

**A BRIEF HISTORY
OF
CARMELITE CONVENT
KHARALE, SANDOR 1939 – 2023**



HISTORY OF THE CONVENT

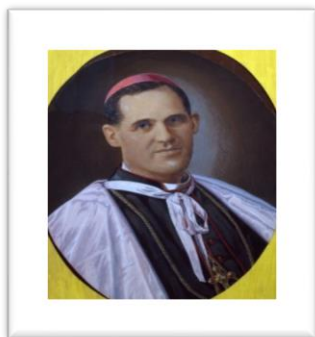
Name of the Convent	: Carmelite Convent
Patron	: Our Lady of Mount Carmel
Titular Feast	: July 16
Place	: Kharale, Sandor, Vasai (West)
Parish	: St. Thomas Church, Sandor
Diocese	: Vasai
District	: Palghar
State	: Maharashtra
Year of Foundation	: 1941
The Founding Members	: Mother Mary Adelrich, Superior, Sr. M. Jacob, Sr. M. Emmanuel, Sr. M. Augustine.
Our Primary Objective	: Education of the girl child in Bassein

Carmelite Convent at Sandor was founded in 1841. Our sisters however settled at Bassein on 18th October 1939. The Founding members were Mother Mary Adelrich, Superior, Sr. M. Jacob, Sr. M. Emmanuel, Sr. M. Augustine. Our Primary objective was the Education of the girl child in Bassein.

Mission : We reach out to Humanity to bring the fullness of life and harmony in society and the cosmos by providing opportunities for holistic growth and development and respect and care for our planet.

Vision: Creation of a new Human Society where Equality, Freedom, Love, Justice, Peace and Joy reign in an eco-friendly communion.

Development down the years : 1939 -2019



It was at the request of His Grace, the most Rev. Dr. Thomas Roberts S.J. Archbishop of Bombay, to Rev. Mother Mary Archange Superior General of the Carmelite Sisters of Trivandrum, that the Carmelite Convent, Sandor came to be founded. It was an event in the history of



Bassein that was to have a far reaching influence changing the very face of Bassein, reviving its people and injecting into it new life-blood an event which was to affect deeply the life of the Archdiocese of Bombay and of the Church in India.

To understand this bold statement we shall review the conditions prevailing in Bassein at that time and state how this Convent came to be founded. In the year 1937 Divine Providence arranged a chance meeting between Rev. Fr. Paul Fernandes and two gentlemen from Bassein at Dr. D.A. D'Monte's residence Hill Road, Bandra. Mr. Michael Colaco B.A.L.L.B. and Mr. Pius Almeida, C.A. the conversation turned to Bassein and the backwardness of education prevailing there, especially education of girls. Father Fernandes advised them to lead a deputation to the newly appointed English Archbishop of Bombay and put before him their grievances regarding the backwardness of Girls' Education in Bassein. He would procure a donation of Rs. 10,000/- for the Convent if founded by His Grace. In reality the donor was himself but he had decided not to disclose his name to the Archbishop. Accordingly a group of Basseinites headed by Mr. Michael Colaco approached the Archbishop and impressed upon him the urgent need of starting a Convent School for girls in Bassein.

Archbishop Thomas Roberts. S.J. promptly held a meeting of the Parish Priests in Bassein, at which Rev. Fr. D'lima who was the then Dean of South Bassein and Parish Priest of St. Thomas, Sandor offered to give the Church land at Sandor for the proposed Convent, though it was not easy of access, being far from the main Road. To quote the words of Mr. Colaco, "How His Grace Dr. Thomas Roberts S.J. Archbishop of Bombay, requested Rev. Mother M. Archange to undertake this adventure of starting the first Convent for the education of girls at Sandor in the remotest corner of South Bassein, in a wilderness, so to say, at a place not connected by proper roads and away from residential localities, what was the charism of Archbishop Roberts S.J. which made him stoop to conquer in the future, is a great secret between the Superior General Mother Archange and the Archbishop. It cannot be denied that they undertook the adventure, this leap in the dark, taking a great risk." To us, Mother Archange's daughters, it is no mystery or secret. The spirit of Faith of the great soul explains it this way. The Church had spoken; she had only to obey. She must have foreseen the great trials and difficulties the Sisters at Sandor would have to suffer for many long years, but the will of God and the welfare of the Church put all other considerations in the background.

The difficulties were many and the Sisters suffered great hardships and setbacks. Young girls hesitated to go to the Convent School, to such a lonely place without proper means of conveyance. However, the Sisters in charge of the Convent carried on undauntedly and boldly stood the test.

In the annals of the history of Bassein the most Rev. Dr. Thomas Roberts S.J. the English Archbishop of Bombay, our Belgian Mother General, Mother Mary Archange, and Rev. Fr. Paul Fernandes will and should long be remembered as the pioneers of Convent for girls' education, which has changed the face Bassein- Progress and development taking the lead.

On the 18th of October 1939 the new Community made its first solemn entry into Bassein. The pioneers were Mother M. Adelrich, Superior, Srs. M. Jacob, Emmanuel, and Augustine. They were led by Sr. M. Louise, Mother Mary Archange's delegate and were accompanied by the Community of St. Teresa's Convent, Santa Cruz. Rev. Fr. Miranda, Parish Priest of Merces, received the Sisters at Bassein Road Station. At Merces the parishioners welcomed them and led them in right royal Bassein style, under coloured umbrellas, to the accompaniment of the Band, to their temporary quarters in the new school building, where they were garlanded. At 11.45 am His Grace arrived with his secretary Rev. Fr. V. Dyer. they were garlanded in turn by Sr. M. Louise and Mother M. Adelrich.

All went in procession to the Church. His Grace addressing the Congregation said that he was giving them at last the best thing he could - the Nuns to teach them by example, deeds and hard work, how to live as true Christians. His Grace praised the unity and charity of these nuns and called it a great day in the history of Bassein, which had been waiting four hundred years for the coming of the Sisters. His Grace exhorted the people not to remain just at the receiving end. They were to be grateful, respectful and helpful to the Sisters.

Present at the function was Rev. Fr. Andrew D'Souza, Parish Priest of Papdy who was destined by Divine Providence to guide the steps of this infant Institution for many years and be a true friend and advisor to the Sisters for many more years.

The Sisters started learning Marathi from a young man, Simon D'Souza, who later became a Priest of the Diocese. The Sisters started needle work classes at Manickpur. and took charge of the Girl's Marathi school of 82 pupils in the K.G., I and II at Mercés.

The first step taken by Sr. M. Louise, the delegate, Mother M. Archange was to purchase plots. Eight plots were purchased and one acre donated by Mr. Ignas Fernandes of revered memory. On 31st October five additional plots were purchased.



Moving ahead 15th April, 1940, the foundation of the new Convent at Sandor was laid and on the 9th May 1940, the Sisters came to stay at Sandor in a tiled reed hut, one room of which was used as a Chapel while the other served as Dormitory, Refectory, and Workroom. The kitchen was an outside chullah. It was a hard life especially during the monsoons with cultivated fields around them and snakes and frogs as their daily companions. It required real courage to stay put, but the sisters had to be on the spot to supervise the building construction. Rev. Fr. Andrew D'Souza (future Bishop of Poona) served the sisters in many capacities as Confessor, engineer, contractor etc. On 24/5/1940 the construction of a new well was undertaken. The well was 20ft. wide and 25ft deep. It gave plenty of good water and does so to this day.

On 6th June 1940, Srs. M. Emmanuel and Gemma started teaching at St. Joseph's Primary School, Papdy. On June 10, 1940 the chapel in the Reed house was blessed. On July 1, 1940 Sr. M. Augustine took over the teaching at St. Joseph's School from Sr. M. Gemma and Sr. Gemma began teaching English and French in Std. V, VI at St. Thomas Baptista High School. On 21st July 1940, he was transferred as Monsignor to Gloria Church, Byculla, from where with the permission of the Archbishop, he continued to help the Sisters. The people of Merces did not forget the Sisters. Each day saw someone coming with gifts of vegetables, plantains, mangoes etc.

On 28th September 1940, the new Convent was blessed. And on November 4, 1940, the English Primary School at Papdy was transferred to Carmelite **Convent**, Sandor. There were 80 children – boys and girls. On the 7th November the Convent received its first boarder sent by Msgr A. D'Souza.



The construction of the main building was started on the 14th December. Mr. M. Rodrigues, the loyal sacristan of our Lady of Grace, Papdy was very helpful to the Sisters in supervising the building work and in many other ways. Another friend and advisor in those early days was Mr. Hilary Pereira. Mrs. Esperance, the mother of Sr. M. Alexis of our Congregation who was ever helpful and generous.

On February 8, 1941 foundation for the Marathi school was laid.

The Archbishop of Bombay visited the Convent on the 19th December 1941. His Grace expressed his gratitude to the Congregation for the good work done by the Sisters in the Archdiocese. The next day was a children's Mass on the Convent grounds. A pandal was erected. On the 21st December 1941 the Convent was formally blessed by His Grace Rt. Rev. Thomas Roberts, Archbishop of Bombay

On this occasion His Grace presented the Convent a large coloured photo of himself.

The first School inspection was conducted by Dr. G. Krishnayya on the 21st April, 1942 following which the School received a grant from the Local Board.

In October, 1943, at the request of the Archbishop, Rev. Mother Archange granted permission for the opening of a Marathi Training College for women at Papdy where there was already a Training College for men. The Principal Rev. Fr. A. Rebello S.J. took keen interest in this new venture and promised to set it on firm footing. His colleague Mr. Joshi also offered help.

On May 4th 1944, Mother M. Louise succeeded Mother Archange (who went to her heavenly reward) as Mother General. The College was placed under the patronage of St. Aloysius the Mother General's patron. Sr. M. Amata was appointed Principal and Sr. M. Augustine her assistant. The College had only 3 students at first.

As the Jesuits Fathers were coming to the Convent for daily Mass and as the sisters had to go to the College at Papdy, Mgsr. A. D'Souza had a bullock cart purchased. It was blessed by him and christened "The fiery Chariot of Elias."

On June 5, 1944 a new Marathi school was opened with no students on roll and 2 teachers. Within a week's time we had 15 students on roll.

Many were the vicissitudes the Sisters went through in this Convent at Sandor. Both English and the Marathi schools did not flourish, mainly due to the school not being of easy access. Other Congregations that founded Schools in Bassein much later soon became full-fledged High Schools, but the Carmelite Convent at Sandor lagged behind. Its English Primary and Middle School received support from the Boarding attached to it and continued at an even pace.

On May 10, 1945 foundation for the Marathi medium school was laid and the building was ready and blessed on April 27, 1946. It had 5 classrooms. On June 10, 1946 three new classes V, VI, VII were opened. The total strength was 70.

On June 21, 1948 std. V, VI, VII of our Marathi school were shifted to Papdy. The Marathi classes were amalgamated with the Anglo-Vernacular Std. I, II, III of Thomas Baptista High School. Classes I to IV continued till Mary 1979 when we closed down the Marathi medium due to lack of students.

In June 1966, we were asked to give up boys as it was decided to open a Boys English Medium School at Papdy. Yet our sisters carried on bravely and worked assiduously. Sr. Mary Irene the Headmistress did her very best to upgrade the school. In June 1968 St. VIII was opened.



1970 - 1989

A new block was built, the foundation of which was blessed by Msgr. Sebastian Vaz on the feast of St. Joseph 1970.

In June 1970, Std. IX was opened and in June 1971, Std. X. The School sent up its first batch of SSC Board Examination students in 1972. The school secured 62% pass. Since then the School started making progress in numbers and quality. In 1978 Sr. M. Irene the Headmistress took charge of the school again. It is to her we owe a debt of gratitude. She knew that only if there was an approach road could the school prosper. So she set about to get this approach road constructed. Ever since then the school continued to prosper. In 1983, with Sr. Yvonne at the helm the School secured 100% results at the SSC Board Examination.



The strength of the school continued to increase especially since people from Bombay settled down in Bassein. Children from the vicinity station and Manickpur began to flock to the school. One more block was needed. Its foundation was blessed by Rev. Alex Tuscano of St. Thomas Church, Sandor, on November 4, 1987. The contractor was Mr. Joseph Dias from Sandor and Engineer Mr. J. S. Lopes.

Development down the decades: Carmelite Convent English High School's progress had been very slow due to the non-availability of access road. After the construction of the road the school has grown steadily. At present the school has 3500+ students on Roll. Our SSC results are mostly 100% laudable. In the 2017 batch Anusha Bhat secured the highest marks (100%). We feel proud of her performance. In 2011 our student Shambhavi Raut stood 3rd in the State. Our students are now serving our Nation in various capacities - as Five Priests to different congregations, Doctors, Chartered Accountants, Nurses, Officials in Government offices, Actors and as Teachers in our very school and elsewhere.

Tremendous concerted effort by the sisters and staff has gone into the making of this Institution. It has had its "Agony and Ecstasy". But the good Lord has blessed this mission in His own way and time. It is still in bloom.

We feel proud of the bold step taken by the founders of Carmelite Convent Sandor even in the face of untold hardships. As we celebrate the sesquicentennial year of the foundation of our Congregation there is a warm feeling of being lovingly blessed by our Foundress Mother Veronica. May she be a continual inspiration and blessing to each one of us in our mission.



A new wing is in progress now, intended to be the K.G. block.

We have a good ground, a basket ball court, plenty of trees, coconut, Palmira, mango, plantain, chickoo, guava, Papaya etc.

Our grateful thanks to the Headmistress and Superiors who worked for the school in the face of insurmountable difficulties.

They are:

Superiors	Superiors	Headmistress
1. Mother M. Adelrich	12. Sr. M. Faith	1. Sr. M. Emmanuel
2. Mother M. Jacob	13. Sr. M. Dais	2. Sr. Mary Irene
3. Mother M. Lucy	14. Sr. M. Dulcie	3. Sr. M. Gloria
4. Mother M. Elisee	15. Sr. M. Felix	4. Sr. M. Irene
5. Mother M. Pascaline	16. Sr. M. Delphina	5. Sr. Mary Yvonne
6. Mother M. Sophie	17. Sr. M. Rosemary	6. Sr. Vira D'Sa
7. Mother M. Gerada	18. Sr. M. Camilla	7. Sr. Ansela D'Mello
8. Mother M. Alexandra	19. Sr. M. Conradine	8. Sr. Carmeline Lopes
9. Sr. M. Sophie	20. Sr. M. Delphina	9. Sr. M. Flower
10. Sr. M. Martina	21. Sr. M. Lilian	10. Sr. M. Maud
11. Sr. M. Blanche	22. Sr. M. Flower	11. Sr. M. Perpetua
	23. Sr. Marshan Lopes	12. Sr. Beryl Xavier
		13. Sr. M. Pamela

2019 – 2020 we had 3500+ students out of which 247 students appeared for S.S.C Examination. In 2020 -2021 also we had about 3500+ students out of which 302 students appeared for S.S.C Examination with 100% result and CHOUDHARI RUTVI RAJESH secured 100% result.

A new block was built, the foundation of which was blessed by our Parish Priest Fr. John Fargoes. Our Superior General Rev. Mother Elma, Provincial Superior Sr. Clare D'souza and her councillors Sr. Wilma and Sr. Florippe, Sr. Cornadine from Grace Convent, Our Contractor Mr. Robert Vaz and Carmelite Community were present for the blessing.



The new wing which was in progress is completed now, and named as 'CARMEL' building since it is built for Kindergarten. It is consisted Ground + 3 floors. Ground has office, an activity room, recreation room and an open stage. First & second floors have 5 class rooms each. Third floor includes auditorium with a stage.



It was blessed by Rev. Bishop Felix Machado, the bishop of Vasai on 16th July 2021. Since it was a lockdown only community Sisters were allowed to be present for the Eucharistic celebration on this blessing day which was held in the hall. Father Thomas Lopes our Parish Priest also was present for the celebration of the Eucharist.



It was inaugurated by Sr. Clare D'souza the Ex. Provincial of Western Province, Mumbai on 19th November 2021. Sisters from various communities, Fathers, Teachers, Architects, Contractors and well-wishers were present for this inaugural programme.

With hearts full of love and gratitude to God we lift up this Institution with all its Sisters, Teachers, Students past and present, boarders, benefactors past and present, with all who served it in any way, and ask Him to bless them and continue to use this Institution for His greater glory and the spread of His Love.