

Catholic Art: Mangaluru, a Case Study (1878-2023)

Arun Mascarenhas^{a, 1*} Suvidha P.^{b, 2}

^a IDC School of Design, IIT Bombay, Powai, Mumbai 400076, Maharashtra, India

^b School of Design, Presidency University, Yelahanka, Bengaluru, Karnataka 560064, India

¹ arun.idc@iitb.ac.in *, ² suvidha259@gmail.com

* Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

'Catholic Art' is art produced for catholic patrons, which includes iconographic works in visual arts, sculptures, architecture, and decorative and applied arts. Jesus Christ, his disciples, followers, saints, and biblical narratives have been the subject matter of Catholic art. There is an ecumenical relationship between Christian theology and Catholic Art. However, not all Christians are Catholics, but all Catholics are Christians. The Mangaluru case study centers on the prominent Italian Artist Priest, Fra. Antonio Moscheni SJ (1854-1905). He was entrusted to embellish the newly built cathedral with frescos on Biblical themes. The resemblance of these frescos to the works of the Sistine Chapel of Rome and its unique blend with the native southern mural traditions is a unique and fascinating amalgamation of East and Western art techniques. Due to his work's popularity, Moscheni was commissioned to complete several projects across the churches of western coastal India between 1889 and 1905. He began working in Mangaluru and later Bantwal, the region known as Canara. He did a few projects in Konkan, a northern coastal city of Goa, and Mumbai. In the end, the southern coastal town, Kochi, also referred to as the Malabar, where he breathed his last due to illness. The case study focuses on detailed accounts of his disciples who assisted him during his commissions and were later established as individual practitioners catering to the community's needs. The study locates Catholic art practice in India and its legacies in historical and sociocultural contexts and analyzes and reflects on their milieu.

Keywords - Catholic Art, Indian Christianity, Visual Culture, Mangalore, Jesuit Missionaries.

1. Introduction

Catholic Art is art produced for religious and cultural patrons, with the objective of Art's significance and power to accompany, empower, and enhance religious efforts. 'Christian Art' is often a synonym for Catholic Art (Amaladass, 2012; Sharma, 2021). However, Catholicism is the largest denomination of Christianity, i.e., all Catholics are Christians, but not all Christians are Catholics; it is essential to recognize it. However, there is an ecumenical relationship between Christian theology and Catholic Art (Amaladass, 2008). While it's a vast area to cover and comprehend with its complex historiography, the Mangaluru case study focuses on the prominent Italian Artist Priest Antonio Moscheni SJ (1854-1905) and ethnographic accounts of his art assistants who began practicing this art form independently and their legacies over four generations till date. The methodology included personal studio visits, semi-structured interviews, and open-ended discussions—individual practitioners' physical and digital albums and archives for sourcing the information—telephonic clarifications of specific facts and triangulation of literary sources and published articles.

Nevertheless, without a broader perspective of Christianity, within which this specific practice can be located, readers would find it changing in their understanding of the context. Hence, in its second part, the article provides an overview of Catholic art globally; subsequently, the third section provides an overview of the historiography of Christianity in India across various periods, taking the reader to the

fourth section that details Jesuits' initial contacts and references with the Mughals and their associations with them. It further delves into a detailed account of Missionary activities in Goa before the Mangalore mission that started in 1878 through the lens of mural paintings. It observes the inculturation and blending of Indian traditions with the fresco techniques of the West. The subsections detail several legacies of Catholic art practitioners associated with the 'Mangalore mission' in the late 19th Century and their current lineages. The final section discusses various aspects of art practice, critically analyses it and reflects on the community's cultural milieu.

2. Overview of Catholic Art in the Global Context

We can speculate on Catholic Art being an ancient practice almost as old as Christianity as a religion. In the beginning, due to societal restrictions and fear of prosecution, Christ's disciples and early followers symbolically revered Christianity. 'The Edict of Milan,' in 313 CE, legitimized by allowing the public worship of Christ, leading to flourishing Christianity and Christian Art development. It has been the leading factor behind the Western art world and has developed substantially since then. The religious controversy and iconoclasm briefly divided the Eastern and Western churches in the late 8th and early 9th Centuries, leading to a separate direction in artistic practices. The period is known as late antiquity, followed by the medieval ages. The Byzantine and Eastern churches practiced richer forms, such as mosaics and illuminated manuscripts. In contrast, the Western Church adopted increasingly naturalistic painting and sculptural styles from about the 9th Century—Romanesque Art, which reintroduced Roman art and architectural styles developed in Western Europe.

In the mid-12th Century, The Gothic style, which had pointed arches, windows, high and tall ceilings, thin columns, and elongated figures, emerged in France and lasted until the 16th Century. Early 15th Century Interests in classical antiquity (Greco-Roman) art led to the "rebirth" of the style known as Renaissance art. Explorations in the mannerism of depicting religious themes led to controversies in the later Centuries. The Baroque style brought the new dramatic visual language into biblical themes, which addressed this problem. We find parallels in Indian catholic art during this period, reflected in the Indo-Portuguese art from India. By the 18th Century, the baroque style developed into a more striking but lighter style recognized as Rococo, which posed a unique challenge in adapting to religious themes. By the mid-19th Century, almost a century after the first industrial revolution, much of the best Catholic Religious Art was on public display in museums, as has ever since. Undoubtedly, its widened access to masterpieces secluded in the religious confinements has promoted public awareness of Catholic Art's heritage from its original context. The early adoption of post-modern styles at the dawn of the 21st Century continued with the mid-20th Century trends.

3. Christianity in the Indian Subcontinent

We can find several references to India in ancient times (Butler, 1986; Duke, 1999), particularly Persian records. The Roman Empire covered vast territories, including the East or the Orient, also known as Asia Minor, that included India. India's Christian presence goes back to early Christianity, followed by the death of Jesus. Jesus Christ is also referred to as an Asian by Pope John Paul II in his post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation (Paul-II, 1999). Nonetheless, an overview of the subject and historiography of Christianity in India would greatly help understand this complex tapestry. In Duke's analysis (p, 88-90) (Duke, 1999), Christianity in India has several phases; she explains it as

The enigmatic millennium, a living Christian community, claims its heritage from early St Thomas. St. Bartholomew's legends in India are marked from CE 52. There are several historical shreds of evidence until the beginning of the 12th Century. The covert centuries were the subsequent period during which the identity of Christianity was not openly acknowledged. It started in the early 12th Century with Hinduism's revival until the Portuguese arrival. In the influential period, after Vasco da Gama arrived in 1498 CE, we see the emergence of European colonization. Goa, the state on India's western coast, became the Portuguese empire's administrative and economic center. St. Francis Xavier's fiery missionary came first to Kerala in 1542 and subsequently to Tamil Nadu. However, other parts of the country did not have to wait long for the Roman Catholic Church to root.

Expanding years: The arrival of John Hands of the London Missionary Society at Bellary in 1810 Inaugurated Protestant missions in Karnataka. Roman Catholic missions, particularly the Jesuits and Paris Foreign Mission, launched vigorous Missionary activities developed for a century until 1910, which led to the glorious years of the Church's expansion. Evangelization and social action resulted in the Christian faith reaching out to all four corners. The formative years, The emergence of a new indigenous structure, and the picking up of the First World War were the turning points in the history of the Indian Church. However, the contemporary local Church has flourished since the 20th Century and has witnessed growth in Indigenous revivalism. It saw a transforming mission paradigm after WWII and India's later independence. In the growing years after Indian independence, the indigenous leadership took control of the Church. Its expansion was seen in the formation of the twelve Roman Catholic and four Protestant church dioceses.

From the beginning, Christianity in India has been very conservative in its approach. Though Christians from various denominations live in Indian states, some profess personal faith outside institutionalized Christianity without associating with any Church or its conventional code of belief. Much has been under research and debate. However, their influence is minimal in the subcontinent. About 2.3% of the Indian population is dispersed throughout the country, with the density in the southern and northeastern states. According to the Census Figure 2011, the Indian Christian population was 2.78 Crores.

4. European art connections to India

4.1 The Mughal Empire

Emperor Akbar (1556-1605), later followed by his son Jahangir (1605-27), displayed an active interest in Catholic Art (M-CHIDA-RAZVI, 2014). In 1580, after inviting the first Jesuit mission from Goa, Akbar ordered his court artists to paint hundreds of iconic paintings (The Heritage Lab, n.d.). The paintings of Jesus, Mary, and many saints in the late Renaissance style adorned albums, books, jewelry, and treaty documents. Murals and relief works depicting Christian subjects were executed in the main halls of at least four imperial palaces, the tomb of Akbar in Sikandra, several royal gardens, and buildings belonging to prominent nobles (Roche, 2012). There were two more Jesuit missions; the one in 1590, which ended abruptly, and the third and the last in 1595, led by Jerome Xavier SJ, lasted till the last surviving Jesuit's death in 1812 of the Mughal Mission. As Bailey points out (Bailey, 1998), "...it is quite possible that the Mughals chose Catholic imagery because Islam itself did not provide an iconographic tradition capable of combating the visually potent pantheon of Hindu deities." The imagery was critical in an empire they ruled that was formed by the Hindu majority



Figure 1, 2. Madonna & Child with Angels (Detail) Collection of Harvard Art Museum. (Right) Martyrdom of Saint Cecilia(Detail) by Jerome (Hieronymus) Source: V&A Collection

4.2 In southern India, Art practices the mural painting tradition in the Church

The scholarship in this domain suggests that the Art practices and the mural painting tradition in the Church became prevalent only after the arrival of the Portuguese in the 15th Century. The documentary evidence suggests that the 7th session of the Synod of Diamper (Geddes, 1694), held in 1599 in the Malabar region, recommended having 'Catholic Art' under the priest's direction. The synod had broader directions with 197 decrees, organized into nine sessions on various aspects of the Christian faith that included sacraments, Eucharist, reformation of ecclesiastical disciplines, customs, and morals (Jose Cyriac, 2020)—consequently, developments of Catholic Art of various kinds, including Frescos, Murals under the jurisdiction of Portuguese Padroado. An excerpt read as “...Furthermore, That the images of our Lord Christ, and our Lady the Glorious Virgin Mary and of the Holy Angels that are painted after our manner, and of other Saints which the church believes to be in Heaven, ought to be kept and used in all decent places not only in the houses of the Faithful but chiefly in Churches and Altars.” (Geddes 1694:129) (Geddes, 1694).”

The embellishment of the altar also must have possibly emerged in this context. The Roman Catholic churches had precedence over such art practices, which later might have influenced other denominations as well. The elaborate wooden structures, typically in European style, with highly decorative details, were primarily found in Latin and Syrian Church altars. That contrasted with simple wooden thronose embellished with floral and geometrical motives found in Orthodox and Jacobite Churches. However, local artists in India could create such details referencing European prototypes by

infusing Christian symbols and themes, resulting in a visual and cultural amalgamation of distinct styles.

The furniture, small-scale devotional objects, containers, paintings, and sculptures created by Indian craftspeople also became a big part of trade with Europe. Such products are often made of highly valued commodities like Ivory, sandalwood, precious metals, and gemstones. For example, African elephant tusks were imported from Portuguese colonies in Africa to India. Indian artists preferred the African Ivory due to less brittleness and qualities offered in achieving a high finish and greater details (Del Bonta, 2021). During this period, Goa served as the center for importing uncarved African Ivory and exporting works of art created by the local artisans in India. One of the studies on Portuguese country trade between 1770 and 1840 estimates that 22,000 tusks were imported annually (C. Pinto, 1994). A significant amount of carved ivory sculptures recovered from one of the wrecks of 1615, the *Nossa Senhora de Luz*, which sunk in the Azores on its way to Portugal from Goa, testify to the volume of this trade.

The trade that involved Art and craft formed a vital factor between Portugal, Spain, and their colonies, resulting in devotional sculptures carved out of Ivory and their embodiment of cross-cultural influences forming new visual traditions informed by European imagery and local idioms. One such prominent example is the ivory statue of Christ as the Good Shepherd, which has elements of Hindu and Buddhist iconography. Catholic art from India, especially the facial features, body language, and attire, has marked Indianisation. (Butler, 1986, p. 57). It is important to note that the Church in South India began such innovations in liturgy and social life during the early period. Ivory's works from various sources exemplify this marked influence and inculturation.



Figure 3a. Ivory Statues of the late 17th and early 18th Century of 'The Christ Child as Good Shepherd' (Good Shepherd Rockery) from left A), h, $17.4 \times 6.8 \times 5$ cm (The Walters Art Museum), B) h, $43 \times 15 \times 5$ cm, (Victoria and Albert Museum, London), C) h, $15 \times 5.5 \times 3.5$ cm (Museum of Catholic Art, Goa).



Figure 3b. The Ivory works from various collections show Mother Mary in multiple forms, with traces of polychrome and gilt.

From left A) Madonna and Child 17th –18th century Ivory, h, 10.9 cm, Collection of Dr. S. K. Bhansali from the New Orleans Museum of Art (NOMA). B) The Immaculate Conception 18th –19th century Ivory, h, 18 cm (NOMA). C) The Immaculate Conception 19th century Ivory, h, 10.16 cm, (NOMA). D) Madonna of the Immaculate 17th Century, $26.1 \times 7 \times 5.4$ cm (The Walters Art Museum), E) Virgin of the Immaculate Conception, 13.2 cm, (The Walters Art Museum), F) Virgin of the Immaculate Conception, (Sri Lankan artist), ca. 1690–1710 Ivory, carved, gilded, and painted, h. 25.65 cm, (The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore), G) Nirmala Matha, ivory statue, created in early 20th Century Mysore style, (Museum of Catholic Art, Goa) The last work Artist seems to have been inspired by the famous royal painter of Travancore, Raja Ravi Varma's oleographs that were very popular during the late 19th and early 20th Century.



Figure 4. shows various wooden statues of the 18th-century Portuguese in India, with traces of polychrome and gilt. Catholic art from this period is noted for European references, Christian themes, and subjects with Indian characteristics and features—a collection of Dr. S. K. Bhansali from the New Orleans Museum of Art.

4.3 Legacy of Jesuits' Mission in South Canara

Based on the repeated plea by the Catholics of the Canara coast, Pope Leo XIII entrusted South Canara and Malabar to the 'Society of Jesus' on Sept. 27, 1878. Pro Vicar Msgr. Nicholas Pagan, who came in from Goa, had the formal handing over of the Mangalore Mission in 1878 to the Jesuit Fathers. Four Jesuit Fathers arrived from Italy on Dec. 31, 1878. Fathers Angelo Mutti, Angelo Maffei, Augustus Muller, Quintin Sani, and lay Brothers Francis Zamboni and Matthew Meneghetti. Fr. Urban Stein joined them, and Fr. Otho Ehrle of the Bombay Jesuit Mission was sent to help start the new Mission. The Italian Jesuits played an essential role in the Mangalorean Catholic community's education, health, and social welfare during the Mangalore Mission (Farias, 2006).

The Jesuits were to introduce the first higher education in Mangalore. They built St. Aloysius College in 1880 and St. Aloysius Chapel in 1884. It is at Lighthouse Hill, located inside Aloysius College in the heart of present-day Mangaluru. Its southern wing is dedicated to prayer purposes. Fr. Antonio Moscheni S. J., an Italian priest and trained Artist, adorned the entire Chapel with fascinating frescos and paintings in two years and five months. The murals are fresco-style, similar to the Sistine Chapel of Rome, and have a Baroque likeness.

4.3.1 Antonio Moscheni

He was born on Jan. 17, 1854 (Wikipedia contributors, 2023) in a small hamlet called Stezzano near Bergamo in Italy. He was fortunate that his artistic talents were discovered early. He was sent to the famed Accademia Carrara in Bergamo (Antonio Moscheni - Jesuit Painter, 2017). He studied under accomplished masters, learned advanced techniques, and soon acquired considerable proficiency in painting. Antonio's paintings were exhibited in Milan in 1883 (De Gubernatis & Matini, 1889) and later in Turin in 1884, which earned him recognition as a professional painter.

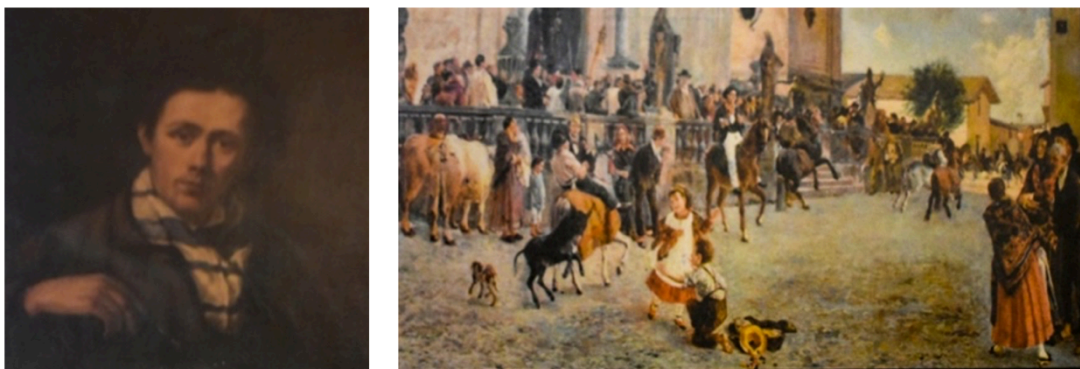


Figure 5, 6. Antonio Moscheni as a young painter. (Right) The Village Square of Stezzano, 1885

He spent a year in Rome studying Michelangelo's masterpieces at the Vatican. Fresco paintings have now become his passion. When he returned to Bergamo, his abilities in mural painting were in great demand. He got commissions from many churches in the city and the surrounding places. The Sanctuary painting of the Church Madonna dei Campi in his hometown, Stezzano, is admired as a great work (Antonio Moscheni - Jesuit Painter, 2017). However, in 1889, at age 35, Antonio renounced his promising artistic career to enter the Society of Jesus. He enrolled himself as a lay brother.



*Figure 7, Fra. Antonio Moscheni
Self Portrait*

Nevertheless, it was not the end of his creative talents. Upon completing the novitiate, his superiors, aware of his immense potential, sent him to Croatia, Albania, and Yugoslavia to work in Jesuit churches. On his return, they sent him to Piacenza and Modena. They also ordered him to paint several churches in his native town of Bergamo and the Chapel of St. Aloysius College in India. In 1898, he came to India and expected to return to Italy once the St. Aloysius project was completed. However, his reputation spread in India as it had at home. He was requested to decorate the Fr. Muller Hospital Chapel at Kankanady, Agrar Church in Bantwal, and the St Joseph's Seminary of Mangalore. Later, he was invited to paint frescoes at Bon Jesus & St. Francis Xavier Cathedral in Goa and Holy Name Cathedral in Mumbai in 1903. On Bishop Matheus De Oliveira Xavier's request to the Jesuit Order in Rome, Moscheni was directed to paint the Basilica of Santa Cruz at Fort Kochi (Priyadershini, 2015).

Vasco-de-Gama has been buried in a nearby church. Based on the directive and a personal invitation by the Bishop, Fra. Moscheni moved to Fort Kochi in 1903 with his close assistant Francis De Gama from Mangalore. Moscheni fell ill with dysentery while the paintings on the basilica ceiling were in progress, perhaps due to passive food poisoning over many years of exposure to paints and plaster. However, he battled against the illness with impressive fortitude and finished the job. Within a month, four days before the Church's consecration, he breathed his last on Nov. 15, 1905. He was said to have been buried at the Carmelite Monastery in Manjummel, present-day Ernakulam in Kerala.

The murals and paintings on the St. Aloysius chapel started in March 1899 (St. Aloysius (Deemed to be University), n.d.) and were completed in August 1901. The Chapel attracts thousands of visitors annually—the vibrancy of the colors and the detail of Moscheni's Art marvel at each visit. The Chapel is much acclaimed despite its ordinary location and architectural style. Besides many domestic tourists, innumerable schoolchildren visit from local and other parts of the state and the country (Jonson, n.d.). It is not astounding that visitors from over sixty countries visit this cultural honor. The artworks in the Chapel's interior can be understood into the following categories: the nave (large middle hall), the aisles (both sides of the nave), the sanctuary (the raised platform inside which encompasses the main altar), and the balcony on the first floor above the nave.

Chapel paintings have three types: Frescoes, decorative artwork, and canvas. Frescoes are murals painted on the wet lime wall using natural pigments. The walls on both the aisles and pillars are embellished with frescoes. The pillars' colors resemble marble or granite using fresco techniques, and the decorative borders are painted around them. Canvases are painted using oil colors (J. Pinto, 2012). The stretched linen cloth is prepared to hold color layers, mixed with linseed oil, and the paintings are completed. The images on the nave ceiling and the balcony are painted with canvas panels and raised to the ceiling. After carefully fixing panels, the borders and embellishments are painted around them. The Chapel contains around 600 sq. Mts. of fresco and about 400 sq. Mts. of canvas paintings.

Murals in the Chapel narrate two life stories – that of Jesus, from the Presentation of Mary at the Temple to the Ascension of Jesus, and that of St. Aloysius. St. Aloysius's life is depicted along with the nave's ceilings. In contrast, the life and miracles of Jesus are painted along the walls, ceiling, and the inner portion of the aisle pillars. The Gospel stories greet the visitors when they step into the Chapel.

However, the central ceiling consists of canvases from the life of St. Aloysius, to whom the Chapel is dedicated

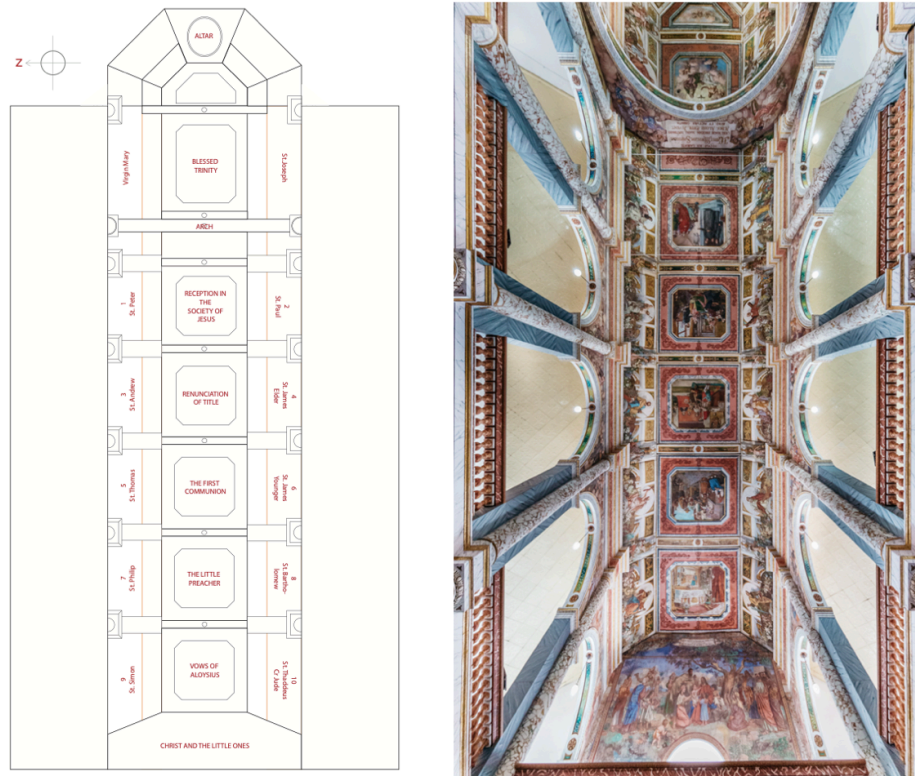


Figure 8, 9. The ceiling positions of St. Aloysius Chapel (St. Aloysius (Deemed to be University), n.d.). (Right) Views of the ceiling from the nave



Figure 10, Details of the ceiling from the nave



Figure 11. Holy Trinity, the painting above the sanctuary (Central), Virgin Mary (left panel), St. Joseph (Right panel)



Figure 12. St. Aloysius Chapel, rare side Mural, Jesus with the Childers (Regarded as one of the best frescos by Artist



Figure 13. St. Aloysius Chapel, interior details show the right side aisle, balcony, and ceiling above.

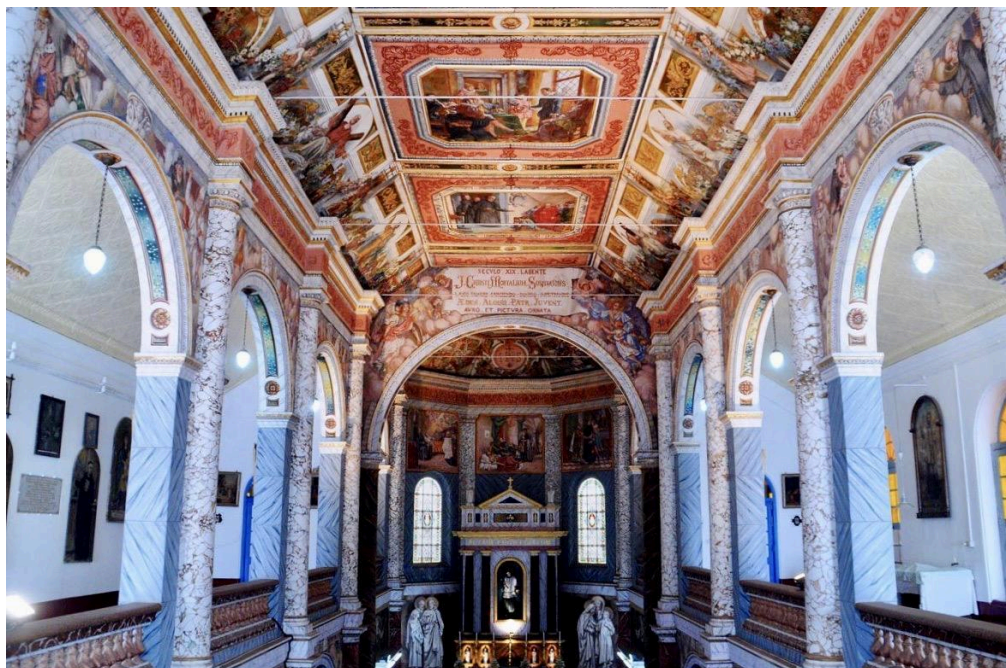


Figure 14. St. Aloysius Chapel, interior details show the altar from the balcony with the ceiling.

A close observation of the entire quantum of works reveals Fra. Antonio Moscheni's single-handed efforts in conceptualizing the layout and the subject matter. A recent event was hosted on Feb. 13, 2020,

to inaugurate the St Aloysius College museum (Aloyseum), dedicated to Moscheni for his extraordinary contribution (Naina J A, 2020). However, he must have trained many inmates and inspired several apprentices while completing this humongous task of hanging on the bamboo scaffoldings. This region's present Catholic Art practitioners hail their roots in this endeavor. The statuary practice was established through assistants and helpers holding paint bowls and ladders for the master painter Fra. Antonio Moscheni. Albert Martis was one of those young boys who continued practicing Catholic Art under the Jesuit fathers' encouragement.

4.4 St. Joseph Asylum Industrial Workshops

This is located at Fr Muller Road, St Joseph Nagar, Attavar, Mangalore, Karnataka. Fr. Diamanti was the pioneer and architect of the Jeppu Institutions. A Catechumenate was opened on the seminary grounds in 1885; This Centre was later renamed St. Joseph's Asylum for the Sick and Poor. It was open to all people irrespective of caste and creed—an orphanage for boys and girls and a refuge for poor widows. The children were taught many subjects, including Drawing and Music, according to their ability and aptitude. The orphanage children were engaged daily in useful outdoor occupations to train them effectively. The girls had to do needle handcrafts in the afternoons. Fr. Diamanti built workshops that included a foundry, smithy, a mechanical workshop, and occupational training like carpentry, shoe maker's shops, and a statuary shop. Though the resource people training in these workshops is unclear, one apparent name is Francis de Gama of Jeppu. His artistic career spanned over forty years until the late 1920s, assisting Fra. Moscheni while painting at St. Aloysius Chapel from his adolescence.



Figure 15-18. A few articles were made and exhibited at St. Joseph's Asylum Industrial Workshops and the present SJITC campus.

After Fr. Diamanti's death, The Orphanage and the Catechumenate owed much to Br. Visuvasam and Br. Fojliem. The latter was the guiding star from 1889 to 1931 and the real manager for over 44 years. The Diocesan authorities were given the Asylum Workshops in 1923 when the Mangalore diocese was

bifurcated into Mangalore and Calicut dioceses. The Diocese of Mangalore has founded the St Joseph Industrial Training Centre (SJITC) to impart occupational training in Technical Education to the weaker sections of society. It is situated on the sprawling premises of St. Joseph's Asylum Industrial Workshops.

4.5 Albert Martis & Co



Figure 19, Artist Albert Martes (Artist)

The completion of St. Aloysius Chapple might have halted the art and painting activities. However, there would have been a demand for Statuary and Catholic Art in the newly built churches around many Parishes. Albert Martis might have found a prospect for practicing Catholic Art in his early career as a teenager, beginning statuary and mural painting at the premises of Milagres in the early decades of the 20th Century. Many creative pupils might have found shelter at Albert Martis & Co. The one-of-a-kind practice emerged in the early decades due to the late 19th-century missionary activity in Mangalore—two boys who worked for him and learned the trade tricks established independently. The first was Simon Sylvester Rasquinha (1910-1987), who worked for nine years, starting at 12, perhaps from 1922 to 1931. The second person to branch out on his own was Peter Fernandes (1914-1999). The Albert Martis & Co., which bridged the catholic art practice gap between the Jesuit missionaries and the present-day practitioners, played an important role. His business might have closed in the early 1930s, establishing his assistants as independent practitioners.



Figure 20. Simon Rasquinha is Seated (extreme left), Peter Fernandes (Centre) on the right, Benito, a staff member, On the top right, Albert Martis (White striped shirt), His Son (In black suit), and the son in law adjacent to him at the statuary studios of Albert Martis & Co., Milagres in c. 1925

Three significant places mark the current statuary practice in Mangaluru. First is Simon & Co at Rasquinha Lane, Capitanio. The second is Pietro Statuary Co at Silva Road. The third is Bondel-centric Practitioners, which includes the training activities at St. Joseph's Asylum for the Sick and Poor workshops. It is interesting to trace the origins of statuary and its growth over the Century to its present status in Mangalore.

4.6 Simon & Co (1932)

Founded in the first half of the 20th Century, Simon & Co was a household name in and around South Canara among liturgical institutions. Simon Sylvester Rasquinha, with a friend Benito, a newly converted Christian, established Simon & Co in 1932 (SAC, n.d.). One year later, Benito left the association with Simon & Co. due to migration to another place. The establishment operated from the Milagres compound with a handful of workers.

The workshop shifted to Capitanio in 1951, where Simon set up a residence and ample space for manufacturing. He continued to have his sales and display outfit at Milagres till 1957. Simon & Co team celebrated the Silver Jubilee on Feb. 7, 1957, Golden Jubilee on Feb. 7, 1982, and Diamond Jubilee on May 1, 1992, at Angelore Church. The present name, Simon Art Co, was amended in 2007 on its Platinum Jubilee, which encompasses the cluster of initiatives by the Family members. The first and most creative part of the business is Catholic artwork. Due to its visual prominence, the lane adjoining is named Simon Rasquinha Lane at Angelore.



Figure 21. Diocesan Eucharistic Congress Exhibition of Catholic Art (1935)



Figure 22. Inauguration of the new workshop at Rasquinha Lane, at Angelore, on Jan. 14, 1951



Figures 23-25. The terracotta Statues of all legacy projects are kept as master references at Simon Art Co. Premises



Figure 26 -28. The terracotta Statues of all legacy projects kept as master references at Simon Art Co. Premises.

4.6.1 Simon Sylvester Rasquinha



Figure 29, Simon Sylvester Rasquinha in his youth

He was born on May 22, 1910, at Kaidel, a neighborhood of Bajel and Kankanady. He hails from a humble family who worked for local statuary in his teens, absorbing art and statue-making elements in the mid-1920s. He was fortunate to be mentored by Francis de Gama of Jeppu, a close assistant of Antonio Moscheni (1854-1905) in his youth. Wood carving attracted him naturally, being from a family of skilled carpenters. His life-size crucifixion statues in teak wood are his best works adorning the shrines. Simon was a specialist in the art of painting. He created stage scenes and oil portraits at the Don Bosco Hall in Mangalore. The name 'Simon' soon reached far and wide in the Indian subcontinent and many countries overseas. As an artist, perhaps Simon's hour of glory came when he was called upon to retouch the immortal Artworks at St. Aloysius Chapel.

He was a master creator of many landmark projects of Catholic Art and a well-reputed songster creator of scene backdrops and props for the stage. He was instrumental in founding the 'Konkani Natak Saba.' He was well-known among Konkani Catholic households for his active working life spanning over half a century as an artist and sculptor. His residence at Simon Lane, Angelore, is named "SILALIS."

Simon married Alice on May 2, 1938, and they had four daughters and three sons in their happy married life. Arthur Rasquinha, the fourth of Simon's seven children, is the mentor of Simon & Co.; till 2010, he took over from his father in 1973. Simon S Rasquinha, the legendary Artist, died at 77 on Sat, Aug. 29, 1987, and was laid to rest at the Angelore parish cemetery on Aug. 31.

4.6.2 Arthur Paul Rasquinha

He was born in 1946. After completing High School, he trained for a year under L. K. Shevgoor, a master painter of Mangalore. After finishing University in 1968, he worked under his illustrious father at Simon & Co. for five years. He learned the skills before taking over the business In May 1973. According to the changes in Church Liturgy brought about by the II Vatican Council, a growing need arose to provide Catholic Art items like Mass altar tables, Ambo and Tabernacle stands, Lecterns, Celebrants' seats, and Baptismal fonts. Arthur decided to meet this need and started an annex to Simon & Co., a subsidiary unit called Simon Art Marble, in 1975. Since May 1975, it has provided requisite Sanctuary items and entire Church floorings in highly polished Marble, Granite, and Limestone. This mechanized unit for processing stone slabs is considered the first in coastal Karnataka. Keeping with modern technology, In 1995, They started making statues in Fibre Reinforced Plastic (FRP), commonly known as Fibreglass, for the first time in Mangalore, which became popular. It occasionally produces statues of non-religious themes like Freedom fighters and politicians for its clientele with an informative online presence.

Arthur's wife Merlyn – who studied at Sir J. J. School of Art, Mumbai - is the first qualified woman commercial artist in Mangalore. She founded & ran an annex called Simon Art Pottery, which produces fine pieces of terracotta Art Pottery & Jewellery that became popular. She has been active in training young women and creative pursuits. They have a daughter, Mangal, and two sons, Amrut and Ashwath (Shet, 2015).



Figure 30. Arthur Rasquinha and family at Simon Art Co. (Ashwath on the extreme left)

When business demands grew, and specialized handling became the rule a few years ago, Simon & Co., first established in 1932, became 'Simon Art Co.' in 2007. Now, it is proudly run by the second son of a third-generation family, Mr. Ashwath Rasquinha.

4.6.3 Ashwath Rasquinha

He did his Master of Fine Arts in Sculpture from the College of Fine Arts, Bengaluru, in 2006. Subsequently, two other sculptor friends founded a studio in Domlur, Bengaluru. They executed works on the commission until they returned home in 2009. He formally took over the business from his father, Arthur, on May 1, 2010, and has carried forward the fine statuary tradition. He has been instrumental in introducing newer technologies, processes, mechanical tools & equipment in the statue production process. He has created the infrastructure necessary for the business and practice, thereby saving precious time & labor. Ashwath designs and conceptualizes Art for Churches. He has an aptitude for classical art and merges old and newer forms to create traditional yet modern designs. He has made all the facilities available to train and retain artisans at the studio. Today, he is proud to have a cohesive group of artists & craftsmen trained in their studios to bring the finest in Catholic Art (Viegas, 2020).



Figure 31. shows a few statue projects completed at Simon Art Co. (Fiberglass)



Figure 32, 33. Holy Cross Church, Cordel, and Lady of Fatima Church Perampalli, Recent projects by Simon Art Co.



Figure 34,35. The Lady of Mercy Church, Fajir, and St Joseph's Church, Bajpe, recent projects by Simon Art Co



Figure 36, 37. Holy-Redeemer-Church,-Belthangady and the main altar's detail, and completed work, by Simon Art Co.



Figure 38 39. The Holy Family's panel and the crib set are projects by Simon Art Co.



Figures 40, 41. Statue of the Saint, and non-religious subjects' statues at the studio.



Figure 42. shows a few panels of the way of the cross set.

4.6.4 The Artists and the workshops

They are the backbones of Catholic art in practice. Simon understood this aspect very early in his career. He had established a well-equipped systemic studio for various purposes. Over five decades of active practice, he has inspired, trained, and groomed several artists and artisans. The very reason it has stood the test of time. Some crucial artists have been mentioned in their archives.



Figures 43, 44. Senior Sculptor Henry Siqueira in 1958 (left) and 1980 (right) working on the plaster & clay modeling

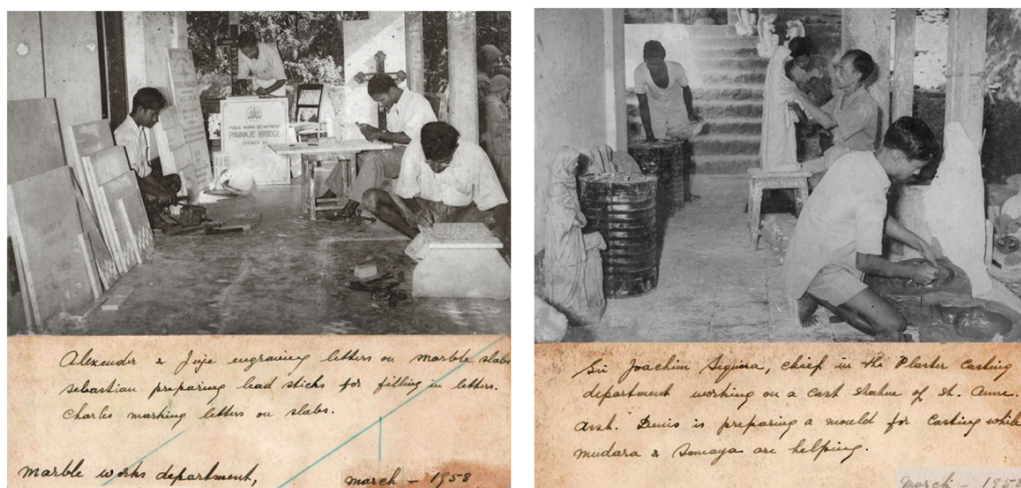


Figure 45, 46. Artist Workings various aspects of the statutory and other related work for the Catholic and other community

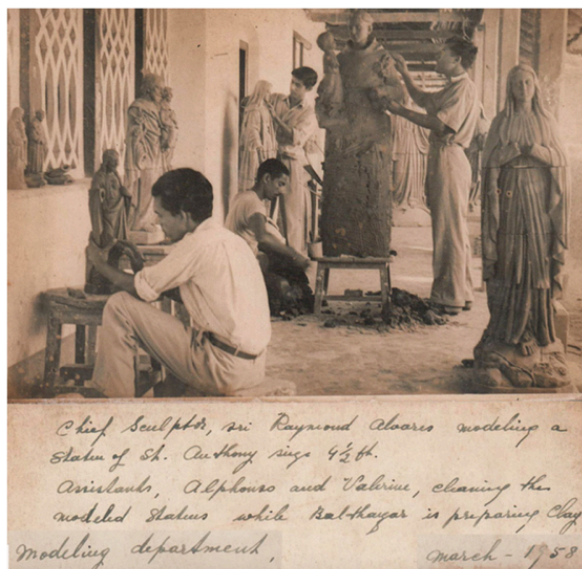


Figure 47, 48. Chief artist Raymond Alvares and Michael Vegas with other artists



Figure 49-51. Senior And recent Artists at work in the Painting studio,



Figure 52. An Altarpiece executed for Most holy redeemer Church, Belthangady, Dakshin Karnataka.



Figure 53-55. A technician is casting the fiberglass statue at the studio and a statue after casting.
(Right) Sri. Mantu, a senior artist from West Bengal, is in front of the founder's bust at Simon Art Co.



Figure 56, 57. Artists from other parts of the country working on the clay modeling of St. Mary and St. Antony 10. '(to be molded in Plaster of Paris and subsequently cast in FRP)

4.7 Pietro Statuary Co. (1932)

After bifurcating from his mentor, Albert Martis, a well-known artist and veteran statue maker, Peter Fernandes established an independent statuary called Pietro Statuary Company in 1932, Kankanady Mangaluru (Official Website, n.d.). Subsequently, in 1945, it shifted to Silva Lane in Kankanady and established Modern Cement Works. It is one of the leading businesses in Statue manufacturing and Art and Architectural products—their expertise in designing and manufacturing RCC products, Monuments, and murals for Religious and Non-religious Institutions.

Few landmark projects and monumental works are at Pietro Statuary's credit are:

- Eleven Statues at Bendoor Church in Terra Cotta in 1932 at Mangalore
- Gateway of Dharmasthala (Design & Construction) in 1962 at Dharmasthala
- Shrine of Fatima, Retreat House (Design & Construction) in 1963 at Mangalore
- Mining Model Kudremukh Iron Ore Mining in 1999 at Kudremukh, Karnataka
- St. Aloysius College Chapel (Repainting of Arches, Columns, Altar) in 2000
- Oil on Canvas Life History of Fr. Urban Stine in 2003 at Mangalore
- Milagres Church's Sanctuary Painting in 2004 at Mangalore
- Kulshekar Church's Sanctuary Painting in 2007 at Mangalore
- RCC Balusters, Railings, Pillars of Heritage Museum of Holland in 2009

- Bejai Church's Sanctuary Painting in 2012 Mangalore
- Dandeli Church Stations of the Cross in RCC in 2012 at Dandeli
- Church in Vasco Mysteries (Fibreglass) in 2013 Goa

4.7.1 Peter Fernandes

He was born to Albert and Flora Fernandes on Mar. 28, 1914. At 18, Peter used his work experience to set up his company, Pietro Statuary, on Aug. 15, 1932. He identified his art practices with Italian Renaissance art, which explains his firm's name. It has been eighty-nine years since its establishment. Being gifted with an innovative mind and skillful hands, Peter made his presence felt quickly. Due to this visible business's prominence, Silva Lane is named after him. His custom-designed church paintings, monuments, statues in churches and convents, and memorial inscriptions stand testimony to his oeuvre. Peter and his wife Christine's eldest son, Antony Fernandes, the second-generation mentor, started working with his father in 1967, before Peter's demise in 1999. As the eldest among Peter's eight children, he continued the legacy.



Figure 59. Oil painting on canvas at St. Antony Ashram Mangalore (1950)

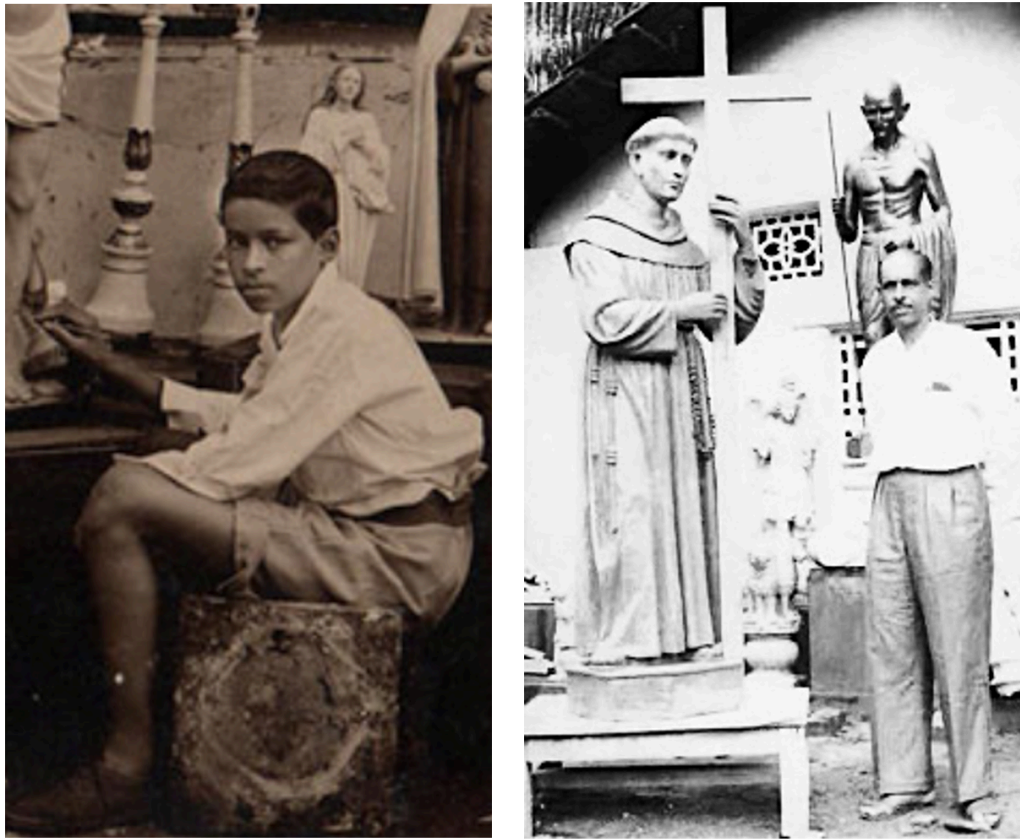


Figure 60, 61. Young Peter Fernandes, in 1925, working as staff at Albert Martes Co. (Right) State of Gonsalo Gracia (Teak Wood) by Peter 1962-63 at Mumbai

4.7.2 Antony Fernandes



Figure 62, Antony Fernandes

He was born in 1945, is the third child among Peter's eight children. As a child, he was groomed by his talented father, who assigned him small tasks like correcting the statues' nails. That is how he picked up the nuances of creative works' without formal training. Antony began understanding the artworks by observations and slowly gained confidence and expertise through practice. Antony was obliged to shoulder the mantle while pursuing his Undergraduate graduation in 1967 due to his father's sudden illness. Even otherwise, he had plans to join the business soon after his BSc (Roche, 2012).

Like his father, some of Antony's works stand testimony to his creativity and propensity for perfection. He was responsible for restoring the arches' paintings, pillars, and St Aloysius chapel's altar with finesse. The work began in 1999; It took nearly two years to complete. Antony married Muriel, and they have two sons, Keron Peter Fernandes, an engineer inclined toward Art. Keron married Yvonne and has a son named Kayden. Antony's second and youngest son, Mithun Fernandes, has been active in Modern Cement Concrete Works' works since the early 2000s.

4.7.3 Mithun Mark Fernandes

A talented young artist who earned his diploma in Fine Arts from The British Institutes Mumbai in 2007, he inherited the genes of creativity from his father and grandfather. He has been evincing keen interest in continuing the proud inheritance. He, along with his elder brother Keron, assisted in studio responsibility. This business employs individuals dedicated to their respective roles. It puts efforts into achieving its founder's shared vision and goals.



Figure 63. shows some Concrete cement projects executed at Pietro Statuary & Co. and Modern Cement Concrete Works.



Figure 64-65. Some cement Concrete projects were executed at Pietro Statuary & Co, Modern Cement Concrete Works.



Figure 66-68. Some fiberglass projects were done at Pietro Statuary & Co, Modern Cement Concrete Works.

With the third generation taking up the mantle, the legacy will show the same dedication as Pietro Statuary and Modern Cement Concrete Works.

4.8 Bondel-centric Catholic Art practices

4.8.1 Raymond Eugene Alvares

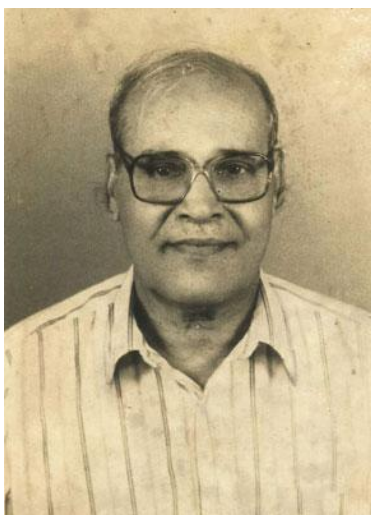


Figure 69, Raymond Alvares in '80s

Born on Aug. 31, 1924, after finishing primary education in the Bondel parish school, he helped his family in their fieldwork near Kavor in Mangalore. That is when he scooped some clay from the near-dry bed of the Kavor lake and modeled a crucifix when he was just 17. It impressed the priest Rv. Fr. Sylvester Monteiro S J. later became Principal and Rector of St Aloysius College and Provincial of Karnataka Jesuits. Fr Sylvester put Raymond in touch with Simon Rasquinha, who had his statutory workshop at Milagres. Later, Simon moved his workshop to a place near Capitanio.

Young Raymond initially walked the distance between Bondel and Milagres and later cycled to Capitanio. Under Simon's able guidance, Raymond evolved into a model-maker. He was privy to various statues in clay and wood executed at Simon & Co. He worked for Simon from 1941 to 1980. On retiring, Raymond set up his work shed attached to his residence close to Bondel Church. He was a sound sculptor and painter. One of his specialties was wood carving out of timber blocks. He is

well known for carving crucifixes of various sizes. He was said to have had a collection of Don Bosco calendars for references rich in Western Art visuals (Monteiro, 2018).



Figure 70, 71. Raymond Alvares working on the clay model (St. Antony 4.5') 1958, (Right) Raymond Alvares with his family members, teakwood crucified Christ (early 90's)

Some of his notable works are the ones he did for Bondel church, Infant Jesus Shrine at Bikarnakatte, and another Mother of Sorrows church in Udupi. About 40 years ago, Bondel parish first became host to statuary by setting up Raymond Alvares' business. On his death in 2000, the statuary works closed. The new practitioner, Mr. Harold D'Souza, has restarted the new statuary business opposite Raymond Alvares' compound. This is a brief account of one statuary's eclipse and the rise of another in Bondel Parish.

4.8.2 Harold D'Souza

Fondly known as Harry, born on Nov. 26, 1960, Harry did his BA at St Aloysius College. He joined the seminary, which he had to exit after a year due to health issues. Harry set up a steel and aluminum fabrication workshop in 1984 and diverted into making statues. In 2017, where the new statuary workshop is at present.



Figure 72, 73 Harold D'Souza of Bondel parish with Bishops, and the statue of St. Laurence

He began making horses for the niche market and the widely used angel statues. Bondel parish is one of his earliest patrons. Besides the old Jesus crucified statue (Made by Raymond Alvares), he has installed St. Lawrence's statue for the newly inaugurated school building. Harry's latest works include The fibreglass statue of Jesus on the old wooden cross in the sanctuary of Bondel Church in mid-March 2018—the massive Pieta statue in Fibreglass. The cluster of figures related to the story of Lucia, Jacinta, and Francisco, who witnessed the apparition of Mother Mary in Fatima, are a few in the Fiber-reinforced plastic (FRP). With his new workshop, he continues the legacy of Bondel, a statuary artist who was left orphaned after Raymond Alvares' demise in 2000.

4.8.3 History of the wooden cross in Bondel Church



Figure 74, Alter Cross at Bondel church, Mangaluru.

The wooden body on the cross in Bondel church, Perhaps the statue carved in Goa, had detachable limbs. Unlike other crucifixes, where both legs are nailed to the cross with a single nail, the Bondel Church's statue had two feet nailed separately. It was stored in a large wooden casket before being installed at the newly built Church in the mid-1980s. It was only taken out for the Holy Week ceremony. The crucifixion scene was enacted at the time of Jesus. On Good Fridays, a group of people dressed like Roman soldiers and the people of Israel used to take down the wooden statue; likewise, the inert, dead body of Jesus from the cross was narrated in the bible and reverentially placed in front of the congregation for the adoration. In 2018, the old wooden cross was replaced by the fibreglass figure. Like many such works of Catholic Art lying in the custody of the Church and institutions, the wooden statue might get a new lease of life in the local museums due to its artistic and heritage value.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

In the Western world, most Christian Artworks are created in a religious context. The patronage has also recognized its distinct artistic quality and influence. Catholic Art practices came along with missionary activities. One such Spanish Jesuit artist, archaeologist, and historian, Enrique Heras, S J (1888-1955), who greatly admired Indian culture, encouraged native artists from the Christian community to adopt Indian art forms and symbols to express Christian themes. That brought a distinct identity to mainstream Art practice. He was recognized as the 'Father of Christian Art' in India. In the wake of the independence struggles and nationalist movements, cultures perceived as foreign to the natives were under siege. Post WWII, many countries achieved independence from their former colonizers, bringing new discussions on religious contextualization of the native cultures in former colonies, leading to deliberations on religious and liturgical practices by the leadership of the Catholic Church.

The 2nd Ecumenical Council of the Vatican II held between 1962 and 1965, proposed several reforms to the Catholic Church according to each continent's needs and native contexts. In between, the Synod of Diamper (1599), which led to several innovations in liturgical practices, including the start of frescos and Catholic Art, and the latest Special Asian Synod held in Rome in 1998 (Paul-II, 1999), to implement the directives of 'The Vatican II' attuned to the native cultural practices, the Catholic Art has come a long way with its reforms and contextualization of the faith. Passive inculturation has been a reality for the Indian Christian community since the beginning; it has enabled the community to be rooted in its cultural milieu and come to terms with society (Amaladass, 2008, p. 500). It experiences a sense of belongingness in its immediate sociocultural realities. It feels confident in assimilating the core of its faith in the context of living.

Catholic art practices in India are unique due to their cultural assimilations over the centuries. Craftsmanship is a significant aspect of this practice. Many practitioners who honed their skills through perseverance kept this art form alive and evolving. Their histories primarily survive in published catalogs and personal photographs, often with their creations and sometimes with family members. Once embellished, high pedestals and altars of the religious shrines, without claiming their due recognition, might find their new life through research and documentation efforts by scholars. Studying such unknown occupations and legacies has been the primary motivation for this case study. It is also essential to encourage the future generation to look into occupations that primarily depend on human creativity and craft, with spiritual inclination. Professional education bridges the gap between history, current cultural practices, and knowledge. The establishment of the Museum of Christian Art (MoCA) in Goa in 1994, the first of its kind in Asia, for the conserved heritage artifacts, and the recent setting up of the Museum of Christian Art in 2011 by the Archdiocesan Heritage Committee (AHC) at Goregaon, Mumbai, the hopes on conservation, documentation of native catholic art is high.

Catholic art practitioners used traditional materials and processes due to the lack of innovative options. Based on the artwork's requirement, statue makers chose materials like Stone, Wood, Terracotta (baked clay), and Stucco (specially prepared lime composition). Economic liberalization and globalization paved the path for advanced materials and technology in our neighboring markets. Comfortable and cheaper options quickly replaced traditional materials, toil, and the delicacy they offered. Artists began adopting quickly procurable and economical materials and skilled labor that inevitably brought division between manager and maker. The makers might not be emotionally connected to the Art practice, and the hazardous nature of materials also contributes to the shortage of experienced artisans. The innovations contributed to simplifying the process to achieve a resemblance

to classical Artworks. However, it has lost the qualities admired as classical in many recent examples. We must also revisit the traditional materials that offer the quality of classical Arts. By achieving this, Catholic Art would serve a much larger purpose along with the community's religious and spiritual needs.

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