

SAMUEL J. BOLAND

FATHER FRANCISCO DE MENEZES C.S.S.R. MISSIONARY
APOSTOLIC IN INDIA AND SRI LANKA (1843-1863)

SUMMARY

1. *The Redemptorist*. - 2. *Missionary Apostolic in India (1843)* - 3. *Bombay (1843-1846)* - 4. *Sri Lanka (1846-1847)* - 5. *Monsignor de Menezes* - 6. *Return to Bombay*.

Some years ago the *Spicilegium* rescued from obscurity the faintly mysterious figure of the Indian Redemptorist, Father Francisco de Menezes¹. Father Sampers, the author, has shown that, contrary to the assumptions of those who had scarcely known him personally, Father de Menezes had not left the Institute on his being sent by the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide to India as a Missionary Apostolic. From the material available in the general archives of the Redemptorists it was possible to offer an account of the subject's time in Europe, leaving to further investigation his ministry in the Indies. The present article attempts to supply that need. There is much useful information in the files of the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelisation of the Peoples, the old Propaganda and there is probably more material to be gleaned in diocesan archives in India and Sri Lanka².

Further investigation of Father de Menezes certainly repays

¹ A. SAMPERS, *Father Francisco de Menezes, the First Asian Redemptorist* in "SH" 23 (1975) 200-220.

² The following abbreviations have been used in citing archival material:
ACEP = Archivio della Sacra Congregazione per l'Evangelizzazione dei popoli.
Acta = Acta S. Congregationis.
LDB = Lettere e decreti della S. Congregazione e Biblietti di Monsignore Segretario.
SC = Scritture riferite nei Congressi.
IO = Indie Orientali.

the effort. He emerges as a character of much more spirit and colour than would have been suspected of the man from the tropics who wretchedly endured a succession of European winters. Back in his own land and fortified by the commission of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide, he found himself, probably for the first time, able to express freely the energy, of which he had an unlimited fund, and the genuine apostolic zeal, which he saw himself called upon to exercise as a Redemptorist. Whether or not one can always admire his methods, it is scarcely possible to question his devotion to his ministry. As such, the career of Father de Menezes represents a phase in Redemptorist history that well deserves to be remembered.

His was quite a vivid career. For twenty years, 1843 to 1863, he served the Church in Bombay and Colombo, occasioning in the process a surprising amount of correspondence with the Holy See, both by himself and by his, at times, quite furious Vicars Apostolic³. His activities, in themselves stirring enough, are inserted into an important and troubled period in the history of the Church in India. During the middle decades of last century ecclesiastical authorities were too frequently preoccupied with the so-called "Schism of Goa"⁴. In the disputes over jurisdiction Bombay was an especially sensitive area. In an uneasy compromise a divided jurisdiction between the Vicar Apostolic and the Bishop of Damião had been functioning since 1794⁵. And Bombay was the scene of most of the Indian ministry of Father de Menezes. Though his part throws little light on the events, it does reveal much of the tense and at times heated spirits of those involved.

Before tracing the missionay career of Father de Menezes it is as well to review briefly his life as a Redemptorist in Europe. It will entail summarising what has already been so well treated in the former article; but it is necessary in order to situate the apos-

³ ACEP, SC, IO, vol. 17 ff 92-97. Under the title *Memorie dell'archivio sul P. Menezes, Redentorista nell'India Orientale*, it is a detailed summary of the extensive Menezes file. The summary, which contains quotations from letters not otherwise preserved, is cited as *Memorie*.

⁴ It is too emotive a term to describe as schism the dispute over jurisdiction between the Archbishopric of Goa and the S. Congregation of Propaganda. It began in 1838, when new Vicariates Apostolic encroached on territories of Goan jurisdiction, under the Portuguese *padroado*. There was a partial agreement reached in 1857 and a final pacification in 1864. Correspondence of Vicars Apostolic and of de Menezes himself frequently speak of "schism" and "schismatics", but Propaganda avoids the term except in the case of some few particularly defiant individuals.

⁵ Cf Leslie J. RATUS & Errol ROSARIO (editors), *The Catholic Directory of the Archdiocese of Bombay*, Bombay, 1982.

tollic ministry of our subject. After all, one of the admirable qualities of Father de Menezes was his unswerving fidelity to his religious vocation and his Alphonsian family.

1. - *The Redemptorist*

Christened Francisco Luis Rosario, Father de Menezes was a Goan by birth, born in 1806⁶. He was in the archdiocesan seminary long enough to receive two minor orders before leaving for Portugal in 1828 in search of a career in the army. From the little he revealed of his background it seems that his family was of some prominence. Certainly, the name is one that has long been familiar in Goan history. That became abundantly clear when Father Teotônio R. de Souza S.J. turned up an intriguing item of local folklore⁷. In the late eighteenth century it seems that a certain José de Menezes had been found guilty of desecrating the Blessed Sacrament while stealing valuable sacred vessels from the parish church of São Mathias. The horrified people in time came to hold that in punishment for the sacrilege no Menezes would ever be ordained a priest. The story is relevant, since our Father de Menezes was of Aldea de São Mathias⁸. Interested correspondents, however, taking up the challenge, were quick to point out that there was more than one family of that name so that it was extremely difficult to determine which bore the stigma. Eventually, a certain Armando Menezes wrote of two distinguished priests of his own family, one of whom was "Father (alias Dom) Francisco de Menezes, a Redemptorist", whose life written by Israel Gracias was long treasured in his home⁹.

Whether or not our Francisco Luis was of the sacrilegious family, he certainly escaped the curse that was whispered among the people of São Mathias. He was ordained in 1831 by the Papal Nuncio in Lisbon after completing his studies as a professed Redemptorist¹⁰. Some record of the ordination was made in Goa in terms that suggest possibly a word of mouth report. Among the

⁶ "SH" 23 (1975) 201. Personal information about de Menezes is provided by Father Valle, his companion for much of the time he remained in Europe.

⁷ T.R. de SOUZA, *Why no Menezes Priest in Malar in Goa Today*, Goa, November, 1976, 13. The article aroused a debate, which continued in the correspondence columns for almost a year.

⁸ "SH" 23 (1975) 201.

⁹ *Goa Today*, June, 1977, 5.

¹⁰ "SH" 23 (1975) 202.

priests ordained during the long vacancy of the Archdiocese of Goa after 1832 is listed "Monsignor Luis Francisco (sic) de Menezes, Goa, Ilhas, of the Congregation of the Redemptorists, some time in Europe, where he was in 1841"¹¹. Shortly after his ordination he had occasion to show his mettle, when together with the other members of his community he tended the victims of the cholera epidemic in Lisbon late in the same year¹². Father Valle, his companion, in praising his devoted care of the sick, speaks of him as also a zealous preacher and confessor and in every respect a fervent and edifying religious.

This promising start to his religious life came to an abrupt end shortly after the middle of 1833, just two years after his ordination. Revolution in Portugal closed the Redemptorist house and scattered the little community. The younger members, including de Menezes, made their way to Belgium. In spite of his efforts to learn French and take a share of the labours of his confrères, he found himself unable to cope with the bleak northern climate. With his young Portuguese companions he was transferred to the Duchy of Modena, where the Redemptorists of northern Europe had established houses. With his forced departure from Lisbon poor Father de Menezes entered on an unhappy period of his life, which ended only in 1843, when he left for India. He suffered from the cold and could not adapt to European diet. He was frequently ill, so as to cause concern to his superiors. He passed from one house to another in Italy — to Pagani, to Frosinone, to Spoleto before finally finding himself in Rome in 1843, in the house of Monterone, the residence of the Procurator General.

It is hardly surprising that a person coming from India should suffer in a European climate. One wonders, though, how such a person would react to the change of culture and language, particularly in such cosmopolitan communities as those of the Redemptorists outside the Kingdom of Naples tended to be. Very little evidence has survived of how he adapted to life with his new confrères. He did experience some tension with at least two of the Fathers with whom he lived in Frosinone¹³. Even there, however, he was treated with exceptional kindness on the occasion of a canonical visitation¹⁴. The Visitor, Father Vincenzo Fusco, directed that,

¹¹ Francisco Xavier VAZ & Placido da COSTA (editors), *Monumenta Goana Ecclesiastica*, III, Nova Goa, 1928, 170.

¹² "SH" 23 (1975) 203.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 206-207.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 207.

should the cook fail to provide Father de Menezes with special fare, he was to be punished by a fast on bread and water¹⁵. Perhaps it would not be fair to attach too much significance to a remark made by venerable Father Joseph Passerat, Vicar General beyond the Alps. Father de Menezes, he "ventured to say, would not be satisfied anywhere"¹⁶. That unflattering judgment was expressed in a letter to his Superior General concerning two Portuguese confrères, who had been expelled with him from Lisbon and had accompanied him to Modena. In describing as "unstable, discontented and obstinate" Fathers Valle and Azevedo, who were destined to distinguish themselves as Redemptorists, their superior seems to have done them less than justice; and it seems right to say the same of his curt dismissal of Father de Menezes.

Rather more to our point is the comment made by Father Sabelli, personal secretary to the Superior General, writing in 1836 to Belgium¹⁷. He says that Father de Menezes, recently arrived in Pagani, had expected to find a more relaxed way of life, and had conducted himself accordingly, with his daily outings and his smoking and eating whatever and whenever he liked. That is more specific than Father Passerat's offhand and dismissive remark, and it is far from being the picture of an edifying religious. Father Sabelli for one, and others probably agreed, considered that the newcomer to Pagani was a man who liked to have things his own way. And one has to suspect the prudence of a man who by his smoking and eating habits seemed to flout the sensitivities of those with whom he lived.

There is another matter mentioned by Father Sabelli, which helps to understand certain incidents in the later career of Father de Menezes. He seems to have established a close relationship with the Superior General, Father Giovanni Camillo Ripoli¹⁸. "The office he fills with Father Rector Major », writes Father Sabelli, "is the one that all Indians and Moors fill with all the great lords of Europe, namely he gives lessons in French twice a day, and in return is taught Italian"¹⁹.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 215.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 207.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 206. Father Giovanni Giuseppe Sabelli had joined the Redemptorists in Warsaw in 1803. Transferred from the Transalpine Region in 1822, he resided in Pagani, serving the Superior General, especially in matters concerning his companions in Northern Europe. Cf S.J. BOLAND, *A Dictionary of the Redemptorists*, Rome, 1987, 332-333.

¹⁸ On Father Ripoli cf S.J. BOLAND, *A Dictionary*, 21.

¹⁹ "SH" 23 (1975) 206.

If one may judge from the letters written by Father de Menezes after he had left Europe, there was a warm friendship between him and the Rector Major, revealed by expressions of affection and confidence. The correspondence also reveals a similar warm friendship with Father Claudio Maria Ripoli, brother of the Superior General and Consultor General²⁰. Whether it was by design or not, Father de Menezes was as a Redemptorist certainly fortunate in his friends.

This, then, is the man who was soon to return to India as Missionary Apostolic. He was a strong character who liked to have his own way; and for that purpose was not particularly careful of the demands of prudence or the sensitivities of others. Perhaps one might reasonably ask more of an altogether exemplary religious, but it is impossible to doubt that Father de Menezes was heartily devoted to his Redemptorist vocation. When the revolution dispersed the community in Lisbon, he with all his companions indignantly rejected the suggestion that he escape exile by being dispensed from his vows²¹. When he left Europe in 1843, it was with the declared wish to introduce the Redemptorists into India²². On his taking leave of Father Ripoli a second time in 1848, he repeated his desire to see the Congregation established in his homeland²³. At the end of his life he wrote to the then Superior General, a stranger to him, summarising his life as a Redemptorist in terms of appreciation which it would be unjust to question. As we shall see, his loyalty to his Institute and to St. Alphonsus was to occasion disputes in both India and Sri Lanka. It may well be that the battles were not disagreeable to him, especially when they generated heat, but he showed himself none the less a staunch champion of his Founder and his Congregation.

2. - *Missionary Apostolic in India (1843)*

Father de Menezes, wretchedly moving from one house to another in search of a place in Italy where he could live his Redemptorist life, was rescued by the intervention of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide. His name had been in their files since 1838, when Father Ripoli had suggested him for the struggl-

²⁰ On Claudio Maria Ripoli cf "SH" 2 (1954) 269.

²¹ "SH" 23 (1975) 203.

²² *Ibid.*, 208.

²³ *Ibid.*, 218.

ing Redemptorist mission in Bulgaria. That was a year of crisis for the little community in Phulippopolis²⁴. Begun with high hopes in 1835, the mission flourished at first; but disaster struck after only one year. The superior, Father Johann Forther, died in 1836, and in the following year a cholera epidemic threatened the entire mission. An Apostolic visitation in 1838 found the survivors anxious to continue, especially since they had plans and well-founded hopes for expansion. But they were desperately short of personnel. This was the report brought back to Propaganda, which occasioned the proposal of Father de Menezes for Bulgaria. The mission had been established from northern Europe; but Father Passerat felt himself unable to meet the new demands and appealed to Father Ripoli in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies²⁵. Father de Menezes was not needed on this occasion, since in spite of his misgivings, Father Passerat was able to send three men from Austria early in 1839. He remained as a possibility whenever a new occasion should present itself.

In March 1843 the Secretary of Propaganda, Mgr. Giovanni Brunelli, wrote to Father Giuseppe Mautone, Procurator General of the Redemptorists, asking whether there should be any problem about sending Father Francesco Menezes, whose good qualities were known to the Cardinal Prefect, to Bombay²⁶. Father Mautone answered promptly, his letter bearing the same date, 10th March, as that of Mgr. Brunelli²⁷. He was able to state that Father de Menezes would gladly undertake the charge. He could speak confidently because the Father was with him in the house of Monterone, having found the climate of his last residence in Spoleto too severe. Moreover, as a Redemptorist he had undertaken an obligation to go on the Missions²⁸. And to clinch the matter, the fact that it was work in his native land should make it the more acceptable.

This last consideration had clearly been in Mgr. Brunelli's mind in writing to Father Mautone, since he spoke of de Menezes as "*nativo di Goa nelle Indie Orientali*". As such he seemed a suitable man to send to Bombay. How suitable he was time would

²⁴ For information about the mission to Bulgaria cf S.J. BOLAND, *A Dictionary*, 289-290; E. HOSP, *Erbe des hl. Klemens*, Vienna, 1953, 338-352; C. MADER, *Die Kongregation des Allerheiligsten Erlösers in Oesterreich*, Vienna, 1887, 81-92; 332-336.

²⁵ Cf "SH" 23 (1975) 207.

²⁶ The letter, dated 10th March 184, is in "SH" 23 (1975) 214-215.

²⁷ Mautone to Brunelli, 10th March 1843, in ACEP, *Missioni*, vol. 20 (1841-1843) f. 652.

²⁸ Father Mautone was speaking, perhaps, too strongly when he spoke of an obligation, even though there was a strong orientation towards the evangelisation of unbelievers. On the Redemptorists and the foreign mission cf "SH" 32 (1984) 129-151.

tell; but he was apparently at least eager. A list of missionaries leaving Europe under the direction of Propaganda mentions Father de Menezes as leaving for Bombay by way of Alexandria in April²⁹. Less than a fortnight after the approach by Mgr. Brunelli de Menezes wrote to inform the Bishop of Tropea that he was about to leave Rome for India³⁰. So much is gathered from a letter of Bishop Michelangelo Franchini to Cardinal Fransoni. It is likely that in the course of his wanderings de Menezes had spent a little time in the Redemptorist house of Tropea, where he became friendly with the bishop. In any case, the bishop begged the Cardinal Prefect to be good enough to forward his own letter to the *degno P. D. Franco Menezes del SSmo Redente*". He left Rome, in fact, on 4th April, less than a month after the negotiations began³¹.

Father de Menezes left with the title and faculties of Missionary Apostolic and with the intention of establishing a Redemptorist foundation in India, as Father Sabelli reported to Father von Held in Belgium³². His first stop was Lisbon, the scene of his earliest days in the Congregation. There his coming created no little stir; and one suspects that he found it by no means disagreeable. A newspaper reported his arrival in terms we find surprising³³.

"A letter from Rome brings word that His Holiness has entrusted certain matters in the East Indies to Father Francisco de Menezes of the Redemptorists. Father de Menezes, who was at the same time invested with the character of Vicar Apostolic and who will reside in Bombay, is an Indian priest, known in Belgium, where he lived for a time and from where he moved to Modena on account of the climate and then to Naples".

The author who quoted the newspaper report found it necessary to add a correction. "It is not true that Father Menezes was Vicar Apostolic. For some time he was a guest in the seminary of Rachal, where he won admiration for his virtue and knowledge". Rachal was the archdiocesan seminary of Goa, and the author, Casimiro de Nazareth, would have had occasion to seek information there concerning the subject of his study, the Portuguese bishops

²⁹ ACEP, *Missioni*, vol. 20 (1841-1843) f. 571.

³⁰ Bishop of Tropea to Cardinal Prefect, 11th April 1843 in ACEP, SC, IO, vol. 9, f. 216.

³¹ "SH" 23 (1975) 208.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Journal da Sociedade cath.*, Lisbon, 1843, no. 4, p. 43. The paper is reported by CASIMIRO DE NAZARETH, *Mitras lusitanas no Oriente*, II, nova Goa and Lisbon, 1894 & 1924, p. 464.

in the colonies. His quotation from the newspaper was made in his dealing with the Prelacy of Mozambique; and it was preceded by an equally surprising piece of information. Under the date of 1843 he lists "Mgr. Dr. Francisco de Menezes of Mallar, Goa". He goes on to explain. "Coming to Lisbon in 1843 from Rome, where he had completed his theological studies, he was proposed for the government of the Prelacy of Mozambique, which he refused. So states the *Almanach recreativo*, N. Goa, 1883, p. XIV"³⁴.

The authority is, of course, far from the event, and it is in error on more than one point. It was not until 1848 that Father de Menezes was given the dignity of Papal chamberlain and declared honorary Doctor *utriusque iuris*, and far from completing his studies in Rome, he did little else there than try to keep warm. That does not mean that the report is to be dismissed. The Redemptorists in Lisbon before the revolution had won the esteem of some influential families, and Father de Menezes was the guest of one such on the occasion of his later visit in 1848³⁵. It is quite conceivable that good friends would have seen to his being proposed for the Prelacy, which, after all, was in the gift of the *padroado*. It is also in keeping with what is known of the man himself that in obedience to his vow as a Redemptorist to refuse all dignities outside the Congregation, that he should have declined the promotion. A few years later he was at pains to ask his Superior General to condone his having accepted the lesser dignities of monsignor and doctor offered as a mark of benevolence by the Pope³⁶. This is the only evidence, as far as can be gathered, of his escaping a mitre, and there seems to be sufficient substance in the somewhat jumbled report to do him credit, both for the esteem in which he was held and for his own religious spirit in avoiding the honour. In any case, it did succeed in having him listed by Casimiro de Nazareth among the *Mitras lusitanas* of the East.

After that brief stir of excitement in Lisbon the voyage to India was without incident. The new missionary duly reported to the Cardinal Prefect from Alexandria on 14th April³⁷ and from Suez on 21st³⁸, giving a detailed account of his expenses. Writing from Suez, he headed the page with the letters JMJT (Jesus, Mary, Joseph and Teresa), a devout practice of St. Alphonsus continued

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ "SH" 23 (1975) 203, 218.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ ACEP, SC, IO, vol. 9, ff 230-232.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, f. 240.

by many members of his Institute. It is one of the admirable qualities of Father de Menezes that he remained true to his Redemptorist life until his death, even though for twenty years he was entirely without contact.

3. - *Bombay (1834-1846)*

The Vicariate Apostolic of Bombay, where de Menezes was to begin his Indian ministry, was one of the earliest ventures of Propaganda; and from the beginning its history had been turbulent. It began with the appointment of Matheus de Castro Vicar Apostolic of Bijapur in 1638, as a challenge to the *padroado*³⁹. De Castro was a Brahmin of Goa, who had been refused ordination by the Portuguese archbishop, when he presented himself at the conclusion of his seminary studies. He sought justice in Rome, after an overland journey of four years, and was duly ordained in 1630 and sent back to Goa. When the ecclesiastical authorities again refused to accept him, he returned to Rome, complaining bitterly in the indignant ears of Mgr^e. Francesco Ingoli, the first Secretary of Propaganda. The outcome was that he was sent back to India with the episcopal character and a jurisdiction which was in evident defiance of the *padroado*.

Bijapur was the extensive Moslem Sultanate bordering on the Portuguese enclave; and an uncomfortable neighbour it had often proved itself. Mgr. de Castro very soon fell out with the archbishop, principally through his ordaining Indian priests, flouting the restrictive, racist policies of the *padroado*. His Vicariate Apostolic was large enough in 1638, but it expanded hugely when it changed its designation to that of The Great Mogul, replacing the Jesuit mission of that name, established in the sixteenth century. By the time de Menezes came back to India it had become the Vicariate Apostolic of Bombay, several excisions having been made from its original enormous jurisdiction. Under its new name and new government it remained what it had always been, a sign of contradiction and a thorn in the tender side of the long-suffering *padroado*⁴⁰.

³⁹ Pratima Kamat, "Some Protesting Priests of Goa" in Teotonio R. de SOUZA (ed.), *Essays in Goan History*, New Delhi, 1989, 103-108.

⁴⁰ On the history of the Vicariate see E.R. HULL S.J., *Bombay Mission History with a special study of the Padroado*, 2 vols., Bombay, 1927-1930; J.H. GENSE S.J., *The*

A further complication was introduced in 1661. On the occasion of the marriage of Catherine of Braganza to Charles II of England the Portuguese ceded the island of Bombay as part of her dowry. There were already churches on the island, served by Portuguese Franciscans. In 1720 the British government, with the agreement of the Holy See, expelled the clergy subject to Goa and introduced Carmelites, mainly Italian. Opposition to the newcomers so disturbed the peace that the government thought it best to forbid the Vicars Apostolic to reside in Bombay from 1746. That was no solution, as should surely have been foreseen, and in 1772 the authorities allowed the Vicar Apostolic to return. Finally, in a mood that looks very much like desperation, there was arranged a double jurisdiction, with the churches divided between Propaganda and the diocese of Damão, suffragan of Goa. That was in 1794.

The period of "double jurisdiction", as it is still called, lasted until 1928. It was never comfortable, but during the first half century or so of its existence the antagonism was strongly marked. The Vicar Apostolic appointed in 1794 to exercise authority under Propaganda was the Italian Discalced Carmelite, Pietro da Alcantara⁴¹. During his long tenure of office relations with Goa became quite tense, especially when he claimed jurisdiction over the island of Salsette. The Vicar Apostolic and his fellow Carmelites found themselves in an embattled position, the more so as the clergy of his jurisdiction were divided. But he was a strong man, highly esteemed by Roman authorities, and he set himself vigorously to work. He tried to build up a seminary and to bring peace, even if it should have seemed at times in spite of what the people wished. After all his striving it was a sadly troubled jurisdiction that he bequeathed to his coadjutor in 1840.

The new Vicar Apostolic was Bishop Fortini⁴². The dispute over Salsette was at its height when he succeeded his doughty predecessor, and the division among his clergy was at its keenest. It

Church at the Gateway of India, 1720-1960, Bombay, 1960; A. SOARES, *The Catholic Church in India*, Bombay, 1964, p. 61-84. Particularly informative for our present purposes is Michaelis Antonii de S. Aloysio GONZAGA OCD et sociorum, *Commentarium de origine et incremento Vicariatus Apostolici de Bombay*. It has been published in *Monumenta Anastasiana, documenta vitam et gesta servi Dei, Anastasii Hartmann OFM Cap. collustrantia*, edited by Adelhelmus Jaun a Stans, Luzern, 1939-1948, I, 1120-1151.

⁴¹ Born in Modena, in 1760, his name as a secular was Antonio Ramazzini. He died in Bombay in 1840. Cf. R. RIZLER & P. SEFRIN, *Hierarchia Catholica medii et recentioris aevi*, VI, Padue, 1968, 89.

⁴² In religion Luigi di S. Teresa, Ferdinando Fortini was born in Rome in 1795. He became coadjutor in 1838, succeeding to the Vicariate in 1840. He died in Bombay in 1848. Cf. RITZLER & SEFRIN, VII, 1968, 125.

was an extremely difficult time, and the historians of Bombay agree that he was not the man to meet the challenge. One of the kindest comments described him as "too weak for the troubled times"⁴³. The Jesuit, Father Hull, paints a gloomier picture, calling the years 1840 to 1850 "the Dark Ages of the Vicariate of Bombay"⁴⁴. The *Catholic Directory* in its excellent survey of the history of the archdiocese says succinctly of the same period that it was "a little hell"⁴⁵. It was precisely at this unhappy time and to this struggling Vicar Apostolic that Father de Menezes came in 1843.

Immediately on arrival he fell foul of the Italian Carmelites, as he reported to Cardinal Fransoni⁴⁶. From the beginning he had met with *despotismo, prepotenza ed ingiustizia*, as he indignantly declared. One of them, a certain Father Agostino, who was destined to rue his tactlessness, demanded why he had come, adding that "this mission does not need a Liguorian from Goa"⁴⁷. He had been greeted soon after his coming by the leading Goans of the city and some prominent public figures. He was himself a Goan, after all. Unfortunately, these men had fallen foul of Fortini, who had denounced them in a circular, branding them as rebellious and disobedient. On two occasions he refused the unhappy new missionary a hearing to explain the incident⁴⁸. To make matters worse, Fortini and his Carmelite confrères had publicly expressed their opinion of their new helper as negligible, an incompetent, ignorant fellow, only to be humiliated when a lecture he delivered to the clergy at the request of the coadjutor was enthusiastically acclaimed⁴⁹. The coadjutor, Bishop Whelan, a Dublin man, not long out of Europe, became a friend of de Menezes; and this was bound to make the latter suspect to the Italians, as they looked askance on their Irish confrère. As de Menezes described it, he was in a really pitiable position. Fortini had put him under the supervision of Father Michele, who did not allow him contact with anyone, not even a spiritual director. He was deprived of all means of support

⁴³ A. SOARES, 77.

⁴⁴ E.R. HULL, I, 370.

⁴⁵ P. 12.

⁴⁶ De Menezes to Cardinal Prefect, 15th October 1843, in ACEP, SC, IO, vol. 9, ff. 466-467.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, f. 466r.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, f. 466v.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* The coadjutor was William Whelan, in religion John Francis, an Irishman, consecrated in 1842 to assist the delicate Fortini. He succeeded to the Vicariate in 1848, was summoned to Rome in 1849 and resigned in the following year. Cf. RITZLER & SEFRIN, VII, 1968, 97.

apart from Mass stipends. Everything seemed to point to the fact that the Vicar Apostolic was trying to force him to leave Bombay for Goa⁵⁰.

That was unhappy news from a place that was already giving the Cardinal Prefect troubles enough. Propaganda lost no time in endeavouring to soothe the ruffled spirits. A letter to de Menezes promptly answered his complaints, assuring him that his case would be put to the Vicar Apostolic. Should that bring no improvement, he might find a more agreeable posting in Ceylon, where he would have the support of a worthy missionary, newly appointed, Padre Orazio Bettanchini⁵¹. A letter written on the same day to Fortini spoke with sympathy for his own difficulties, suggesting, just the same, that he might see that Father de Menezes be given suitable occupation⁵².

The Vicar Apostolic was prompt to defend himself, saying he could not imagine why Father de Menezes should think he had not been well received⁵³. He went on to state that as far as he could see, de Menezes was quite unsuitable as a missionary. He had associated with the Goans, who in turn were friendly with the English. On this account he had found it necessary to administer a kindly and paternal admonition. On his part, he had reason to complain of the newcomer, who from the time of his arrival had spoken against the Vicar Apostolic and the Carmelites, saying among other things that all Italians would soon have to leave the mission.

Fortini, in a poor state of health, was in trouble enough without the complications occasioned by charges against him in Rome. He was probably quite correct in seeing his problems as arising largely out of the fact that he was an Italian, as were his Carmelite helpers. Later in the same year his coadjutor was to suggest as much to Propaganda. Mgr. Whelan reported to the Cardinal Prefect that for various reasons the British authorities wished to have a British subject in charge of the Church⁵⁴. Poor Fortini seemed to be beset by anxieties and suspicions, which made him fear that the newcomer was turning the government against him. His care of the Vicariate suffered, as can be gathered from a letter of Whelan, complaining that "Mgr. Fortini tries to do everything by himself

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, f. 467r.

⁵¹ Propaganda to de Menezes, 2nd December 1843 in ACEP, LDB, vol. 330, ff. 973v.

⁵² Propaganda to Fortini, 2nd December 1843 in ACEP, LDB, vol. 330, 974-975.

⁵³ Fortini to Cardinal Prefect, undated, in ACEP, SC, IO, vol. 9, ff. 471-472.

⁵⁴ Whelan to Cardinal Prefect, 1st November 1843 in ACEP, SC, IO, vol. 9, ff. 501-502.

without consultation”⁵⁵. As a consequence, he lamented, “I fear we shall lose the excellent Father Walsh, Irish Augustinian ... and good Father Menezes whom your Eminence sent here”.

With the new year the intervention of Propaganda began to have effect. Father de Menezes was able to report that at last the Vicar Apostolic has assigned him duties. He asked permission to visit his relatives in Goa⁵⁶. The improvement did not last long, and it was too slight to have been satisfactory. By the middle of the year he was complaining once more. He painted a black picture, as he usually did when he described his woes⁵⁷. How, in addition to being so little appreciated in Bombay he had to suffer the grief of having to renounce the Archbishop of Goa as well as his own relatives, surely an exaggerated expression of his being subject to Propaganda rather than the *padroado*. As to his new duties, he was set to teaching Portuguese to fifteen little boys — a sad humiliation for one who “had taught dogmatic and moral theology in the Redemptorist College in Belgium”. Again we must fear that he overstates his complaint. During his two years in Belgium there is no record of his having taught the students, who were housed with him in St. Trond. This time Propaganda did not see fit to intervene on his behalf; and eventually he tired of his little boys and wrote once more, reminding the Cardinal Prefect of his earlier suggestion of Ceylon⁵⁸. A note added to his letter states that permission was given to transfer to the Vicariate Apostolic on 12th January 1846⁵⁹.

After three years Father de Menezes ended his first experience of work under Propaganda. He obviously had found it far from satisfactory. And his complaints must have made him quite unpopular with the authorities in Rome. He had reason enough to chafe under his treatment, it is fair to say. He was in a position which many another would surely have found discouraging. On the other hand, his time in Bombay was a sore trial also for the unfortunate Fortini. It is hard not to sympathise with him, especially since he was in a poor state of health. It could well be that his

⁵⁵ Whelan to Cardinal Prefect, 30th November 1843 in ACEP, SC, IO, vol. 9, ff. 580-581.

⁵⁶ De Menezes to Cardinal Prefect, 30th January 1844 in ACEP, SC, IO, vol. 9, 806-807.

⁵⁷ De Menezes to Cardinal Prefect, 19th July 1844 in ACEP, SC, IO, vol. 9, f. 1092.

⁵⁸ De Menezes to Cardinal Prefect, 17th September 1845 in ACEP, SC, IO, vol. 10, f. 534.

⁵⁹ ACEP, SC, IO, vol. 10, f. 535.

constant illness contributed in large measure towards making it abundantly evident that he was too weak for the troubled times in the Vicariate, which in his time went through its Dark Age. At any rate, de Menezes won the sympathy and approval of the coadjutor. That may not have been to his credit, as Whelan was himself to show opposition to the Italian Carmelites to the extent of its becoming necessary to remove him from the office of Vicar Apostolic. His Redemptorist protegé went on to Sri Lanka, where further excitement lay in store.

4 - Sri Lanka (1846-1847)

Ceylon, our present Sri Lanka, was just one more unhappy source of worry to Propaganda, precisely at this time. In 1842, on the occasion of the appointment of a Vicar Apostolic, the Cardinal Prefect spoke of the problems awaiting the man who should be chosen⁶⁰. He mentioned complaints that had reached him concerning the harmful Portuguese influence through Goan clergy. He suggested that, since the island was now under British rule, it seemed a convenient solution simply to decide on a man who was a British subject. His own selection was Charles Russell, professor of humanities in Maynooth, the Irish national seminary. Since his proposal met with general approval, Russell was duly notified⁶¹. He, however, was able successfully to plead very real and pressing family reasons why he should be excused. The Sacred Congregation found itself reluctantly compelled to return to a Goan regime. In June 1843, accordingly, Cajetan Anthony Mulsuce, an Oratorian, was consecrated titular Bishop of Usula as Vicar Apostolic of Ceylon⁶².

When the Cardinal Prefect spoke to his associates of Propaganda about the harmful influences coming from Goa, his complaint must have had a familiar ring. But it was not the usual quarrelling over disputed jurisdiction. The trouble was the pastoral practice of the Goan Oratorians. It was very much to be regretted that it should be so, since the Oratorians of Goa held an honourable place in the story of Catholicism in Sri Lanka. The Oratory of Goa was the creation of venerable Joseph Vaz, who achieved such marvels

⁶⁰ ACEP, Acta, vol. 205, ff. 379-381.

⁶¹ Concerning Russell see Ambrose MACAULAY, *Dr. Russell of Maynooth*, London, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1983.

⁶² RITZLER & SEFRIN, VII, 385.

as the Apostle of Sri Lanka⁶³. Coming to the island, his aim was to strengthen the Catholics in their struggle to resist the Dutch, who since 1658 had been using force in order to impose the Reformed Church. After some years of labour in constant danger but with encouraging results, Father Vaz returned to Goa in 1685 and there gathered about him priests whom he formed as an Oratory after the model of St. Philp Neri, intending that they join him in his perilous mission in Sri Lanka. They went back with him, and after his death in 1711 continued his labours. It was due principally to them that there was a strong and healthy Catholic Church when the British replaced the Dutch in 1796.

The Oratorians remained in the island; and it was about them that Propaganda was hearing complaints. The trouble was, not so much their adherence to the *padroado*, as a pastoral practice that was too harshly restrictive. Orazione Bettanchini, the good missionary about whom the Cardinal had spoken to de Menezes, summed up the complaints of many. Writing in 1847 as coadjutor, he spoke of the moral theology of "these good Goans"⁶⁴. His language was strong. "Their execrable Jansenist method does not save souls, but sends them to hell". Though the criticism was different, the Vicar Apostolic of Ceylon was like poor Fortini in that he was on the defensive. Before long he would discover that his new subject would add substantially to his troubles.

Father de Menezes was put to work as soon as he arrived in Colombo early in 1846. His first assignment was in Negumbo, some miles from the capital. There he achieved encouraging success as he reported to Rome⁶⁵. Within a short time, with the help of an interpreter, he had instructed and received fifteen adult converts, "Lutherans, Calvinists and idolators". He did not remain long in this position, since by June, when he wrote once more to the Cardinal Prefect, he had been transferred to the suburban mission of Calatorre in Colombo. It was on account of his health, he told the Cardinal, but he was continuing to do good. His work was mainly in English, but with the aid of interpreters he was able to preach in "Scingla",

⁶³ Venerable Father Vaz has been too much neglected. Possibly, the best and most informative account of his life and work is D. REGO, *L'Apostolo di Ceylan, P. Giuseppe Vaz della Congregazione dell'Oratorio di S. Filippo Neri*, Venice, 1753. An English translation entitled *Father Joseph Vaz* was published in Calcutta in 1896.

⁶⁴ Bettanchini to Cardinal Prefect, 13th November 1847 in ACEP, SC, IO, vol. 11, f. 438.

⁶⁵ De Menezes to Cardinal Prefect, 5th June 1846 in ACEP, SC, IO, vol. 10, ff. 1094-1095.

by which he obviously meant Sinhalese, and in "Malabar", which most likely was Tamil.

This second posting must also have been short, since in January of 1847 he was writing from Galle to his Superior General with a summary of his doings since leaving Italy⁶⁶. This seems to have been the first of his letters to have reached Father Ripoli. It has nothing to say about the stormy times in Bombay, but speaks mostly about his doings since coming to Sri Lanka. No doubt the Superior was delighted to learn about the many converts in the "seventeen churches of this island where I have so far held missions". If he had, in fact, engaged in such extensive preaching campaigns, then his first year in the new mission must have been a very busy one indeed.

In the eyes of others, however, the picture was not as rosy as he painted it. The *Memorie* of the de Menezes story in Propaganda speak of a report from Bettanchini, the coadjutor, written shortly after his arrival in Nangunbo⁶⁷. He reports from hearsay, which he seems inclined to believe, that the new missionary had been guilty of some imprudences, among them of associating too freely with "schismatics". Although "he seems opposed to the schism, on occasion he has used expressions that favour the Archbishop of Goa". In his defence from the implied charge, it must be remembered that de Menezes was himself a Goan and that it was only to be expected that he associate with people from his homeland. A better indication of his attitude to the "schism" is what he wrote to his Superior General. He asked for prayers for India, which were urgently needed "by reason of the schism of the Archbishop of Goa, my home"⁶⁸. Probably the worst to be read into the coadjutor's report is that de Menezes was not as circumspect as he ought to have been. One must remember that he had offended the Vicar Apostolic of Bombay by associating too openly with the Goans as soon as he arrived. Prudence, it has to be confessed, was never one of his characteristic virtues.

More ominous of disturbances to come was in his letter to the Cardinal Prefect. He was having difficulties, he wrote, with the "Filippini in Goa"⁶⁹. Further on in the letter he explained that

⁶⁶ De Menezes to Ripoli, 28th January 1847 in "SH" 23 (1975).

⁶⁷ ACEP, SC, IO, vol. 17, *Memorie*, f. 94^v.

⁶⁸ "SH" 23 (1975) 216.

⁶⁹ De Menezes to Cardinal Prefect, 5th June 1846 in ACEP, SC, IO, vol. 10, ff. 1094-1095.

the problem was that the theology of the Oratorians was extremely rigoristic. In his own district (Calatorre, it seems) "almost all Christians had been without absolution for up to twenty-five years". This complaint was apparently not exaggerated, Bettanchini, as we have seen, also spoke about the "execrable Jansenism" of the Goans. His figures in support of his very damaging declaration are very similar to those of de Menezes, namely that many people have been without absolution for twenty years or more.

Writing to Father Ripoli, de Menezes says that the Moral Theology of St. Alphonsus was followed by all the missionaries of Propaganda⁷⁰. He added that the people showed how much they appreciated the more benign pastoral practice. He did not suggest that the people were turned against the Goans, but to a notable extent that was the case. In July of 1846 a Memorandum was sent to Propaganda over a couple of pages of signatures asking that the Goan missionaries be replaced by Europeans⁷¹. There was undoubtedly an atmosphere of severe tension in the Vicariate; and those who adhered to "execrable Jansenism" were bound to clash before long with such a doughty protagonist of St. Alphonsus as Father de Menezes. When the inevitable confrontation occurred, it was on grounds less edifying than theological debate.

Galle was to be the last scene of de Menezes' apostolate in Sri Lanka. He began with promise, winning general approval, at least of his people. The Catholics of the mission were loud in his praises to Propaganda, just at the time when the storm clouds were gathering⁷². Their letter is in English.

"The Rev. Francisco Menezes of the Congregation of the Holy Redeemer was sent by Your Eminence to this island as Missionary Apostolic and was appointed to the church of Point de Galle. His Reverence began his ministry in the month of September 1846, since which time your Petitioners have lived contented and satisfied with him and have reason to admire his zeal, piety, patience and virtue. And your Petitioners feel bound to express their gratitude for the assistance he has always afforded them, both by administration of Confession and the other Sacraments at all times, contrary to the practice of the Reverend Missionaries of Goa, who only confess

⁷⁰ "SH" 23 (1975) 216.

⁷¹ Catholics of Colombo to Cardinal Prefect, 18th July 1846 in ACEP, SC, IO, vol. 10, ff. 1148-1149.

⁷² Catholics of Galle to Cardinal Prefect, 28th February 1847 in ACEP, SC, IO, vol. 11, ff. 194-197.

on certain appointed days. Such conduct of the Reverend Francisco Menezes has acquired for him, not only the love and esteem of your Petitioners, but of the inhabitants of other stations on the Island to which he has been at different times appointed, who join in giving thanks to Almighty God for his arrival in the Island".

This effusion bore an impressive number of signatures. It probably does no more than justice to its subject, agreeing as it does with the Father's own report of his earlier works for his Superior General. The petitioners, however, went on to the burden of their complaints. Their pastor, they declared, had been suspended by the Vicar Apostolic "as soon as he was appointed to Galle"⁷³. The people had asked for an explanation, but had received no answer. It was generally thought that the underlying cause of the trouble was the Vicar Apostolic's dislike for his coadjutor.

A missionary known to the Cardinal Prefect appeared on the scene a few weeks after the events and reported to Propaganda about the mission and the general state of confusion⁷⁴. A later communication from the same source suggested that it had been de Menezes himself who had started the rumour that the suspension was connected with the tension between the Vicar Apostolic and his coadjutor⁷⁵. Whatever the origin, the mention of the strained relations in the Vicariate was only too familiar to Propaganda. The coadjutor was that same Orazio Bettanchini who had been suggested by the Cardinal Prefect as early as 1843 as a possible sympathetic friend for de Menezes. He had been named coadjutor in 1845, but because of the tension that quickly developed had been named Pro-Vicar Apostolic of Northern Ceylon in 1847, which became Vicar Apostolic of Jaffna in 1849⁷⁶.

The vague talk reaching Rome must have left the Sacred Congregation in some confusion. Things were not made much clearer by the first report of the incident sent by the Vicar Apostolic⁷⁷. The single page he wrote in Latin left much to be explained. It was an attack on de Menezes, whom he accused of imprudent conduct in Neginmbo and Calatorre before being sent to Galle. When

⁷³ This evident exaggeration is due, no doubt, to the indignation of the petitioners. Subsequent reports reaching Propaganda show that de Menezes was suspended in February, a week or so before the petition and five months after his appointment to Galle.

⁷⁴ Domenico Priori, Missionary Apostolic, to Cardinal Prefect, 17th March 1847 in ACEP, SC, 10, vol. 11, ff. 234-235.

⁷⁵ Priori to Cardinal Prefect, 19th August 1847 in ACEP, SC, IO, vol. 11, f. 405.

⁷⁶ RITZLER & SEFRIN, VII, 373.

⁷⁷ Cajetan Anthony (Mulsuce) to Cardinal Prefect, 2nd March 1847 in ACEP, SC, IO, vol. 11, f. 208.

complaints reached him from this last mission he went there on 19th February with two companions to make investigations. On the night of their arrival de Menezes had summoned a policeman to arrest one of the priests; and the next day he made a sworn statement before a magistrate. This was considered tantamount to summoning his bishop before a secular tribunal; and was the reason for the suspension.

Some of the large gaps in this sketchy account were filled in when de Menezes sent his own account of what had happened a little over a week later⁷⁸. The Vicar Apostolic had come to Galle with two Goan missionaries, whom he identified as Fathers Noronha and Casimiro. The interview had opened with the Vicar Apostolic's complaining that de Menezes had more respect for the coadjutor than for himself, for which reason he should leave the island. When de Menezes replied that he could not leave the mission without leave of Propaganda, he was assaulted physically by Father Casimiro. For his own protection he had called in the police and the next day had made a deposition before a magistrate, describing the incident. On the following day, which was a Sunday, the Vicar Apostolic announced to the people that de Menezes was suspended. A few days later, on 26th February the Vicar Apostolic was once more in Galle, and on this occasion had denounced de Menezes to the people as a "schismatic". This was just two days before the Catholics of Galle sent their laudatory account to the Cardinal Prefect. According to de Menezes, their insistence had persuaded the Vicar Apostolic to remove the suspension after only a couple of weeks. He was probably ministering to the people again by the time he sent on his report towards the middle of March. The trouble, however, was by no means over; and the missionary's defence of himself could not be considered altogether satisfactory.

The Cardinal Prefect must have taken more seriously a report sent from Galle at the beginning of May⁷⁹. Signing himself R.W. Langslow, the writer identified himself as the magistrate who had received the deposition that had occasioned the suspension. The letter, written in English, concerned itself principally with the strained relations between de Menezes and the Vicar Apostolic. Since his signature was among those Catholics of Galle who had

⁷⁸ De Menezes to Cardinal Prefect, 13th March 1847 in ACEP, SC, IO, vol. 11, ff. 229-230.

⁷⁹ Langslow to Cardinal Prefect, 1st May 1847 in ACEP, SC, IO, vol. 11, ff. 231-233.

earlier addressed their petition to Propaganda, he was clearly on the side of the harrassed missionary.

The Vicar Apostolic, he wrote, had accused de Menezes of seriously offending charity in his preaching. This charge was probably what had been seen as the "imprudences" which had occasioned the confrontation. The accusation, the magistrate declared, was quite untrue; and in that opinion all the Catholics of Galle agreed. It was common knowledge, he added, that the trouble was entirely due to the disagreement between the Vicar Apostolic and his coadjutor. He had been in Ceylon, he went on, for six years and had witnessed the improvement in pastoral care that had become apparent with the arrival of Bettanchini and missionaries other than those of Goa.

This letter, written in respectful terms, no doubt confirmed the Cardinal Prefect in his decision to divide the jurisdiction of the Vicariate. The situation in Galle, however, remained unclear enough to preoccupy Propaganda throughout most of the year. As late as August, Priori, the missionary who had earlier written about the stir caused by the suspension, spoke about the continuing unrest in Galle, where de Menezes was trying to justify "his childish behaviour"⁸⁰.

Just after the middle of the year the Vicar Apostolic gave a further account of the original altercation. It was evidently at the request of Rome⁸¹. He said that he had not intervened to restrain his priests when the disagreement became physical, because they had been provoked by de Menezes. He was able to claim that it was a repetition of what had occurred in Bombay, since he had been in touch with Fortini. Just as on the former occasion, de Menezes was alleging ill treatment by his superiors. He concluded by informing the Prefect that he had raised the suspension as directed. It is puzzling to find the suspension reported as being raised as late as July, when de Menezes had mentioned its having been raised within a fortnight; and that was when he had written in March. Possibly the slow mail service with Europe could explain the riddle; or could there have been more than one suspension? Whatever the reason, this was not the last mention of the suspension.

Before long the Cardinal Prefect found occasion to administer a severe reprimand to de Menezes. A letter in September expressed

⁸⁰ Priori to Cardinal Prefect, 19th August 1847 in ACEP, SC, IO, vol. 11, f. 405.

⁸¹ Cajetan Anthony to Cardinal Prefect, 10th July 1847 in ACEP, SC, IO, vol. 11, ff. 358-359.

his surprise and disappointment at the Father's blameworthy behaviour towards the Vicar Apostolic and Fathers Casimiro ad Noronha⁸². At the request of Propaganda the Vicar Apostolic had raised the suspension on de Menezes, only to have his letter returned with the insulting inscription, "REFUSED". The indignant Prefect wrote the offending word in large block letters. He was prepared, he declared, to overlook the appeal to the secular power and the public resistance to ecclesiastical superiors, but he could not possibly pass over such an "extraordinary act of insubordination". The culprit was warned to take heed to his spiritual condition and offer the Vicar Apostolic "satisfaction proportionate to his grave fault". Otherwise he must be deprived of his status as Missionary Apostolic.

It does seem that the suspension now in question was different from that imposed in February after the unseemly brawl in the priest's residence and the appeal to the magistrate. It is not hard to believe that de Menezes had fallen again under suspension, especially since as late as July Priori had occasion to speak of his "childish behaviour". Whatever the reason for the censure and when it was incurred, it gave rise to the stern reprimand from Rome. And it marked the end of the Sri Lanka ministry of de Menezes.

His time in Sri Lanka was brief, less than two years, but it is the period that provides the most information about his pastoral activity. It is scanty enough, to be sure, but it does help to understand the man. He was able enough, if we may judge from his reports of his doings in Negumbo and Calatorre; and there seems no reason to disbelieve his word. From Galle we have the people's word in his favour. The petition of the Catholics and the letter from the magistrate both represent de Menezes as zealous in his duties, the former praising also his piety. Both single out his work in the confessional, contrasting it with the rigorism of the Goan Oratorians. He himself, writing to his Superior General, gave the credit to the "Moral Theology of our Holy Founder", which the people loved⁸³, Father de Menezes frequently spoke of his devotion to St. Alphonsus and his writings; and there is no reason to doubt either his sincerity or his fervour in this respect. Reading between the lines of his communications, both from Bombay and from Sri Lanka, one has reason to suspect that his devotion was markedly aggressive. It does seem to have been the principal cause of the

⁸² Cardinal Prefect to de Menezes, 23rd September 1847 in ACEP, LDB, vol. 336, ff. 1137-1138.

⁸³ "SH" 23 (1975) 216.

antagonism he showed to the Goan Oratorians. Those who crossed him very soon had reason to regret it; and that especially, it could well be, if they happened to be his ecclesiastical superiors. He never failed to fight back, even to the extent of going beyond the bounds of good taste. That was what drew down on him the exalted wrath of the Cardinal Prefect. But Father de Menezes was an extremely hard antagonist to worst.

5. - *Monsignor de Menezes*

Right at the beginning of the trouble in Sri Lanka de Menezes had given some indication of how far he was prepared to venture in defence of his position and reputation. In the summary of the turbulent career of the Redemptorist missionary Propaganda quotes a letter written in March by the Vicar Apostolic to Fortini, his colleague and fellow sufferer in Bombay⁸⁴. In search, no doubt, of a little sympathy from one who ought to understand his troubles, the poor man unburdened his soul. "Father Menezes is giving much trouble and no small expense, since he seems to have in his head some desire to go around the world at the expense of the mission, and to act as though he wore a cardinal's hat".

What his formidable opponent had in mind became apparent after that stern reprimand by the Cardinal Prefect. The same summary of the de Menezes story by Propaganda recalls that after the battles in Galle the Father had come to Rome and gained favours from the Pope⁸⁵. Whether or not it was at the expense of the mission, de Menezes did, in fact, travel half way at least around the world to put his case to somebody more exalted than those who had blamed him. He pleaded his cause to good effect, as he somewhat apologetically explained to Father Ripoli. "With the greatest sorrow and confusion I inform your Paternity that the reigning Pope, Pius IX, has made me his *cameriere* and conferred on me the diploma, of Doctor *utriusque iuris*"⁸⁶. He begged pardon for the possible violation of his vow to renounce all dignities outside the Congregation. His name after 1848 appears regularly among the *Camerieri d'onore in abito paonazzo*; and he is given both his

⁸⁴ ACEP, SC, IO, vol. 17, *Memorie*, f. 94r. The letter quoted is dated 13th March 1847.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, f. 96r.

⁸⁶ Letter of 12th September 1848 in "SH", 23 (1975) 218.

titles in later correspondence with Rome, at times from those who fell foul of him, in a manner lacking in respect.

The letter to the Superior General had been written from Lisbon, where de Menezes had called on his way back to India. The Nuncio asked Rome for information about this distinguished personage⁸⁷. The reply of the Cardinal Prefect, couched in language more restrained than his reprimand a few months earlier, stated that Mgr. Menezes was travelling with the knowledge and authorisation of the Sacred Congregation. He was to labour in Goa, but was calling first in Bombay in order to prepare himself for possible difficulties by reason of the "schism"⁸⁸.

At the same time the Cardinal Prefect wrote to the Vicar Apostolic in Bombay, now Whelan, the friend of de Menezes, the coadjutor who had succeeded Fortini⁸⁹. He explained that it seemed prudent that de Menezes spend some time in Bombay before proceeding to Goa. During his stay he was prepared to make himself available for help in the seminary. The Sacred Congregation had agreed in view of his ability and his promise not to make trouble as in Ceylon. With his old friend now in charge of the Vicariate, it is not surprising that by the end of the year the distinguished Mgr. Dr. de Menezes was Rector of the seminary.

The Bombay seminary was far from being the grand institution its name might suggest to a European. When Bishop Whelan first came to Bombay, he was agreeably surprised to find that the Vicariate boasted such an establishment. He reported to Rome, "Here we have a seminary, maintained by the English government;⁹⁰

It is not clear when the seminary was first established, as more than once it was closed and reopened. It was certainly in existence in the year 1777, and it remained fairly stable from that date. It was indeed helped by a government subsidy, as Whelan had reported, since the British authorities were anxious to exclude Portuguese influences coming into the colony by way of Goa. Until after the middle of the nineteenth century very little is known about the discipline of the candidates or the curriculum of their studies. What information did reach Propaganda did not present a satisfactory

⁸⁷ Nuncio in Lisbon to Cardinal Prefect, 23rd August 1848 in ACEP, SC, IO, vol. 11, f. 887.

⁸⁸ Cardinal Prefect to Nuncio in Lisbon, undated in ACEP, LDB, vol. 337, f. 688.

⁸⁹ Cardinal Prefect to Whelan, 3rd August 1848 in ACEP, LDB, vol. 337, f. 597.

⁹⁰ Whelan to Cardinal Prefect, 18th June 1843 in ACEP, SC, IO, vol. 9, f. 343v. There is an excellent summary of what various historians have written about the seminary in *The Catholic Directory* quoted earlier, on pp. 339-346.

picture at all. The most vociferous in complaining was a group of Indian priests, who resented what they described as a long and unjust discrimination. Their principal spokesman was Sebastian Andrew Duarte, who went to Rome in 1850 and from the Irish College, where he lived as a guest, harrassed the Sacred Congregation with his complaints⁹¹. In his first communication he quoted among those who supported him "the learned Liguorian, Mgr. Menezes". One of the principal grievances, repeated too often, one has the impression, was the long neglect of the seminary so that Indians were deprived of fitting preparation for an ecclesial career.

It seems that under the "learned Liguorian" things remained far from satisfactory. Early in 1850 Whelan was replaced by the saintly and zealous Swiss Capuchin, Anastasius Hartmann. He addressed to the Secretary of Propaganda, Mgr. Alessandro Barnabò, a detailed account of the Vicariate as he found it on his arrival⁹². Of the seminary under de Menezes he reported that the candidates were housed with a priest who was suspected of simony. One of their own number, a subdeacon, was their spiritual director, "with what results you may judge". One of the new Vicar Apostolic's first cares was to improve the seminary training. He met with a great deal of resistance, but not from the Rector. He had betaken himself off to Goa soon after the new Vicar Apostolic's arrival. Hartmann's biographer says tersely: "The former Rector, Father Luis Francisco Menezes (sic), on hearing of Bishop Hartmann's coming to Bombay, thought it better to pack up and return to Goa, the place of his origin"⁹³.

Whelan's term of office was cut short in 1850, less than two years after his succession, when he was persuaded by Propaganda to resign as Vicar Apostolic. In that short space there was much turmoil in Bombay, worse even than the normal chaos Propaganda had come to take for granted in the place; and de Menezes was, predictably enough, in the thick of it. The situation was described briefly by the Vicar Apostolic of Verapoly, Lodovico of St. Teresa O.C.D. Even allowing for his sympathy for his fellow Italian Carmelites, what he describes is far from edifying⁹⁴. Whelan, he says,

⁹¹ Duarte to Cardinal Prefect, 21st June 1850 in ACEP, SC, IO, vol. 12, ff. 924-928. See also ff. 1072-1073; 1095; 1179-1184.

⁹² Hartmann to Barnabò, 25th May 850 in *Monumenta Anastasiana*, I, 509.

⁹³ Father FULGENTIUS OFM Cap., *Bishop Hartmann*, Allahabad, St. Paul publications, 1966, p. 235.

⁹⁴ ACEP, SC, IO, vol. 17, *Memorie*, f. 96^v There is a quotation from a letter of the Vicar Apostolic of Verapoly.

favours the "Liguorista" against his own Carmelite confreres. He had deposed Father Agostino from the charge of an important church and conferred in on "the intriguing and two-faced Dr. Mgr, Fr. Menezes". This latter had become "*padrone e signore assoluto*" of the Carmelites, and he showed himself especially hard on Father Agostino, forbidding him to say Mass in public, even on a Sunday. It had, of course, been Father Agostino who a few years earlier had told de Menezes that a Liguorian from Goa was not welcome in Bombay. The vengeance of the offended party was certainly excessive. When the gentle Bishop Hartmann arrived in Bombay he was shocked, as he wrote to Propaganda, to find that Father de Menezes had treated Father Agostino "like a pariah dog"⁹⁵. It is not surprising that de Menezes was quick to find refuge in Goa soon after Hartmann replaced his friend and protector, Whelan. He had left Bombay by the middle of 1850.

6. - *Return to Bombay*

Of his time in Goa, a period of five years on this occasion, little information has survived. It is reasonable to suspect that the time was not peaceful. In the climate of the "schism" and the continuing disputed jurisdiction in the Vicariate Apostolic of Bombay a man of the temperament of de Menezes could hardly have kept silent⁹⁶. If Casimiro de Nazereth referred to this time when he spoke of having met Mgr. de Menezes in Rachal seminary, then we can say that Rachal was his residence in Goa. That being so, we must also accept the same author's statement that in the seminary de Menezes "won admiration for his virtue and knowledge". Such commendations are sufficiently frequent to be taken seriously in forming a picture of the man. Events in Bombay and Galle are evidence of a fiery, hasty character, not always ruled by prudence. But there is evidence enough, too, that underlying the surface defects, that were only too observable, there was a man of ability and genuine piety. This was the man who, through the storms he gathered about himself, remained to the end true to Redemptorist life and devotion.

In 1855 de Menezes was back in Bombay, entrusted by the

⁹⁵ Artmann to Cardinal Prefect, 3rd August 1850 in *Monumenta Anastasiana*, I, 572.

⁹⁶ I was informed in Goa that the archival material of the period had been transferred to Portugal.

Vicar Apostolic with the care of a chapel⁹⁷. It would appear that he had been encouraged by the kindness of Hartmann's regime to leave Goa. The chapel given to his charge was probably in what was long called the "castle", a relic of Portuguese power in Bombay⁹⁸. If so, he was in a central position, which speaks well of the forbearance of the Vicar Apostolic, who had been so shocked at his uncharitable behaviour. Under Hartmann, capable administrator as he was, there was peace, or at least there is no evidence to the contrary. This happy state of affairs, so rare in the missionary career of de Menezes, was not to last for long. The Vicar Apostolic left for Europe, where he was to remain for some years, endeavouring to secure the stability of the Church in Bombay. In particular, he was negotiating with the Jesuits to undertake the charge.

Newly established in his chapel, de Menezes found himself thrown into the company of Hartmann's fellow Capuchins, who had been left in charge of the Vicariate. It looked like the old confrontations with the Carmelites and the Oratorians. It was not as bad as that; but that is the very best that can be said of an association that the Capuchins found uncomfortable. Early in 1857 Father Angelicus wrote to Hartmann in Rome: "Mr. Menezes has left the castle and gone to Poona on account of his health"⁹⁹. Later in the year a newsy and very colloquial letter of Father Cornelius to a confrère speaks of two priests of the Vicariate, who are described as acting "on the same principle as Father Menezes, money right or wrong and then money again"¹⁰⁰. At the time that unflattering account was written de Menezes was probably living under the same roof as Father Cornelius. In December Father Angelicus, now Pro-Vicar Apostolic, reported as sharing his residence "Menezes, Celsus, Cornelius and Ignatius"¹⁰¹. Before the end of the following year Father Cornelius was once more writing with his pen dipped in vitriol, this time to Father Angelicus, who had joined Hartmann in Rome. "Father Menezes is now in Poi, apparently for change of air; but your Paternity knows the sheep, and therefore I say

⁹⁷ de Menezes to Cardinal Prefect, 19th February 1859 in ACEP, SC, IO, vol. 17, ff. 250-252. This letter most probably occasioned the compilation of the *Memorie*, which are dated 1859. There was now a new Prefect, Cardinal Alessandro Barnabò, and a new Secretary, Mgr. Gaetano Bedini.

⁹⁸ Angelicus Benedik of Capranza OFM Cap. to Hartmann, 5th March 1857 in *Monumenta Anastasiana*, III, 833.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ Father Cornelius to Father Lorenzo, 27th September 1857 in *Monumenta Anastasiana*, IV, 17.

¹⁰¹ Angelicus to Hartmann, 18th December 1857 in *Monumenta Anastasiana*, IV, 72.

no more" ¹⁰². The Poi mentioned is Poona. Father Celsus, in charge in the absence of Father Angelicus, wrote that de Menezes was in Poona for change of air and was showing himself unwilling to go to Surat, which was without a priest. He suggested that it might be as well to persuade him to leave the Vicariate ¹⁰³. Soon the loquacious Cornelius was writing again. "Father Menezes has agreed to go as assistant to Nuggar: it is not known when he intends to go" ¹⁰⁴. He just could not resist that barb at the end. By then the Capuchin period in Bombay was about to end. If it had not been for de Menezes as happy as it might have been, he must bear most of the blame himself: but it could well be that he was not the only one at fault. Whatever about his relations with Hartmann's confrères, he found it quite impossible to live under their successors, the Jesuits.

At the end of 1858 Alexis Canoz S.J. arrived in Bombay with the authority and title of Apostolic Administrator of the Vicariate. By February of the following year de Menezes was sure he could not serve under his new superiors. A letter to Propaganda repeated complaints that had a sorely familiar ring about them ¹⁰⁵. Now it was the Jesuits who did not see fit to allow him a suitable residence, even though Bishop Hartmann had esteemed him sufficiently to appoint him to a chapel in the city. He asks if it might be best to allow him to return to Europe in order to end his days in some Redemptorist house. It seems that this cry of distress occasioned the compilation of the *Memorie*, the detailed resume of all the correspondence concerning de Menezes. Apart from noting that he had expressed a wish to retire to some Redemptorist house in Europe ¹⁰⁶, the authorities took no further steps. After all, there had been trouble enough in Bombay, and in that de Menezes had played no small part. Now he found himself left to his own devices. He withdrew once again to Goa, leaving Bombay about the middle of the year. With the appointment of the first Jesuit Vicar Apostolic, Walter Steins S.J. in 1860, he could see no further scope for himself in Bombay ¹⁰⁷.

¹⁰² Cornelius to Angelicus, 9th September 1858 in *Monumenta Anastasiana*, IV, 232.

¹⁰³ Celsus to Angelicus, 9th October 1858 in *Monumenta Anastasiana*, IV, 252.

¹⁰⁴ Cornelius to Angelicus, 25th October 1858 in *Monumenta Anastasiana*, IV, 260.

¹⁰⁵ de Menezes to Cardinal Prefect, 19th February 1859 in ACEP, SC, IO, vol. 17, ff. 250-252.

¹⁰⁶ ACEP, SC, 10, vol. 17, *Memorie*, f. 93v.

¹⁰⁷ Walter Steins, a Dutchman, born in Amsterdam in 1810, as consecrated titular Bishop of Nilopolis and Vicar Apostolic of Bombay on 18th December 1860. He became

Once again, lack of information makes it impossible to trace the events of his last sojourn in Goa. From 1859 to 1863, the year of his death, his life is as obscure as when on the former occasion he took refuge at the approach of Bishop Hartmann. Nothing more is heard of him until in 1869 his Will with its explanatory letter was handed to the Redemptorist Superior General.

That final communication from India to the superior in Europe may serve as a summary of the career of de Menezes¹⁰⁸. He introduces himself as the *povero Indiano* professed in 1830 by the *Padri Tedeschi* in Portugal. He must have known a little about the stirring events among the Redemptorists, which had led to his addressing a Superior General resident in Rome and not in Paganì. To him the Superior General, Father Nicholas Mauron, would probably have appeared as one of the *Padri tedeschi*; but Father Mauron quite clearly knew nothing about this *povero Indiano*. He was described as ex-Father and benefactor¹⁰⁹. Though forgotten by his European confrères, de Menezes clearly held himself to the end to be a genuine Redemptorist, as he had been warmly assured by an earlier Neapolitan Rector Major. He showed that he retained knowledge of Redemptorist usages and devotions. He had been ready, aggressively so, it may well be, to assert the honour of his venerated Father, St. Alphonsus. In the letter he declared himself to be at the end a faithful member of the Congregation.

However genuine these protestations may have been, and there is no reason to think otherwise, they have to be taken with a grain of salt to provide a clue to the character of the man. The true Redemptorist needs to be seasoned with the numerous reports about him that reached Propaganda, and especially with those *Memorie* which so feelingly summarised his missionary career in India and Sri Lanka. As an Apostolic Missionary commissioned by the Holy See, he showed himself capable of hard and effective pastoral work, especially in Sri Lanka. But beyond doubt he was a thorn in the sides of his ecclesiastical superiors and hard on any who crossed him. Devout Redemptorist though he might have been, he added no small measure to the troubles of those years when the Church was in conflict with the *padroado*.

Vicar Apostolic of Calcutta in 1867 and Bishop of Auckland in 1879, dying there in 1881. Cf RITZLER & SEFRIN, VIII, 1978, p. 415.

¹⁰⁸ The entire letter is in "SH" 23 (1975) 219-220.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 211.