small outstation, which was visited by Fr Legendre from Villa Maria on his way to Qomoqomong, became the talk of Quthing. The site, which was chosen for that mission, is witness to the broadness of the view of Fr Hammond. He had been offered two places by the then catholic magistrate of Quthing, Mr Axenctovtich; one well situated in the centre, a few meters from the administrative buildings near the Anglican Church seemed to be ideal but was just big enough to build a church; which was very far from what Fr Hammond, Superior of Villa Maria, expected for a catholic mission.

On the other side of the hill, far from the centre, hidden from sight was a big field without road, except for a bridle path. It would be difficult to develop a mission, build a church, a convent, and a high school without a proper road.



He did not hesitate. Father Hammond took the big site without a road and he immediately mobilised a few brothers, obtained free of charge a dozen of prisoners (which was quite normal at the time) and started building the road, digging and moving rocks with his bare hands. One of the brothers, working with the prisoners, happened to be a Canadian, and passers-by expressed their amazement aloud, "Ke qala ho bona lephantiti la lekhoa" (it is the first time I see a white prisoner). Their hard labour has been well rewarded. Today the mission is proud of its five hundred high school students. The Christian community is overtaking its mother, Villa Maria in numbers.

Fr Drolet was the first resident priest to build the multi-purpose hall with the view of building the church later. But it seems the bishop is not ready to follow through with the project as yet. He was succeeded by Fr Jacques Gerard who was succeeded by Fr Andre Dubois who was still in charge of Villa Maria; then for 11 months the author himself who found only 35 Rands in the bank account. Then the author was succeeded by Fr Augustinus Selialia who was in turn succeeded by Fr Houle. Fr Houle was succeeded by Fr Khoaeane who is still there.

#### D. DIOCESE OF MOHALE'S HOEK

The diocese of Mohale's Hoek was established on 2 April 1978. It was formerly a part of the Archdiocese of Maseru and now comprises the civil Districts of Mohale's Hoek and Mafeteng. It is bounded on the North by the Archdiocese of Maseru, on the East by the Diocese of Qacha's Nek and the West by the boundaries of Lesotho and South Africa. It covers the area 5.799km<sup>2</sup> and it had the total population of 241.616 and the Catholic

population of 114.175 in 1988. Its first Bishop is Sebastian Khoarai, O.M.I. (Lesotho Catholic Directory 1988 p.36)

#### 1. Mount Olivet: (1882)

In 1878, the son of Chief Moorosi of the Baphuthi was arrested in Cape Town and imprisoned. However he escaped from the prison. His father protected him from being rearrested. As a result, a war broke out between the Baphuthi of Quthing and the Cape colony. The Baphuthi resisted for a long time because they had guns. In 1879, the Cape parliament passed the peace preservation act by which all Blacks were forbidden to possess firearms of any kind or assegais and were ordered to hand in their weapons to the nearest magistrate who would value them and pay compensation. (Historia Lesotho F.laydevant, o. m. I pp. 94-97)

The Basotho owned modern rifles, which they had acquired while working on the Kimberly mines and of which they were very proud. They were unwilling to part with their weapons because they had never misused them in any way. The unwise insistence of the prime minister, Sir Gordon Springs resulted into the disastrous war of the guns, which became in effect, a Basotho civil war with Molapo's son Jonathan remaining loyal to the Cape, while Letsie's son Lerotholi, Molapo's other son Joel and Masupha stirred up their people to rebel against the order.

What interests us most is not how the war was waged and how it ended, but the position of the missionaries. The Paris Evangelical Missionary Society were on the side of the Basotho. The missionaries of the Church of England were, of course, on the side of the Cape while the Roman Catholics remained neutral! Father LeBihan was the chaplain of the Basotho soldiers. At the end of the war in 1881 all the Basotho warriors went to the chief for their reward. Father LeBihan went with them as he was called "Mohale oa Lesotho", i.e. the warrior of Lesotho, because of his deeds during the war, caring for the wounded and helping in peace negotiations. However he received no reward. He was told by Letsie I to choose a site for a church wherever he wished and that would be his reward. At this time there were only two mission stations. They were Roma mission and St. Monica. So Father LeBihan went south to look for a site for a mission station, passing Mafeteng where he was interested in the place called Hellspoot. He went on until he reached Quthing trying

to find a suitable site. On his journey he discovered the "Maletsunyane falls" which were afterwards called the LeBihan falls by Colonel Clarke. (Mohale oa Lesotho pp. 78-79)

But throughout his journey, Hellsport became the centre of attraction. As a result in 1882, he set out to Mafeteng from Roma to start a new mission. He said, if Hellsport meant the gate of hell, he would build the church there to make it also the gate of heaven. The name of the mission was Mount Olivet named after the theological school in which he completed his studies in France. The official opening of Mount Olivet was on 16th September 1883 with a bigger feast than that of St. Monica in 1877.

## 2. Samaria (1907):

Chief Sephula, one of the Bakoena tribe was the son of Marabe. His village was twenty miles from Mount Olivet. His father Marabe was baptised by Father LeBihan. Marabe wished to see a church in his village but he died before his wish was realised. His son Sephula was baptised in 1905 and wanted to see his father's wish realised; so he began collecting stones and forming bricks.

The man who built the church was Jersy. He finished the church in 1907. But when Sephula was supposed to pay him, he had no money, and he went to paramount chief Letsie II who gave him the money, which was needed to pay the builder.

Shortly after this Letsie II visited Sephula. It was on the occasion of the feast of the opening that Letsie II gave Father LeBihan the church of Samaria. He explained that was a gift of thanksgiving to Father LeBihan for what he had done for the Basotho nation. The church was 90ft by 30ft. It was one of the biggest churches in Lesotho at that time. The church at Samaria and its gift to Father LeBihan were seen as signs that the church in Lesotho was mature.

As a result of this, the Bishop of Port Elizabeth visited Lesotho and wanted a full report on the formation of the mission of Samaria. Father Laydevant gave it to the Bishop who sent it to Rome. Two years later, on 1 February 1909, Father Cenez was consecrated a bishop, the first vicar Apostolic of Lesotho. It was from then that Lesotho became a vicariate independent of the vicariate of the Free State. Father LeBihan was the first

priest at Samaria.

To conclude the account of the formation of the mission at Samaria, let us note these three points: during the gun war Father LeBihan had helped the Basotho in washing and caring for the wounded; Basotho never forgot that act of sympathy, this is why many years later they rewarded him by their act of building. The Church at large sees them as a mature church and therefore, they were made an independent vicariate. We do not ignore the fact that, the Bishop of Free State had notified Rome about the size of his vicariate, but the formation of Samaria contributed to his appeal. For this a debt of gratitude is due to Sephula and Letsie II.

### 3. Emmaus (1905):

In 1904, Father LeBihan who was based at Mount Olivet and his assistant Father Bourdin went to visit some catholic families near Tsoaing River when they wanted to found a mission in the valley. At that time there were about 3 or 4 Catholic families there, but they were too far from Mount Olivet for proper pastoral care. They consulted the chief of the district, Seeiso who gave them a site. However Motlepu, the son of Makhakhe was against the giving of that site saying it was a pasture for his sheep. But Seeiso reminded him of the promise of his father to Father LeBihan (referring to the gun war promise) and so the site was given to the Catholic Church.

The construction of the chapel soon began, thanks to a benefactor and friend of Father LeBihan, an ex-Oblate priest. However this chapel was destroyed by a hurricane in November 1905. Two years later the ruins of the small church were raised, this time a church of stone, 53ft by 24ft was built. The former was of bricks. The second church was opened in 1908. In January 1910 Father Laydevant became the first residing priest of the new mission of Emmaus. He found 50 Christians who had been baptised by Father Helbory in December 1905. In 1912 Fr. Antoine Bates opened a school for which he was responsible until the arrival of the Holy Cross sisters in 1914.

The sisters were given charge of the school, and they also opened a dispensary. Due to this, the number of the Christians increased to such an extent that a new church was necessary. Bishop Cenez drew the plan of the church, which was 80ft by 83ft; it was finished by Christmas 1915. Soon,

this big church was too small. The influence of the First World War increased the number of conversions for people were afraid. The famine of 1933 and the epidemic that followed, which took 5% of the population filled the people with fear so they turned to God. In 1934 Father Laydevant received 1150 catechumens. The church of Bishop Cenez was also crowded. In 1962 the Christians of Emmaus numbered 15000. Father Laydevant died after working at Emmaus for 26 years and was succeeded by Father Ameyer. (Emmaus historic codex pp. 10-11)

#### 4. Bethel (1909):

In 1908 an Austrian countess made a considerable gift of 400 pounds to the apostolic vicariate of Basutholand, on condition that the mission she wanted built, would be dedicated to the sacred heart. Bishop Cenez accepted this immediately. The gift of this lady coincided with the request of Paul Malephane, a good Christian who had initiated the foundation of St. Gabriel, and who wanted a mission near his new residence at Phamong. There was no difficulty in agreeing with his request. Malephane was the great counsellor of the court working with Nkoebe, the chief of Quthing who was now settled at Phamong as guide of Griffith, the new chief of Phamong.

Paul Malephane himself chose the site of the mission of Bethel, which was dedicated to the sacred heart, and the church was soon opened. Chief Griffith attended the opening even though at this time he was still a drunkard who did not consider the scandal of his acts, but who would later become a Christian. In 1913 he was to be the first Catholic Paramount Chief of Lesotho and his faith would never look back.

Father Fouloneau established Bethel at the end of 1909. At that time there were only 15 Christians among whom were Paul Malephane himself, Amelia 'Makori who was living where the out station of Qhoasing is now located and 'M'aGabrile and her children at Ha Lengau. On the other side of the Orange River, there were about 40 old Christians of Roma mission who had come to live with Sekhonyana, but now they were apostates.

Father Fouloneau worked for 13 years at Bethel. He built the house of the sisters of Holy Cross and the first church and schools in the district. Above all he is remembered for having converted Griffith and helping him

to overcome his habit of drinking. On 22nd February 1922, Father Fouloneau left 700 Christians to his successor, Father Hentrich. The latter developed this beautiful mission. In 1926 he started to build the presbytery which took quite some time and demanded patience for after it had been completed 3 weeks a hurricane lasting 2 minutes pulled down its roofs and he had to start again.

During the 12 years of his stay there, Fr. Hentrich opened seven new schools among which we can mention Nohana, where he received many people to catechumenate, led by the conversion of the wife of chief Qacha and that of Qiqita who was baptised 8 days before his death. Moreover, the conversion of Seliane and his family persuaded more than 200 Protestants to become Catholics. (Suivez Le Guide S'IL Vous Plait p179)

From 27th February 1933, Father Lecompte visited the mission of Fr. Hentrich (we are not told about his departure and where he went) at Bethel several times until the arrival of Fr. Parquet who stayed for two years with Brother Horace Rainville. Then came Fr. Gilbert who during his stay, organised a retreat for chiefs which had Fr. Thommerel as preacher. Fr. Gilbert remained there from October to January 1939. He was succeeded by Fr. Dumas until October 1940, when Fr. Lorenzo Bernier came and stayed for 8 years and was replaced by Fr. L'Hour in 1948 who was replaced by Fr. Ronald Bernier in 1950. All these priests were from Canada since the era of the French was coming to an end.

Half way between the out stations of Seliane and Lengau there is a grave of a Mosotho saint whose Beatification is being promoted by the Bishop of Mohale's Hoek, Eulalia 'M'a Gabriele who died in December 22, 1932. On the recommendation of Fr. Hentrich who had known the saint, Fr. Lorenzo Bernier made a pilgrimage to her grave on the 22 August 1944. Suddenly he felt devoured by his zeal and he preached a short sermon to those around him. Briefly he said: *"You are not ashamed of staying for such a long time in paganism while you have a saint among you"*\_\_ Among those around him was Abraham, the second son of 'M'a Gabriele, an apostate for 5 or 6 years since his daughter Maria 'Maliepetsane Mokhosi had entered the religious life. Profoundly touched by this brief sermon of Fr. Bernier he took him by hand and said to him, "I feel the faith and the grace acts in my soul and I want to convert". His daughter later died as a member of the Grey Nuns with the name of Sr. Alina. (Suivez Le Guide S'IL Vous Plait. p 180)

On 25 September 1952 in an eventful ceremony, Bishop Des Rosiers administered confirmation to 750 Christians in the first church built by Fr. Fouloneau. This church was now too small and the Bishop remarked that there was an urgent need for a bigger church at Bethel. Fr. Bernier then began to construct a bigger and better church with arches, around the old one. But these arches provoked a misfortune on the evening of 22nd September 1953. A formidable wind came; the arches were spilled like cards all over the old church, which completely collapsed; all that was inside was wiped out. It was at 11:00 at night when the chief arrived with his men. Everybody was dismayed and looked on in silence. The statue of the sacred heart was in tiny bits; that of the blessed virgin was without the head. But the catastrophe bore its fruits; the stones of the old church were sufficient to finish the construction of the new one, which had until then not been finished according to its plan.

#### 5. Holy Cross: (1921)

One day a man called Luke "Halalela" Ntsaba (he was called Halalela meaning holy, because of his apostolic zeal in preaching the word of God) who was entrusted by Fr. LeBihan to the care of Fr. Derrienic, came to the latter and asked him to open a branch in his village at Ha Soko. Fr. Derrienic who arrived to start the mission of St. Gabriel agreed. Halalela built a chapel out of his expenses and immediately influenced his wife, children, brothers and sisters to convert. From then on conversions increased.

In order to give the children a catholic school, Fr. Derrienic looked for a more central place than the village of Halalela about two miles far on the side of a rocky hill where the mission of Holy Cross is today. This branch which was visited by the Fathers of Bethel or St. Gabriel became independent at the end of February, 1922 when Fr. Aloysius Kieger came to live there and its growth was assured. The local chief, Michael Soko Letsie, was a great friend of Griffith and the latter influenced him. When Soko was seriously ill and had to go to hospital, Griffith advised him to become a catholic. When he recovered, he did not only remain faithful to his baptism but also took and cared for, to the end of his life, the interests of the mission entrusted to him by Griffith in 1921 when he had a legal case with another chief, Karabo on the question of the boundaries.

On the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the foundation of the church in

Lesotho, Soko received the medal of St. Sylvester from the Pope in recognition of his mature Christian spirit. After a year Fr. Kieger was sent to Qacha's Nek to found the mission of our lady of Hermitage (my home mission). He was succeeded by Fr. Dubach who built the convent and the noviciate of the sisters of the Holy Cross, which was blessed in 1925. A new high school was built in which the sisters helped. After six years Fr. Fouloneau arrived. He converted and baptised people.

In 1930 when the law prohibiting the establishment of new schools was abolished, Fr. Fouloneau opened six schools one after another. In February 1935 he was replaced by Fr. Joseph Thomas who stayed for 11 years and built a church, which was admired by all for its beauty. Frs. Conrad, Blais, Brisson, Benoit, Robitaille, Juneau and Caron also worked at this mission succeeding father Fouloneau. There is one thing worthy of note about this mission of the Holy Cross. When this mission was founded, the whole region was Protestant and the Catholic Church was completely unknown. The baptismal registration book will witness and ascertain the conversion of many Protestants. The above mentioned Halalela was a convert from Protestantism and led the whole of his family and many of his relatives to Catholicism; Raphael Mpala was a minister of the Protestant church of Seaka; Jobo Masiea an Anglican catchiest of Morobong at Ha Nkau; Henry, Edward, Molikou, Edwin Moiloa and Vernet Tseetse were Protestant teachers. All of them converted with their families and through their influence many converted.

This influence was doubled by that of the chiefs. Louisa, the wife of Soko had been one of the pillars of Protestantism. It should be understood that by Protestantism is referred to the Lesotho Evangelical Church, L.E.C, which was the Paris Evangelical Mission Society P.E.M.S. at that time. She had attracted many to the church to which she belonged. When she converted, she became a strong instrument that led many to Catholicism. The whole of her village, which was once Protestant, became entirely Catholic.

Another important work worth mentioning about this mission is the maternity clinic opened during the time of Fr. Juneau and which the sisters managed. This is the small cell of the family of Halalela which became a flourishing mission which gave birth to a community of religious, a boarding school, noviciate (even though it is no longer there) and many schools. On May 30, 1955 Fr. Robitaille planted a big cross of iron on the peak of the rocky hill of Holy Cross, marking the accomplished work. (Suivez Le Guide s`IL Vous Plait pp102-104).



## 6. St. Gerard (1938):

Seventy years after the arrival of the first missionaries, the Catholic Church was established at the camp of Mafeteng in 1932. Before that, the camp did not have the importance it has today. There were simply residences of the district administrators and there was no reason to start a mission there. Little by little such camps as Mafeteng extended and became small towns.

The big mission of Samaria on which Mafeteng depended could not really serve the Catholics 18 miles distant from the Samaria mission. The children had no other school to attend except protestant schools. For years Fr. Monte looked for the suitable place which he never found. The problem was water. Fortunately, providence came to his aid; a lady abandoned her hotel on a small but good piece of land. There were 13 rooms, a dining room; some stables, a garage and a windmill. On July 5, 1931 Bishop Gerard Martin and Fr. Pennerath bought the hotel for 750 pounds. However, there were some difficulties. Mr. Dulton, the magistrate at the time had sworn that the Romans would never put their feet in the camp. (Suives Le Guide S`IL Vous Plait p.78) Fortunately, paramount chief Lerotholi and the commissioner residing in Maseru granted the necessary authorisation.

The new mission took the name of St. Gerard in honour of the apostolic administrator. With 100 pounds given by the Bishop, Fr. Montel made some urgent repairs and bought some furniture foreseeing the arrival of the sisters. On January 15, 1932, the sisters of the Holy Cross arrived. Sister Gerard opened a school on 9 February with 26 pupils who, 2 months later had increased to 63 and reached 100 in 1934.

On January 24, 1932 Montel came for the first time to say mass at St. Gerard. This was the official opening of the mission. But it was quasi-symbolic opening for during the next 5 years, until the arrival of Fr. Philippe Dubois on April 15, 1937; the sisters were alone without a priest, having no mass except when the fathers of Samaria could come. Fr. Martin who replaced Montel at Samaria assured that the mass was said at St. Gerard every Sunday and 3 times during the week from February 11, 1935. There were 450 Catholics on the territory of the new mission at that time. The

mass was said in the dining room of the hotel where the classes were also held.

We should remember that Philippe Dubois was the assistant of Montel at Samaria and St. Gerard was not yet canonically detached from Samaria, which would only take place in 1940. In effect they were afraid to wean this young and difficult mission. How was it going to subsist? The 16 oxen of Samaria began to transport stones for construction in November 30, 1938. Dubois was sent to Massabiella and nobody replaced him. For 6 months the sisters were alone again. Fr. L. Klein came to reside at St. Gerard as the assistant at Samaria. Unfortunately he became sick and went to the hospital. Once again St. Gerard was without a priest; Fr. Lorenzo Bernier who had just received his obedience for St. Gabriel, had to stay for some weeks at Mafeteng waiting for the return of Klein. This gave him his first chance to preach a sermon in Sesotho. Klein did not come, and it was Fr. Nehling, who was on his way to Bethel, who had to serve in the interim until the arrival of Conrad Blais who constructed the church.

In 1944 Fr. Marino succeeded him and worked with zeal. He visited his parish and was very interested in the catechumens. Then from 1945 to 1948 Fr. Roland Jacques was the parish priest who was replaced by Fr. Leopold Dumas who began a school which was completed by his successor Fr. Lucien Damphousse. Unfortunately in 1957 he was taken to Johannesburg because of a heart attack and had to leave Africa without even having the consolation of going to greet his Christians at Samaria and Mafeteng.

#### 7. Good Shepherd (1939):

The mission of the Good Shepherd is better known by the name of Ha Tsepo. Tsepo was the son of Potsane and brother of Malebanye. It was he who in 1916, at the request of his nephew Chief Goliath, gave Fr. Roulin his beautiful piece of land near the camp of Mohale's Hoek to found the Good Shepherd mission and to satisfy his wife, Phakiso and their catholic neighbours.

Phakiso Jeremia Lebona had done something extremely rare in Lesotho. He embraced the religion of his wife (one of the daughters of Griffith) on the day of their marriage. He was baptised at Mpharane; his house immediately attracted other Christians and all of them together had

built a mission or a chapel near them for they found it very difficult to travel three and half hours on horseback every Sunday to Mount Olivet. Tsepo, to whom the land belonged, had shown himself too generous and that raised jealousy mixed with politics. People contested the right with which he disposed of his land; but the paramount Chief Griffith intervened in his favour and everything was in order again.

Fr. Roulin decided to visit this station 3 times a year. The school founded at the beginning progressed. In 1925 Bishop Cenez had the intention of placing a priest who would reside at Ha Tsepo but this was not realised. Ten years later in 1936 construction of a big convent began, destined according to the plans of the time to become the noviciate of the Holy Cross sisters. Then this plan was changed.

On December 21, 1939 Bishop Bonhomme decided to change everything. He called the sisters from Holy Cross and presided over the official opening of the mission which was entrusted to Fr. George Saint Jean. In August 1940 Saint Jean had to go to Pretoria to learn English. He was replaced by Menard for more than 9 years; he visited his outstations: Mpharane, Masemouse, Kolo-la-pere and Nko-ea-khomo. He practised the apostolate of personal contact. Above all, he taught the boys cultivating in them a seed of priestly vocation with love. The ex-priest Hlalele and Simon Rampeo were examples of his success. His successors are Jalbert, Rigaud, Brodeur, and Desrochers who built the schools of St. Patrick, Romestaing and Charron.

#### 8. Mount Carmel (1955):

The beginning of this mission dates back to 1916 with the foundation of a school. A man called Louis Mokoena, taught there until 1945 when he retired. Another important name attached to this mission is of the man called Timothy who lived there at Mpharane. Timothy was suffering from a hysteric sickness. He had tried many traditional doctors for help in vain until he went to Fr. Le Bihan at Mount Olivet to be accepted as a catechumen. After his baptism he was sent back to Mpharane, and he was cured. He was armed with books of prayer and the catechism. He invited people to pray with him and taught them the catechism. When he finished with his recruits he came to Fr. Le Bihan and presented them to him. He had more than 200. They were the first fruits of the mission of Mount Carmel.

On May 17, 1946 Bishop Bonhomme who came from Bethel for the confirmations, also witnessed to that and the way they received him there. The chiefs: Mopeli Mohale, Mahapelo, Sempe Taele and Nkhahle went to meet him with their men riding on donkeys not horses as was the custom, and escorted him. The soldiers coming from war paraded in uniform before the hut of the bishop. These people did so because they had something to ask the bishop: they wanted an agricultural school and a branch of the diocesan co-operatives. As far as a priest was concerned they said nothing, for they had been promised one about 20 years before. However, the bishop made another promise knowing well that before opening new places the old ones should be maintained.

Another six years of patience followed until 1953 when Fr. Gerard Jalbert came. He built the present big church. He was then replaced by Fr. Dulude; then came Fr. Menard. He was interested in religious and priestly vocations. Besides Fr. Rampeo and Hlalele we mentioned at Ha Tsepo, Fr. Mohlalisi, the present Archbishop of Maseru, brothers Mohlalisi, Ramakatsa and Aloysius of the sacred heart are all the products of this mission. We do not forget the sisters among whom we can mention Fidelia, Dyonisius, Alexis and Maria-Anunciata, etc.

#### 9. Mofumahali oa Maluti (1961):

At the beginning of 1958 Fr. Van Der Kallen came visiting Ha Nohana from Bethel where he was staying with Fr. Bernier. Little by little he began to stay at Ha Nohana. Since he had no money himself he relied on Fr. Bernier for material development of the mission. So, the development of the mission was very slow. He settled there in 1961, but in 1962 he went to Holland for a holiday and was replaced by Fr. O'Callaghan, an Irish man. Van Der Kallen was Dutch. We shall see later why those who were not Canadians did not have money to develop their missions.

It is now more than 20 years since Nohana has not had a resident priest. It has become an outstation of Bethel and is served by Fr. Leo. It has always been like that, since for 20 years the priest of Bethel has to serve Nohana too.

#### 10. St. Mark (1961)

Towards 1910 Mofoka, son of Mohale of the house of Masebele asked Fr.

Roulin to establish a church at his village. The priest of Mount Olivet did not want to engage himself with this chief because of the Anglicans there. The church was not ecumenical in those days. However, on the 8th September 1917 'Matsita, the daughter in law of Mofoka, under the influence of grace, went to Mount Olivet to be admitted into the catechumanate despite the Anglicans and her husband who supported them.

Profiting from this occasion, Fr. Roulin went to Chief Mofoka and asked for a piece of land. Chief Mofoka showed himself to be generous and on 24 April 1918, the land was marked and granted to Fr Roulin as he had asked. After that Chief Mofoka and Fr. Roulin ate a chicken and drank some Sesotho beer together as a celebration for the acquisition of the land. When he got back to Mount Olivet he recited his breviary. Every now and then he got distracted by the events of the day at Ha Mofoka. He was reciting the first vespers of St. Mark so venerated in his region at home. That is how he got the idea of putting this place under the patronage of St. Mark the evangelist. The priest of Mount Olivet served this branch of St. Mark until 1961 when Fr. Gustave Rigaud arrived as the first resident priest. Among his successors are Fr. Gilbert and Ntebele. The Handmaids of Christ the Priest care for the mission at present.

#### 11. St. Patrick (1962)

On October 21, 1942 Fr. Joseph Thomas, the parish priest of The Holy Cross bought a piece of land in the camp of Mohale's Hoek in the name of the diocese of Maseru, for an undisclosed sum. It was at that time, that St. Patrick was designated as the patron of the new mission. Of course, Joseph Thomas came from Ireland.

In August 1943, Brothers Lemay, Nadau and Pepin laid out the big mission of St. Patrick. In 1946 Fr. Brisson, the parish priest of the Holy Cross at the time, went there to say mass once a month. Fr. Gerard Desrochers opened a school, we are not told when. In January 1962 Fr. Hugues Barbeau came as the first resident priest and began with the foundation of a big church. He stayed there for 25 years and was succeeded by Fr. Drolet who is still there.

In 1978 when the diocese of Mohale's Hoek was born, St. Patrick became the cathedral. It is again the motherhouse of the sisters of The Holy Cross and the noviciate was transferred from The Holy Cross mission to this place. The sisters are also in charge of the home economics school of St. Elizabeth, which is on the premises of St. Patrick.

## 12. St. Andrew (1962):

In 1921 there were already Christians at Sebelekoane. Simon, the son of Ntoanyane asked Fr. Laydevant if he would like to open a chapel there. There was no difficulty at all. Chief Moholobela of the region gave his field for the building of a school-church. From that time this branch was served regularly every six weeks. It became for Fr. Laydevant an occasional residence and a sort of a base from where he visited his stations on the other side of Makhaleng river, in the heart of the mountains, Ha Khotso, Solomon and Leloko.

In June 1922 the superior general of the Oblates, Bishop Augustine Dontenville visited Emmaus. Some collections were taken in his honour; the amount collected was used according to his wish to build the first chapel of Sebelekoane and was dedicated to St. Augustine, as he had desired.

On the evening of 8 December 1948 after a big feast at the baptism of 378 people at Emmaus, Fr. Morin was informed that wind had blown off the roof of his school at Sebelekoane. The damage was so great that he had to demolish a part of the walls. He profited from that by also building a suitable house for himself there, for he had been dreaming of settling there.

In September 8, 1949 Brothers Paul Rousseau and Labrecque put the roof on the new buildings which were blessed the following year, on September 13, 1950. On that day 136 adults and 174 children received their first communion. It is on the occasion of this feast that Frs. Morin, Mousseau, Levesque and Lerotholi were presented that the name St. Augustine disappeared. We are not told about the name.

At the end of 1957 Fr. Jacques Gerard became quasi parish priest of Sebelekoane. He asked Bishop Des Rosiers what the name of the mission was. The bishop responded that since it was the centenary of the apparition of the blessed virgin at Lourdes he could not think of any other

name except that of Lourdes. But there was already a mission of this name, so he hesitated. In May 1958 the diocesan council of Maseru decided that the mission of Sebelekoane would from then on be called St. Andrew. In 1962 when Fr. Brodeur became the first parish priest of this mission he found 3 000 Christians and catechumens living there.

### 13. Christ the Priest 1968

Conveniently situated along the Maseru-Mafeteng Highway, the village of Motsekuoa developed rapidly. While still at Emmaus Fr Jacques Gerard adopted this outstation and he was looking after it in very special manner he visited the mission every Sunday; but the installation of a permanent priest was still a dream. Then in 1967 a wonderful ending to one of the chapters of the stormy history of the Institute of Christ the Priest occurred. Archbishop Mabathoana, who was aware of the hardships of the institute had to suffer during the preliminaries of its foundation and also knew that many of its members were from Lesotho, made an appeal to Fr Blais who answered immediately. He sent Fr Jacques Gilbert OMI who he had borrowed from the Oblates a few years before to help the community of Groblersdal. For Fr Blais, a return to Lesotho after a long exile was so exciting that he did not hesitate in sending his most valuable subject. In this way Fr Gilbert came to take charge of the mission of Motsekuoa. There he found an already well rooted and interesting community.

Fr Blais' ever-fertile mind thought of everything; he had sent a group of the Sisters of his institute with him. So, the Handmaids of Christ the Priest established a branch of their order in Lesotho even before the Priests arrived. After having helped the Sisters settle down, Fr. Gilbert received the male branch of the community; they built a badly needed church, and have taken care of the Mission ever since. In 1968 the catholic population was 3 000. Fr Gilbert was succeeded by Stephen Ramantsi, William Thahanyane, Paul Raselloane, Matsoso and Hlephe. The sisters ran a clinic, dispensary and a home for the crippled.

### 14. Our Lady of Rosary 1980

When Bishop Sebastian Khoarai took charge of his diocese in 1978, one could travel the 50km that separated Mafeteng and Mohale`s Hoek without seeing a Catholic Church along the road. The big village of Taung was situated just halfway between Mafeteng and Mohale`s Hoek and would be exactly the right place to situate a mission. The practical bishop did not wait

long to take the necessary step to find the site. He found one on the hill just behind the village of Taung. Having no priest to spare, he managed to get sisters Anunciata and few other teachers from Holy Cross convent and with Bro. Mofokeng they organised the mission that prides itself on having a high school and an impressive church dedicated to Our Lady of the Holy Rosary. Pending the arrival of a resident priest the bishop takes care of the parish himself. The catholic population is now 6 000.



## **Chapter Two**

### **THE SOCIO-POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT OF THE CHURCH: CANADIANS.**

In this chapter I am going to discuss first, the government of the church within itself, and secondly the involvement of the Catholic Church in the political life and the development of Lesotho. This section I call the era of the Canadians because at this time they were the majority from 1930. We should remember that in 1923, there were only 14 priests in Lesotho; who were French. Between 1930 and 1939 there were 81 because during those years Canada sent 88 Oblates. They were 52 priests and 36 brothers.

I will divide the government of the church into three sections, namely:

- (a) The bishop and the ecclesiastical government.
- (b) The role of the bishop and his relationship to the oblate authority, under which we will take the era of four bishops in their chronological order: Bishops Martin, Bonhomme, Des Rosiers and `Mabathoana the Bishop of Leribe and the Archbishop of Maseru.
- (c) The material resources of the diocese which also has two parts:
  - i. the financial assets of the bishop.
  - ii. the collection of funds for the diocese.

#### **(A) THE BISHOP AND THE ECCLESIASTICAL GOVERNMENT:**

A key figure in the government of the church was and still is the bishop. Although chosen from the Oblate community, as a bishop he was not answerable to the Oblate authority. We will see in this part how the head of the church may not have felt inclined to oppose his religious congregation in case of conflict, but when he did, it was difficult for him to counter the weight of the Oblates. For it was through the Oblates that the Catholic Church of Lesotho received most of its resources in men and money. Moreover, through their connections in Rome the Oblates enjoyed a good relationship with a level of ecclesiastical authority, which stood above the bishop. If the latter could not, from Lesotho, easily impress his

ecclesiastical superiors, he would clearly be at a disadvantage. In this part we shall look first at the administrative structure which a bishop governs, then after giving a formal definition of his role, we shall see how under the four most influential bishops of Lesotho the government of the church was kept separate from the Oblate community.

The diocese, which constitutes the most important unit of the government in the Catholic Church, is established and its boundaries are delineated by the Vatican. Until 1952, the catholic population living in the territory of Lesotho formed a single diocese. It was then subdivided and in 1962 there were three units: one archdiocese and two dioceses and later in 1978 there were four. Although they are ranked differently, archdiocese and dioceses are equivalent, as far as internal government is concerned, the archdiocese is merely larger. The creation of new dioceses in Lesotho was general policies decided by the Vatican. In the case of the first dioceses it was not the result of local internal pressure as was the case with Mphahlele's Hoek.

When in 1952 the diocese of Leribe was established, the Vatican had taken the decision to elevate indigenous clergy to the episcopate in mission countries. The move was initiated by Rome and the local clergy had no choice but to agree, although some important people in the church of Lesotho did not particularly welcome the decision. The second diocese of Lesotho was formed by detaching 18% of the mother diocese's population. Because it was comparatively small it did not significantly alter the balance of power in the church, but it had a symbolic meaning. It established for a Mosotho a post equal in status to that occupied by the expatriate bishop who governed the larger diocese.

The diocese of Qutha's Nek which was created in 1962 was perhaps more consequential in terms of balance of power. It was made up by detaching a small part only 20%, of the mother diocese but it was entrusted to the former bishop of Maseru who was, by then, the only expatriate of his rank who as such had resources and antecedents which set him apart from the other bishops. The third diocese segmented the ecclesiastical structure to a greater degree than had been the case in 1952. Even so the three units of government of the Catholic Church of Lesotho were grossly unequal and after 1962 there was, as there had been before, an archbishop who occupied a position of dominance and represented the church in its relationships with national agencies. In 1962 for example, the two smaller dioceses together contained less than 40% of the catholic population in Lesotho, whereas the archdioceses of Maseru contained the rest. This

situation combined with the fact that the administration of the Oblates was never divided helped maintain a larger degree of unity in the church.

For the largest part of the period we are here considering, the relationship between the ecclesiastical organisation and the Oblates was not that of a college of bishops confronting or co-operating with the oblate hierarchy. The pattern was rather that of a bishop alone who stood with or against the Oblate authority.

## **(B) THE ROLE OF THE BISHOP AND HIS RELATIONSHIP TO THE OBLATE AUTHORITY.**

The bishop is the person who has ultimate responsibility for the material and spiritual administration of the church within the diocese. His position is of primary importance in the ecclesiastical organisation. In mission countries especially where the Catholic Church had allowed a greater centralisation than elsewhere the missionaries were placed directly under his authority. The bishop here does not only regulate discipline and public conduct but is also allowed freedom in placing and displacing the religious staff at his convenience. The prerogatives of the bishop were recognised by Father Lebreton as the head of the Oblates in 1931 in the following terms:

*"It is perfectly true that the congregation has no possessions (i.e. in Lesotho). Everything belongs to the Propaganda of which monsignor administrator is the only representative. His authority within the vicariate is supreme in all including nomination and change of obedience. I have no right to interfere in his administration, to supplant his authority or limit his freedom. He has all rights to act on his own to give you funds, to order you to do a certain work and you must obey him. But in this case he would act in his own capacity and the congregation would bear no responsibility."*

( From a circular letter written by father Lebreton to the Oblates of Lesotho on April 22, 1931.)

A bishop administers his diocese with the help of a council that he appoints. The constitution of a council is obligatory and in theory all-important matters should be debated, but in fact, it is up to the bishop to make what use he wishes of his council. No sanctions were imposed on bishop

Bonhomme when it was found that he had never brought to the council the most important questions of his administration.

Bishop Bonhomme was in open conflict with the oblate authorities and it would have been most difficult to discuss his policies at the diocesan council, which was made up of oblates. The debates of the diocesan council were confidential, as were those of the oblate council, but it could happen that some members belonged to both at the same time. In 1930, it had been established that at least the bishop would not invite the head of the Oblates in Lesotho to be part of his council so as officially to make clear that the two authorities were separate. The concern here seemed to have been more with the public image of the bishop. It would appear as a misinterpretation of his status. The Canadian provincial gave this advice to his representative in Lesotho on this question:

*"If you enter the bishop's council you will be on the same footing as the other councillors, nothing more. Consequently, your authority as pro-vicar will be diminished. Mgr. Martin will understand easily that he must do without you at official councils as a member of his administration so that he may benefit from your officious direction. In other words apostolic vicar and vicar of mission discuss alone together all the matters that concern Basutoland but do not meet to discuss debatable projects in the presence of other councillors."*

( From the letter from father Bourassa to father Lebreton, 30th October 1930.)

As we see, it is quite instructive, not only on the function of the council but also on the relationship the Oblate authority believed they should entertain with the bishop. The bishop's council was no instrument of democratic government. It provided a privileged channel of communication between the bishop and a few chosen priests who were not necessarily involved in important church activity. During the administration of bishop Des Rosiers, when the council convened most regularly one found an over-representation of the older missionaries replaced for their orthodoxy. The council certainly then functioned as a means to reinforce the legitimacy of the bishop's command. It also coated with prestige those who were seen through the council as close associates of the bishop. Sometimes important and confidential matters were discussed at these meetings but judging from the minutes of the preceding meetings. A great difference was always shown as regards the right of the bishop to take final decisions alone.

The religious orders of nuns and brothers had no representation in the bishop's council nor did the parishioners. The relationship between this group and the bishop will not be discussed here. But first of all it is essential to understand clearly the position of the bishop vis-à-vis the Oblate authority, for it is here that we can determine who effectively ruled the church of Lesotho.

We shall discuss in turn the cases of four bishops. This will be presented in chronological order so as to mark the importance of the historical progression of this relationship.

### **(I) BISHOP MARTIN 1930-1933.**

The rule of this bishop was short-lived because he was considered inadequate for the job. The most important judge of his performance was the head of the Oblates in Lesotho. The young bishop who had been nominated at the age of 33 was sent to Lesotho soon after being ordained. In his first years he had been under the superiority of Father Lebreton who became the head of the Oblates in Lesotho just at the time that Father Martin became the administrator. This change of status seems to have had very little consequence for the relationship between the two men.

Father Lebreton kept a close and paternalistic check on the administration of his former subject, regularly reporting on him to the oblate general. Soon he criticised the "lack of maturity", the "lack of weight" of the young bishop, the fact that "he was too easily influenced and could be manipulated" (by the wrong people maybe). Father Lebreton's judgement carried great authority in the eyes of both the Oblate General in Rome and the Canadian provincial in Canada. Moreover, the role of guardian of the church interests which Father Lebreton took on was completely taken for granted by the two Oblate leaders who never suggested that this perhaps ought to be passed on to, or at any rate shared with, the bishop. The Canadian provincial himself showed by the tone of his letter to Bishop Martin that he considered him his junior, if not his subject.

This superior attitude was maintained behind the facade of submission, which was assumed not so much for the sake of the Bishop, himself as for the lower ranks of the church. The Oblates were concerned to convey to their subject the right image of what the bishop's role ought to be. The differentiation of roles between the head of the Oblates and the bishop who

was new was repeatedly stressed and it was outwardly proclaimed that the Bishop was in the last resort the person responsible for the government of the church.

When after three years the Oblates decided that Mgr Martin was not the man they needed for the job, the Vatican, it appears, simply endorsed the opinion of the unsuitability of the Bishop. The Bishop did not attempt to argue his case in Rome. Had he been more experienced, more independent of his former superiors or more politically minded, he might have tried to find allies in Rome to represent his cause to the Vatican, but he did not. (Possibly because he was not yet consecrated as the bishop he was just an administrator with the title of Mgr).

The departure of Mgr Martin was not attributed in Rome or Lesotho to a conflict between ecclesiastical and oblate authorities. More relevant categories at the time were that of nationalities. Mgr Martin, a French Canadian, symbolised the new take-over of the Lesotho mission by the Oblates of his country. He was young and inexperienced, easily influenced, whereas the wise, the experienced, the missionaries who really knew the Basotho including Fr Lebreton all tended to be French. The so-called wrong people who had influenced Mgr Martin were also French Canadians. It was recognised that there were marked cultural differences between the two national groups as well as a generation gap. What was the importance of those factors in bringing about the removal of Mgr Martin? We have seen that the French Canadian provincial himself agreed on the inadequacy of the Bishop.

But of course, his opinion was greatly influenced by the reports he received from Fr Lebreton. The data we have on this early period, are somewhat sparse, and it is difficult to determine to what extent the cultural orientation and the youth of Mgr Martin contributed to his disqualification given that the years 1930-33 were a period of transition in government, which understandably produced many tensions between national groups. It would be surprising if an opposition on those grounds did not play a part here. Of course we would expect that leaders responsible for the decision to recall Mgr Martin would acknowledge such factors. It was evidently in the interest of those representing the Oblate Congregation as a whole to play down divisions on national lines within their group.

In spite of its incompetence, our account of Mgr Martin's administration and circumstances that led to his departure show well enough the small margin of autonomy the Bishop had in relation to the Oblate authority. The

administrative reform which required that the ecclesiastical structures be clearly separated from the Oblates had been implemented, but granting very few resources to quarantine the security and the independence of the bishop. Behind the scenes, the Oblates still pulled all the strings that controlled the entrance and the exit of the bishops.

## **II. Bishop Bonhomme; 1933-1947**

Under the administration of Bishop Bonhomme a new pattern of relationship emerged between the ecclesiastical chief and the Oblates. We have already indicated that Bishop Bonhomme was nominated from Canada and therefore arrived as bishop new to the Lesotho situation. He came with a clear idea of what his role, as bishop should be, which is that of a leader. Bishop Bonhomme had an assertive personality quite different from that of his predecessor. He had been chosen by the Canadian Oblates as the man to direct the great expansion of the Church, which was foreseen. The thirties were considered as critical for the so-called "race of conversion". The Catholics, who considered themselves victimised by the Colonial Government, were keen to have a bishop who would not be afraid to stand up and fight.

Evidently the Oblates did not anticipate the conflicts which might ensue between a strong bishop and their own position as regards the internal government of the Church. From the very beginning the policies of Bishop Bonhomme were expansionist. The leader saw practically no limit to the tasks the Catholic Church could undertake in Lesotho. The enterprising attitude of Bishop Bonhomme may have alarmed competing Churches or the Government, but not the Oblates, who at first shared the benefits of an expansion of the Church. The first signs that the relationship between the Oblates and the Ecclesiastical Authorities were turning sour appeared in 1938, that is five years after Bishop Bonhomme's arrival.

The contention was mainly over two issues, which were of critical importance for the continuation of the Oblates hegemony in Lesotho. First, Bishop Bonhomme believed that the Oblates should no longer keep a monopoly of priestly functions in the country. They should allow and encourage the development of a secular clergy amongst the Basotho; a clergy that would not be restricted by the Rule of a religious congregation and would probably be better suited to the multiplicity of functions that the Church required. It is easy to see that if Bishop Bonhomme

succeeded in bringing about this change, it could also alter the structure of Church Government. It could give him considerably more freedom since his power would no longer be restrained by the Oblate monopoly.

Since Bishop Bonhomme could not increase the number of secular priests fast enough, because of the recruitment criteria we shall discuss below, he wanted to bring into the country a diversity of religious orders. He wrote in a report to the Canadian Provincial;

*“Our ambition should not be to keep Exclusively to the Oblates and to European Oblates this territory which has been entrusted to us by the Church. This opposition that existed under the “ancien régime”(we presume he refers to the French Oblates who controlled the Church before 1930) against indigenous clergy and indigenous congregations must disappear. To-day everybody is unanimous on this question.”*

(Letter dated 18<sup>th</sup> June 1945 from Mgr. Bonhomme to Father Deschatelets.)

The second point, which intensified the confrontation between the ecclesiastical and Oblate authorities of Lesotho, is linked to the first. Bishop Bonhomme wanted to speed up the Africanization of clergy. In 18 years the seminary had managed to produce four priests at the cost of 150,000 dollars, which the bishop considered a very low level of productivity. A large number of Basotho candidates were leaving the seminary unable or unwilling to comply with the required standards. Bishop Bonhomme felt that there was something wrong in the system of selection, and he was very aware of the consequences of such a situation for the future of the Church. He stressed repeatedly that the task of missionaries, by definition, is to train indigenous Church leaders in order to leave them as soon as possible in control of their own Church. Given the rate, at which Africanization was proceeding, the bishop felt that this aim would not be achieved in a hundred years.

As far as the Vatican was concerned, Bishop Bonhomme `s views were quite orthodox. It had been repeatedly advocated by the Propaganda Fide that seminaries in mission countries should be given priority over other works, and these should train secular rather than religious priests. (It should be recalled here that in 1939, of the four Basotho that had made it to the priesthood, one was a secular and three were Oblates.) But the Oblate General had quite a different opinion on the question of recruitment. He had formulated his instruction to the Oblate Council as follows;



*"You must accept only those individuals that are capable  
Of a moral and intellectual education of the kind that forms an  
Elite. Leave all those that are not apt to a superior education.  
For our Oblate priests we need both..."*

(Letter from Father Laboure, dated 24<sup>th</sup> May 1939.)

This elitist policy was legitimised by proclaiming that the African priest must in no way be inferior to the white priest and only equality of standards would be acceptable. Of course, as consequence of these views, everything else being equal, the Europeans could remain in control of the Church for nearly as long as they wished.

In the conflict that opposed the Oblate and ecclesiastical authorities, the members of the clergy were also divided. Not surprisingly, the first area of tension was the seminary where the staff was split into two factions, those loyal to the oblate directives and those who followed Bishop Bonhomme. Father Des Rosiers, (who interestingly would later be the bishop to succeed Mgr. Bonhomme), led the first faction, the second faction was led by Father A. Blais. The staff of the seminary could not agree on the common criteria for the recruitment or the dismissal of their students, and an open confrontation developed.

In 1939, Bishop Bonhomme entrusted father A Blais with a special mission. He instructed him to found a religious institute of Basotho Brothers with a Rule adapted to their own culture. In the same year he ordered the seminary to change its policy and prepare its recruits as secular priests rather than Oblates. In 1941 Father Des Rosiers was dismissed as the rector of the seminary and an Oblate with views similar to those of Bishop Bonhomme was put in his place. By then Bishop Bonhomme was ruling by interim. He left for Canada in 1940, and because of the war he was unable to return until 1944. During his absence his authority diminished, the man he had himself appointed to take on his function did not have his prestige, and the tension in Lesotho kept growing.

Further events, which we can only briefly relate here, contributed to a further deterioration of the situation. Always with the view in mind that the Oblate monopoly must be broken, the Bishop had ordered in 1940 that the direction of the college of Roma (later to be the University College Pius XII) be handed over to the Brothers of the Sacred Heart and thus be removed from Oblate government. This was looked upon by the Oblates as a great insult, especially as the fathers were asked to continue teaching under the direction of the Brothers. The Oblate canonical visitor commented

subsequently that this decision contravened all the conversions of the church (letter sent by Fr. Marchand to Fr. Deschateles, dated 9 July 1948).

In spite of the fact that the Oblates disapproved of the Bishop's policies his orders were carried out as we have mentioned above, as the Bishop's position gave him authority to act in the manner he did. The theoretical right to move the religious staff at his convenience without consulting the Oblates had been earlier acknowledged by the Oblate Provincial himself. But by thus using his right the Bishop was nevertheless initiating a new practice. Customarily in Lesotho all obediences had been agreed at the Oblate council first and later submitted for the Bishop's approval. That the Bishop should violate this convention was interpreted by the Oblates as a sign of open hostility.

After his return from Canada in 1944, Bishop Bonhome was unable to reunite the fathers. At the same time, determined more than ever to break the Oblate monopoly, he invited in July 1946 two new communities of priests, the Dominicans and the fathers of The Holy Sacrament, to establish mission stations in the country. But before he could carry this any further he was forced to resign. The Bishop had been aware for a long time of the strong opposition his policies provoked at the highest level of the Oblate community. In 1942 he had written a letter showing a great insight to his protégé, Fr. A. Blais in which he predicted the fierce battle to come, he said:

*"Unfortunately it is in high quarters of the congregation that Oblates are only wanted. They say yes (that they will form secular clergy to Rome and in official papers but they do not act accordingly in mission countries you would not believe they are manoeuvring to maintain this spirit in Basutholand. Everyone who does not have it must disappear. Important events are about to prove whether I am right or wrong in this affair. They will be decisive for one side or the other."*

(The letter sent from Canada dated 31st October 1942).

Even so Bishop Bonhomme was so convinced that he was morally right that he did not bother to mount a campaign to defend his case in Rome where he had in any event few personal allies. How crucial were the Oblates in bringing about Bishop Bonhomme's departure? As we have seen, the Oblates of Lesotho on their own could do little to change the Bishop's policies. As early as 1939 the conflict had been echoed to the Roman Oblates. The Oblate General had then personally paid a visit to Lesotho but he had no success in changing the Bishop's decision. In 1940 the Assistant General had written from Rome;

*"It seems useless to send a third visitor after the failure of the first two" repeating that the fathers must obey their Bishop "the fathers must obey even if authority makes obedience difficult, almost heroic by its abusive way of governing."*

(the letter written by Fr. Desnoyers, dated March 1940).

The Oblates in Rome looked with the greatest suspicion at any attempt to reduce the power of their congregation. In comparison with a body such as the Propaganda Fidei, the leaders of the Oblates were rather conservative on issues such as Africanization. In the forties the community was very confident of its strength. In terms of members they were then at the peak of their expansion. They considered Lesotho to be one of their glorious achievements, and they were not prepared to let go of their control over it. The Catholic Church as a whole had nothing to lose with the implementation of Bishop Bonhomme's policies, quite the contrary, so long as the resources in men and money, which had been provided by the Oblates, would not be jeopardised.

After the failure of their various missions the Oblates had no alternative, if they wished to maintain their power in Lesotho, but to work for Bishop Bonhomme's dismissal. From Lesotho the only spokesman who was given a hearing on this question was Fr. Des Rosiers who had been the champion of Oblate policies at the Seminary, and was consequently dismissed in 1942 as its Rector. Fr. Des Rosiers made two trips to Rome, the first in 1938 and the second in 1947. On both these occasions he went with good credentials for he had been elected by the Oblates of Lesotho as their delegate to represent them at the General Chapter. Soon after Fr. Des Rosiers left for Rome in 1947, Mgr. Bonhomme was asked to hand over his resignation as Bishop of Lesotho. The following year Fr. Des Rosiers became his successor. These events confirm once more the limits of the Bishop's independence in relation to the Oblate authorities. Evidently the margin of autonomy enjoyed by Bishop Bonhomme had been much greater than for Bishop Martin.

### **III Bishop Des Rosiers; 1948-1962 Bishop of Maseru**

Bishop Des Rosiers was appointed as the protagonist of Oblate policies. With him all conflicts between oblates and ecclesiastical authorities seemed to disappear and the two worked in close co-operation. There were divisions

among the clergy but opposition did not take the form of confrontation between the Oblates and ecclesiastical interests.

In the first years of Bishop Des Rosiers administration the Oblates were determined to put their house in order in Lesotho. Those who had been closely associated with Bishop Bonhomme and had identified with his policies were invited to leave the country while others themselves requested to be sent elsewhere. The fathers who had manifested sympathy without being deeply involved were made to pledge once more their first allegiance to their religious community .

The task of sorting out the irregularities of the Lesotho situation i.e. from an Oblate point of view , was carried out by a special envoy sent from Rome by the Oblate General, Father Marchand. With the title of the canonical visitor, he was given overriding powers to investigate all the contentious actions of the previous administration. The new Bishop willingly gave complete freedom to the visitor. The canonical visitor had access to all confidential documents no matter whether they belonged to the ecclesiastical or the Oblate domain. As far as the Oblate official was concerned there were no boundaries between the two, or if there were, he was beyond them. Fr. Marchand thus proceeded to judge the actions and dispositions of the fathers who had allegedly violated their religious vows by following their Bishop without the consent of the Oblate superior. Detailed reports of his investigation were sent to the Oblate General but it was he who judged the guilty, for his reports nearly always imposed a foregone conclusion.

The canonical visitor remained in Lesotho from 1948 until 1953. His domineering presence caused no resentment from the Bishop. It is very likely that at the beginning, Bishop Des Rosiers' position was reinforced by the backing of the visitor. We have seen that the conflicts of the previous administration had been greatly personalised and the new bishop who had been highly involved could probably recast his image more easily as a neutral bishop, committed to the good cause and uninterested in personal ambition, with the help of an authority such as that of the canonical visitor. In 1953, it was not the Bishop but the Oblate General that recommended the departure of canonical visitor, commenting that he over-shadowed the authority of the new bishop. The Oblate General here probably wished to let the bishop stand on his own feet being quite confident that the policies of the bishop would always be favourable to his congregation.

During the years 1948 -1952 important questions which determined the orientation of the Catholic Church of Lesotho for at least the next ten years

were settled by the new joint Oblate -Ecclesiastical leadership .The religious institute started by Father Blais for the Basotho was closed and its founder allowed to leave the country. The university college Pius XII was handed back to the Oblates .The seminary once more reversed its policy and trained primarily Oblates and finally the plan to invite other communities of priests to Lesotho was postponed indefinitely.

This turning point in the history of the Church of Lesotho caused drainage of Oblate members, which although relatively small, had never happened before. As there were signs at the same time that Oblate recruits in French Canada were decreasing, those departures caused a slow -down in the expansion of the Church which had been going on unabated since 1930. The collusion that existed under Bishop Des Rosiers' term in office between the Oblate and the ecclesiastical authorities did not put an end to the questions of Africanization of the clergy and the Oblate monopoly these raised but from other quarters. The apostolic delegate, kept a close watch on Lesotho. He was unsympathetic to the Canadian Bishop -Oblate connivance. He had witnessed reluctantly in 1948 the closure of the Religious congregation founded for Basotho but in 1952 it was he who prepared the nomination of a Mosotho Bishop.

In the fifties, the leaders of the Catholic Church in Lesotho had put on the pretence that they agreed to promote the formation of a non-Oblate and above all of an African clergy. The Oblate general wrote in a confidential letter to the canonical visitor that he was certain the Propaganda Fide would really welcome the foundation of an indigenous clergy autonomous from the Oblates but he added:

*"Like you I remain convinced that it is better to assimilate the indigenous population rather than leave them to govern themselves ...nevertheless I believe it would be wise not to refuse absolutely the request of the Propaganda. Refusal is not easily acceptable..."*

(A quotation from the letter dated 12 June 1951 from Father Deschateles to Father Marchand.)

The careful diplomacy was not quite sufficient however and after 1948 the Oblate leaders of Lesotho increasingly provoked suspicion amongst the Catholics of southern Africa for refusing to promote the changes advocated by the Vatican .We find several statements like the following stressing this point:

*"The general opinion amongst oblates in southern Africa is that the Apostolic Delegate is not favourable to the Oblates. It is a bit our fault because our lack of unity and the unfortunate reports sent by our former Apostolic Vicar (Mrg. Bonhomme ). There is also an anti-Canadian movement probably caused by the same reports".*

(This is a quotation from the letter from father Pageau ,provincial of Lesotho to father Des Rosiers in Rome ,dated 15 Sept. 1947)

This comment was made in 1947, but by 1955 the reputation of the Oblates had not improved. If any thing it had worsened. Of course by then it was difficult for the oblate leadership to accuse the administration of Bishop Bonhomme of being responsible for the situation. The refusal of the church leaders and more particularly of its Bishop, to adopt to the changing socio-political situation of Lesotho in the fifties caused tension within the ranks of the Oblates themselves. A group of fathers centred in the University College Pius XII increasingly began to resent the blindness of their leaders to the wider social milieu. This time the dissidents were not aligned as pro-Oblates or pro-bishop although they did sometimes attempt to protect themselves by playing one authority off against the other.

The fathers of the university manifested their opposition to the church leaders in several ways, and somehow political issues became embroiled with the question of morality and observance of the Oblate Rule as if deviance in one domain should necessarily entail deviance in the others.

They were accused by the bishop of being too mundane, too permissive with their students, and too independent from their superiors, and some of them were said to be of doubtful morality.

Politically the university did not follow the official position of the Catholic Church .The Oblate professors refused to support the political party, which was backed by the bishop and most of the clergy , and they would not boycott the other party which had been labelled as communist by the Catholic leader.

It is interesting to point out here that after the departure of the canonical visitor, the fathers of the university sustained a confrontation with a bishop who considered himself not only the leader of the church but as the guardian of the Oblate ethos. The Oblate provincial was in fact judged by the bishop to be too lenient in his interpretation of the Rule and often the bishop attempted to bypass him .The institution of Pius XII, being administered directly from Rome, had a certain degree of independence from the bishop,

who could only supervise it at distance. It was the one place in Lesotho where a degree of autonomy from the monolithic leadership of the Church could be maintained. Moreover the university was an influential centre very much in evidence in the country. For this reason it was a real thorn in the bishop's flesh. All through the fifties, the bishop complained to the Oblate General about the irregularities and the deviance from the Oblate Rule in the college. Finally in 1960, the bishop won his point and had its rector dismissed and sent to Canada. With the rector a number of fathers joined the exodus .

Not all the fathers who left were judged bad Oblates by Rome. They were removed after repeated requests by the bishop, merely for the sake of peace. This episode recalls the exodus of 1948-1952. For the second time a group of missionaries was expelled from Lesotho because of views which were not in agreement with those of the leaders of the Church in the country, although this might have been acceptable and even commendable to the Catholic authorities outside Lesotho.

There was not in 1960 ,the same degree of confusion as to which authority governed the church. The bishop was at the time clearly in control. The fact that he got rid of his opposition also immediately confirmed and reinforced his position. But in the long run it would appear that the success the Church Leader had in eliminating the internal challenge to his authority served to increase the tension with agencies external to the Church. For indeed the more the Catholic Church became monolithic, the more polarised grew the conflict with groups that the Church opposed. As we shall see below, the political struggles, which had begun in the fifties, reached a climax in the sixties, each of the main political parties having the support of one of the Churches in the country.

Bishop Des Rosiers identified so closely with the Oblates that it seems he was prepared to accept a weakening in the overall position of the Catholic Church in Lesotho rather than endanger Oblate hegemony.

In 1959 when the Oblate General himself finally suggested that perhaps out of necessity, non-Oblate European priests ought to be invited to Lesotho, the Bishop was most reluctant. Oblate recruits from French-Canada were then fewer than ever and Basotho priests were not emerging in sufficient numbers. Pressures to obtain priests from elsewhere were therefore great. It was not this time a question of re-enforcing the position of the bishop against the Oblates as had been the case under Bishop Bonhomme. It was

a matter of maintaining the church's actual position and avoiding a regression of the very institution, which encompassed the Oblates.

Bishop Des Rosiers had proposed that European Oblates be sent to Lesotho if those from French Canada were not available in sufficient numbers. Although a variety of nationalities could cause difficulties, it was preferable, to sharing with non-Oblates the bishop believed. With this the Oblate Superior General in Rome did not agree. One of his assistants wrote:

*"The Reverend father General does not believe, now that the Oblates have worked so well even for local vocations, to leave, without conditions, the pleasure of the harvest to foreigners. To leave a couple of organised missions would mean to abandon everything to new-comers that would only have to gather from the neighbouring centres. Is not it proper that new missionaries should begin by clearing the ground and toil themselves next to us?..."*

( From the letter to Bishop Des Rosiers dated 22 May 1958)

This quotation reveals that the Oblates believed they had a special right to the Catholic Church of Lesotho because they had been responsible for building it up. In the late fifties the Vatican had made clear its intention of appointing African Bishops and the French Canadian Oblates wanted at least to derive, and for themselves alone, all the credit and the prestige of handing over the Catholic church they had built to the new Basotho leaders. The letter also shows the extent to which national pride was associated with Oblate pride as a motivation for the missionary enterprise.

Bishop Des Rosiers might have stronger feelings for the Oblates than for his national group, but there was not between him and the Oblate Authority any serious disagreement on the question of preserving, as far as possible, Oblate hegemony and, until the Basotho took over, the control of the French-Canadians. From a merely administrative point of view the bishop was concerned about the demotion that would result for some Oblates if these were to share their domain with the new community. A new order would have to set up its hierarchy where as non-French-Canadians, Oblates could easily be absorbed in the existing structure, he wrote;

*"To those new-comers it would doubtless be necessary to give up some of our best parishes with the possibility of discouraging some of our Oblate cures who would be forced to return to ranks of simple parish priests".*



(This is quotation from the letter dated 5 April 1956 from Bishop Des Rosiers to father Marchand )

The Oblates, as missionaries, expected to be, and effectively were, placed in positions of responsibility relatively sooner than their counterparts in Canada or Europe. This is undoubtedly one of the rewards of being a missionary, which the bishop did not think fit to jeopardise.

It is clear that in the plans devised by the Vatican about Africanization the bishop had more to lose than the Oblates since the last could still perpetuate themselves through a Mosotho bishop. But if the office of the Propaganda Fide decided to remove the bishop before the normal age of retirement, there was not much that could be done. In view of the determination of the Vatican to proceed with Africanization of the hierarchy, the Canadians were quite powerless to save the last expatriate bishop. When in 1961 the diocese of Maseru was promoted to the rank of an Archdiocese and a Mosotho Oblate was appointed as its Head, Bishop Des Rosiers was transferred to a minor seat as the Bishop of Qacha's Nek. This clearly amounted to a demotion for him. Nevertheless an Oblate, assistant to the General assured him;

*"You will be the powerful man to keep harmony in the church of Basutholand"*

( From the letter dated 7 Feb. 1961 from father LaRochelle to Bishop Des Rosiers) Was this a promise that even with a Mosotho Archbishop, as far as the Roman Oblates were concerned, nothing would really change in the government of the Catholic Church in Lesotho?

#### **IV. Archbishop Mabathoana; 1961-1966 Archbishop of Maseru .1952-1961 Bishop of Leribe.**

The first Mosotho to lead the Catholic Church was chosen from among the very few Basotho who had been successfully socialised into the ways of the Oblates in cloistered institutions. Archbishop Mabathoana entered the seminary at the age of twenty. Ten years later he was received in the congregation of the Oblates and ordained a priest. Thereafter he remained at the seminary as professor of languages, for most of the time under the dictatorship of the future bishop Des Rosiers. He never left the institution except for the two years he spent in Rome and London while living in the Oblate residence. In 1952, that is after twenty-five years spent in relatively

enclosed institutions the Mosotho father was appointed bishop of Leribe. While in Rome in 1951, the future archbishop had been closely observed and it was feared that he might be too modest to be entrusted with a commanding post; here is a letter about him from Rome.

*“A very brave man but of very modest means.  
Good character. But if ever the church demanded a  
man of his race is he really the best we have to present?”*

(The letter was sent to Bishop Des Rosiers dated 15 July 1951.)

We should remember that at the time of his choice there were about twelve Basotho priests; two of these were considered quite inadequate as priests, let alone as bishops.

Considering the long socialisation of the candidate in an environment which valued attitudes of submissiveness it was difficult to expect at the same time leadership and initiative. Nonetheless father Mabathoana was chosen. What seems to have determined the choice was above all that father Mabathoana was considered honest and trustworthy, and having “no inclination to get involved in political or mundane matters.” (From the same letter)

During his nine years in office as Bishop of Leribe, Mabathoana was generally overshadowed by his senior colleague. Most of the time, church policies, which had to be uniform throughout Lesotho, were decided from Maseru. Only once have we evidence of a confrontation between the two Bishops. The issue was whether Catholics should be allowed to join the Basutholand National Teachers Association, set-up for all teachers by the government. Bishop Mabathoana pressed by Basotho teachers, took the view that Catholics should not boycott B.N.T.A on the grounds that it was non-confessional. This organisation as we shall see later was the focus of intense political activities in the fifties. The conflict between the two bishops on this issue proved to be more a question of tactics in the end than a conflict over political values or ideologies, but the reaction of Bishop Des Rosiers suggested that such opposition was a rare occurrence, and was looked upon as a serious matter.

This chapter will end here with Bishop Mabathoana and we will return to him in the third chapter i.e. the church under the indigenous clergy.

## **C -The material resources of the diocese**

### **I. The financial assets of the Bishop.**

Among the sources from which the Catholic Church financed its activities in Lesotho, charities were solicited individually by most of the French Canadian missionaries, and when these were attached to the ecclesiastical works as opposed to the Oblate works, the fruits of their labour accrued to the diocese. But there were those funds that the bishop controlled centrally for the diocese. We shall also comment in this chapter on the kind of the profitable activities a bishop was allowed to engage in, and the sanctions on mismanagement. We shall look at how methods for collecting charities were modified through time in order to adapt to changes in the donor country.

The decentralisation of the financial administration meant that the bishop could himself at times be rather poor, although the church as a whole might command comfortable assets. The bishop was assured of an annual allocation from the Propaganda Fide but this was small and just about covered the maintenance of his household. In 1959, for instance, when the bishop had over a hundred priests in his diocese, he received 2000 pounds a year from the Propaganda Fide. The allocation was in the nature of a symbolic gesture and was never meant to cover the entire bishop's needs. In addition to the annual regular allocation, the bishop could apply to the Propaganda for help with specific projects. The seminary was partly sponsored by the Vatican agency in this manner. Unlike the regular allocations, the special fund was conditional on the recipient implementing the Church policy.

The bishop was expected to supplement his revenues by some industry of his own undertaking. In 1939 when money from the Propaganda was especially tight because of the war, a secular letter was sent to bishops asking them to make a special effort.

*"Could you not without going against our Holy canon, create personal industries that could make up for the meagre resources sent by the Propaganda?"*

(letter from father Marchand to bishop Bonhomme dated 14 April 1942)

On this occasion, bishop Bonhomme had enumerated the profitable activities, which the church in Lesotho had already set up; these were the mills activated by electrical power, the farms, the dispensaries and the

revenue from schools. He added that in good years these earned about \$ 75 000. In 1939 this revenue was sufficient to feed and cloth the missionaries and it cared for them when they were sick but it did not cover the cost of buildings.

Of the sources of revenue listed by Bishop Bonhomme, the mills and dispensaries were not centrally controlled; they were part of the revenue of the mission station, which had a separate budget. On more than one occasion however when the bishop had no money a percentage of this income was appropriated by the bishop, but this was not done without difficulty. The revenue from the schools and farms were centrally controlled. We shall say more about the schools' system and its finances later. It is sufficient for the moment to note that the church invested perhaps as much of its own money in the schools as did the government and therefore the government allocation constituted a revenue for the church only if we consider the schools as part of the church patrimony. The farms, of which there were never more than three at any one time, brought in an income, which was relatively small. They were never highly profitable enterprises, partly because they were located in South Africa and it was difficult to supervise them efficiently at a distance.

Traditionally land and property ownership have been one of the preferred forms of investment for the Catholic Church. It was a more acceptable way of making a profit than participation in commerce or industrial production, and it was also considered secure. But the church of Lesotho could use this method of investment only to a limited extent since according to the law of the country no private ownership of the land was recognised and therefore the land had to be bought outside. Bishop Bonhomme in 1942 commented on the situation as follows;

*"Already oblate bishops in South Africa and apostolic vicars in this Part of the black Continent had created works, which provide a regular income every year. They had farms and houses, which they rented to the profit of their missions. But here in Basutholand, not having the right to own a single inch of land and having no City, these methods were, for me impossible."*

( From the letter from Bishop Bonhomme to Father Marchand, dated 14 April 1942)

During his prolonged visit to Canada, between 1940 and 1944, Bishop Bonhomme started some enterprises that could not be established in Lesotho. Because he was in great need of independence money wise, to

support his policies in Lesotho, he chose to launch business ventures, which were not sufficiently planned. Using funds from various sources, including his missionary mass stipends and the fruit of his own soliciting for charities, Bishop Bonhomme invested in two enterprises.

First, he bought eight buildings in various cities of French Canada, these to be used as boarding establishments and run by a society of eighteen women described as "friends and sympathisers of the missionaries" for greater produce because they were handling the money of the missions, Bishop Bonhomme's collaborators obtained a civil charter for their enterprise which was known as *i'Deuvre Des foyers*. The company concealed Bishop Bonhomme's identity as its proprietor, an aim that the bishop had deliberately sought. Later the bishop bought a wood mill with some forest land. Again the management of the enterprise was entrusted to the lay people one of who was the relative of the bishop. The mill was registered under the same charter as the boarding houses. Here especially it seems to have been important to keep the identity of the owner secret, because the mill was more obviously than the boarding houses, a commercial enterprise.

In neglecting to ensure legal recognition of his rights, we do not believe that Bishop Bonhomme was preparing himself in case he lost the confrontation with his rivals in Lesotho. As far as we know he did not anticipate his dismissal. On the other hand, acting in this manner, he showed a total lack of concern for the succession of his office. From the start it appears that the mill was not a sound business proposition. The bishop had invested too much, too soon, without being assured of clients. The enterprise swallowed what were, for the missions, vast sums of money without return. The bishop had originally believed that he could ship wood to Lesotho for church use, but he was stopped by the Canadian export control. 1947 faced the mill faced with imminent bankruptcy. In spite of vigilant efforts, the identity of the owner was known to some of the workers, and this was most embarrassing. The mill was eventually liquidated at a loss, and the boarding houses covered the debt.

From a legal and social point of view the bishop was able to save face, but the mission money, which had been wasted in the venture, was not soon to be recovered. By then Bishop Bonhomme had resigned under duress as Bishop of Lesotho. Although the dismissal and the bankruptcy occurred at the same time, we have confirmation that as far as the Oblates and Vatican were concerned, the two events were quite separate. The business of

bishop Bonhomme in Canada was unknown to the higher authorities at the time of his dismissal.

It is only when the bishop's successor inquired about the finances of his new diocese that the activities of Bishop Bonhomme were discovered. Bishop Des Rosiers, who found the coffers of his office empty when he arrived, attempted to recover what was left of the assets of l'oeuvre Des foyers, but of course there were serious difficulties. Considering the manner in which Bishop Bonhomme was dismissed, one could hardly have expected him to co-operate in handing over what was partly the fruit of his efforts to his rival, who was going to implement precisely those policies against which Bishop Bonhomme had fought so hard. Bishop Bonhomme was not legally the owner of the company he had set up, and therefore civil courts, had he wished to use them, were of no avail to Bishop Des Rosiers. The only recourse was moral persuasion. If it did not work with Bishop Bonhomme, it was hoped that his collaborators might respond to it. Bishop Des Rosiers appealed directly to the secretary of l'oeuvre Des Foyer in the following words;

*"I do not intend to resort to the court of justice of Canada to take Possession of what belongs to my vicariate...I appeal to a justice which is higher and to the conscience of people that withhold property obtained for the greatest part from the money of the mission"*

(From the letter drafted by father Marchand ,in the name of Bishop Des Rosiers for Moisselle Sequin, dated 2nd Jan 1949.)

But it did not work. The society still recognised the authority as Bishop Bonhomme, and even later, when he was placed under an interdict by the Propaganda itself, the society persisted in refusing to acknowledge Bishop Bonhomme s' successor.

After the failure of Bishop Des Rosiers the Oblate General attempted to persuade Bishop Bonhomme to desist from those works, which he had set up as the Bishop of Maseru, for they were not his personal property. But the general had no success either, and after making every effort to keep the affair within the boundary of the Oblate community, he appealed in the end to the higher authority. In a report that an Oblate official drafted for the prefect of the Propaganda Fide, the most important breach of Bishop Bonhomme's administration was said to have been the dilapidation of funds,

that is the fact that he had diverted money meant for certain works to somewhere else.

In 1950 sanctions against Bishop Bonhomme were issued by the Propaganda, and he was told to abandon all activities linked with the Catholic church of Basutoland, and was placed under the obedience of the Oblate provincial in Canada, and had to retreat to the monastic life in a scholasticate. These events demonstrate well, amongst other things, what kind of economic activity a bishop was allowed to engage in, what was tolerated and what was not by the catholic authorities.

## **II The collection of funds for the diocese.**

Most of the money collected by the Lesotho missionaries from French Canada came from a number of small donations rather than a few big ones. Profit making enterprises such as those set up by Bishop Bonhomme brought in less than the sum total of donations collected from Christians, solicited from the pulpit by visiting missionaries. At least this was so in the thirties and forties. This period could be described as the golden age of lassie-fair as far as soliciting was concerned. The French Canadian public, which was universally catholic, was looked upon as an open territory, a free for all. Each visiting missionary could preach to full churches wherever he liked, if granted permission by the parish priest. In addition there were a number of propaganda centres for Lesotho alone, six were listed in 1942, each set up by an individual missionary with the help of lay people who were often relatives, and each operating independently of the other.

In the fifties this freedom ended and fund raising activities became more controlled and organised. The Bishops of French Canada began to show a certain impatience with so much soliciting funds not only from the Oblates but from all the other missionary orders as well, often competing with each other. The dioceses were partitioned and each mission country or each order was allocated a certain number of parishes where they might ask for charity. This caused the Oblates of Lesotho to re-organise and concentrate their propaganda efforts. A few missionaries were then appointed on a full time basis as official procurators for the church of Lesotho. There were three main interests, each having its propaganda centre; one was for the Bishop of Maseru, another for the Bishop of Leribe, and a third for the University College Pius XII. The parishes allocated by the Canadian Bishops to the Oblates of Basutoland were more or less monopolised by these interests.

Individual missionaries who were expected to raise funds for their particular mission stations had to devise new means to find support. Personal networks of relations were here important. Also letters were sent from Lesotho to lists of people, sometimes simply picked by alphabetical order in a telephone directory. These methods of raising funds could more easily evade the Canadian Bishops' supervision. We do not know how successful each of those was, but it does not appear that the overall revenue collected by individual missionaries diminished markedly in the fifties. The ability of the fathers in this domain had, in any case, been voted as highly unequal. I remember one missionary who had a full filing cabinet with the addresses of the benefactors in Canada, and my work, as a visiting brother was to sort out those that did not respond. That was in 1979. As an example, one of the best fund raisers in charge of a mission station was reported in the sixties to have collected about \$ 40 000 a year, which could be compared to a collection \$29 000, and \$35 000 in 1960 for the Bishops of Maseru and Leribe respectively. But if we base ourselves on the few mission stations on which we have budget records during the same decade, an average of 2000 to 3000 dollars a year may be more representative of what most missionaries received from outside.

Even if fund raising was successful after 1950, it continued to cause friction between the church leaders of French Canada and the church of Lesotho. Propaganda through the post came to be forbidden without the expressed permission from a Canadian bishop, and for a while censorship of the content of the letters was imposed, the rules were more often infringed than respected.

In the fifties and more especially in the sixties the society of French Canada was rapidly changing and the propaganda of the Lesotho missionaries, who had often been away for many years, was not always attuned to a culture which was increasingly secularised. The officials of the church in Canada for their part were concerned to avoid criticism and did not wish to emphasise the image of a church primarily occupied with financial considerations. Even the Oblate provincials were worried about the reputation of the Oblate congregation. They feared that the association of its members with fund- raising activities might hamper the efforts that were made to recruit new members. To collect charity was obviously no longer easy. It was just at that time, in the early sixties, that the Catholic Church of Lesotho made its first appeal to international aid agencies. This means of obtaining funds and resources was to become increasingly important. Of course it could be used only for the projects that could satisfy some criteria



of "development". It could not be used to pay Catechists or to build a church. But it could be used to build a road to the church.

Apart from French Canada, some funds came from the USA and the Republic of South Africa, that is where the Oblates had the link with a particular parish. But these funds represented a much smaller proportion than the money obtained from French Canada.

The missionaries from European countries were reputedly poor. They had no personal network of supporters on the scale of the French Canadians. In 1966, the Catholic Church of Lesotho was still substantially supported by the funds coming from French Canada, but many wondered for how long this could continue. The money collected in Lesotho represented but a small fraction of its budget. To increase their appeal, most missionaries had never insisted that Christians support the institution, which would have resulted in self support, it was reputedly cheaper to be a catholic than a member of the Paris Missionary Evangelical society, for this mission from the beginning knew that the church depended on the local society. The result of this situation was the extreme vulnerability of the Catholic Church of Lesotho to external change.

#### **D. The involvement of the Catholic Church in the politics of Lesotho**

When we were speaking about the formation of the missions we had already taken the formation of schools, which also indicated the sociological development brought, by the church, I take this as sufficient to show how the church helped in this way. What I am going to discuss here specifically is the involvement of the church politically. I think it is enough to mention that through the school system the missionaries of the church extended their control over Basotho society. Now let us see what the ambitions of the Catholic Church were as opposed to the other religious groups, and we shall consider the means the Catholics possessed to influence the course of political events. Let us also divide this part into two sections, the first being

(i) The incorporation of the Catholic Church as compared with other religious groups.

(ii) Participation of the Catholic Church in party politics.

**(i) The incorporation of the Catholic Church as compared with other religious groups.**

Before considering how the churches came to be aligned as opponents in party politics, let us discuss how each of these religious groups adapted the ideal organisation of church and sect to the particular context of the Lesotho situation. It is obvious that given the entrenchment of three churches the Catholics could not become universal. On the other hand, the Calvinists lost much of their sectarian character as they were caught up in the competitive process for expansion. The Catholic Church could no longer hope in the fifties to become the religion of the Basotho people as it had thought in the beginning. Two other churches the Calvinists and Anglicans were equally officially recognised by the government. This structure was best expressed in the school system where the government subsidised all schools. In response to those external conditions the catholic authorities attempted to encompass their followers so as to maximise church control over the widest possible domain. If the boundaries of church membership could not correspond to the political boundaries of the territory the church tried to introduce social discontinuities by its own means wherever it could.

At the village level the attempts to segregate the Catholics were not the most successful. Rulings regarding mixed marriages or the avoidance of other religious groups at gatherings such as feasts, mourning or other public meetings were not usually observed. The Basotho were a relatively homogeneous group, conscious of their unity and it was difficult that the church had the right to interfere in what they considered the Basotho affairs. The choice of a marriage partner was practically never influenced by church preferences and so called irregular unions were more numerous than regular ones in the parish records.

In those establishments where the control of the church was more direct and effective however the segregation of the church was fairly strictly enforced. Here, not only was the closed structure maintained, but informal encounters between members of different religious groups were generally discouraged. When in 1934 the Bishop was asked, for example, if catholic boys could join a national pathfinders association, he replied that the Catholics are not of those who believe that all religious groups are equally good; and that they do not tolerate military training by others for review only.

Even the mixing of religious groups at sports was strictly limited in the early sixties. If ever such meetings took place, the church authorities insisted that the catholic students be in a group and under the guard of a priest. In the same manner, the in-take of non-Catholic students in the Catholics schools was not to go beyond 10%. With this low percentage, non-Catholics would

be effectively submerged and their influence neutralised. A higher percentage would dangerously expose the catholic population. Such a concern for the maintenance of religious group boundaries in social meetings of all sorts need not have political repercussions when applied to school children; but when the same principle was effective amongst the teachers, who were leaders of political parties, the consequences were most important.

The Catholics attempted many schemes to increase the self-sufficiency of the catholic community. For example, in 1945, they established buying and selling co-operatives, which were open to the Catholic teachers, parents of children attending, schools, and staff of the Catholic missions. Saving banks had also been planned to function with the co-operatives. Before long, however, the government intervened and proclaimed those to be illegal. The administration either feared that the power of the Catholic Church would be extended to yet another domain, or else tried to protect the traders, most of whom were expatriate whites. Later the government sponsored its own co-operatives, but they never put much energy into promoting the principle. The question of the co-operatives became a sore point in the relationships between the colonial officials and the Catholic Church and it cropped up at regular intervals in their confrontations.

In this case the Catholic Church defined its legitimate field of action more widely than the colonial government would recognise. Generally, however, the void created by the weakness and inaction of the state helped the Catholics considerably to approximate the ideal of incorporation. The entente was as follows: if the government tolerated the church hegemony over the relatively large domain circumscribed under education, the Catholics did not challenge the legitimacy of the colonial government. (This is a calculated guess) They criticised their policies but never the basis on which the authority rested. This co-operation of the church with the government required that in administrative relations the latter recognised the church hierarchy. It meant that the government accepted that Basotho followers were not generally associated with decision-making in those domains under church control. The head of the church, or one of his delegates was the necessary intermediary between the government and the catholic population.

The new nationalist leaders who emerged in the fifties understandably had no wish to perpetuate such a model of social organisation and when they promised to remove education from church control when they came to power, the catholic authorities had no hesitation in organising their followers

and manipulating the situation so as to maintain their position. It is clear here that the Catholic Church tends to approximate its ideal scope of incorporation best where the state is weak, as was the case under the colonial regime.

In contrast to the Catholics, how did the Calvinists adapt to the Lesotho context? Reviewing the question here very briefly, we may say that the ideal of the mission was seriously jeopardised from quite early on, as the demands of the pure doctrine could be met by practically no one. The Calvinists required the internalisation of values, which were especially foreign to the Basotho moral views. At the end of the nineteenth century, the PEMS minister Dieterlen wrote that the Basotho generally believed in God, and that there are no real pagans. But their traditional conception of divinity was quite different from that of the Christians. People expected from God temporal protection. They could not understand the ideal of sin and punishment. The mission that demanded a deep transformation of the individual in any way, which had little meaning of prestige in the wider society, could not expect to find many recruits.

Confronted with their meagre success, the PEMS missionaries became less rigid. It is likely also that the arrival of the Catholics and Anglican missionaries brought to bear on the Calvinists to relax their rules. This was part of the competitive process, which contributed to produce uniformity among the three missionary groups. The school system also brought some parallel developments. All the missions including the PEMS had to cope with the heavy administrative load, which transformed church ministers into managers and employers. To handle their school network they had to develop a structure, which was sufficiently centralised. These requirements were not in line with the preferred PEMS type of organisation of small democratic assemblies.

Although very soon the PEMS did not function as a mission society, there remained important differences between them and the Catholics as well as the Anglicans. Because the Calvinists believed that the control of their members should be inward rather than outward, they never attempted to enclose their followers in the way the Catholics did. The manifestation of one's religious identity remained more an individual affair than a group one. Also in the public domain the actions of PEMS members were less concerted than those of the Catholics. The Calvinists did not have a big dividing line between ministers and lay people. Ordinary members were encouraged to discuss and even participate in the direction of church affairs.

Possibly because of this members of the PEMS were generally more confident as leaders than the lay Catholics.

We have made little mention of the Anglican Church in this study. They were important in the socio-political configuration of Lesotho in as far as the tendency of the Catholics to regroup their members in exclusive catholic organisations pushed the Anglicans into the Calvinists camp. The Anglicans who were tolerant of the religious diversity of the Basotho society could together with the Calvinists proclaim the liberal ideal of an open society, while criticising the Catholics for their closure. These oppositions and alliances of the churches are not to be attributed only to doctrinal positions for the Higher Anglican Church stood at quite a distance from the Calvinists in this respect. We recognise here the old alignment of religious groups, the cause of which originated in European history. All the same, this came to have a big impact on the Basotho society.

## **(ii) Participation of the Catholic Church in party politics**

Having discussed the aim and type of incorporation the catholic church sought to achieve in the Lesotho context, and having described how these differed from their main competitors, let us now trace the participation of the Catholics in those events which from 1950 onward led to the independence of Lesotho. The first two political parties, the Basotho African Congress (BAC) were founded in 1952 as an offshoot of the Basutholand National Teachers Association (BANTA). BANTA had been since its beginning riddled with conflicts between religious groups and the first political party was to bear the mark of this. In order to understand the link that existed between the churches and the political parties, it will be useful to explain first how the teachers' associations functioned.

Not surprisingly, from the division of the school system the formation of a unified teachers' association was an easy affair. Before BANTA existed the Catholics and the PEMS in 1944 had both formed their associations separately. A year later the PEMS teachers had invited the Catholics to merge the two, but the latter declined the offer. We may remember that in those years the three churches were dissatisfied with the government policy regarding schools. Teachers of all denominations suffered from the closure of a number of institutions. When we read the constitution of the Basutholand Catholic Teachers Union (BCTU) it becomes clear why the catholic leaders should have refused to join their protestant counterparts.

Indeed the battle they were fighting was not portrayed as identical. The aims of the BCTU were described as follows by one of its secretaries:

*"In 1944, the BCTU was started, first to give the teachers that spirit of unity needed for practical and efficient action, secondly, to make them realise more plainly the importance of their vocation and the role they have to play and of their country.....the wonderful nation of the teachers raises them from the rank of mere employees to the one of apostles whose work is to give Christ to the children entrusted to their care."*

(Pamphlet titled *Some Landmarks on the History of Basutholand Catholic Teachers Union* by I. L. Monese, 1958).

The Catholic Teachers Union was not initiated by the teachers but by the clergy; and as the above declaration shows, its primary aim was to promote not so much the teachers' interests as a better service by the teachers to the Catholic Church. The solidarity it called for obviously could not be extended to the teachers of another church. By naming their association a union, the catholic teachers nicely played on words, for indeed one is reminded of another type of organisation where the employees solidarity is defined in contra-position to that of their employees. But here it was quite the contrary. The aims of the BCTU were presented as if the interests of the teachers were hand in hand with those of the church who employed them.

In 1946, the formation of national teachers association was proposed by the government. The catholic bishop agreed reluctantly to let the catholic teachers enter the new organisation but only under the condition that BCTU would be allowed to continue. BCTU, however, was refused a seat on the national council, on the District Advisory Committee and on the Central Advisory Board on Education, where only BANTA was represented. The catholic bishop hoped that the catholic union might be strong enough to eventually neutralise or dominate BANTA, but this, as we shall see, did not happen for many years.

BANTA soon became a highly politicised organisation, which completely escaped the control of the Catholic Church or that of any other church for that matter. In 1951, under the presidency of Ntsu Mokhehle, a petition was presented to the Residing Commissioner, which demonstrates that the militancy of the groups was without parallel in the country. The document denounced the arbitrary treatment of the churches towards their teachers. Teachers, it said, were dismissed without reasons being given and had no right of appeal against unfair decisions. Interestingly, the government

secretary for schools replied to these complaints that teachers were not civil servants but servants of the missions or school committees which employed them. Grievances should therefore be addressed to the authorities concerned. This shows nicely the profound ambiguity of the public versus private character of the schools. The churches, on other hand insisted that it was a government right and duty to regulate the school system.

The BANTA refused to deal with the churches separately, and besides they did not accept that education could be a private service while being financed by public money. The recriminations they expressed for once irrespective of denomination, had a great appeal amongst teachers, including Catholics. The growing popularity of BANTA increasingly worried the catholic authorities perhaps more than the demands for better conditions of work. They feared the danger of having teachers detached from the catholic cause.

The links between BANTA and the first political party, the BAC remained for many years very close. When Ntsu Mokhehle founded the Congress Party, he passed on the presidency of the National Teachers Association to his brother and until 1961 all the members of the BANTA executive committee openly supported the BAC (which after 1959 had changed its name to BCP).

In spite of the challenge represented by the BANTA and BAC, the Catholic Church did not actively react until 1957. The anti-colonialist campaign these organisations were conducting had wide support and the catholic clergy did not join the movement. They were careful not to condemn it as such. On this question, we may add, there were noticeable differences in the attitudes of the expatriate missionaries and the new Basotho priests in the church, but these did not come to the open.

In 1957, it was becoming clear that the country was heading for self-government, and unless an opposition was mounted, it was feared Mokhehle and his BAC might well come the power. When this was realised the Catholic Church went into action with a great sense of urgency. Two courses were taken: first, the BCTU was revived, and second, a new political party under the sponsorship of the Catholic Church was formed.

The Catholic Teachers Association had endeavoured to control BANTA since its beginning but had failed. In 1957, the catholic bishop considered once again boycotting the national organisation altogether, but he was eventually persuaded by his new and dynamic father secretary for schools that a last attempt should be made to neutralise the protestant congress

influence of its leadership. Indeed, if the Catholic Church opted out completely from the only movement in the country, which was entirely constituted and directed by Basotho, it would do harm to the image of the church. Besides, the Catholics might lose some of their influential teachers by taking this course of action. But something had to be done, and quickly for the church was losing its grip on its teachers. The father secretary for schools believed that since catholic teachers represented a majority in BANTA, there was a good chance that, if well organised and well briefed, they could be able to elect Catholics to the executive committee, and if successful, this policy would give a good boost to the confidence of the catholic teachers, who as a group it needed badly. Moreover it could serve as a good training ground for catholic politicians.

The non-voluntary aspect of the Catholic Church association(s) in a moment of crisis is well exemplified in the new constitution with which BCTU meetings were endowed in 1958. Membership and attendance at BCTU meetings was made compulsory for all teachers employed in catholic schools. Members unable to attend a meeting without authorised dispensation were fined the equivalent of their daily salary for as many days as they missed. The presence of priests at all meetings was made an essential requirement. This regimentation was, of course, a way to check the lack of concern of some teachers, as well as the BANTA congress sympathies of others.

Equipped with this constitution, BCTU organisers (i.e. the priests who were school managers under the leadership of the father secretary for schools) then devised a detailed strategy to have catholic members elected to BANTA committees. A BCTU compulsory meeting was convened on the same day and immediately before BANTA was due to have an election. There a catholic candidate was chosen and members were warned on technicalities, such as not to divide their votes by proposing two or more candidates against one Protestant. Let us quote some extracts from a letter of advice to BCTU members before BANTA meetings:

*"Do not rely on the sympathy and fair-mindedness of the non-Catholics and do not expect to win through eloquence or strong arguments. A majority in the hall is the only guarantee of complete success. If you have grudges against your manager, have enough common-sense to settle this privately. Or if you think it is a matter of general interest, bring the matter up at a BCTU meeting, but not at BANTA meeting. Wash your dirty clothes at home, the English say.*



*It is a shame for a catholic teacher to go and attack his church in the presence of non-Catholics."*

(from the circular letter to the catholic teachers written by father secretary dated 10 June, 1960)

When there were problems of transport, the parish priest provided a vehicle at his own expense. For non-Catholics in many parts of Lesotho, distance was often a deterrent to the attendance of these meetings. Thus arriving en masse which is well briefed, the BCTU succeeded in electing several candidates. At the end of 1960, there were 31 Catholics to 11 Protestant members elected for a special conference to replace the District Advisory Board. The 7 members of the executive were protestant but the catholic opposition, with 31 votes to 18 had no difficulty in imposing their point of view. By 1961, the National Teachers Association had been effectively split, with two executives, none of which were recognised by the government.

The battle of the BCTU and BANTA had considerably contributed to polarise the position of the churches on the political front. The Catholics had made it clear that those supporting BANTA or the congress party were enemies of the church and the catholic teachers who did not back catholic and anti-congress candidates in BANTA were made to appear as traitors. Since amongst the PEMS church leaders there were certainly strong sympathisers, this was sufficient for the congress party and for BANTA to be associated with this particular church in the eyes of the Catholics, and soon two factions had emerged.

Meanwhile, constitutional changes were proceeding fast in Lesotho. In 1959, a constitution was adopted which provided for nine directly elected District Councils and a National Council composed of 40 nominated members and 40 members indirectly elected through the District Councils. The Catholic Church was not going to let these elections take place without making its influence felt. Rather hastily the Basutholand National Party (BNP) was set up at the beginning of 1959 to prepare for elections at beginning of the following year.

Much speculation has been offered as to the exact role the catholic clergy played in the foundation of this party. In this domain the activities of the church had to be conducted with the greatest secrecy insofar as it involved the priests.

*"We cannot as priests become the propagandists of any political party."*

(from the circular letter from father Gareau to the school managers dated Oct. 1960)

This was a convention of the Catholic Church itself. We may add that the involvement of foreigners in a national struggle, from a different point of view, also necessitated some discretion. The evidence we have suggests that the establishment of the national party was a direct initiative of members of the catholic clergy who had in this matter the full support of their bishop. (Lesotho 1970 An African Coup under the Microscope by B. M. Khaketla London C. Hurst & Company p20-21)

In December 1958, Bishop Des Rosiers had made a public statement on the need for a catholic party in Lesotho. (Ibid. p.21-23) In January, the minutes of proceedings of the Diocesan Council report discussions on who could lead such a party and Leabua Jonathan was agreed on. In the following month the party was officially launched.

The National Party never became in the hands of the church authorities an instrument as malleable as the BCTU. It was led by a man who had ambitions of his own. Leabua Jonathan was not a teacher but a junior chief who was at the time adviser to the Paramount Regent. He was a member of the National Council and had set on the special committee that led to the constitutional reforms.

Jonathan converted to the Catholic Church rather late in life and for reasons, which he himself later privately admitted, were purely instrumental. To prove this let us quote from a most interesting letter written confidentially (and we may add most imprudently) to the Commissioner-General for the South Sotho of South Africa, Jonathan stated the following;

*'I must now refer to something, which worried Your Excellency Last time. You said you did not like the support which the Catholic Church is giving me. I became a Catholic because of Circumstances, which I explained to you, but at heart, I am still Protestant and I cannot let you down. When I control the Government after the elections we shall find a good way of Dealing with the Roman Catholic danger which we discussed at Length with you I also told you what is its intention in Basutoland. But at present, it is wise to use them to get the overwhelming Support of the Catholics in this country.'* Dated: 18 Nov. 1964

We may add that God's Providence overcame him. But in 1959 he happened to fit the plans of the catholic priests who were urgently looking

for a leader to head the new party. Jonathan who was ambitious, responded to the offer. He was given as assistants two men the church authorities had trusted for a long time but who, we presume, did not have his qualities of leadership. In 1961, the bishop and his councillors would have liked to remove Jonathan as chief of the National Party as it appeared he did not fulfil their expectations. But by then he was too firmly established in his position for the church to dare to interfere.

In the election of 1960, the National Party presented 74 candidates, a number generally thought astounding, comments Halpern, since Jonathan, busy as an adviser to the paramount, mounted only a token campaign himself while the National Party possessed only one car. (Halpern Jack South Africa's Hostages regain Africa, Library, London, and 1965 p.153) Of these, 22 candidates were elected at the District Councils, but only one member made it to the National Council. This was not bad considering the party had been in existence for less than a year.

Whatever success the BNP enjoyed in these elections was entirely due to the efforts of the Catholic Church which had more or less taken charge of organising the electoral campaign of the party. But this, of course, was not done openly.

The experience of the BCTU in their attempt to control BANTA served the new party well. The sessions of information which stressed catholic solidarity and defined a certain political philosophy also tried to persuade the catholic teachers that as a group the Catholics ought to have a bigger share, not only in the direction of BANTA but in the government of the country. It stressed, for example, the fact that the percentage of catholic members sitting at the National Council was far below the proportion of the Catholics in the country. It also warned the teachers that to show liberalism by electing protestant candidates was not in their interests. We may add that BCTU was the first catholic organisation to suggest that religious divisions of the school system ought to be extended to formal politics.

It is interesting to note here that the Catholics were as much as possible kept away from exposure to the ideals put forward by BANTA and the Congress Party. They were not allowed to attend meetings other than those at which elections took place. The unusually outspoken newspaper of the opposition Mohlabani, was also to all practical purposes banned from catholic schools. In fact, the one catholic teacher who was on the BANTA

executive was quietly dismissed from his employment in a catholic school after he had sold this publication on the doorstep of the church.

To further the politicisation of the catholic elite, begun in the BCTU, the Catholic Church put up in 1958 a series of courses entitled "catholic sociology". These were held at the university and shared the privilege of this institution. They were meant for chiefs, teachers, Catechists and other influential persons of the community who were recommended by the parish priest. One of the main themes of these courses was in fact the danger of communism. The implication was that the Congress Party was dangerously close to this ideology. For the Catholic missionaries, a government that threatened to nationalise schools and close churches, as the BCP did, could not but be communist inspired. The label was convenient as the catholic priests could not directly campaign for a political party but they believed they were totally justified to condemn and work for the destruction of an atheist movement. The alleged communism of their opponents brought an element of religious crusade into the political struggle of the Catholics.

The anti-Communist campaign was carried on from the pulpit and in the schools by nuns and teachers who had been well briefed on the question. Of course, its intensity varied according to the personal conviction of each individual. The official church position on this matter was given in a letter from the bishop read out in all the churches a few weeks before the elections. This letter said it was a sin not to vote and that everyone had to chose according to the dictates of his conscience. But of course, the bishop added, the conscience of every catholic will demand that he gives his vote to the candidates that offer sufficient guarantee for the protection of God's right and of his soul. Quoting from the letters the Pope had written in 1931 and in 1948 at a time when the Italian communist party was felt to be a great threat to the Vatican, the bishop reminded the Basotho that communists were the enemies of the church and that they would be excommunicated. Not once were the National or Congress Parties mentioned but constant references were made to good and bad parties.

*"It is necessary for Christians to recognise the indisputable signs of the parties they pretend to lend. Some are opposed to the truth, charity, justice and prudence. Some political parties are good others are bad."*

(From the letter of Bishop Des Rosiers read in all the churches, 1959. No exact date)

Besides the BCTU, the university, the schools and the pulpit, the Catholic Church used its newspaper, the Moeletsi oa Basotho, to promote the National Party. As the election approached it became more virulent and polemical. The circulation was increased at a financial loss as an effort was made to provide each teacher and each village with a copy. Many parish priests who felt this time to be critical for the Catholic Church paid the subscriptions of their parishioners from their own pockets.

Parish priests also played an important part in organising and canvassing. It was suggested that they use a discreet and trusted catchiest to check the political sympathies of the catholic population and that prayer associations be employed to change the mind of those who supported the Congress Party. Through his Basotho assistants the parish priest was asked to collect lists of absentees who could vote by proxy and to make sure that all those likely to vote for the National Party be sent a form.

The limited success of the National Party at the 1960- elections certainly fell short of the Catholic Church's expectations, but we must not judge its power from these results. They had built the party extremely quickly and the campaign was not carried out everywhere with the same thoroughness. Moreover let us not forget that the Congress Party had been in existence for eight years and had derived all the credit for the anti-colonial campaign which had brought the constitutional advance to Lesotho. The National Party was a late-comer. 1960 was in fact given as the year when party politics truly started in Lesotho.

After the elections, the Catholic Church intensified its campaign against communism and defined more explicitly its anti-congress position. In June 1960, a movement called "Tsa Ka Tsa Mesa Mohloane" was formed. It was translated into English as the anti-Communist league. The organisation fought an ill-defined danger, which was much larger than the small communist party founded in Lesotho in 1961.

*"We fear that self-government will mean irreligious, political oppression, social disorder and poor education."*

(One of its members from the report following meetings of the anti-Communist league dated 16-23 June, 1960)

The league pretended to be above political parties and denominations. Its leader was the catholic scoutmaster who had been, in 1958, given a salary and placed at the disposal of the secretary for schools. One of his missions, then, had been to visit the parishes and hold assemblies in order to

convince the catholic population of the gravity of the hour. No priest appeared to be openly associated with the anti-Communist league and the catholic authorities publicly denied having anything to do with it.

Meanwhile the National Party was building up its organisation. This time the official leaders were taking a greater part in the direction of the party, but the catholic bishop and his councillors still advised and sometimes directly intervened. In 1961, for example through links with the Catholic Church of South Africa, the Bishop found an "experienced" white man from Johannesburg to help Jonathan build up his party. It was in law that this man was experienced and his name was Mr. Vyeira. (Lesotho 1970 An African Coup under the Microscope B. M. Khaketla p. 18-19)

The Catholic Church continued to give financial assistance to the party although this was probably on a small scale compared with what was later received from South Africa or West Germany. Nonetheless the money of the Catholic Church came at an opportune moment when the party was little known outside Lesotho. We know that in 1961 the Mosotho Bishop of Leribe together with the French Canadian Bishop of Maseru also later agreed to assist Jonathan to meet the rent of the party's headquarters as well as pay for a secretary.

Perhaps the Catholic Church authorities intended to do much more than they did to finance the party. At the Diocesan Council in 1961, Bishop Des Rosiers declared that the father who collected charities from Canada for the diocese of Maseru should consider putting some money aside for a few years to help the National Party. But this was not done. We may recall from our previous section that there was in that year a change in office, which placed a Mosotho Archbishop at the head of the church. This may have caused some change of policy.

At any rate, the large debt that the Archbishop had to settle soon after his nomination certainly put a considerable restraint on his budget. But even when the financial position was good, we believe that Jonathan may not have found the Archbishop excessively generous in terms of money as indeed each donation was accepted at a high price for the independence of the party. There is no doubt that the National Party needed the Catholic Church to build up their party and this Jonathan realised very well, but the main contribution of the church was not after all financial. The Catholic Church could help the National Party most by using the authority and power they carried over the catholic population and by providing a ready-made infra-structure to the party through its network of schools and parishes with

its staff of priests, nuns, brothers and teachers. We may say that no other institution in Lesotho was as well organised as the Catholic Church in this respect. If for example, the Congress Party had decided to use the structure of the PEMS to further their goal, they would have been in terms of organisation at a net disadvantage as against the Catholics.

All the methods the Catholic Church had used before the elections in 1960 to persuade people to back the National Party were still employed after the election, only more effectively. The church increasingly clamped down on teachers who showed Congress sympathies. Indeed, this was a situation where sanctions could be most effective. The school secretary wrote to his school managers in September 1960 that teachers who openly supported Congress had to be dismissed.

*"Whereas the ladies of St Ann in certain parishes have to their initiative dismissed Congress members, our parish managers continue to employ Congress members as teachers. The vigorous campaign undertaken by the Moeletsi against Congress in the last two months shows beyond any doubt that the church considers the congress as extremely dangerous." To keep members of this party on our teaching staff will surely be a scandal to our Christians and to their children as well.*

*Teachers who are officially members of the Congress and who are known as such must be given three months notice in the course of this month of September. If however the manager wishes to give reasons for his notice he is free to do so. But please do not tell any teacher that he is given notice because he is a Congress member."*

(confidential letter to school managers Maseru District by father Gareau, dated 19 September, 1960)

This policy must have effectively restrained catholic teachers from supporting BANTA or at any rate campaigning for them. Elsewhere, amongst the parishioners, there was no guarantee that coercion, if used, could be successful. The threat of excommunication for communists, for example, could be effective only if people believed that they had to remain church members to be assured of salvation. If the threat made them doubt the church's sacred powers and provoked the end of their ideological commitment, then it was certainly of no use.

In fact, we know that excommunication was not applied to a large number of Congress members, if at all. In 1960 a priest had asked the bishop whether

he should refuse the absolution of sins to a well known Congress member and the bishop replied: "for the moment, you should not refuse absolution for this reason only." (Diocesan Council, 7 Nov. 1960) Of course, there were also priests who did not check with the bishop and did refuse absolution to people of this category. But if the position of the bishop was such, it is quite clear that excommunication, which is a stronger sanction, was not resorted to.

In April 1965, a second election took place which this time determined who was going to direct the first government of Lesotho as an independent country. In the election of 1960, women did not vote but this time the suffrage was universal. This no doubt benefited greatly the party the Catholic Church supported since women had always responded better than men to the church's instructions. Four parties contested sixty seats. Apart from the National and Congress Parties, two smaller parties that had broken off from the Congress participated in the elections.

Civil servants were not allowed to be candidates and in the election of 1965 for the first time teachers were included in this category. Such a decision was not consistent with government past policy. Perhaps it was meant as a measure to reduce the importance of religious allegiance that teachers displayed more than any other group in politics. At any rate, it made very little difference since the churches had enough independence and power to decide for themselves whether they would allow a teacher to be absent from work and still be paid while he participated in the electoral campaign. The catholic authorities in particular, for whom winning the election was so important were certainly not going to make difficulties for their teacher who were candidates for the National Party.

The climate that prevailed in the few weeks preceding the elections was fraught and the catholic missionaries were extremely tense. Many of them believed that if the National Party lost it would be the end of the church. Let us quote what a missionary wrote in the codex which gives a good idea of the charged atmosphere:

*"At last the week of the elections, as I am on the black list of the Congress I have been given protection for the night. There are people from the village that sleep at the mission. Moreover, I have barricaded my room. I have put my two big wardrobes in front of the windows. The store-keeper has lent me guns. In the night of the 28-29 of April I left out door lights on till two in the morning. At twelve people came to ask for petrol but I refused."*



(Historical Codex of Fatima Mission, April 1965)

And again at another mission in the heart of the mountains:

*"Day of the elections the sisters go to vote at the Moreneng at 6.30 in the morning. They have been warned to go early to avoid being insulted. 3rd of May: We are still waiting the final results. It is a week since we dare to go out at night and everyone has a gun in case of trouble."*

(Historical Codex of Paray mission. April 1965)

When the final result came out the catholic priests were relieved. The National Party had won with a narrow majority as we can see by the count of the votes:

BNP	108,162 votes	31 seats
BCP	103,050 votes	25 seats
MFP	42,834 votes	4 seats
MP	5,592 votes	.....

The victory was made possible only by the split, which had created two offshoots to the Congress Party. The Congress leaders who had more or less taken for granted that they would constitute the first government of an independent Lesotho, as they had fought longer than anyone else for this great event, were badly prepared to accept a defeat, and the political tension did not cease after the elections. The French missionaries were vehemently attacked for having orchestrated a split in the Basotho society. The newspaper "Makatolle" which was the mouthpiece of the Congress Party did not mince its words.

*"The French Canadian missionaries have emerged as a dire threat to the genuine independence of Lesotho. Indeed nobody could have ever guessed that at the very point when the British were about to hand power over to the Basotho that foreign missionaries in the person of the white French Canadian priests would dramatically interpose themselves in Basotho politics."*

(Makatolle, in vol. 4, 18, 29 May 1965)

Interestingly, the Makatolle was careful not to put the blame on the Catholic Church and they attributed no responsibility to the Mosotho Archbishop in this affair. In other words, they chose to ignore the strong corporate character of the church.

When Leabua Jonathan came to power he nominated a cabinet whose members, with one exception were Catholics. Moreover the minister of education was a man whose family had been known to have an especially close link with the church for a long time. It is certain that the first benefit the Catholics wanted to secure from the new ruling party was the maintenance of the church control over education. After all this had been the main reason to enter the political arena to begin with.

Prime Minister Jonathan's cabinet included a majority of chiefs, a group on whose support his power also rested. The association of the Catholic Church with the chiefs was not new in Basotho politics; it can be traced from Moshoeshe I himself. They felt quite at ease in each other's company.

After independence in 1966, faced with the attacks of an embittered opposition the Catholic Church made some attempt to recast its image as an institution, which is above politics. The new Mosotho Archbishop, nominated in 1968 was cautious and put on a facade of neutrality, but some of the priests he did not control continued their campaign against the Congress Party.

In 1970 Leabua Jonathan drew the country into a new crisis. He called the elections but suspended the constitution and declared a state of emergency after he learned that his party had lost. With a small armed force and with the covert support of South Africa, he maintained himself in power. This move and especially the repression that followed embarrassed the Catholic Church who, because of their identification with the National Party, saw themselves associated with these very unpopular measures. The Archbishop expressed public criticism of the government actions. Nonetheless, the fact the Catholics were often spared from victimisation compromised the church in the public eye.

Two months after the coup a well known Mosotho writer and political leader declared:

*"The feeling is that this has now become a religious war waged by a cabinet almost wholly catholic against the Protestant church in Lesotho...This is indeed a most unfortunate development for it appears as if it is going to put Lesotho back to the European Middle Ages when oceans of blood were spilt in religious wars. And the Roman Catholic Church through some of its priests might be blamed for this because several of them (mostly white) support chief Leabua to the hilt of his illegal seizure of power."*

(B.M. Khaketla: "Lesotho 1970, An African Coup under the Microscope, C. Hust & Co., London, 1971, p284.)

Yet in the condemnation of the coup and the repressive acts which followed the elections of 1970, the Catholic Church appeared united with the other religious groups. As Christian leaders, the heads of the churches of Lesotho made a joint declaration to this effect which was supposed to be broadcast but was finally read out in the churches because of government censorship. Later, they met Leabua privately to express their unanimous disapprobation. Were these signs that the Catholic Church wanted to initiate a reproachment with the other churches while at the same time disengaging from party politics?

The first move would have been in accordance with the ecumenical movement, and the latter would have been in line with a principle officially proclaimed by the church. There might also be a good reason to put down arms and make peace after the bitter struggle for power, which had reached its climax in 1965-66.

## Chapter Three

### THE CHURCH UNDER THE INDIGINOUS CLERGY: INCULTURATION

In this chapter I am going to point out the problems of the inculturation ever since the church came to Lesotho, bore positively and negatively, what the local clergy had done, and what they are trying to do to bring the gospel home to every Mosotho. That means that this will go together with what I understand as inculturation. So we divide this part into two parts:

- (i) The problems of inculturation
- (ii) what has been done in the realisation of the need for inculturation.

#### (i) The Problems of Inculturation

We should remember that when the first missionaries came they saw nothing positive in the Basotho culture. Everything seemed to be evil. They wanted to change the Mosotho in every way. In the words of Herbert Kane:

*"The missionaries had a superiority complex. Almost without exception they considered western civilisation better to any other. Worse still they unashamedly equated civilisation with Christianity. They referred to the people as 'natives' and in their letters home they depicted them as lazy, dirty, dishonest, irresponsible and untrustworthy."*

(A Concise History of Christianity World Mission, pp161-164)

But in this we can defend the missionaries in that they were not the only ones with the superiority complex. There were very few people in the 19th century that did not share this point of view. Professors, clergymen, politicians, men of letters, all had a blind spot at this point. They assumed that western civilisation was superior to all others and expressed their views freely. The missionaries took a dim view of the "pagan" religion. They were unnecessarily negative in their attitude towards these religions and often preached against idolatry in terms that were quite offensive to the listeners. The same truths could have been expressed in less abrasive terms.

Without sufficiently investigating the indigenous religions, they assumed that they were wholly false and rejected them out of hand. But at the same time they preached the universality of God, as if He started being universal with the arrival of the missionaries. They failed to differentiate between

Christianity and western culture. They brought with them an excess amount of baggage: moral and social taboos, personal prejudices and predilections, ethical and legal codes, and economic and political institutions. In so doing they placed on the neck of their converts a yoke that was more than they could bear. We may add that in Lesotho they have succeeded to a great extent from what we hear from those who are against inculturation.

They failed to encourage the indigenization of Christianity. It never entered their minds that Christianity could retain its essential core while at the same time being expressed in non-western forms. They seemed to think that the form was essential to the substance and must remain forever western in motive. They erected church buildings complete with spires, bells, and crosses. They introduced hymns with western words and tunes. Drums and dances so dear to the African soul were taboo, and the African Christians were taught to hate them. Instead they used musical instruments imported from the west. The liturgy was western in style. The Roman Catholics were the greatest offenders at this point. They insisted that the Mass be said in Latin in every Roman Catholic Church in the world and Lesotho was no exception. Even theological education was patterned after the classical kind so common in the West.

They were guilty of paternalism. It is easy to make a case against the missionaries on this score. The unhappy details are well known to everyone remotely interested in Christian missions. It should be remembered, however, that paternalism is not always bad. In the beginning it was natural, necessary and inevitable given the circumstances of the 19th century. This was true in Africa including Lesotho where most of early converts were fugitive slaves and miscreants from tribal society. The missionaries took them into their residential stations after which they became virtual wards of the missions. The missionary in charge provided them with food, clothing, shelter and security; taught them to read and write; gave them land, seed and tools to make a garden; taught them a trade. All they asked in return was obedience. If they did not accept the discipline of the community they were chastised. In rare cases they were flogged. (J. Herbert Kane A concise History of the Christian World Mission. P. 163)

The greatest punishment was expulsion from the community. That was paternalism with a vengeance, but it is difficult to see how the missionaries could have acted in those days. The real problem came when paternalism was continued long after it had served its purpose. It is simply a matter of record that the missionaries held on to power much too long. They can be forgiven for the treatment of the first generation of converts; but what about

the second and the third generation? These were educated men with ability and experience who wanted to be masters in their own houses. It was at this point missionaries misinterpreted the needs of the church and its new members. They continued to think of the Christians as children to be pampered, prodded, and protected, not as mature adults capable of holding office, exercising discipline and administering the affairs of the church. A good example of this is the involvement of the missionaries in politics, which led to the independence of Lesotho as shown above.

The missionaries were unwise in their use of western funds. Too often they allowed their hearts to run away with their heads. Western funds were used all too freely and over too long a period of time, to the detriment of the developing churches. This situation was not as simple as it might appear on the surface. To begin with, charity is a Christian virtue. So, if the missionary was generous with his money, he can hardly be faulted for being unchristian in his conduct. Secondly, the Christians were usually very poor, at least by western standards. Often their profession of Christianity deprived them of getting or holding jobs, in some places. Thirdly, the missionaries, though woefully underpaid by state standards, were regarded as fabulously wealthy on the mission field. In these circumstances, the temptation to solve problems by handing out money was exceedingly great. Most of us would have done the same. But this is a problem of the self-sufficiency of the local church in Lesotho today.

## **(ii) What has been done in realisation of the need for inculturation**

On September 2, 1985, there was a seminar on inculturation at Mazenod Conference Centre. There were about 45 priests and some students who were completing their course at the St Augustine Seminary. There were 12 students including the 4 who were in their pastoral year among them the author. The opening talks were done by Frs. Rampeo who was vicar of the Provincial and P. Maboloka who was the Provincial of the Oblates.

Let me give a summary of the talk of the Provincial in opening the seminar. He spoke in the name of the Oblates giving St Paul Mission as the model for fostering inculturation. He pointed out that since Christ made himself native to all cultures by his incarnation, so the church must do the same. Liturgical pluralism is an imperative, not a mere concession based on pragmatic opportunism. The church should enter into communion with all cultures.

Pope John Paul II is promoting inculturation strongly everywhere, stressing that authenticity of Christianity and authenticity of local cultures must go together. We must be consistent in what we say and live what we preach. The church must embrace fully the good values of every local culture. The seed of the faith must burst into a fully African flower. Expatriate missionaries must also co-operate with the local Christians in this process of inculturation. The Oblate charisma of evangelisation must express itself in the local cultures of the evangelised." ( From the report on seminar on inculturation held at Mazenod C. C. on 26-9-85.)

This was indeed a very nice talk if there were listening ears, I say this because of the resistance of the clergy to inculturation which proves that the words were said in vain. Fr. Lapointe the main speaker at this seminar talked for three days, divided into three parts, which we are going to summarise here. The first part was: Inculturation and the Mission of the Church. The second was: Christian Revelation Values, Other Religious and Human Culture and finally, Anthropological Hermeneutic of Culture and Christian Intervention.

#### A. INCULTURATION AND THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

Fr Lapointe, in his talk, said the following:

"Culture is the way a more or less homogeneous group of people, perceives, understands and lives its relations to people (in family and society), the world (universe and nature) and the transcendent (God, ancestors, death and its aftermyth). Each culture carries with it a distinctive and whole system of symbols. Any culture is essentially a dynamic phenomenon and at the same time a particular and limited realisation of human nature...therefore a custom is not necessarily right because it is a custom. A point to underline is that the spirit of God has been working in each culture from the beginning of the human race and is present in any individual or group of human beings even before evangelisation.

Despite its limits and shortcomings any culture possesses the capacity to be assumed, enlightened and transformed by the gospel. That is where inculturation takes place when an incarnate gospel and a culture by coming together create a new synthesis or understanding of the gospel.

Besides the " actualisation " of the gospel and its mere interpretation by a reader there is something more profound which is called inculturation, that is a genuine and original response of a given culture to the first or the on-going proclamation of the gospel.

In the process of inculturation, the missionary even the first preacher at home represents a particular variation of the gospel and the only thing he can do is to sow and discern. He dares to translate and to proclaim, but afterwards he remains discreet and waits for the response, a creative one. He is not the subject of inculturation, neither the church, which is always local and a particular one. Inculturation is something between God and the people who receive him which give birth to a new local church not a transplanted church from Canada or France. Christ is the subject of inculturation, and the only one.

Inculturation has the same prefix as incarnation. And this points to the heart of the matter. Christ is the word, the message, and the good news and therefore to be reformed, reincarnated, transfigured in each culture as if each one was a unique one. This involves a lot of implications for the church of today. We must cease to consider culture as a kind of dress that can be separated from its content. Therefore inculturation cannot be restricted to externals or mere adaptation but implies not only the borrowing of a few symbols of some ways of doing things, but the penetration of the whole system of symbols and ways of relating to the world and to the transcendent, the assuming and transformation of human thought as a whole inherent to the culture.

It is also difficult to think the Latin should continue to embrace the Latin America, Africa and Asia. Changes of structures are needed so that the church in Africa be allowed to formulate her own answer to faith and the gospel. We will be on the right path, the day the Latin Church...begins to withdraw herself from the non-Latin hands and cultures and give them the opportunity to formulate the creative and original response to Christ whom they have received in faith through the Spirit."

(from the report on the Seminar on Inculturation held at Mazenod Conference Centre, September 26, 1985)

The discussions and suggestion followed the talk, which are going to be summarised at the end of the chapter.



## B. CHRISTIAN REVELATION, VALUES, OTHER RELIGIOUS AND HUMAN CULTURE

The second talk briefly went this way:

"Christianity understands creation as being influenced by grace since the beginning, even after the fall. Consequently, any group of human beings is moved by the Spirit, even outside explicit Christianity, be it conscious of it or not. That means that other religious and human endeavours, with their own limits, are part of the saving event of God. That means also that God must be experienced in one way or another and can be known even supernaturally although possibly only in a mysterious way and all kind of human activity. Man expresses this knowledge in the language of symbols and myths, the language poetry, which appeals to the whole person instead of reason alone, more or less the way, the Bible has been written.

"The Christian revelation provides a unique means of dialogue of discernment, for explicating what God is trying to tell us in all the human manifestations of his saving action. It reveals also the historical saving event of Christ which cannot be perceived in any human experience except maybe through an enigmatic longing for a kind of saviour.

"This has many implications for pastoral theology and the proclamation for the saving event in the church. Other religions, culture and human thought could be taken as a kind of Old Testament, as imperfect as it maybe, on which Christianity could be built to which the church could bring the Revelation of Christ. Examples of this can be found in Acts 14: 6-18 and 17: 16-28; where Paul makes no evident reference to the Old Testament but starts from the knowledge of God that his audience gained from their own world and culture.

"We can also find in African cultures a striking resemblance with the Old Testament approach regarding the problem of death, the experience of estrangement from God, of some kind of catastrophe at the beginning, a longing for a saviour whom, paradoxically, man wants to get rid of. Four stories were used here. One from the Kradi people (Ghana and Togo). One from the Zulus and two from the Basotho. Generally speaking we can say these African stories catch up with the experience narrated by the Old Testament. On the other hand they are relatively brief and do not form a whole as it is found in the Old Testament from Genesis to the prophet Malachi. These stories tell us also the way of life of the people concerned, their cosmogonies, their beliefs and symbols. What remains to be

proclaimed to these people is the saving event of Jesus Christ starting from their deep experience...the foundation is already there on which to build."  
(The report on the Seminar on Inculturation held at Mazonod C. C. on the 26-9-85)

### C. ANTHROPOLOGICAL HERMENEUTIC OF CULTURE AND CHRISTIAN INTERVENTION

The third talk went briefly this way:

"Inculturation means a dynamic interaction between two apparently opposed "texts" (culture and the Gospel) which produces a new synthesis, a new "text" for the traditional Basotho, the cultural activities accompany the ordinary activities and give them an ultimate values and meaning. Life as a whole is in continuity with the ancestors. It comes from them and returns to them. A good illustration of this is the myth of Ntsoana-tsatsi. A myth for the Basotho is the exemplary model of human life it justifies, explains and gives value to existence. It sublimates, gives a social meaning, an ultimate value to action, conduct and rites of life.

Ntsoana-tsatsi is a myth of origin. It is the place where the sun rises or comes from...a supra-geographical land although it is visualised..supra-historical...from where came the first ancestors. The myth is celebrated and actualised mainly at the time of death, at burial. An ox is killed...it is to be eaten by all the participants...the contents of the stomach is placed on the grave..."ho tea lejoe." The whole complex of the rites of burial is called "ho felehetsa mofu..."to bring him to the ancestors land, Ntsoana-tsatsi.

Secondary rites take place to reinforce and enlighten the profound meaning of funeral; a hole is opened in the wall of the hut (to get the deceased lost). The pipe, the stick etc. are buried with the corpse...for use in the land of the ancestors where continues the same type of life. The corpse is buried in a crouched position, ready to leap and facing the East...the rising sun. After the burial everybody returns to the village after having said: "Let him/her sleep in peace." Everything is made to insure a safe and peaceful return to the land of the ancestors...to ensure that he will not come back...in the form of "sethotsela" (ghost). The ancestors are existent...they must not be

forgotten after harvest...when an animal is killed...or when beer is brewed...etc.

This myth is an explanation of the necessary rites to be performed in order to celebrate the events of social or community life: death, a good harvest, the coming back of some one from mines, etc. the myth serves as a model, a justification for the need of celebration. Up to now we can recognise four steps in the anthropological interpretation: (1) the myth as it is narrated, (2) the actualisation of the myth in a rite, (3) the social significance of the rite, (4) the coming back to the myth in order to give it its deep and ultimate meaning.

This myth as any other must be related to the gospel, but for this we need a definite method. First the anthropological interpretation has to be done in its entirety to bring the explicit consciousness of what is known implicitly. Then it has to be faced with the Christian text; the gospel, where its positive aspects and short-comings will be revealed. This Christian intervention will normally lead to a re-interpretation of the myth and of its actualising rite.

What is important for the Christian agent is to hold the two essential ends of the dialectic. Incarnation and resurrection. If he holds only the resurrection end he tells himself that culture is not so important and he does not take it into account...If he holds the incarnation end only, he has nothing to say anymore...because the evangelical message is identified with the culture without transforming it, without giving it the Christian dimension."

This is the great problem of inculturation.

Before we come to the questions which were asked and answered by those who attended the seminar, let us again give the summary of the talk of Fr Pula who was given chance to say something on inculturation. His topic was "Inculturation, the Context of Fear." Shortly he said:

"Christ has assumed the whole human nature except sin. Christ and his church assumed all cultures except what is sinful. The church must study the religious endeavour, the way of seeking God of every culture. The fear in the Mosotho's life is his way of seeing the beyond, thus his way of preparing himself for the understanding of the gospel. Because of the sinful situation, this must be purified, elevated and transformed. The two words: "Balimo and Baloi" (Ancestors and sorcerers) summarise all religious fears of Basotho. These two words are related in the mythical prayer. Both, "Balimo and Boloi" are capable of using a certain power, which can be used

for good or wrong doing. In the mind of a Mosotho it is clear that if he is not protected by his "Balimo" he will be attacked by "Baloi" (sorcerers).

Fear as such is an emotion but basically the fear of a Mosotho is religious and is present in his whole life. It must be purified and elevated. In the Old Testament, great emphasis is made on religious and reverential fear. The only one to be feared is God. Even Moses had his share of fears. But there is also Saul asking a witch to call back the deceased Samuel (1 Samuel, 28). The law was against that kind of action but it was practised. The contact with the ancestors made Saul aware of how he should deal with God, obey Him. In the New Testament we find reverential fear in Jesus, the angels, the apostles. Moral fear is the beginning of wisdom. Perfect love casts out the fear of judgement. Fear has been the basis of the covenant ethics.

The fear of the Mosotho can be useful. It is the expression of his religious endeavour. It has to be perfected as the natural virtue of the religion by the Holy Spirit, the fear of God. If we fear God truly we cannot fear "Baloi" or "balimo" in a negative way. Christianity must elevate and purify the natural basic fear(s) of the Mosotho."

(from the report on Seminar on Inculturation held at Mazonod C. C., September 26, 1985)

## WHAT CAME OUT OF DISCUSSIONS

1) We often emphasise the universality of the church. What does universality mean here?

Universality means that the church is everywhere and embraces the values of all cultures for all times. It is a universal sacrament of salvation calling all people and all values to salvation.

-How is the particular the manifestation of the universal? Give examples:

The particular is the manifestation of the universal: E.g. Many nations believe in life after death but this faith is expressed in a particular way by the Basotho as we have seen in the myth of Ntsoana-tsatsi. And religious singing is the expression of a universal faith (the transcendent) in different ways according to different cultures.

-Universality for the church does not consist in a process of creating uniformity all over the world but in the capacity of assuming the multivarious values of the world while preserving Christian authenticity." What is your reaction of this statement?

This statement is correct. The universality of the church is expressed in particular local churches and its universality consists in its openness, its capacity to assume all values of cultures. A universal church is the totality of all local churches and it is expressed in individual local churches.

(2) In the words of Vatican II, the church is to "enter into communion with different forms of cultures. Thereby enriching both herself and the cultures themselves." (Gaudium et Spes, art. 58). What is the meaning of this statement for you?

This statement implies through a certain equality in giving and receiving i.e. the church becomes the servant of cultures receiving from them the positive values they have and at the same time purifying and enriching them in their limitations or shortcomings.

-What does the word "church" mean in that statement? Which church is spoken about here? Universal or local?

The local church assumes different cultures but it is inspired in its orientations from the universal church and so the universal church is enriched. It means that there is communion at different levels with both the universal and the particular churches.

-What are the implications for the church of Lesotho?

It must be more open to assume values of the local culture to translate the gospel to it.

-Give examples if you can find any, of inculturation of the church of Lesotho.

The contribution of the Sesotho Language to express Gospel values, elevation of Sesotho marriage to Christian marriage. A Mosotho convert brings his qualities, virtues, gifts to church and has these strengthened by the church. The Basotho understand the devotion to Mary and the death of Christ in a special way because of their special understanding of motherhood and death (serata ngoana ke serata Mae.)

At the end of the seminar, there were recommendations, which were said to be short term policies and long term policies.

#### Short Term Policies:

- 1) To foster research and study of the Sesotho culture at the parish and diocesan level.
- 2) To give instructions to the parishioners on liturgy and culture.
- 3) To organise another workshop on inculturation for religious and lay people including those involved in the living of the Sesotho customs like Basotho doctors, Babolotsi, etc.
- 4) On such an important issue, priests should be guided by the principle of collegiality and get together at the district level to discuss their pastoral work.
- 5) Experiments on liturgy should be allowed with a spirit of openness and tolerance.
- 6) Pastoral committees at parish and diocesan levels are needed.
- 7) All saints day should be celebrated in a very special way in order to show more clearly the relationship we still have with our ancestors.
- 8) To foster the celebration of special national event: E.g. Moshoeshoe's Day, Independence Day, Family Day, etc.
- 9) In the context of inculturation, research and study of Sesotho customs, a greater use of mass media, (radio, TV, newspaper, etc.) should be made.
- 10) More reading and study of the documents of Vatican II especially those on the church, the missions, and the liturgy is needed.
- 11) It should be a policy to make no condemnation or suspension of people without a proper explanation.
- 12) Some among us should be asked to study carefully the "Lebollo" (Initiation Circumcision Rite) and its implications.

#### LONG TERM POLICY

- 1) To have people working on a Sesotho rite for the mass including the eucharistic prayer and the revision of the liturgy according to the Sesotho way of life. This can be done under the guidance of FRS Tsasane and Selialia.
- 2) That we will work towards a unique celebration of marriage that is at once Sesotho and Christian.

- 3) The establishment of a Pastoral Institute on national level to promote pastoral unity and study is needed.
- 4) To promote small Christian communities as the milieu of inculturation.
- 5) A yearly workshop on inculturation under the supervision of FRS Masse, Lapointe and Pula as a follow-up to this one is necessary.
- 6) To promote contextualisation...that is inculturation in the context of the present signs of times with special references to youth.

Let me comment generally on what has been agreed upon in this seminar. Inculturation as such seems to be a problem in Lesotho maybe because of what I have mentioned as the problem of inculturation, which shows that what the missionaries have done is hard to pull out. Their work was a success. The first problem is that there is division among the clergy on this matter. Some think that to foster inculturation will be to destroy the church, and so they cannot pass what was agreed upon to their faithful who are also divided. To show this, let us see how many of the recommendations have been implemented. To my knowledge there is no research and study of the Sesotho culture at the parish level or the diocesan level. Maybe there are individuals who are doing it but their work has not come to light yet, since 1985.

Maybe instructions are given to the parishioners on liturgy but the rate is very slow judging from the missions, which have a seem-change. There has never been any organisation of another workshop on inculturation for religious and lay people. Priests are meeting on district level to discuss their pastoral work but inculturation is never taken seriously. The line of liturgy, which is under discussion, is singing. It is only there that we have experiments, which are hardly tolerated.

- Pastoral committees at the parish level are there in the form of parish councils; at the diocesan level none.
- Two or three missions celebrate all saints day in a very special way to show the relationship we have with our ancestors.
- National days are celebrated, as before, only by the government.
- The newspaper is the only way, which is used for expressing different opinions on liturgical matters. In 1989 the bishops repressed the "Penteconta ea Basotho" where opinions were exchanged.
- Very few priests are interested in the documents of Vatican II. Some even have the problem even to find the documents on the church.
- In some missions the suspension and condemnation still goes on as before the seminar.

-Nobody has been given the task of studying the "Lebollo" and its implications. Father Pheku tried on his own but it was before the seminar and he was criticised by many.

As we can see all the recommendations of the seminar have been a failure up to now. Maybe there will a success after 50 years, for they are now five years old. Or maybe I did not understand the meaning of "short-term policy". I am not going to say the long term policy is a failure but I can say we have not started, for I do not know how long is long enough. But let me comment on two of them. There will be no unique marriage, which is Sesotho, and Christian for Sesotho marriage has died a natural death. There is nothing to unite with Christian marriage unless we mean "chobeliso" (abduction). There have never been yearly workshops on inculturation. Maybe it was found not to be necessary.



## **Assessment of the Catholic Church in Lesotho today.**

The Catholic Church in Lesotho today can be said, to be materially and spiritually, developed. Judging by the numbers of the personnel and the quality of the services offered to the people, and its relations with other churches can be said to be healthy in as far as ecumenism is consent. There are no more fights over the differences, as before, even though there is always room for improvement.

The Catholic Church in Lesotho, now has its own radio, which reaches most of the Lesotho districts if not all, which means, the church can now Evangelise the whole country at the same time, and even without having to travel physically to conduct people like Father Gerard did.

Politically the church is no more involved as it was in 1963, understandably because now the Basotho know about politics. They do not need the intervention of the Church, in a teaching way, we know that the Church is always wrongly judged, as interfering when it gives advises in politics or governments.

But the Church also seems to be too quite when it is supposed to be saying something, there are elements of injustice like the political uprisings of 1998 where the Church never said anything when people needed direction, and were looking to the Church. That is why the bishop of the Methodist Church in South Africa was surprised when he visited Lesotho in those uprisings and commented that "the Church in Lesotho always come last when it is always the first to come elsewhere."

To be quite when you are to be saying something to my opinion is not a virtue, but weakness, especially now that the Church is dominated by the local clergy which have more rights than the expatriates of 1963.

It is totally healthy for the Church to be quite, since the Church itself may to take a definite line in public, when the vital interests of the nation are involved. Take cases of rampart policy of apartheid and that of communism. In such cases, all the Bishops of the country denounce in concert these things and call the Christians to their duties as patriots.

It is of course; true that Christians are a force in politics, strong in proportions to their numbers, their abilities, their solidarity, and also their international connections. It is equally obvious that they are profoundly influenced by the Church.

Sometimes States and Politicians try to transform the Church into a political force devoted to their interests; and this gives rise to frequent conflicts, for the Church, even if its individual rulers make unfortunate concessions, can never renounce its calling.

The whole history of the Church bears witness to the influence of political factors, from one epoch to another, on the course of its development. The specific effect of such factor is to facilitate or impede the contact of the Church with the people, in arousing in them favourable or hostile prejudices. The mission of the Church remains loud and clear, and what contributes to its realisation cannot be refused nor rejected. There is no harm in remaining on the side of the truth.

APPENDIX 1:

Education Department, Maseru, Basutoland.  
19th June 1963.

Educational Secretary,  
R.C.M. Schools,  
P.O. Box 80, Maseru.

Sir,

NEW PARISH - ST PETER'S R.C.M. MOKHOTLONG

On the recommendation of the Circuit Education Officer at Qacha's Nek I hereby approve the establishment of a new parish of St Peter's with Rev. Fr. Perreault OMI as manager.

I am, Sir,  
Your obedient servant,

Mohlalisi

For PERMANENT SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION

After receiving a copy of the above letter, the parish priest, Fr. Perreault  
Answer to the letter of Fr. Gareau

Copy: Permanent Secretary  
His Lordship  
Rev. Fr. R. Perreault, St. Peter

11 June 1963

In receiving a copy of this letter of Fr. Gareau I found very strange that Fr. Gareau asks the department of education whether they approve the establishment of a new mission. This is not their concern at all! He could have simply asked the permanent secretary whether he approves that Fr. R. Perreault become manager of the above mentioned schools. By the tone of that letter, one would believe that Fr. Gareau attributes to their jurisdiction the right to approve or deny the establishment of a mission whereas it is answerable to the Bishop.

Attached copy of letter No. 332/257 SM/AMM in English.

Appendix 1 Information courtesy of Oblate Provincial House Archives in Maseru, Lesotho.

## APPENDIX 2:

### THE GROWTH OF THE MISSIONS

In this part I am going to mention only the statistical view of the missions; that is, in as far as the geographical dimension is concerned, which is the mission and its outstations and the number of the living Christians. So it will be from the first mission which is Roma to the last which is 'Mabasotho.

#### 1. ROMA:

These are the schools and outstations of Roma mission: besides the school of Roma mission itself, there are Popanyane, Thaba-chitja and Meshaka. The total population of Christians according to the baptismal register is 15 643.

#### 2. ST. MONICA:

These are the schools and outstations of St. Monica: there is a school at St. Monica's mission, Tsabalira, Mokati, 'Mathata and Tsikoane. The total population of Christians is 12 744.

#### 3. MOUNTOLIVET:

There is a school at Mountolivet and Seabee, Lempetje, Mabatla, Lebaka, Matsana, Lekoatsa and Motamolane. There is also a secondary school. The total population of Christians is 20 452.

#### 4. GETHSEMANY:

These are the schools and outstations of Gethsmany: there is a school at Gethsmany itself, and at Mpara, Mahlatsa, Mohatlane, Tsimatsi and 'Mantoetse. The total population of Christians is 17 000.

#### 5. SION:

These are the schools and outstations of Sion: there is a school at Sion and Ramakoro, Likheo, Bitsolebe and Dahon high school.

#### 6. ST. JOSEPH KOROKORO:

St. Joseph has only one outstation which is Khoarai, but there is also a school at the mission itself and the total population is 9 2000.

#### 7. ST. GABRIEL:

These are the schools and outstations of St. Gabriel: There are schools at

St. Gabriel and Thaba-Ntso, Makama, Merataleng, Mpapa, Piti, Sempe, Likolobeng and Kaloli. And the total population of Christians is 8 906.

**8. ST. THERESA BELABELA:**

There are schools at Bela-Bela and Pelele, Thaba-Lesoba and Bakaneng. The total population of Christians is 10 510.

**9. ST. MICHAEL:**

There is a school at St. Michael itself and at Tjopa and Sekete. The total population of Christians is 6 000. There is also a vocational school and social centre.

**10. LERETTO:**

There is school at Qoaling itself and Ha Tseka, Likotsi and Mankoaneng. The total population of Christians is 16 000.

**11. SAMARIA:**

There is a school at Samaria and the minor seminary, and also a school at Phechela, Tsakholo, Thoahlane, Rabeleng, Ntanyele and Monyalotsa. And the total population of the Christians is 8.730.

**12. EMMAUS:**

There is a school at Emmaus and Rannakoe, Ramosoeu, Monyake, Joei, Sekhaupane and St Lucia and St Thomas high school. The total population is 17.590.

**13. BETHEL:**

There is a primary and secondary school at Bethel and at Seliane, Lengau, Makhabane, Sakhele, Lithipeng, Sealuma, and Tsiu. The total population is 7.630.

**14. MASSABIELLA:**

There is a school at Massabiella and Ha Pita and Ha Ramokotjo. The total population of the Christians is 9.525.

**15. ST LOUIS:**

There is a school at the mission and Molungoa and Taele. The total population is 4.768.

**16. BETHANY:**

There is a school at Bethany and St Lucia and Motloang. The total population of Christians is 11.901.

**24. ST JOHN TLALI:**

There is a primary and a high school and primaries at Lekunutu and St Bernadinus. The total population of Christians is 7.100.

**25. PONTMAIN:**

There is a Kinder, primary and high school at Pontmain, and other primaries at Likileng, Holy Trinity, Nyollelo, Bolahla, Seetsa, Chabatsane, Mokhachane, Mofonosou, Mphosong, Sefapanong, and Thaba-Phatsoa. The total population of Christians is 16.500.

**26. ST JOHN THE BAPTIST:**

There is a primary and high school at Marakabei and other primaries at Likalaneng, Kepisi, Rapokolane, Setala, Seiboko, and Montsi. The total population of Christians is 8.468.

**27. MAZENOD:**

There is a primary and a high school at Mazenod and also other primaries at Tseka, and Mohasoa. There is also a book centre and printing works. The total population of Christians is 10.250.

**28. ST ROSE:**

There is a primary school at St Rose. Even though there are no other schools and outstations, there is a dispensary and the maternity and it is the motherhouse of the sisters of Holy Names. The total population of the Christians is 7.700.

**29. ST LEONARD:**

There is a primary and the high school at Semonkong and other primaries at Boreipala, Nchela, Samuel, Makhoalipane, Seng, Mothibi, Lebelo, Sefateng, Khajoane, Bali, Thaba-Ntso, Thaba-Liphofung, Makoa, Ramosothoane, Sibi-Sibi, and Ketane, Malane and Motenalapi are just outstations. Six other outstations formerly belonged to Nohana and are excluded here. The total population of Christians is 22.600.

**30. VILLA MARIA:**

There is a primary school and the noviciate for the oblates and other primaries at Dili-Dili, Shoaepane, Seaka, Mohapi, Maleka-Tsekoa, and Bolepeletsa. And there is an outstation at Sixondo. The total population of Christians is 7.932.

#### 17. NAZARETH:

There is a primary and the high school at Nazareth and Lirahaliibonoe and Inok. The total population is 10.750.

#### 18. HOLY CROSS:

There is a school at Holy Cross-, Primary and high and at Morifi, Mohlakoana and Tsebe. The total population of Christians is 8.640.

#### 19. HERMITAGE:

There is a primary and home economics and high school for girls at Hermitage and at Roijane, Ha Nqhoaki, Ha Molalanyane and Qanya. There is also a minor seminary and a high school nearby at Eagle`s Peak. Hermitage is also the cathedral of Qacha`s Nek. The total population of the Christians is 6.301.

#### 20. ST JAMES:

There is a primary and a high school at St James and Likhameng, Senekane, Mabulane, Sakeng, Mphere, Matjota, Jeke, Libibing, Tseko, Moeketsane, Letlatsa, Kanana, Phohla, and Makhherehloa is just an outstation and another school at Rosemane.

#### 21. ST PAUL:

There is a primary and a high school at St Paul and also at Mary Vale, Cart Wright, St Alphonse, Qalo, St Philomena and Makoabeng.

#### 22. PARAY:

There is a primary and high school at Paray and also at Sefapanong, Khomoliileng, Bereng, Majara, Mokoto, Ramaomane, Phaattjana, Ramatseliso, Mpela, `Nyai, Khohlontso, Sekhohola, Semena, Sehaula, and Lelaka. The total population of the Christians is 10.000.

#### 23. ST MARTIN.

There is a primary and secondary school at St Martin and other primary schools in the following outstations: `Mei, Nkhaulise, Ramosoeu, Mpheulane, Mafura`pela, `Meta, Ntjabokone, Marumo, Taung, Mabuleng, Tiela, Molopa, Ntsupe, Phatlalla, and Letsa-la- Draï and Mapholaneng are just outstations. The total population of Christians is 5.100.

**31. ST RODRIQUE:**

There is a primary and a high school at Ha Shoaepane and other primaries at Motanyane, Machakela, and Mamoholi. The total population of Christians is 7.900.

**32. ST DAVID:**

There is a primary school and there is one school at Khafung, which is the only outstation of this mission. The total population of Christians at Ha `Mamathe is 9.800.

**33. SEBETIA:**

There is a primary school at Sebetia and at Nokong, Mapheleng, Phororong and Boseo. The total population of Christians is 7.220.

**34. ST GERARD:**

There is a primary school and `Masentle high school and other primaries at Tsaeng, Thabaneng, and Motse-Mocha and there is also a school for the Catechists, St Charles Lwangwa, which does not function well. The total population of Christians is 7.884.

**35. CHRIST THE KING:**

There is a primary school at the mission and a high school for girls and other primaries: Holy Rosary, Sekhalabateng, Thaba-Telle, Manyatse, Sebaretlane, St Andrew, Khomong, Luma-Luma, Khama-Khamane, St Julius, Mahlakaneng, Mahlomola, Qhoali, Letele, St Magdalena, Tsepo, Seforong, which is just an outstation and Luka, `Muso, Potso, Lebeko, Jopo and Mokopung and Morulane which is seemingly a mission. The total population of Christians is 14.561.

**36. `MAMOHOU:**

There is a primary and a high school at the mission and other primaries are at Khauta, Befole, Mallane, Matsoele, Manamolela, Suoane, Rapoea, Sepinare, Sheshela, Mahlekefane, Moluoane, Tiholo, Sello, Bokoko, Lihobong, Lihalaneng, and Lemphane; and there is a hospital. The total population of the Christians is 11.101.

**37. ST BENEDICT:**

There is a primary school at the mission and other primaries at St Raphael, St Thomas, St Odilon and St Theresa. The total population of Christians is 9.000.

**38. GOOD SHEPHERD:**



There is a primary school and a high school at Ha Tsepo and other primaries at Kolo-la-Pere, Nko-ea-Khomo and Mokhele. The total population of Christians is 8.282.

#### 39. AURAY:

There is a primary and a high school at Mantsonyane and other primaries are at Bocheletsane, Popa, Leqhekoana, Fantisi, Seqhoe, Hleoheng, Sekolopata, Poloko, Maime and Khotso. The total population of Christians is 13.276.

#### 40. ST Bernard:

There is a primary school at Likatseng. The mission does not have outstations. The total population of Christians is 3.360.

#### 41. ST FRANCIS:

There is a primary school and a vocational school for girls at Tsoelike and other primaries are at Leseling, Lebakeng, Libobeng, Khohlong, Makoae, Thaba-lia-Tlokoa, Ntsupeng, `Melikane, Monyane, Moeti, Likileng, Mafika-Lisiu, Tsoloane, Qhobosheaneng, Matebeng, Thamathu, Ramokakatelela, Liqaleng, Patising, Mofutho, Moalosi, Mavuka, Sekokoaneng, Mosafeleng and Makhoareng. Mavuka has also a secondary school and is seemingly a mission. The total population of Christians is 19.900.

#### 42. MONTMARTRE:

There is a primary and a secondary school at Lesobeng and other primaries are at Qobacha, Methalaneng, Letsika, Mosiroe, Khetsi, Mahao, Motsiba, Mokhorro, Kuebung and Kuebunyane. The total population of Christians is 8.000.

#### 43. MOUNT ROYAL:

There is a primary school and a high school at Hlotse and other primaries are at St Margaret and Lesaoana. Mount Royal is also the cathedral of Leribe. The total population of Christians is 8.088.

#### 44. OUR LADY OF VICTORIES:

There is a primary school at St Bernadette, St Joseph and `Mabathoana high school and a primary at Moshoeshoe 11. Caritas Lesotho is also here and the school secretariat, the papal visit office is also here. This is the cathedral of Maseru. The total population of Christians is 14.000.

**45. ST CHARLES:**

There is a primary and high school at St Charles. Other primaries are at Jane, Paramente, Lepatoa and Khaketla. There is also a hospital. The total population of Christians is 6.800.

**46. ST PETER CLAVER:**

There is a primary and a secondary school at Tsoeneng. Other primary schools are at Rothe and Menard. The total population of Christians is 5.920.

**47. FATIMA:**

There is a primary school at Fatima itself and others are at St Antone, Ramosebo, Thabo-Letsie, and Sekantsing. The total population of Christians is 4.500.

**48. ST THERESA MASHAI:**

There is a primary and a secondary school at Mashai. Other primaries are at Kenene, Khomo-ea-Mako, Matebeng, Makoko, Pitseng, Solomon, Mosehle, Lokorana, Firi, Makhotsa, Mokoting, Sealemetse, Makunyapane and Majoe-Matso. The total population of Christians is 14.400.

**49. MOUNT CARMEL:**

There is a primary and a secondary school at Mpharane and other primaries are at Masita, Ramatlali and Sechaba. The total population of Christians is 9.530.

**50. ST ANN:**

There is primary school at Ha Mokhorro and others are at Keenya and Seetsa. The total population of Christians is 5.600.

**51. ASSUMPTION:**

There is a primary and a high school at Berea and other primaries are at Holy Family and Koali while Fusi is only an outstation. The total population of Christians is 8.500.

**52. MARYLAND:**

There is a primary and a secondary school at Leribe and other primaries are at Maria Goretti, and Nqechane. There is also a pre-noviciate for the Oblates. The total population of Christians is 8.000.

**53. LOURDES:**

There is only one primary in this mission at Mositi and a secondary school. There is only one outstation at Ha Tente. There is a clinic and Maternity. The total population of Christians is 6.000.

**54. IMMACULATE CONCEPTION:**

There is only one primary school and secondary at Liphokoaneng and a clinic. The total population of Christians is 4.807.

**55. ST DENIS:**

There is a primary and secondary school at Khabo. Other primaries are at St Dominic, St Felix, Mokoatlong, Villa Crux and Loti. The total population of Christians is 14.420.

**56. LEPERENG:**

There is a primary school at the leper settlement. Makhoathi was formally an outstation of Lepereng but now it is a mission. The total population of Christians is 2.651.

**57. LITTLE FLOWER:**

There is a primary and a secondary school at Kolonyama. The other primary is at Thokoa. The total population of Christians is 4.850.

**58. ST PETER B.B.:**

There is a primary school at St Peters Butha-Buthe. Other primary schools are at `Moteng, `Mutlanyana, Maris Stella and Ha Boroko is a primary and secondary school. The total population of Christians is 3.500.

**59. ST CECILIA:**

There is a primary school at the mission and another one at Hanger`s Drift. The total population of the Christians is 4.600.

**60. MOFUMAHALI OA MALUTI:**

There is a primary school at Nohana. Other primary schools are at Moru-Motso, Koni, Mafika-Lisiu, Sebili, Lephoto, Tsuinyane, Qotiane, Rantjanyana, Thabo Matete, Hialele and Kotelo. The total population of Christians is 4.649.

**61. ST MARK:**

There is a primary school at Ha Mofoka. Another one is at Morero. The total population of Christians is 5.466.

**62. ST PATRICK:**

There is a primary and secondary school and home economics at St Patrick. Other primaries are at Ha Sekoati, Tumo and Makhakhe. It is the Cathedral of Mohale`s Hoek. The total population of Christians is 10.000.

**63. ST ANDREW:**

There is a primary and secondary school at Sebelekoane. The other primaries are at St Hycinth, Makoanyane, Jobo, Makhetheng, Lengau and Lebona. The total population of Christians is 9.098.

**64. HOLY REDEEMER:**

There are two primary schools in the camp which belong to the most Holy Redeemer. Another one is at Mosaqane. The total population of Christians is 4.854.

**65. ST MATTHEW:**

There is a primary and high school at Mount Moorosi. Other primary schools are at Masiu, Phahameng, Lekoro, Khakeng, Leqheka, Mantsoepa, Danyele, Jobo, Majara, Mapheelle, Nking, Lazaro, Thaha, Makoae and Kubung,

**66. ST PETER MOKHOTLONG:**

There is a primary school at the mission and others are at Linotsing, Seotsa, Poso, Ralefatla, Mohale, Linareng, Letjama, Thaba-Moea, Leshuta, Seeiso, Lechesa, Malapane, Masaleng and Motioang. Nazareth is an outstation only. The total population of Christians is 10.971.

**67. ST MAGDALENA:**

There is a primary and a high school at the mission and other primary schools are at Ranthamo, Pulane, Tsetsana and Thaba-Phatsoa. The total population of Christians is 12.000.

**68. ST PIUS X:**

There is a primary school at Ha Rapase and other primary schools at Khongoana-Tsoeu, Matseka, Pepeneneng, Sacred Heart, Khamokha, Qholoane, Motsoana-Kaba and Qabane, Sekitsing and Mahabe are just outstations. The total population of Christians is 5.600.

## 69. LAGHETTO

There is a primary and secondary school at the mission and other primary schools are at Palane, Khopung, Ntseli, Theko, Mokopela, Rachele, Liseleng, Leferefere, Ranthoto, Phepheng and Methalaneng. The total population of Christians is 11.090.

## 70. CHRIST THE KING:

There is a primary and a high school at Motsekuoa. Other primary schools are at Malimong, Ramokhele, and Koki while Rabaleng is only an outstation. The total population of Christians is 9.300.

## 71. ST SAVIOUR:

There is a primary and a high school at St Saviour and other primary schools at Letsika, Zibandayo and Basieng while Moorosi is now an outstation since the school has been transferred to Basieng. Another outstation is Setsomi. The total population of Christians is 7.450.

## 72. `MAMOLIMO:

There is a primary school at Ha Mosalla and there is no other school or outstation. The total population of Christians is 3.776.

## 73. LELAPA-LA-LERATO:

This is not actually a mission but a retreat centre with a priest residing permanently as an organiser. There are no Christians who fall under this centre.

## 74. MOFUMAHALI OA ROSARI:

There is a primary and a high school at Taung and other primary schools are at Oming, which was formally an outstation of Mount Olivet, Matsoareng and Leribe. The total population of Christians is 600.

## 75. ST LUKE:

There is a primary and a high school at Maputsoe and another primary school at Chaka, which was formally an outstation of St Monica. The total population of Christians is 7.000.

## 76. `MaBasotho:

There is a primary school at Ha Mabote. Others are at Cenez and Motimposo. We have to note about `Mabasotho that even though it is taken as a mission, it was formally intended as a pastoral and inculturation centre. But it has lost the meaning altogether. It is now a mission. With the

estimated population of Christians of about 4.000 , which formally belonged to the cathedral and all those outstations, belonged to the same.

**77. MAKHOATHI:**

There is a primary school in this new mission which was formally an outstation of Botsabelo. It has an estimated population of 1.000 Christians.

### **Appendix 3**

**Holy Spirit (lower Seoli)- foundation 1995.** The great asset of Fr. Leclerc, was the importance he attached to the necessity of entertaining good relations with all the Chiefs of the different villages of his vast parish. In 1993, when the Archbishop told him he wanted to found a new mission in Maseru, out of a section from Loreto, in the area of Lower Seoli, there was no problem; Fr. Leclerc had already told his friends, the local Chief, that the Bishop would probably need a site in that area for a Church; he had it surveyed and marked. They had both agreed that, if he did not build a Church, then they should build a school. The Chief was working hand in hand with him. They were ready and the Bishop could send his architect.

Then, came Fr. Cousineau, with his genius for adaptation. Ever since the building of the Cathedral of Maseru, some artists had criticised the architects of our Churches for not considering the local environment. The idea of having a big roundavel that would take 1000 people in Maseru had been seriously considered, but had been abandoned on account of the prohibitive charges of installing a roof on a huge circle. Then Fr. Cousineau decided to build a roundavel, but had the idea of extending his structure in the form of a pent house; he built a subsidiary structure with a sloping roof attached to the main building, thus extending the surface considerably, bringing its capacity to the same as the Cathedral, for a fraction of the price, and still being aesthetically acceptable. His plan was cloned at many places. The community at Holy Spirit is growing rapidly; special attention is given to the youth. The first and actual priest is Fr. Cousineau.

#### **St Vincent (Ha Matala) Foundation 1995.**

A Monastery had been built at Ha Matala, by the Secular institute of Christ the Priest, but after the reorganization of their institute, they were no longer in need of it; so, when the Archbishop decided to decentralize Maseru by the foundation of five new Missions, he had the idea of using the premises for a group of priests that would take care of the new communities, pending the time he could afford to provide accommodation for each of them in their respective missions. The church was built in the immediate vicinity of the monastery, which proximity renders its administration possible even if there is no special appointed priest.

#### **Sacred Heart (Ha Abia) Foundation 1996.**

In the Parish of Loreto, was the important outstation of Abia, with its High School of one thousand students and, many in the primary schools and a

center for disabled children under the care of the Sisters of the Holy Names. The mass was celebrated every Sunday by a visiting priest; one of the classrooms was used as a Church, but, like in the other suburbs, the Catholic population increased so fast that not one, but five classrooms would have been needed to accommodate the congregation. The eyes of the Bishop turned again to Fr. Cousineau and, in a short time, another rondavel like Churches was shining in the sky of Maseru.

Fr. Tlaba the superior of Mazonod institute spends his weekends ministering to that interesting community.



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Fr. Simon Rampeo, 25<sup>th</sup> November 1992

Fr. Drolet Jacques, 15<sup>th</sup> January 1990

#### Letters

From Bonhomme to Blais 1942 31<sup>st</sup> October

From Bonhomme to Marchand 1942 14<sup>th</sup> April

From Bonhomme to Deschateles 1945 18<sup>th</sup> June

From Marchand to Bonhomme 1942 14<sup>th</sup> April

From Deschateles to Marchand 1951 12<sup>th</sup> June

From Superior General to Fr Laboure 1939 24<sup>th</sup> May

From Pageau to Des Rosier 1947 15<sup>th</sup> September

From Assistant General to bishop Des Rosier 1958 22<sup>nd</sup> May

From Bishop Des Rosiers to Fr. Marchand 1956 5<sup>th</sup> April

From Bishop Des Rosiers circular letter; 1959 no exact date

From LaRoche to Des Rosiers 1961 7<sup>th</sup> February

From Rome to Bishop Des Rosiers 1951 15<sup>th</sup> July

From Marchand to Moisselle Sequin 1949 2<sup>nd</sup> January

**From Education Secretary to Catholic teachers 1960 10<sup>th</sup> June**

**From Jonathan to commissioner-General for Sotho of SA. 1964 18<sup>th</sup> November**

**From Gareau, to school managers 1960 19<sup>th</sup> September**