

CATHOLIC STANDARD

53rd YEAR

FIRST QUARTER

MARCH. 1957

Published for the Bishop of Georgetown
by the Sword of the Spirit.



Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam

One Hundred Years with the Jesuits in British Guiana

1857, – 1957

Part II: Bishop Galton, S.J.

Bishop Compton Theodore Galton, S.J.

1902 – 1931



**Right Reverend
COMPTON THEODORE GALTON, S.J**
Titular Bishop of Petenissus
Consecrated: 19th October, 1903
Died: 10th April, 1931.

On the 4th May, 1902, the Very Reverend Fr. Compton Theodore Galton, who had become Administrator of the Vicariate on the death of Bishop Butler, was appointed Titular Bishop of Petenissus and Vicar Apostolic of this Mission.

He was consecrated on October 19th of the same year in the Cathedral, Georgetown by Archbishop Flood, O.P., of Port-of-Spain, assisted by Bishop Gordon, S.J., of Jamaica and Bishop Schelfaut, C.S.S.R. of Roseau, Dominica. Today, more than fifty years later, there are numbers who recall the magnificent ceremony, the Pontifical High Mass, with the Cathedral Choir assisted by members of the Militia Band under Captain Carrol. Unlike his predecessor, Bishop Galton was already intimately known to many of his people - an intimacy that was to grow to almost legendary strength in his long episcopate of twenty nine years.

Undoubtedly, numbers are far greater today - the Catholic population has more than doubled itself since his time but he was probably unrivalled in the history of this country for his individual knowledge of and his personal contact with, not only the members of his own flock, but with the community as a whole.

It is against the background of this increasing personal knowledge of this country and its people - possible in the particular circumstances of the time - that the work of the Church in British Guiana, so well

started by his predecessors, was to move forward, with God's grace, under Bishop Galton.

In an attempt to pinpoint the developments of Bishop Galton's regime, the compiler of these notes sees the Bishop under three aspects:-in his intense love of children reflected in his personal interest in families, in education, in the care of the orphanages; in the opening of the interior missions; and in the building of our present Cathedral.

Children

In 1902, the year of his consecration, Bishop Galton brought the Sisters of Mercy with some of their boys from Santa Rosa to take over the Boys' Orphanage at Plaisance. Here the Bishop was a frequent loved visitor, known to all the boys. Further, on more than one occasion, the Bishop himself supplied

for the Parish Priests at Plaisance. As with the boys, so with the girls at St. Ann's Orphanage, Ursuline Convent. It was Bishop Galton's concern for these two homes that introduced the annual collections on Good Friday for the girls and on Christmas Day for the boys.

Bishop Galton's interest in the Leper Hospital at Mahaica was keen and constant. Perhaps the most fitting memorial to him today is the "Bishop Galton Memorial Home" for leprous children, in the hospital compound. Like their more fortunate young contemporaries outside, they too knew the sound of his hearty laugh and knew him as their friend.

For a very great part of his long episcopate he gave weekly instructions to the girls of St. Rose's High School. The Catholics of the whole school assembled for these instructions and every girl was known to the Bishop by name.

In 1907, Bishop Galton witnessed the move of St. Stanislaus Catholic Grammar School to the eastern end of its present block, where he blessed it and formally dedicated it as St. Stanislaus College. In 1929 he was again present to bless the new building - the present "old wing".

Churches and Travels

In 1902, the Bishop opened the new church at Mahaica and in 1903 he went to Barbados to consecrate St. Patrick's Church.

In 1905 he paid his first *ad limina* visit to Rome. He attended the Eucharistic Congress in London in 1908 and in Montreal in 1910.

Rupununi Mission

1909 marked the start of the Rupununi Mission - the bringing of the Aboriginal Indians of this country to the knowledge of the one true God. This story is told under its own head but such has been the effect of the work of the Fathers that today there are some 4,500 Catholics among the Indians. In those days when Bishop Galton made a start and for many a long year afterwards the journey to the Rupununi had to be made by boat with all the accompanying dangers of shooting the rapids and there was no such help as motor transport in the long journey across the Savannah. Bishop Galton himself accompanied Fr. Cary Elwes to the Takatu river to find a suitable site for the headquarters and there established with him the Mission of St. Ignatius.

And so began the long splendid "adventure" in Christ's service against unbelievable difficulties of language and living conditions that was to be so fruitful in the spreading of the Church. It was Bishop Galton's Missionary vision that foresaw the wonderful help it would be if there were Sisters to accompany the Mission and so, right in these very early days, the Sisters of Mercy set up a Convent. The initial difficulties of the still unchartered country were overwhelming and - to their own intense



**Fr. CHARLES COOKSEY, S.J.,
first Editor of the "CATHOLIC STANDARD".
started by Bishop Galton in April, 1905.**

sorrow – the Sisters had to withdraw.

In 1913, he aided the Sisters to reopen their Convent at Santa Rosa on the Moruka River which they had attempted as far back as 1897 at Bishop Butler's request. This time their efforts met with complete success. They opened a school and began that devoted care of the people that has made them an essential part of the Amerindian Reserve today; and also opened an orphanage which included some Amerindians from the Rupununi.

From Santa Rosa convents were to be opened at Morawhanna (1914) and Hosororo (1915) where the work so flourished that at one time they even had their own noviciate in this North West District.

1913 Fire

Such had been the joyous start of the year 1913. Then on the 7th March, the first Friday of the month, came the great blow - the disastrous fire which, in a very short time, completely destroyed the beautiful Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. This was recognised as a tragedy for the colony. His Excellency the Governor himself was among the many spectators who gathered among the smouldering embers to sympathize with Bishop Galton.

The Bishop rose to the occasion. The story is told of him as, standing amid the ruins, he declared his intention to rebuild the Cathedral in concrete - the enormous undertaking which was to be the work of the next 12 years. The work was put in hand immediately and the concrete raft was begun in the following year. On August, 15th, 1915, the Bishop laid the foundation stone. The upper flat of the present St. Mary's School was used as a temporary Church, while the school was continued on the lower floor. At this time also, in order to provide further accommodation for the faithful, the Ursuline Convent Chapel was opened to the public. Amid all the difficulties occasioned by the first world war, work proceeded on the Cathedral.

Shipwrecked

In 1918 the Bishop set out on one of his visits to the Takutu Mission and it was on this occasion that he was shipwrecked while trying to shoot the Korona rapids on the Ireng. His regalia and all his belongings went to bottom, but much was regained later as it floated down the river. The Bishop, himself a powerful man, managed to swim to safety and great was the rejoicing when he returned to town. He proceeded to the United States of America for a much needed rest, later continuing to Rome for his "ad limina" visit which had been deferred on account of the war.

Opening of the Cathedral

In 1921 came the great event of the opening of the first part of the Cathedral. Officially set for Passion Sunday, 13th March, it was forestalled by the death of Father Paul Miller, S.J., and the Cathedral was first blessed and used for his funeral on 4th March. Bishop Galton then continued with the official blessing as planned on 13th March. In 1925, the whole Cathedral was thrown open and for the first time the stately figure of Bishop Galton in flowing Cappa Magna was seen coming down the full length of the aisle for Pontifical High Mass on the Sunday within the Octave of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, 13th December, 1925.

In August, 1927, The Bishop consecrated the new ferro-concrete Church of Our Lady of Peace built at Mahaicony by Father J. J. Purcell - the only Church to be consecrated in the Colony. On October 19th of this year Bishop Galton celebrated his Silver Jubilee. Great were the rejoicings throughout the Colony which reached their climax in the solemn Pontifical High Mass celebrated for the occasion, and in the public meeting arranged in the Promenade Gardens where a presentation was made from the Catholics of the community. Here, as at so many of the other important points in the Bishop's episcopate, the entire community joined in the congratulations and many of the celebrations.

On September 21st 1930, the Bishop laid the foundation stone of the new Church of Christ the King at Suddie, Essequibo. For some time now his great strength had been failing him. The picture of him

remains clearly etched - old, tired, but with the indomitable determination to carry on.

Missionary Bishop

The one condition under which the Society of Jesus permits its sons to accept the office of Bishop is in the case of Missionary Bishop. Bishop Galton appears as an ideal example. With the opening of the interior missions, he had travelled over this Colony of British Guiana more than most men. It is significant that the new schools of his episcopate were in the Rupununi, Santa Rosa, and the North West District. It has been impossible to reiterate the progressing work of all the coastal missions, but the simplicity of the Bishop in his concern for them is strikingly brought out in his efforts to himself supply for Parish Priests, as occasion arose in different districts. In social work, his first hand knowledge of the conditions of B.G's slums and "yards", was invaluable in furthering the work of the St. Vincent de Paul society.

Ladies of Charity

1927 witnessed the introduction into this country of their counterpart--the Ladies of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul. The work of these two societies was to go forward with ever increasing impetus for the good of the community. The Bishop's wide knowledge and experience was always available to legislators in the Education Department, and Education Committee. In the spiritual development, we find returning to work under him three Guianese Secular Priests: Father Joseph Franco (now in California), Father John B. Vieira (died 1944), and Father Emanuel da Silva, still happily among us. Christmas 1930. The Bishop pontificated at Midnight Mass, but the end was nearing.

Final Effort

In 1931, in the face of much anxiety over his weakening physical condition, he completed all the ceremonies of Holy Week and Easter, and himself preached at the Evening Service on Easter Sunday.

Five days later, on Friday, 10th April 19031, Bishop Galton died, and passed to his reward. The solemn Requiem Mass, offered in the Cathedral by his Vicar General, Very Reverend Father J. L. Morrison. S.J., and the funeral followed on Monday, April 13. The Bishop's body which, embalmed, had lain in state in the Cathedral, was borne round the compound by successive relays of bearers from the Sodality of Our Lady and St. Ignatius, and the Guilds, before being placed in the crypt below the High Altar.

All "Water Street" – commercial Georgetown - closed its doors for the entire time of the funeral. In his lifetime the Bishop was asked why he had built such a big Cathedral. At his funeral there was no possibility of its containing those who sought entrance.

A quotation from the Press of the day reads: "The streets were filled with immense masses of people - the great army of labourers and artisans, and also the still closer ranks of our unemployed.



BISHOP GALTON towards the end of his life – as he is best remembered.

This crowd lined the four corners of the Cathedral, and when the (funeral) procession passed all this multitude, Protestants and Catholics, labourers and unemployed, knelt or uncovered. It seemed as if for half a day, our two worlds, separated by a materialistic and commercial civilization, embraced each other, reconciled in a common sorrow above that Coffin".

SUPERIORS IN THE CENTURY

1857 - Fr. J. Etheridge, S.J.
continued as Bishop.
1878 - Bishop A. Butler, S.J.
1900 - Fr. C. T. Galton, S.J.
1902 - Fr. H. Beauclerk, S.J.
1908 - Fr. V. Hornyold, S.J.
1914 - Fr. B. Killion, S.J.
1926 - Fr. P. Dinley, S.J.
1927 - Fr. J. L. Morrison, S.J.
1946 - Fr. R. L. Guilly, S.J.
1954 - Fr. F. J. Smith, S.J.

End of Part IV:

Click to view the other Sections	
Part I:	<u>Catholic Standard First Quarter March 1957</u>
Part II:	<u>Bishop Etheridge, S.J.</u>
Part III:	<u>Bishop Butler, S.J.</u>
Part IV:	Bishop Galton, S.J.
Part V:	<u>Bishop Weld S.J.</u>
Part VI:	<u>Bishop Guilly S.J.</u>
Part VII:	<u>St. Stanislaus College</u>
Part VIII:	<u>Jubilarians</u>
Part IX:	<u>Priests of the Century</u>
Part X:	<u>Rupununi Mission</u>
Part XI:	<u>Kurikabaru</u>