

**THE CONGREGATION OF HOLY CROSS AND  
THE HAFLONG PREFECTURE**

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by

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## **THE HOLY CROSS CONGREGATION AND THE HAFLONG PREFECTURE**

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### **I**

When India became independent in August 1947, it became necessary to create a new ecclesiastical unit. It was not found convenient for the two dioceses of Dacca and Chittagong in East Pakistan to continue to care for its mission stations and parishes across the new border in Agartala, Badarpur, Haflong, Aizawl, Kolasib and Silchar. In view of this, Bishop Alfred LePailleur, C.S.C., of Chittagong petitioned the Holy See in 1948 that the missions of his diocese and those of Dacca situated in India be detached from the existing dioceses and constituted a separate unit.<sup>1</sup> He put forward the suggestion after a visit to Montreal in late 1848, where he had gone to canvas support for the proposed division. Bishop LePailleur wanted the Holy Cross Congregation to continue to work in the new unit, which to him was "the best territory we have in the entire Diocese, both in view of prospects of numerous conversions among its peoples, and its climate and other advantages, such as summer resorts in the hills and the absence of the ever haunting mud of Bengal." He was of the view that in the course of the hundred years that Holy Cross had been working in Bengal, "the Congregation did never experience anywhere the lure of such a promising field for conversion as in the new Ecclesiastical Unit, the future of which we nursed with such high hopes, and which the Holy See is ready to entrust to us."<sup>2</sup> He had already received acceptance of responsibility from the Provincial Councils of both the Priests and Brothers of the Canadian Province of the Holy Cross Congregation, as well as from its General Council.<sup>3</sup>

LaPailleur, who had often visited the missions in the proposed unit, emphasized the need of the Holy Cross Congregation to accept the division and take charge of its management. He wrote a series of letters to the Superior General, Fr. Christopher O'Toole, and in one of these he reflects:<sup>4</sup>

There is no doubt that if we refuse to accept the division that we are proposing in the Lushai Hills area, the Salesians would seize it immediately and give us in exchange that part of Krishnagar which is in the Backergunj District and the Faridpur District. We have already been very generous towards them in the past by giving them in 1889 the beautiful country of Shillong where they are doing such beautiful work among the Khasis of Shillong, whereas we, in our spirit of sacrifice, have accepted to live in the mud instead of keeping the greater portion of our territory in the healthy mountains of Assam. If we refuse to accept the Cachar and Lushai Hills, as I see it, we shall again sacrifice ourselves and continue to stick in the mud of a soil barren of conversion.

The Bishop was sorry to learn that despite the readiness of Canadian confreres to help out in personnel and finance, some Holy Cross missionaries had written a proposal to abandon the Lushai Hills apostolate and then to focus on Backergunj and Faridpur. Replying to queries from the Superior General, LePailleur informed that there would be no restrictions on admission of missionaries into the Lushai Hills; that he was considering opening centres at Kolasib and Chhawtrui where buildings would be simple and according to the local style, that industrial schools could be opened in each centre and directed by the Brothers, which the Government would very much welcome; and as work progressed he envisaged the opening of as many orphanages as required. Though much of the 'promise' would come from the Mizos inhabiting this district, he also gave some attention to reorganizing the Cachar District and makes mention of working among the Nagas around Haflong where the sisters of Our Lady of Missions (RNDM) were already at work.<sup>5</sup> The Bishop's attendance in the General chapter of 1950 got his Congregation's assurance of support and it was decreed that the missionaries who would work in the new ecclesiastical unit of Assam would be a separate district of the

### Religious Vicariate of Chittagong.<sup>6</sup>

Meanwhile the Vatican, which had initially considered the erection of a new diocese, had on reconsideration settled for a Prefecture Apostolic. The reasons for this were the small number of Catholics in the proposed diocese and the absence of a Church at Haflong suitable for erection into a Cathedral.<sup>7</sup> Orders were later given to table the entire project for some time, as the Apostolic Delegate in India had felt that it was not wise to "proceed too hastily" with this and other proposed divisions, and that it was preferable to study each individual project very carefully. Lepailleur's presence in Rome was required for a resumption of the case and hastening a favorable decision.<sup>8</sup> He did this on his return from Montreal in late 1948.

## II

Eventually the Prefecture of Haflong was erected by the "Bulla Fit Nonnumquam" dated 17 January 1952. The "Decretum" of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide appointed Fr. George Breen Prefect Apostolic on 21 March 1952.<sup>9</sup> The first information of this to the elder Breen came from a cable sent on 3 April 1952 by the Superior General. A second cable was received by him some days later sent from the Provincial. Breen presented his credentials to the Archbishop of Dacca on 5 May 1952, "who received my profession of faith and listened whilst I read the two oaths."<sup>10</sup> The Prefecture was assigned four districts, South Cachar, United North Cachar and Mikir Hills, the Lushai Hills and Tripura, and entrusted to the Canadian Province of the Holy Cross Congregation. Breen recalls that his first act was to appoint Rev. Aime Duclos as Pro-Prefect and that Duclos and Revs. Louis Faineau and R. Lavoie were members of his first Council to assist him in the administration of the Prefecture.<sup>11</sup>

Born on 10 December 1896, in Wareham, Massachusetts, George Breen entered the Holy Cross Novitiate in April 1918, pronounced his perpetual vows on 23 July 1923, and was

ordained a priest on 24 January 1924. Breen came as a missionary to India in 1927. He acted for some time as Vicar General of the Chittagong diocese and as Administrator took charge of the diocese upon the resignation of Bishop Alfred LePailleur until Archbishop Graner was appointed Apostolic Administrator. As a missionary he had spent many years in Haflong and in the Lushai Hills before he was called to be the Prefect apostolic.<sup>12</sup> His headquarters was Haflong in the North Cachar Hills, and he lived in Vandaville Bungalow, a quaint and simple structure, close to the lake and a good walk below St. Agnes Convent. The school had started in 1918 and was meant for Anglo-Indians and children of European planters and railway employees. Later a plot of land was given rent free and without premium for the construction of a Catholic church in May 1928. The resident priest, the first being Fr. Raygasse, was Chaplain for the Convent. Government made it a condition that the church make no attempt to proselytize among the hill people.<sup>13</sup> When Bishop LePailleur applied to the Assam Governor for permission to open a mission station at Haflong, he was informed that Government regretted its inability to change the policy decided in 1927 that limited the extent of missionary operations in that sub-division. With the Welsh Presbyterian mission already at work there, Government was further cautious as "two or three different missions could only get in each other's way."<sup>14</sup> The first Holy Cross priest to reside in Haflong was Fr. L. Moreau, who served this centre from 1929 to 1938. George Breen took over in 1938 and was followed by Louis Lazarus, who came as Priest-in-Charge in 1940. He had an uninterrupted charge till his death on 5 May 1959. He was joined in 1952 by Fr. Louis Faineau, who also had a long stay in this hill resort till his passing away on 1 February 1961.<sup>15</sup>

These two priests and the Monsignor made the threesome of Haflong. Later they were joined by Fr. Jean Aussant who came to assist Breen. At Badarpur, a station on the Bengal

Assam Railway, was Fr. Aime Duclos who ministered to the small and diminishing 'Firingi' population of Portuguese descent and all the tea gardens in Cachar. Aijal (now Aizawl) was under the care of the Prefect Apostolic's younger brother Fr. Harold Breen and assisted by that wonderful and pioneering missionary Bro. Godfrey Danis and the younger Paul Lemieux. Rev. Jean Doris Marcotte was in Chhingchhip which he started in 1950 in preference to Chhawtrui. With him was Bro. Gilbert Boucher who, on 15 April 1947 along with George Breen, was one of the first C.S.C. missionaries to take residence in Aizawl. Kolasib to the north of Aizawl and on the way to Silchar had a mission station that had just been started by Rev. Gerard Jourdain. Silchar, the district headquarters where Harold Breen and Godfrey Danis had first pitched tents in 1947, was by 1952 under the charge of Fr. Mathew Lavoie, before his confrere Fr. Raymond Boivin took charge of the quasi-parish. Boivin was for a short time at Mariamnagar in Tripura with the lone secular priest Rev. Leo Gomes.<sup>16</sup>

Soon after taking over as Prefect Apostolic Breen wrote for additional men, as there were too few priests to man the missions.<sup>17</sup> He had earlier made a tour of the Prefecture to assess the situation he had inherited. Financially he was in a comfortable position in the early years, but as he complained to Fr. Phileas Boulay,<sup>18</sup> the Bishop of Chittagong "wants to rake off something from our bank account. I tried to make him understand that he should leave ours alone even if it happens to be bigger than his, because he has everything on his side, big churches, pucca buildings, brand new library . . . . We have only the Badarpur Church which will soon be in the river along with the house and school. He has a flock of sheep and he wants to pull the wool off the only lamb we have."<sup>19</sup>

Considering that the area was too large, and as he had too few men, Breen wrote to Fr. General at the Foreign Mission Seminary in Montreal a year after he assumed charge:<sup>20</sup>



This is the Prefecture of Haflong set up just about a year ago. It is too big for the number of priests we have or are likely to get for some years to come and there is a section of it known as Tripura State that we should like to pass over to some other Congregation. . . . The people are mostly Hill Tribes understanding the Bengalee language and the prospects of conversion are very very good. If therefore, your other calls are not too many and you would be interested in taking on this unit as a foreign mission field, kindly let me know.

The reply that came informed him that La Societe des Missions-Etrangeres of Quebec province could not study the suggestion as it was at that time considering the offer of a foreign mission in Gorakhpur.<sup>21</sup> Apparently Breen was not getting support of men and material at an early stage of the Prefecture. Apart from this problem, the Canadian priests were made to register under a new Foreigners Act, which Breen at first refused to do. He was advised to do so by the Superior General. His question to the Superior General of whether the C.S.C. should hold on to the mission set Fr. Christopher O'Toole thinking "it would be much simpler if some religious community with more indigenous priests could take over our work."<sup>22</sup> The "hopelessness" with which Breen functioned without additional hands and restrictions on entry of Canadians prompted his superior, the Rev. Fr. Provincial, to think of giving up the Congregation's efforts in the Prefecture.<sup>23</sup> Breen's greatest worry was the lack of priests. "No one asks for a vacation," he once wrote. The isolation, and, though the opportunities were promising, "the many languages with which we are too little acquainted constitute a real drawback." He therefore had good reason to believe that the Holy Cross Congregation "is not keen in keeping this mission and if it is not beyond my rights, I would recommend that this mission be made over to the Salesian Fathers of the Shillong diocese or to some other congregation."<sup>24</sup> It undoubtedly had been a difficult beginning. Things were to improve - but only for a while.

### III

Something now needs to be written on the missions entrusted to the Prefecture. Churches and schools were a priority in the missions. Kulikawn in Aizawl was the location of Christ The King Church built in 1948. Chhingchhip became a parish in 1953, and soon after Kolasib was erected as a parish. In 1954, St. Paul's School opened its door in Aizawl. More humble was the thatched structure that began as St. Peter's School in Chhingchhip.<sup>25</sup> Kolasib's school was somewhat different and for the Mizos a welcome change. There in 1956 was set up Brother Andre's Industrial School to give vocational training, particularly carpentry, to young men.<sup>26</sup> Some years later the mission took over a school which became St. John's School. Aizawl had another vocational centre in St. Joseph's Printing Press which was started by Bro. Boisclair. Its little monthly journal Catholic Kantu kept the faithful informed of the church's teachings and the programmes of the Prefecture.<sup>27</sup> The priests and brothers, other than those already mentioned, who worked in the then Lushai Hills missions were Fr. Maurice Legault, who died in December 1948 following a stomach disorder and is buried in Kulikawn Aizawl; he had not been in these hills more than a year when he passed away; also Frs. Raymond Bujold, Levite Theriault, Marc Gagnon, Jean Vezina, M. Gregire and Bros. Gerard Arsenalt, Gerard Turcotte, Camille Richard, Aurele Tessier, and John Gougen. The Holy Cross connection here in the Lushai Hills was beginning to take roots - one can even venture to say, here was the success story of the Prefecture.

Not that Silchar, Badarpur, Tika-barunga and Agartala were not growing or that the Holy Cross Congregation was not giving adequate attention to these missions. Badarpur was an established centre and continued to be an important base for C.S.C. expansion, despite its population being affected by the new geographical boundaries and a smaller railway traffic. For



the church, Badarpur had been the base for the entry into Mizoram, till Silchar was developed. At Silchar, Fr. Patrice Landry replaced Raymond Boivin and later Frs. John Martin and J. Charles Descary arrived. Martin had the distinction of having been parish priest for 12 years, and Descary was his Assistant for 11 years. Together they pioneered the work among the Hmars and the Khasis and laid the foundation for a strong community among these people. It was for these people that the Congregation started Holy Cross School in Silchar. Charles Descary followed his Silchar posting by becoming the first parish priest of Tikarbarunga, where he continued to work among the Khasi and Adivasis. When Leo Gomes was to leave Agartala Holy Cross priests came in to find that this secular priest had constructed a chapel, the parish house, a boarding house for tribal boys and girls, and the Mariamnagar School. The Canadian religious who worked in this mission at different times were Frs. Paul St. Onge,<sup>28</sup> Roger Marcil, Thomas Fortine and Georges Leclerc.<sup>29</sup>

The missionaries' lives were hard living. Theirs was a combination of giving religious instruction, conducting the sacraments, long tours more often on foot than by vehicles, often doubling as school masters, and if time was still there they put it for construction of buildings and planning for future developments. Brother Godfrey for many years ably managed St. Paul's School. The District Administrator also requested him to be the first Principal of Pachunga College. Bro. Aurele put himself into writing and publishing Chhiarkawp Bu Thar, an arithmetic textbook for modern schools in the Mizo language.<sup>30</sup> Not a few of them became sufficiently fluent in the languages of the people they worked for, whether it was Mizo, Khasi or Bengali. In another sense these Canadian priests and brothers were pioneers. They were among the first to have scooters and motor cycles in Mizorami as Marc Gagnon and Paul Lemieux fondly recall.<sup>31</sup>

The growth of the Catholic church in the Prefecture was slow but steady. An explanation for the slow growth, as one priest put it, was "the long and protracted preparations the catechumens had to undergo."<sup>32</sup> In their first two months in Aizawl, George Breen and Gilbert Boucher could baptize only 129 persons. Between July 1947 and June 1948 the number of baptisms increased to 774.<sup>33</sup> Figures for 1955 show that Badarpur had a Catholic population of 670, Aizawl 718, Kolasib 131, Chhingchhip 1008, and Agartala 827.<sup>34</sup> By 1957, there were a total of about 4000 Catholics.<sup>35</sup> The numbers increased to 6290 by 1963. This increase, though relatively small, wrote the Prefect Apostolic, "does not seem to us unsatisfactory in view of the small increase in the number of missionaries over the same period."<sup>36</sup> In the last year report and before the Prefecture was upgraded to a Diocese, the growth had reached 8332 believers.<sup>37</sup>

Reflecting on the position he was entrusted soon after he was installed Breen mused:<sup>38</sup>

I was beginning to realize how happy I was or should have been in my former jungle mission. What a difference! This consists in keeping accounts, writing letters and answering long lists of questions etc. As someone must do it. I will try to resign and take it as a slave of Mary should, and hope some day things will look brighter.

And just how much he loathed paper work, but did it with dedication comes out in another letter.<sup>39</sup>

I have finished my accounts, statistics and reports for Rome covering the past two years. A job I am glad to be through with. Just how exactly they are I cannot say but I did the best I could while trying to preserve my sanity.

The Prefect's task was not easy. He had few workers for a stupendous job and funds were not that easy to come by. He was tight fisted, but as he explains in yet another letter, "It is true that I crib a bit at times, but I do so in order to keep them from thinking that the funds are unlimited."<sup>40</sup> He seemed to have stressed more on canon law and regulations to the neglect

of planning. He was literally no builder - during his tenure Haflong had no church/cathedral as was expected of an ecclesiastical unit such as a Prefecture. But Breen, remembers Descary, was very spiritual, very missionary minded, very simple in his life style, had practically nothing of his own, that he loved baseball and he smoked a good cigar! Breen at times lacked decision making; he respected authority, was humble and insecure, scrupulous to details and afraid of making mistakes.<sup>41</sup>

#### IV

Neither the Canadian nor the American Holy Cross confreres made any attempt to begin the training of Indian Holy Cross religious till the late 1950s. In 1953, Fr. Gervais Lapierre, Religious Superior of the Vicariate of Chittagong, made a visit to South India to investigate the possibilities of recruitment of candidates for Chittagong Vicariate. He had been advised to particularly visit Kerala by the Jesuits of the Patna Mission. This was followed by Frs. Philip Payant and Alfred McClure going to Kerala where they were able to recruit two aspirants. Lapierre made a second visit in the next year and made another two recruits. A year later (May 1956) Fr. Yvon Fournelle, Novice Master in Chittagong, also travelled south where he too returned with two young men. The reports of these visits were made known to the General Chapter in its Rome, July 1956 meeting, which authorized the Superior General to take special steps for recruitment for the Holy Cross from south India.<sup>42</sup> Breen also made his way south in January-February 1957. Returning to Vandaville he wrote:<sup>43</sup>

The country down that way presents a different aspect from any other place I have seen in India or anywhere. The atmosphere is really Catholic. Ever so many churches, wayside shrines, convent schools and colleges. It is not surprising that vocations are numerous. The missionary spirit is very much alive and quite a number have gone . . . to different dioceses and congregations in other parts of India. It seems they do not like to venture as far as Assam because of the distance. . . .

The initial steps that had been taken were for recruitment for Chittagong. There was no thought or planning for formation for the Prefecture until McClure was transferred from Barisal in east Pakistan to Haflong in June 1958. Within weeks of his arrival he was sent by Fr. Aime Duclos, the Religious Superior of the Haflong Vicariate, to investigate the possibilities of recruitment in south India and to locate a place for a seminary. McClure made his second visit to south India in August-September 1958. He returned in October to write a report, which was so optimistic in content that the Superior General appointed him in December that same year to go down south and start a minor seminary in Yercaud. He left Silchar on 10 January 1959. In Calcutta he had a change to meet Mgr Breen on 18 January, after which he travelled on to Yercaud. Before proceeding on to the hill station, McClure stayed for some days in the Carmelite Monastery at Alwaye.<sup>44</sup>

On 1 April 1959, Duclos arrived in Yercaud along with five scholastics who had earlier been recruited for Chittagong, but visas being denied to them they were not able to return to East Pakistan. It was thus decided that they should complete their scholasticate in Yercaud. These five, of whom only Fr. Mathew Vadakdom continues to be in the Congregation, were therefore the pioneers of the Holy Cross scholastics for the Prefecture. They resided for some months in the Coolie Lane before shifting to the Poonamallee Seminary premises which were vacant. On 16 April, the Bishop of Salem gave permission for the foundation of the Seminary located in his diocese. On 11 May, eleven candidates arrived in Yercaud - The first group to be selected for the Prefecture. In that same year Bro. Godfrey visited Yercaud and decided that the Brothers' Congregation too would start formation in that region. Before the year closed he and Bro. Nadeau had made arrangements for what was to be the beginnings of their house in Salem.<sup>45</sup>

It is not necessary to go into details in this paper of Holy Cross formation in India. It will suffice to say that the 'experiment' in Yercaud was tested and began to show results. Property was acquired, buildings were erected and renovated and staff joined the seminary. In the first years these were Frs. McClure, Joseph Kuttickal of Verapally diocese, Levite Theriault and Bro. Gilbert Boucher. Later, Harold Breen came as Master of Novices, Yvon Martin as Assistant Superior and Reginald McQuaid as another of the teachers in the formation house. It was from the first group of novices and those who had joined as scholastics that the Prefecture some years later would get its first Indian Holy Cross priests.<sup>46</sup> During a visit to Yercaud in June 1959, Duclos wrote to Fr. Christopher O'Toole, the Superior General: "At last Holy Cross is on the move, but our efforts will be fruitless unless we move in the right direction. The right direction to my mind is here at Yercaud."<sup>47</sup> Many of his younger C.S.C. confreres who have been to Yercaud and studied there would support these lines.

## V

Sad days were ahead for the Prefecture and the Holy Cross Congregation. During the Mizo disturbances of the 1960s, the Government found reason to believe that a Holy Cross missionary was in support of the underground. Fr. Marcotte was ordered by the Assam Government in early August 1967 to leave the Mizo Hills immediately as his activities were "prejudicial to the interest of the state" reported one newspaper.<sup>48</sup> It was reported that he had "openly instigated the Mizos to rise in open rebellion to build a Sovereign Christian State outside India."<sup>49</sup> That two local clergy and the intelligence had framed a priest there is no doubt for Marcotte had lived with the Mizos for twenty years and must have been well aware of the delicate situation - a situation he would not possibly have consciously fostered. He was



accused of harbouring Mizo rebels in church premises, passed them off as inmates and thwarted attempts of security forces to apprehend them.<sup>50</sup> "The Typewriter", wrote Marcotte in explanation of the order he next received to leave India, "the fact that gave ground for the accusation happened in another station where the priest in charge was an Indian."<sup>51</sup> He refuted the allegations that he had encouraged the rebels; he had refused to pay a tax levied by the underground and had also refused to furnish paper they asked for from the press.

The impact of this quit notice to Marcotte had far reaching effects on his other Canadian confreres and the Prefecture. Between 1967-1969 all the Canadian C.S.C. had to leave the Mizo Hills for missions in the Cachar plains below, Haflong, Shillong or south India. By 1972, all except two<sup>52</sup> had vacated the Prefecture missions - Tripura included. The Prefecture was in dire straits for personnel to man its missions. It was fortuitous that the Prefecture had just begun to have the first batch of Holy Cross priests, who together with some diocesan priests, took over whatever mission/parish they could, though some parishes such as Chhingchhipp were closed for a period of time. Mathew Vadakadom was posted to Mariamnagar (November 1965), Joseph Chalil was stationed in Silchar (August 1967), P. J. Joseph and Bro. Arakal went to Kolasib (May 1968), Winfred left Haflong for Aizawl (May 1968); two years later Ittyapara and Mathew Thirumala went to relieve him in Aizawl (May 1988), and Thomas Thengumpally, who joined the Prefecture in May 1968, was asked to report to Mariamnagar to learn Bengali. A year later four young C.S.C. priests came north. They were Mathew Ullatil, Isaac Kelampampil, Joseph Kunnath and Peter Chittayath.

Before these developments had taken place Mgr. Breen had sent in his resignation in late September 1966. He was disillusioned and pained with what had happened to his fellow religious - many actually left the Congregation on their return to Canada - some we are told



had to undergo very traumatic experiences in their decision to have the priesthood. Human relations between the priests were often not cordial and very unpriestlike!

In view of the prevailing conditions a Council was held in the prefecture to propose a plan for the future. Three proposals were discussed: (i) to hand over the Prefecture to another religious congregation, (ii) to hand over the Mizo district to another congregation, (iii) to keep the status quo. The third proposal was accepted and it was decided to approach other Congregations to send men to the Prefecture<sup>53</sup> Apparently the Prefecture was struggling to maintain its position. Descary the Superior of the Haflong Vicariate was very concerned of losing the only apostolic commitment of the Holy Cross in the country and yet he was confident that he and his confreres were in a position to keep this responsibility.<sup>54</sup> The fate of the Prefecture was sealed by the visit of Fr. Maurice Lafond (Provincial) to the Prefecture in January 1967. One of the points he mentions in his letter to the Internuncio in New Delhi was that there was general agreement among Mgr. Breen, the Father General, all the missionaries and himself that the successor to Breen ought to be an Indian and a Bishop. He closed his letter with these lines:<sup>55</sup>

The Prefecture of Haflong is composed of areas where the situation is delicate for the missionaries, both regarding their permission to reside and also to do the missionary work. It is essential that the Pastor of this diocese, being an Indian, be able to look after all his priests, to visit without difficulties all the religious of the diocese, to stand and speak very freely.

The Prefecture of Haflong was upgraded to the Diocese of Silchar by Pope Paul VI on 29 June 1969. Shortly before his Episcopal Ordination, the Bishop Elect, Denzil D'Souza, wrote to Fr. Choquette who would represent the Canadian Priest's province at his installation.<sup>56</sup>

The raising of the former Prefecture of Haflong to the status of a Diocese is the fruit of the labours and sacrifices of your missionaries. Although

everything will be new to me in the field entrusted to me, I am sure that with the help of your missionaries in a spirit of co-responsibility we shall work together. . . .

Holy Cross has given unstinted support to the Bishop, in assisting his office, continuing to care for missions, returning to Mizoram in opening a new parish and school in Champai, and taking Tripura as a "mandate" for its apostolate. This commitment of the Holy Cross Congregation to north-east India in general and Tripura in particular has found expression in the appointment and installation on 26 May 1990 of the first Indian Holy Cross priest, Lumen Monteiro, as the Bishop of Agartala.

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# NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. (B)ishops (H)ouse (S)ilchar, "Project of Division of the Lushai Hills and the District of Cachar from the Diocese of Chittagong and exchange of the District of Sylhet for the Tripura Estate with the Diocese of Dacca"; Prefecture Apostolic of Haflong, Quinquennial Report 1963-1969, p. 1
2. Ibid. "Project of Division. . . ." p. 3.
3. Ibid., p. 4.
4. (P)rovincial (A)rchives (M)ontreal, K 1.2, Letter from Alfred LePailleur to Father General, dated Chittagong, 11 February 1950. Note that it was not the Salesians who had gone to Assam and Shillong, but the German Salvatorians. I am indebted to a number of C.S.C. priests and brothers for translating this and other texts from the original French into English. Those who spared time for their history were Brothers Aurele Tessier, Madore, and Frs. J. Charles Descary and H. Morrisette.
5. Ibid.
6. Circular Letters of Very Reverend C. J. O'Toole, No. 2, p. 33.
7. Propaganda Fide at one stage considered Badarpur as the episcopal centre instead of Haflong principally because it had an impressive church. See P.A.M., K 1.2, Letter from Christopher O'Toole to Alfred LePailleur. The Bishop did not want Badarpur as the new diocese headquarters as he writes in a letter 'un petit village' (Badarpur) was situated on the river Surma which was changing its course.
8. P.A.M., K 1.2, Letter from Edward L. Heston to Alfred LePailleur, dated Rome 20 November 1948.
9. (H)aflong (P)arish (R)ecords, 'Prefecture of Haflong', p. 7; B.H.S., File 57, 'Prefecture of Haflong', Quinquennial Report 1963-1969, p. 1.
10. Ibid.
11. H.P.R., 'Prefecture of Haflong', p. 8.

12. A short sketch of Breen may be read in Raymond J. Clancy, "The Congregation of Holy Cross in East Bengal 1853-1953", Vol. II, Holy Cross Foreign Mission Seminary, Washington, 1953, p. 70.
13. B.H.S. File, Rt. Rev. Mgr Mathias and other notes, Letter from Sub-Division Officer, North Cachar Hills to Fr. Raygasse dated Haflong, 29 May 1928.
14. B.H.S. File Rt. Rev. Mgr. Mathias and other notes, Letter from Governor of Assam to Bishop LePailleur, dated Shillong, 15 June 1934.
15. Bro. Aurele Tessier recalls that Lazarus was tall and bearded, and that much as he wanted to visit his native Germany, he could not as he had conveniently 'misplaced' his passport for fear of action by the Government on his German citizenship. Faineau was a French national and had been a soldier before his priestly calling. A short history of the Church in Haflong may be read in Silchar Diocese 1952-1977, pp. 37-39.
16. Raymond Clancy, op. cit., pp. 508-509; H.P.R., "Prefecture of Haflong", p. 6.
17. P.A.M., K. 2.5, Letter from Breen to Religious Superior, Chittagong, dated 8 July 1952.
18. Phileas Boulay was the first Catholic priest to visit the Lushai Hills in 1925. The letters of the visit may be read in "Echoes from Bengal", Annals of St. Joseph of Mount Royal, September-November 1927, pp. 276-279; 336-337.
19. P.A.M., Q. 5.1. Letter from Breen to Boulay, dated Haflong 2 September 1952; B.H.S., File 54, Breen to Rev. Fr. L. Lapalme dated Haflong, 2 October 1952.
20. Ibid. Breen to Rev. Fr. General, Foreign Mission Seminary, Montreal, dated Haflong, 21 February 1953.
21. Ibid., Edgar Larochelle to Breen, dated 20 March 1953.
22. Ibid., Christopher O'Toole to Breen, dated Rome, 5 January 1955.
23. Ibid., Breen to O'Toole, dated Haflong, 28 January 1955. When Canadians were required to have visas before entry into India, Breen wrote to O'Toole, "Our death sentence is now passed and the question that remains is: Are we justified in holding on to this Mission. If I had the right to express my opinion I would say No." Ibid., letter dated 22 December 1954.

24. Orient, November-December 1957, pp. 2-8.
25. Marcotte wrote a number of interesting articles for Orient in which he brings out the day to day life of the Mizos, See, "Juge de Paix a Chhingchhip", Orient, July-August 1953, pp. 20-23; "Noel A Chhingchhip", Orient, January-February 1954, pp. 10-15; "Chasse aux rats a Chhingchhip" Orient, July-August 1954, pp. 28-31; "Une Nouvelle Parisse sur la carte Du Monde: Chhingchhip", Orient, September-October 1958, pp. 12-20.
26. Interview with Fr. Gerard Jourdain, Orient, July-August 1956, pp. 32-35.
27. Orient, November-December 1957, pp. 2-8.
28. Fr. Paul St. Onge wrote two articles in the Orient on his Tripura posting. See, "Mariamnagar 1959", Orient, May-June 1959, pp. 24-28; "Mariamnagar", Orient, July-August 1959, pp. 16-21.
29. Read, D.R. Syiemlieh, "Mariamnagar: An Ancient Christian Settlement in Tripura", Indian Church History Review, June 1994, pp. 15-21 for details.
30. Silchar Diocese 1952-1977, p. 71.
31. Interview with Paul Lemieux and Marc Gagnon, Montreal on 7 and 8 February 1994, respectively.
32. P.A.M., L 4.1, M. J. Calvalho, "Catholic Mission in the Lushai Hills," p. 8.
33. Ibid.
34. B.H.S., File 57, Statistics, Letters from Breen to Propaganda Fide, Haflong, 9 September 1955.
35. B.H.S., "Prefecture Apostolic of Haflong," Quinquennial Report for 1952-1957," p. 1.
36. Ibid., Report for 1957-1963, p. 1.
37. Ibid., Report for 1963-1969, p. 2.
38. Ibid., Report for 1963-1969, p. 2.
39. P.A.M., L 1.1, Letter from Breen to Provincial, dated 10 August 1952.
40. Ibid., Letter from Breen to Provincial, dated Haflong, 8 June 1961.
41. Interview with Charles Descary, Madras, 7 January 1995.
42. (P)rovincial (H)ouse (B)angalore, "Holy Cross in South India: Holy Cross Seminary: Book One, Foundation", Capital, p. 1.

43. Haflong Parish, "Prefecture of Haflong", p. 38.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid., pp. 2-3. Fr. Mathew Vadakadom informs that he and his four friends arrived Yercaud on 6 April 1959.
46. Ibid., pp. 2-4. Of these novices the following became C.S.C. priests and served the Prefecture: Joseph Kunnath, Thomas Thengumpally, Mathew Ullatil and Peter Chittayah.
47. P.A.M., L 2.1, Letter from Duclos to O'Toole, dated Yercaud, 17 June 1959.
48. Indian Express, 3 August 1967.
49. Ibid., 5 August 1967.
50. Ibid.
51. P.A.M. L 2.1, J. Marcotte to Cardinal Gracias, Bombay, dated Silchar, 16 December 1967. The New Leader, 3 September 1962, refuted the theory of the typewriter, as it was found some 50 miles from Marcotte's place. The man who was using it was the Directory of the Technical School who had it on loan from the Priest-in-Charge who had no idea that it would be used for unlawful purposes, "if indeed it was used."
52. These were Aurele Tessier who had become an Indian citizen and Charles Descary.
53. P.A.M., L 5.1, Report on the Prefecture of Haflong (n.d.) As it was difficult for foreign missionaries to reside in north-east India a search was made to locate new areas where the C.S.C. could work. On invitation from Bishop Picachy of Calcutta, Charles Descary visited Jamshedpur in March 1968. His report, in the hope that the Assam mission would be retained, was that there should not be a dispersion of forces given the small number of men. In June 1980, Thomas Thengumpally visited Midnapur in Bengal to check its possibilities as a mission field.
54. P.A.M., L 2.1. Letter from Descary to Fr. G. M. Lalande, dated Silchar, 16 April 1968.
55. P.A.M., L 1.1, Maurice Lafond to James Knox, Internuncio, dated Calcutta, 11 January 1967.
56. P.A.M., L 1.1, Bishop Denzil D'Souza to Fr. Choquette, dated Calcutta, 2 November 1969.