

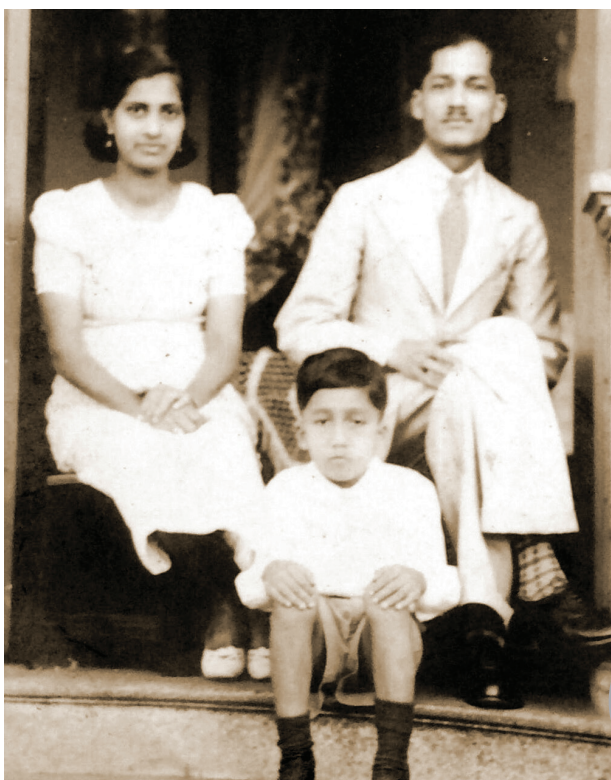
A World War II tragedy that orphaned 3 Goans

Five members of a Goan family perished when a ship was sunk by the Japanese on the Bombay-South Africa route 80 years ago



MERVYN MACIEL

›The writer, who lost five family members in the tragedy, had served as Senior Civil Servant of Her Majesty's Overseas Civil Service in Kenya, before moving to the UK



[From L to R] Wilfred, Francis and Josephine Maciel.

Mathias Maciel, his wife, Effegiana and their son Wilfred.

I find it hard to believe that soon, November 23, 2022, to be precise, it will be 80 long years since the SS Tilawa, a passenger/cargo ship, on the Bombay-South Africa route, was torpedoed by the Japanese during World War II, a few days after it had left Bombay for its East African destination.

THE BACKGROUND

On board were some 700-odd passengers, mostly from India, who were returning to their bases in Mombasa, Dar-es-Salaam, and Durban, as were five members of my family.

My dad, Mathias Maciel from Salvador do Mundo, was returning after his long leave to his post at the Secretariat in Nairobi. Accompanying him were my stepmother Effegiana Maciel – my own mother having died from childbirth a few years earlier – my very young step-siblings Josephine (3 years), Francis (1 year) and Yvonne (3 months).

Although my dad had returned from Kenya with my own younger brother, Wilfred, my elder brother, Joseph, and I pleaded with him not to take Wilfred back to Kenya as he'd planned, but to leave him with us in Belgaum where Joseph and I were already students at the popular Jesuit run school St Paul's High School, in what was then a military cantonment in former British India.

Dad eventually agreed and Wilfy was able to join us at the same school. I shudder to think what his

fate would have been had our dad not agreed to leave him behind with us.

THE TRAGEDY

It was on the night of November 23, 1942, when the first torpedo was fired from the Japanese submarine. I can well imagine the panic that broke out as most passengers were asleep in their cabins or on the lower deck.

My father, however, was on the upper deck of the ship, trying to lull my

three-month-old stepsister to sleep. On hearing the torpedo, my father rushed downstairs to wake my stepmother and the two infants who were fast asleep.

I can just imagine what thoughts must have run through his and my stepmother's minds when, on making for the upper deck, they found that all lifeboats had been taken up by crew members, who should have been out helping passengers to safety, and other deck passengers.

Although my dad was a saloon

class passenger, he didn't have the heart to ask those already in the lifeboats to leave and make way for his family. When it comes to saving lives, there is no distinction between deck and saloon class passengers. All are out to save their own lives and those of their families.

Moments after the first torpedo was fired, the Japanese returned and fired yet another torpedo after which the ship went down immediately, swallowing my entire young family and several other passengers who were unable to make it to the lifeboats.

THE AFTERMATH

To this day, the memory of this tragedy, when my brothers and I were so young, continues to haunt me, and I sincerely hope that following the interest shown by Emile Solanki and his father, Kass, in creating a comprehensive website (www.tilawa1942), further investigations will be carried out if only to honour the memory of my entire family and those who perished during this terrible disaster.

Thanks largely to the support of my maternal grandfather, S M D'Sa, a retired Zanzibar government official, we three brothers, orphaned at a very young age, were able to make a life for ourselves.

My late elder brother, Joseph, ended up as a Jesuit Priest who served with distinction in many parishes in Bombay, including, St Peter's in Bandra. My late younger brother, Wilfred, was an advertising executive and freelance journalist who was well-known in advertising and journalistic circles, both in Bombay and Kenya.

And lastly, I, now in my 93rd year, am a retired senior official of the colonial Government in Kenya and continue to thank all those who came to our rescue during those dark days of November 1942.

80th anniversary of tragedy to be marked on Nov 23

Kash Solanki from Leicester-UK and his son, Emile from Canada have organised a commemoration on November 23, exactly 80 years to the day when the SS Tilawa was torpedoed by the Japanese during World War II.

It is expected that some 100 distinguished guests will attend the proceedings at the Grand Hotel, Ballard Pier, Mumbai, the very spot from where several of the passengers boarded the SS Tilawa on their voyage of destiny.

Apart from relatives of survivors, those attending will include several

high-ranking Indian Naval officials and also the Deputy British High Commissioner in Mumbai.

The presence of the last survivor, Arvind Jani (83) and several family members who have travelled from the UK, Canada and various parts of India, will be a fitting tribute to those who lost their lives in the ill-fated Tilawa.

Mervyn Maciel, who lost five family members in the tragedy, will be unable to attend the event but he has arranged for a message to be read out at the function.

Assolna Goans UK celebrates feast

LUI GODINHO
THE GOAN NETWORK | LONDON

Goans hailing from Assolna got together on November 13 to celebrate their village feast in the UK for the first time.

The Assolna Goans UK celebrated the village feast of Our Lady Queen of Martyrs at Our Lady Queen of Apostles Church in Heston, which was celebrated by Goan priests Fr Patrick D'Souza and Fr Jerry Fernandes. The dine and dance was followed soon after the Mass next door at the Pope John Centre Hall.

Starting from scratch with no funds and only banking on their villagers to support them, the Assolna Goans UK went ahead with the idea and came out successful as the feast celebration was houseful beyond expectations.

THE PREPARATION

"Starting from scratch was always a challenging task because we did not know what the outcome would be. We had no funds whatsoever, but still, we went ahead," said Jhofil D'Costa, one of the organisers and ti-atrist/singer.

"Edwin Rodrigues and I came up with this idea of celebrating our Assolna Church feast here in the UK and on the same day, where our feast was held in our village."

"We even thought of coming up with a Konkani song on our village, but had to drop the plan as it was very very hectic, but we will do it in the near future."

"We got a huge support from our fellow villagers who wholeheartedly sponsored in one way or the other. We held only three meetings before the event. Edwin and I have both managed events for our Goan communities when we were in Sharjah, so we shared our experience with the others regarding the planning, which helped everyone," he added.

THE EVENT

The Mass was celebrated in Konkani and the choir was led by Edwin. The villagers were pinned with the traditional feast flow-



ers on their attire. The offertory procession was also held with villagers participating wholeheartedly. The vote of thanks in the church was delivered by former Assolna sarpanch Maggie Dias, who now lives in Swindon.

The statue of Our Lady was also blessed by the priests and this statue will be given out to all the Assolna villagers throughout the UK to take into their homes.

The dine and dance was followed soon after the Mass and one of the UK Goan topmost bands 'Treble Makers' enthralled the crowd with scintillating music right through the end. The event was compered by Jhofil, who himself is a seasoned MC.

Sumptuous dishes were prepared by some of the villagers cooked at home. Antonio and Rosefern Crasto took the mantle of shouldering responsibilities regarding food to everyone present.

Franky D'Silva, Silvano Crasto, Brenda Fernandes, Sandrico Fernandes made the



necessary required overall arrangements, while Ferio Fernandes took charge of the accounts.

"There was a mood from most of the people to keep this tradition alive and celebrate the feast every year in the UK. We thank all our village sponsors who donated something or the other to make our feast a memorable one. Next year, we have thought of passing the baton to our village juniors here in the UK to carry out these responsibilities with everyone's backing," said Jhofil D'Costa.

Goan Chaplaincy features Konkani film as fundraiser

THE GOAN NETWORK | LONDON

The Goan Chaplaincy UK presented a Konkani movie, titled 'Padrik Nanv Nam?' in six centres across London as a fundraiser. The movie was first released in London in January 2020.

'Padrik Nanv Nam?' is a Konkani film produced by Valerian Vaz and co-produced by Andre Teixeira. The film is written and directed by Viraj Salkar and Valerian Vaz under JP Goa Productions.

"I grew up around priests. The more I interacted with priests, I realised the struggles of the holy men of God," said Valerian Vaz. "That's the heart behind the script."

He spoke about the rationale behind the title, stating that priests are criticised even after doing so many works of charity. He intends to display the silent suffering of priests.

The movie was viewed in Southall (October 1), Wembley (October 7), Swindon (October 8), Mitcham (October 9), Hayes (October 16) and Wood Green (November 3).

Since its release, the movie has completed 25 shows in the UK and Goa, as the pandemic halted the producer's plans to show the film across the globe to Konkani speaking dias-

pora.

Fr Patrick D'Souza, the Goan Chaplain UK, thanked Valerian Vaz for donating the profits of shows in the UK for Goan Chaplaincy and supporting works of evangelisation.

Andre Teixeira, the co-producer, stated



(L-R front row) Valerian Vaz and Andre Teixeira with Fr Feroz Fernandes and Fr Patrick D'Souza, and volunteers for the screening of the film at Southall.

that after the Covid-19 pandemic, Goan Chaplaincy UK had resurrected the movie to bring it before the audience.

"During the pandemic, the film was almost forgotten," recalled Teixeira.

When contacted, Fr Feroz Fernandes, a Pillar Father who is a part of the Goan Chaplaincy in the UK, said he had met some people after watching the film.

"Some confessed with tears rolling their eyes that the film's intensity depicts the unseen life of priests' suffering, sometimes because the priest stands for justice and offers mercy to the vulnerable," said Fr Fernandes.

"The film's climax leads the audience into a silent meditation. Although a few felt the film needed more humour elements, the viewers remained curious if the film was based on the real-life story of a priest."

Monumental connection between Karachi, Goa

The Catholic Church celebrates the Feast of Christ the King around the world on November 20. Three monuments dedicated to Christ the King, one in Karachi and two in Goa, have an unusual connection which goes back nine decades ago. **The Global Goenkar** provides a fascinating account of the three monuments and the Goan who designed two of them.



MENIN RODRIGUES

➤The writer is a Toronto-based communications consultant, Karachi Goan community/city historian and author

A statue was sent to Chorao, a monument was recreated in Assolna

There are many instances of a connect between the people, places and landmarks of Karachi and Goa. Almost two hundred years ago, people from the Portuguese colony sailed north-west along the coasts and anchored in a place called Kurrachee, a fishing village with a few hundred people.

The immigrants cherished their Goan roots, worked hard and established themselves as trusted individuals of a diligent community. They left no stone unturned to contribute to the development of the city and were soon to have made a tremendous impact with their talents, skills and above all, integrity.

Of the several instances of their legacy, one such landmark is the magnificent pure white marble structure of the Christ the King monument on the grounds of St Patrick’s Cathedral. It was completed in 1931 and is an artistic masterpiece, sublime in its contours and can easily be described as a gleaming example of renaissance art.

The purpose of building this beautiful landmark was to commemorate the feast of Christ the King, instituted by Pope Pius XI in 1925. Soon after in 1926, the feast was introduced and celebrated in Karachi, with a solemn procession through the streets of the city, followed by Benediction and Blessing around a statue of Christ the King which was perched high on a temporary pedestal in front of the main door of the Cathedral. The monument was not built then.

Thereafter, it was decided to build the monument and work commenced in 1927. The statue of Christ the King was brought from Rome and was donated by a ‘Major Quadros from Cincinnati Town’.

While opening the wooden case in which it was imported, they found the forefinger of the left hand of the statue, missing! (To this day, it remains as it was placed ninety-one years ago.)

The monument was completed in 1931 and was inaugurated and blessed on October 17, 1931, by Monsignor Leo P Kierkels C P, Delegate Apostolic to the East Indies.

The Karachi monument, designed by M X Andrades and construction supervised by Augustus Rodrigues, includes a crypt with a seating capacity for 100 worshippers. There is a chest/casket under the altar

When a monument in Karachi inspired two villages in Goa



Heritage Cell - DAP NED - October 21, 2013

The imposing monument of Christ the King in Karachi (MR-Archive 2013).

that houses a replica of the body of St Francis Xavier (as displayed at the Basilica of Bom Jesus in Goa), a mural of ‘Heaven’ above the tabernacle and a ‘real life’ depiction of ‘Purgatory’ at the back of the altar (now removed due to decay); all attributed to a Goan artist, Ignatius Vaz, from the village of Guirim.

The grand super-structure in Karachi has a unique history as it continues to stand majestically 91 years from the day it was constructed.

Here is a brief account of the Karachi and Goa connection. It is an outcome of research and how the monument prevailed over Karachi and Goa! It is so unique, providential, and heart-warming that it ought to be highlighted here for our present

and future generations, and duly archived in the history books of the Archdioceses of Karachi and Goa.

Folks from the village of Assolna in South Goa came to know that the Karachi monument was designed by Manuel Xavier (M X) Andrades, an artist and civil engineer of distinction. They immediately contacted him and was commissioned to design something similar for their village. Manuel Xavier agreed, aligned his artistic thoughts, and drew the first sketches. The finished design was breathtaking.

Visiting the Assolna monument in 2012, I observed that it was one-third the size of the Karachi monument but strikingly similar in design elements. It also featured four statues in the

four corners at a lower level facing the central master column. The column was adorned with t h e statue of Christ the King at its summit. Further investigation revealed that the four statues represented the Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

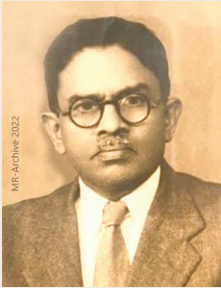
As I delved further into the history of the monument and background of the designer, consulting elder priests and family members, it was revealed that Manuel Xavier’s four sons were named after the Gospel writers. In hindsight, we are to believe that it was a befitting gift to his sons by a loving father, a fact unknown to the people of Goa, or Karachi, until today!

Goan designer of two monuments

Manuel Xavier Andrades, also known as M X Andrade of Karachi, was born in Velim on August 15, 1887. He was the eldest son of four children, two sons and a daughter.

Manuel Xavier schooled privately in Karachi and travelled to Bombay for his graduation from the J J School of Arts & Science, specialising in Drawing & Civil Engineering.

Returning to Karachi, his first job was with Messrs. Herman & Mohatta Engineering Company. He later joined Sindh government service as Chief Mechanical Engineer and Head Draftsman, and designed railway bridges, among his other works. He served the government until his retirement in 1965.



At the community level in Karachi, Manuel Xavier’s renowned legacy is the designing of the magnificent Christ the

King Monument in 1931, the Goan Union Hall/Club in 1931, and the popular All-India Mayor Cabral Hockey Shield.

In 1932, he was requested by the family of Domingo Gaspar Sebastiao Silva Lobo of Assolna to design a monument for their

village, comparable to his Karachi masterpiece.

Manuel Xavier married Juliana Emiliana Sequeira in Karachi and they had six children, four have passed away and two surviving. The eldest daughter, Heidi resides in London, England with her family, and youngest son Matthew with his family in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

M X Andrade died on March 1, 1970, at the age of 83 and is buried at the Catholic cemetery in Karachi, Pakistan.

(Compiled by Menin Rodrigues for MR Archive, from information and photo provided by M X’s son Matthew Andrades in Ottawa, and grandnephew Jerome Andrades in Karachi)

Gift from Karachi atop Chorao hill

My research and inter-actions with priests (1990-2005) in Karachi into the antecedents of the Christ the King monument in Karachi revealed that two statues of Christ the King came from Rome, one was used in Karachi, and the other shipped to Goa.

The priests could not, however, recall who sent it, to whom and where. To my delight, many years later, the dotted lines connected and the statue was traced to the beautiful island of Chorao in Tiswadi.

Located atop the hill at Chorao near the St Bartholomew’s School lies a monument dedicated to Christ the King. A number of plaques are present on the wall inside the entrance, providing details of the donors and a background to the monument.

One of the plaques states that the monument was built in 1936 through the efforts of late Esperdiao Matias Quadros of Gavona, Chorao. Could he have been related to Major Quadros of Karachi, who had donated the statue of Christ the King, which was brought from Rome?

Another plaque states that the monument was rebuilt and renovated in 2005-2006 by the Choraonenses, with the renovation initiated by the Choraonenses Union (Mumbai)

Details of the origin of the monument are mentioned in another plaque. They have been reproduced as follows:

HISTORY – THE 1930s: Enquiries from Sao Bartolomeu parish office reveal that no records are available tracing the history of this magnificent monument. Reports confirm that this majestic statue was brought to us from Karachi in the early 1930s by a kindhearted soul, identity not known. May his/her soul rest in peace.

LEGEND: The heavy casket containing Christ the King statue was kept in the Church corridor. The villagers, the majority being a poor farming community, did not have the wherewithal to afford a befitting place to install the statue. The elders of the village were split into two camps – the church compound, the hilltop. But it was decided to install the statue in the church compound and a pedestal was built.

One fine night few days before installation the statue disappeared from church corridor. Next morning the sacristan found the statue missing. The Vicar was alerted, church bells tolled, and villagers summoned.



The Christ the King monument on the hill at Chorao.

Goan sailor recreated Karachi’s famed monument in Assolna



BENNET PAES

➤The writer is an author and a near-nonagenarian, now retired and writing for pleasure from Assolna, the village he was born in and bred.

Visitors passing along the main road at Assolna are captivated by a unique and beautiful monument dedicated to Christ the King (Cristo Rei), which is located near the Church. Equally beautiful is the story behind this monument, which was inspired by a similar monument in Karachi and erected nearly nine decades ago.

Fr Vincent Gimenez S.J. was the parish priest of St Patrick’s Cathedral in Karachi and headed a group of Goan



The Cristo Rei, a monumental pride of Assolna. [INSET] Domingo Gaspar Sebastiao Silva Lobo of Assolna.

Catholics, when a project was launched to build a monument to

Christ the King in their city, in 1927.

The 54-feet-high edifice in white ‘Carrara’ marble became a reality in 1931, and was officially named as the ‘Monument to Christ the King’. It was an architectural marvel, and was said

to be the only one of its kind on the entire sub-continent.

The late Domingo Gaspar Sebastiao Silva Lobo of Assolna worked as Chief Steward on the British India Navigation (B.I.) ships. His several voyages included Karachi as a port of call.

On one such call in 1933, he visited his son, Christopher, a student at St Patrick’s High School. There, he was struck by the grandeur of a monument that stood close to his heart. He was overjoyed to know later, that Goans in Karachi, including the Goan architect M X Andrades, had a hand in its making.

A thought rushed through his mind, and it posed an incredible challenge: “Why not recreate this beauty in my own home-town in Goa?” That was the kick-start to a makeover in Silva Lobo’s life and career.

He signed for an emergency shore-leave, and later sacrificed his whole career, so he could delve deeper into what he saw in Karachi; and into the feasibility of seeing a likeness of it back home.

Several consultations with M X Andrades in Karachi and Goa

culminated in a master-plan to replant the Karachi model in Assolna. It was, paradoxically, a task as monumental as the monument itself. Aside from that, he also opted to scale up his living standard, and built a house in the village to match it in size and opulence.

He readied himself to put in place the overseas contents of the entire monument, and sought the help of the village church and its parishioners to obtain the required permissions and to shore up local expenditure.

Amid excitement and a sense of pride, there were moments that vied to dampen his spirit. But the indomitable seaman prevailed. A brand-new monument in white Italian marble, dedicated to ‘Christ the King’ and re-titled as ‘Cristo Rei’ in Portuguese, threw open its magnificence to the world in 1937. It has since become the symbol of Assolna’s love and devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and a principal landmark of the village.

Silva Lobo maintained the monument in cooperation with church authorities in the earlier years. Then, he fell ill and was

bedridden, before he passed away.

In 2012, a visiting Director of the Karachi Monument Restoration Project, Menin Rodrigues, who was researching the two monuments, was astounded by the similarity of the two structures.

The Assolna design, he remarked, omits a crypt like the one in the Karachi monument, although it justifies in aesthetic beauty to its Karachi look-alike. The four evangelists (Mathew, Mark, Luke and John) are placed on all four sides of the monument.

The above nuances aside, the story about Silva Lobo’s personal achievements and his indefatigable zeal to succeed was lovingly related to me once before by his late wife, Maria Luisa Colaco e Silva Lobo. She was my maternal grandmother.

Sadly, there is hardly an awareness among the hierarchy or the parishioners of the greatness of this structure in Assolna nor in the government departments concerned. It could have been a great tourist attraction too and a befitting tribute to a monument built by a son of the soil.