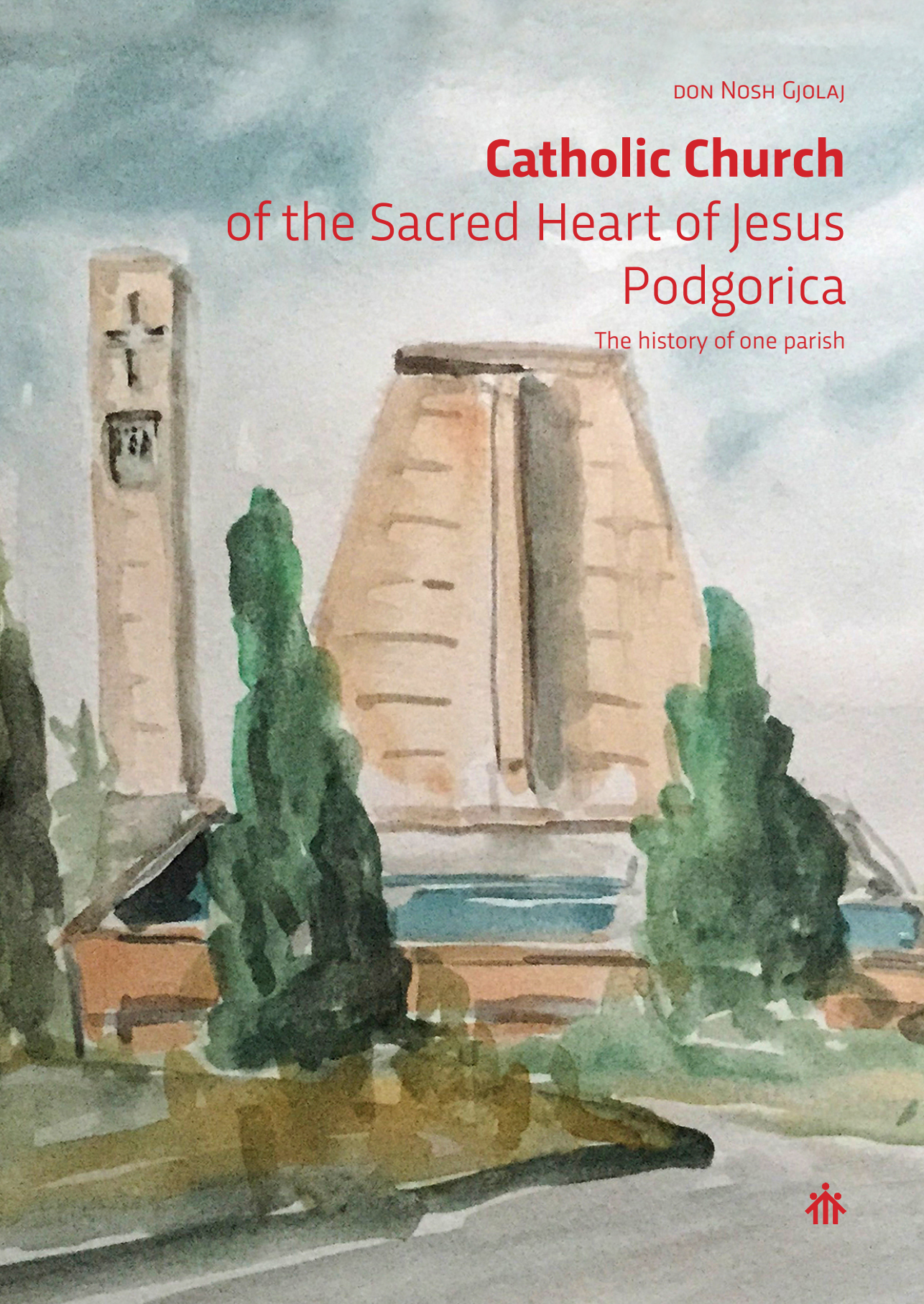


DON NOSH GJOLAJ

# Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Podgorica

The history of one parish



# INTRODUCTION

It is not easy to write the history of a parish such as the Parish of Podgorica; it has been an uncompleted process to this day. The roots of this parish originate from ancient Doclean archdiocese; other parishes originate from early Paleo-Christian period, continue in the Middle Ages, and from the Middle Ages to the period of the Ottoman Empire. The ideology of Pan-Slavic propaganda, the monistic ideology of communism, are harmful factors in the history of the parish, that is, Catholicism, etc. Historians need to get rid of stereotypes, ideologies, as well as chauvinist convictions, which do not serve well the history as a science.

I tried to show the history of the parish in short lines, in a superficial and telegraphic manner, starting from the first chapter: The Paleo-Christian Period; the second chapter: Middle Ages, i.e. X-XV Century; the third chapter: The Ottoman Rule from 1479 to 1879; chapter 4: The Resistance of the Catholic Church during the XIX and XX Century through the Franciscans; chapter 5: The Arrival of the Salesians from 1966, and the last chapter: The Contribution of Religious Sisters (Nuns).

THE CHURCH OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS	It has begun as the centre of the Franciscan mission since 1867, with the same protector. It was founded in 1903 and was restored and relocated in 1966, in new premises – in Konik
BORDERS OF THE PARISH	The Parish of Podgorica borders with the parishes of Nikšić, Cetinje, Tuzi, and Koči
DEANERY	Podgorica
PARISH PRIEST	Don Janez Mirtek SDB.
CHAPLAINS	Don Viktor Ganc SDB, Don Nosh Gjolaj SDB.
LANGUAGE	Albanian (80%) and Croatian (20%)
BELIEVERS	More than 2.000
THE PARISH HAS GOT SEVERAL BRANCHES	Kruševac – the chapel of “The Holy Heart of Jesus” Omerbožaj – the chapel of “The Lady of the Crown” and “St. Anthony”
CEMETERY	The Parish has got several cemeteries: Podgorica and Omerbožaj – two pairs of cemeteries in each place

# I PALEO-CHRISTIAN PERIOD

## **DIKLEA, DOKLEA – DUKLJA**

Prehistoric settlements have been found in these areas ever since the Stone Age. In the Illyrian period, these regions were inhabited by the Illyrian tribes, the Labeates and the Docleats. The Labeates stretched from Shkodra to present-day Podgorica, where the famous fortress Medun (Meteon) was built. The Docleats, however, covered the area of the Zeta Valley, and the famous town was Doclea. During the Roman period, there were three urban centres in the vicinity of Podgorica: Allata, Birziminium, and Doclea.

Doclea, Dioclea or Duklja is located 3 km from Podgorica, where the rivers of Morača and Zeta meet – the Morača River on the right side and the Zeta River, and the Širalija Stream, on the left. It was founded as the capital town of Praevalitana during the Flavian period, in the first century. We find the name Dioclea for the first time with Ptolemy, in the second century BC. The town was named after the Illyrian tribe of Docleats, it grew very quickly and was enclosed by thick and massive walls of 1.5-2 metres in the form of parallelograms. It had bridges on the Morača River and the Širalija Stream, and it represented the “bridge” of connection between Shkodra and Narona. It is believed, according to the oral tradition, that Dioclea was the birthplace of the famous emperor Diocletian, but clear historical sources about it have not been found yet.

Dioclea was the town and the ecclesiastical centre of the diocese, and then of the archdiocese. During the Vespasian period, the town gained the status of municipium (it had its own statute and power) and became an important political and cultural centre. Apart from Roman citizens, the population also consisted of indigenous Illyrians, as well as

Romanized Illyrians.

The town had turbulent history. It was destroyed during the attack of barbarians (the Avars) at the beginning of the fifth century, then it was devastated by the Goths in 489, and 30 years later, more precisely in 518, by the earthquake, and was finally destroyed by the Bulgarians (Samuel) in the X century.

From the fifth century Duklja (Dioclea) was a suffragan of Archdiocese of Shkodra, and the first known bishop of Dioclea was called (Evander) Euander (450), one of the signatories of the Act in the Fourth Council of Chalcedon (451). Dioclea became an archdiocese and a metropolis, which had the following suffragans under its jurisdiction: Bar, Ulcinj, even Shkodra, as well as countless other episcopal centres, right until the destruction of the town. The names of the bishops, i.e. archbishops were: Maksim (451-458), bishop Paulus (Paul - 590), what we know from the letters of Pope Gregory the Great around the end of the sixth century, and Nemesion (602). Old metropolitans of Dioclea are also found in Shkodra. An evidence of the organization of the church or Christian community in Dioclea in the middle of the VI



century is a signature engraved on the stone, found in a chapel at the cemetery. According to the inscription, the chapel was built by diakonises Ausonia ex voto. As it can be seen, the Christian community also had the order of deacons. Two letters by Gregory the Great and inscriptions engraved in the stone are main pieces of evidence for Dioclea until 602. Later, during the period of Caesar Leon III, who had separated dioceses of the Western Balkans and joined them to Constantinople (732), Dioclea belonged to the Metropolitan of Durres. Three anonymous archbishops, or under N.N. initials, were also mentioned. Around 877, Dioclea gradually extinguished and the last archbishop was Ivan (Johannes - 900) around 980, when the Bulgarians demolished the town and Ivan moved to Ragusa (present-day Dubrovnik). In the middle of the X century, Porphyrogenet described devastated and ruined town.

According to the British archaeologist Arthur John Evans, who worked on research of the town of Dioclea for seven years, only the ruins of the walls, as well as palaces with a large number of sarcophagi and decorative reliefs, and inscriptions of graves in Latin have been preserved from the old city of Dioclea. The sculptures and fragments of the old Illyrian-Roman town testify to the culture and ancient civilization of this place which, according to some estimates, had between 40,000 and 60,000 inhabitants in the first century after Christ.

The condition of Dioclea is also described by Kotor historian Mariano Bolizza who, during the visit to Dioclea in 1614, testified to the foundations of monumental buildings, the ruins of a Christian church, open fragments of architecture, inscriptions (Emilio Paulo), and the 12-metre aqueduct from Cijevna. He found some coins. He claimed that the Turks were building in Podgorica, carrying carved stones and processed marble from Dioclea.

For the needs of the town an aqueduct was built from the Cijevna River (Alb. Cemi), passing through Dinoša, Omerbožaj, Vrela Ribnička, and the Zlatica field. One branch of the aqueduct supplied the fortress of Allata, where the Ribnica and Morača meet, which was a caravan station, connecting Shkodra with Naron, while the other branch supplied Dioclea with water.

The ruins of a basilica were found one or two kilometers north of Dioclea, in the Zlatica field. There is a sarcophagus in the upper part of the basilica. It is estimated that this building was built during the Roman period. According to the experts, it was coated with marble tiles and decorated with mosaics.

Some historians think that, after Dioclea was destroyed by the Goths and later by a strong earthquake (518), the seat of the diocese was relocated to Zlatica. Others, however, think the other way around: that the centre of the diocese in the IV century was in Zlatica, and then it was moved to Dioclea, and after that in the town of Martinići. (In addition to archaeological ruins, there is also a location called the Bishop Valley).

Not far from this location, there are ruins of a bridge built, according to some historians, in the VII century across the Morača river, which connected Dioclea and Zlatica. The bridge was demolished during the Bulgarian king Samuel's war of conquest. Some historians believe that the bridge served the believers to come to the church, that is, to the Benedictine monastery in Zlatica.

Unfortunately, carved stones in the ruins of Dioclea were used for the construction of the Turkish tower of Depedegen, and for the construction of many houses in the old city of Podgorica, as well as the Glavatović mosque. Not only that the treasure of the town of Dioclea was robbed through the centuries, but a railway connecting Podgorica with Nikšić was built through the centre of the town of

Dioclea during the period of communism. In addition to this, the road was paved and an electric power station was done. Russian archaeologist Kovaljevski was engaged in excavation of Dioclea ruins in the middle of the 19th century, and the first history of Dioclea was published by Italian Mr. Piero Sticotti (Vienna, 1913), entitled "The Roman Town of Doclea in Montenegro".

## MEDUN

The famous fortress of the Illyrian tribe Labeats, Medeon or Meteon, is located about 12 km northeast of Podgorica. It was built in the III or IV century before Christ by an alliance of Illyrian tribes against Roman danger. It reached its power and the main boom during the period of Illyrian King Gence, and it extinguished after the Turkish conquest during 1467.

## II MIDDLE AGES, X – XV CENTURY

The old antique town of Birziminium, which was renamed Ribnica during the Middle Ages, was located at the place where Ribnica flows into Morača, at the ruins of the old fortress Ribnica.

According to the tradition, Stefan Nemanja was born here and was baptized by Latin or Catholic ritual (according to some sources, in the Benedictine monastery of St. Michael in Dinoša or Zatica or, according to others, in the church of St. George in Podgorica!).

According to the archives of Ragusa and Kotor, the name of Podgorica was mentioned for the first time in August 1326, and according to some other sources, the name can date from the beginning of the XIII century. Before

that, from 1054, it was called Ribnica, by the name of the river Ribnica. During the Middle Ages, Podgorica was under the rule of the Vojislavljevićs, Balšićs and Crnojevićs, until 1474, when the Turks conquered it. During the Ottoman Empire, Podgorica was an administrative, political, and trade centre.

According to Bogomile Hrabak, there were many settlements, as well as churches, in the narrower area of Podgorica. In the part of Doljane, called Lontodokla, there was a fortress with several churches.

Podgorica had several churches and monasteries. A religious monastery in Pobrežje is mentioned in old traditions, as well as the church of Durres; today, there are ruins of the monastery and the church at Đečevićahouse. There was also one near the river Ribnica, called the church mahala (Kish mahalla, the term is preserved in Albanian version), a road leading from the Clock Tower to the bus station. Likewise, there was a church in Čepurci settlement, under the hill Ljubović.

In a text published in "Glas Crnogorca" in 1886, Dr. Petar Miljanić reminds that in the house of Ujkaševićs in Pobrežjedozens of large boulders can be seen, showing that they originate from the former church in which there were engravings and icons.

Of all the churches before the Ottoman peri-



od, only the church of St. George under Gorica was preserved. It seems to be built in the X or XI century, or maybe at the end of the IX century. According to Aleksandar Deroko, the church of St. George has got the style of medieval Catholic churches, characteristic for churches in Dalmatia, very similar to the Church of St. Peter near Omiš.

Apart from the Church of St. George, the important monuments from this period are the old fortress Depedegen (also known as Nemanja's Town), the Clock Tower, Osmanagić Mosque, Starodoganjska Glavatović Mosque. Podgorica had about 6 mosques. The Ribnica Bridge, Vezir's Bridge, etc. are well-known bridges of that time. During the period of the Ottoman Empire, Podgorica suffered devastating earthquakes, as well as two epidemics of cholera and, on the other hand, the emigration of Catholic population on the Adriatic coast from Ragusa (Dubrovnik), Makarska, to Istria, after the war for liberation from the Turks. On the one hand, we have a conversion to Islam, (according to some sources, Podgoricians were rather religious fanatics)

and, on the other hand, the assimilation of Illyrian-Albanian population, initially converting to Orthodoxy and later to Slavs, starting from 1611 – the tribes of Paštrovići, then Bjelopavlići, Piperi and recently, in 1713, Kuči.

### **BENEDICTINES AND DOMINICANS**

During the Middle Ages, according to Jeriček and Shuffly, Benedictines and Dominicans played a very important role in these areas. If it were not for Benedictines and Dominicans, the Balkan Albanians would be Greeks, or Slavs! They contributed not only to Slavic Christians, but also to the establishment and preservation of identity of the Illyrian-Albanian land. Here, in the area of Podgorica Parish, we have Benedictine monasteries in Zlatica, as well as in the location Kishzat (Albanian word with the meaning – little churches) in a place called Toječ, and St. Michael in Dinoša, while the Dominicans were in Old Kolašin. (They have not been sufficiently and adequately researched).

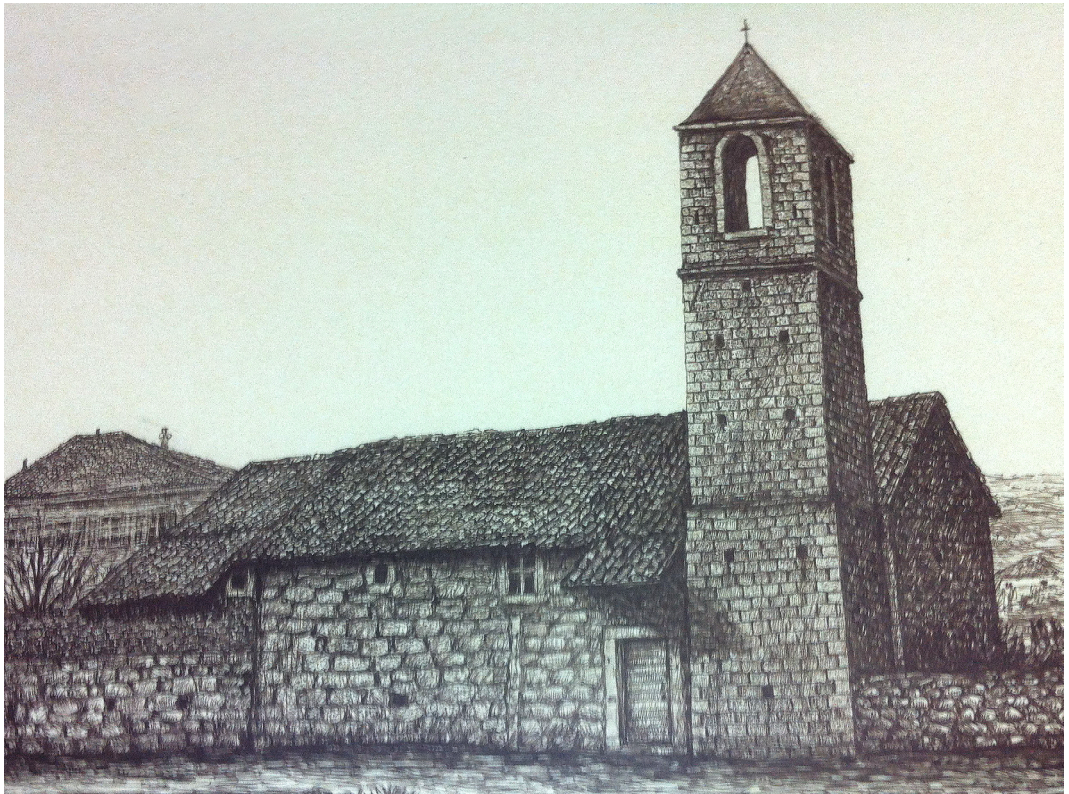
## **III THE PERIOD OF OTTOMAN RULE (1479-1878)**

### **CONTINUITY OF FRANCISCAN MONKS AFTER THE DEPARTURE OF BENEDICTINES AND DOMINICANS**

After the defeat in Kosovo (1389), and the conquest of Shkodra (1479) and Bar (1571), the entire Albanian area in which the Catholic church operated fell into the hands of the Ottomans. On the other hand, the position of Venice weakened and retained its own interests. It negotiated with the Ottoman Empire, to the detriment of the Christian world, and great monastic orders, such as Benedictines and Dominicans who were previously the pillars of the Albanian Catholic Church, were

extinguished. Their monasteries, a testimony to Catholicism, became ruins under the feet of Ottoman invaders. Only the Franciscans remained in this area, experiencing unscrupulous and bloody suffering and attacks on the Church. At the same time, they were witnesses of great apostasy of Albanian people by the Church and their conversion to Islam.

The position of Catholics radically weakened after the Battle of Lepanto (December 1, 1571), where the last Archbishop of Ulcinj and Bar, monsignor Ivan Bruno, Ulcinian by birth, fell in the war. The surrender of Bar to the Ottoman conqueror was a moment when the



Turks began to destroy churches, as well as to persecute Catholics and burn ecclesiastical goods, which influenced both the emigration and the conversion into Islam or Orthodoxy.

During 1633, there were 200 Catholic families in the Bjelopavlići tribe, while in the area between Zeta and Morača, in 1635, there were almost 1,000 Catholics. Almost all Piperi were Catholics in 1610. According to Serbian historian V. Ćorović, the Piperi were completely Catholics until 1610, and most of the Piperi transferred to Orthodox Church in the XIX century. According to the aforementioned historian, this was influenced by numerous battles against the Turks, such as that of 1732 against Osman Pasha, and then those from 1788 and 1796 against Mahmud Pasha – Bushatli, and 1810 against Tahir Pasha.

It was also influenced by the lack of clergy, as we read in a letter sent by Nicolo Mechaisci to Cardinal S. Giorgio, a nuncio of the Holy See, in Venice in 1599, indicating that, due to the lack

of Catholic priests, a part of the population converted into Greek or Slavic Orthodoxy, and the rest into Islam.

According to Thalloczy, Franciscans were those who, after the Turkish conquests, took over deserted parishes and Benedictine monasteries that remained abandoned; they resisted, the hidden guards of Albanian "Nord"; even when Europe did not show any interest in this country and when Turkish authorities did everything to diminish every sign of Christianity, they kept the Catholic faith alive to this day.

The reports of Marino Bizzi (1610) show that some tribes were still Catholic: the Kuči, Piperi, Bratonožići, Bjelopavlići. Thirty years later (1640), missionary Đ. Vušković said that there were still 200 Catholic homes in Bjelopavlići tribe, and that most of the believers were waiting for their priests in vain, so they converted either to Orthodoxy or to Muslims.

One document by Marino Bolizza from 1614 spoke about Skadar Sandžak, which included Podgorica as well, and it was claimed in it that Podgorica was a small fortress, surrounded by a settlement of some 900 houses, and most of them are Christians (Catholics). Podgorica, as such, was a city, town and village.

Another document by Francesco Bolizza, Kotor 7.12.1640, claims that the Parish of Grude (the Franciscan Mission) encompassed the whole of the Podgorica Valley, the hills above Shkodra, up to Drivast (Drisht in Albanian), Hote, Škrelj, Kastrat, Kliment, and three or four Catholic villages in Kuči.

There was no lack of persecution by the Turks, (1639 and 1643-1644), especially during the war between Turkey and Venice (1646-1649). Consequences of this war were also the Franciscan martyrs, such as P. Pali di Veglia from Mantova and P. Salvatore di Offida who, in 1646, suffered martyrdom on the Cijevna River (Cemi in Albanian), in the area of Zatrijebač-Gruda; In 1648, Gjergj Jubani suffered martyrdom near Bar; and P. Ferdinando di Albisola and P. Giacomo Zampa suffered martyrdom in 1649; Fra Gjergj Suma and P. Gaudenci from Grude near Tuzi (1688) and P. Antonio and S. Jacobo went through martyrdom near Podgorica in 1693. It seems that these lattermost were parish priests in Podgorica.

According to the words of monsignor Petar Perković, we can assume that Franciscan missionaries from the Parish of Grude later took care of Catholics in Podgorica. We still do not have precise data about the manner in which they did it and for how long. However, Archbishop Zmajević did not mention Catholics during his visit to Hodo Beg in Podgorica (1702/03).

## **XIX CENTURY**

For Catholics in Podgorica there was silence that lasted until the middle of the XIX century. During that time, there were several Catholic

families of tradesmen, craftsmen, villagers in Podgorica, but they did not have a place for prayer. In 1865, Latin priest in Podgorica, Don Nuo Šlaku (Shllaku), bought the house and land of Mark Ujka, who was originally from Grude and a resident of Podgorica, not far from the old church (Durres), which served as a church and had one bell tower, where Catholic believers gathered.

The old church was probably administered by Don Nuo Shllaku! The land was bought in 1685, more precisely 21 Zilhidjein 1282, which bordered with the house of Toko's daughter, and on the other side with the garden of Ibrahim Čabi, then with the river Ribnica, and on the other side with the road (today the Funeral Home – ex Home of the Yugoslav National Army).

According to the oral tradition, we have another small Catholic church in the settlement of Drač, also called "Cvjetni Brijeg", near the house of Kol Gjyshit Pecaj, and that church was in the old Catholic cemetery in Podgorica, which served not only for Catholic believers, but also for Muslims. This was confirmed by Mr. Kol Gjyshi Pecaj, who found the walls of the old church during the construction of his house, and some graves are visible even now (now the shop - once a self-service office), but there are still no documents about this church, except that there is a Catholic cemetery nearby!

Initially, the Parish of Podgorica belonged to the Shkodra Archdiocese, then to the Franciscan mission from Grude, and then to the Prefecture of Kastrat. The Franciscans came in 1867. Pater Ludovico Di Sasso (1867-1895) was mentioned as the first of them. He served for 27 years and was a bridge between the Ottoman Empire and Montenegro. With the arrival of Montenegrins in Podgorica, most of the residents of Podgorica emigrated to Shkodra or Tuzi, and Montenegrins came in their place, thus changing the structure of the population and ethnicity of this town.



# IV THE PERIOD OF RESIDENCE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH DURING THE XIX AND XX CENTURY

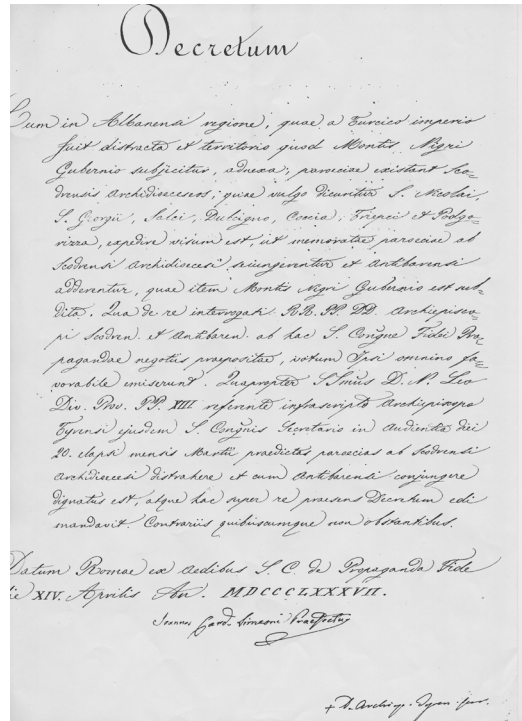
## PODGORICA UNDER THE ARCHDIOCESE OF BAR – 1878

A new period begins with the entry of Montenegro, after the Berlin Congress in 1878, and this parish affiliated to the Archdiocese of Bar, seceding from the Archdiocese of Shkodra, by the Regulation of the Holy See (Decree) dated April 24, 1887, or before the Concordat between the Holy See and Montenegro, 7 December 1886. This occurred during the period of Pope Leo XIII, on April 14, 1887, signed by Cardinal Joannes Simeoni, the Prefect of Propaganda Fide.

The first notes on Podgorica from that period were written by P. Anselm (P. Serma) di Pistoia (+1882), the parish priest of Šestani, during his visit to Podgorica in 1880, saying that P. Ludovico di Sasso operated in Podgorica, leading the parish for 27 years, until his death (1867-1895). Also, the previous bishop monsignor Karl Pooten (1877) remembered P. Ludovico, in a notice for the Shkodra Archdiocese and the parish reports of the Franciscan Mission, where he said that P. Ludovico di Sasso, an old missionary and former prefect, operated in Podgorica, taking care of more than 60 Catholics who were in Podgorica.

In 1887, Podgorica, alongside Danilovgrad and Nikšić, had 210 believers. However, in another document, from 1888, monsignor Šimun Milinović said: "Podgorica has neither church nor chapel, the Mass is celebrated in the hospice kitchen, and it numbers 230 believers".

According to a report by Bishop Šimun Milinović (January 21, 1894), P. Mariano di Palmanova (known as Pater Pasha), who was able to take care of Podgorica, Rijeka Crnojevića, Danilovgrad and Cetinje, was sent



to Podgorica as a parish priest. Ludovico was old (he was over eighty), he was not able to administer the Parish of Podgorica, and the Montenegrin government did not issue the visa to him. However, in one letter, on April 30, 1895, P. Ludovico di Sasso asked to be relieved of his duties as a parish priest and replaced by P. Shtjefen Naletilić, who had assisted P. Ludovico a few years earlier (11.06.1895 - 1899). A tireless worker, he built a large house (Ospicium Parochiale – Podgorica), which also served to celebrate the Mass. On the basis of the Archbishop's pastoral visit on May 15, 1897, it was estimated that the Parish of Podgorica had 200 believers.

In a certificate dated January 19, 1896, it is said

that P. Shtjefen Naletilić, the parish priest in Podgorica, testified that he was present when Zatrijebač parish priest P. Secondiano died and that he left everything to Archbishop of Bar, monsignor Šimun Milinović.

The earlier parish priest of Ulcinj, P. Anton Campanella (from Naples, Italy) was appointed the parish priest of Podgorica (1902-1940). He served, due to the circumstances of that period, in three countries: Montenegro, Austria, and former Yugoslavia. In 1906, King Nikola issued a permit for the construction of the parish church in Podgorica. Although he signed a concordat with Vatican in 1886, the Prince (King) of Montenegro, Nikola Petrović, was strictly against the Catholic Church. One of the facts for such conclusion is the church in Podgorica, for which he did not grant permission. In this case, he appeared to be forced after the visit of Italian king, Victor III Emanuel. Italian consul in Montenegro sent a letter to Monsignor Milinović on April 26, 1906. They say that Prince Nikola gave 500 crowns for the reconstruction of the church in Podgorica, the king of Italy gave 2,500 Italian liras, one national association for the provision of aid to Italian Catholic missionaries gave 3,000 liras, and seven advisors to the management of the tobacco monopoly gave 900 liras. This was given to P. Campanella.

Representative of the Ministry of Education and Ecclesiastical Affairs, the Minister of Justice - sent a letter to Archbishop Monsignor Milinović on May 13, 1906. He informed him that permission was granted for the reconstruction of the Roman Catholic church in Podgorica and that the land for cemetery was required.

The Podgorica church, that is parish, is dedicated to the Heart of Jesus Christ. As Monsignor Šimun Milinović claimed in 1905 or 1908, the church was beautiful, but the inner part was still not completed, which would exceed the figure of 30,000 crowns.

In 1908, the Parish of Podgorica had 65 families and 240 believers. During the mandate of P. Anton, a permit was issued for the construction of a new church near the house, which also served as a church (the Hospice chapel). The new church was dedicated in 1910, under the name "The Heart of Jesus Christ". It was blessed by Monsignor Nikola Dobrečić.

On April 17, 1906, a parcel for the cemetery was to be purchased. It was purchased in Durres (near the present-day church). However, it is not yet known how old this cemetery is. The inscription on one grave says: "Bjeshke BACJA - nëna e Zef Dodes Ivanaj 1833-1893" (meaning: "BJESHKE BACJA - the mother of Zef Dodin Ivanaj 1833-1893"). On this Catholic



cemetery in Podgorica, or beside it, soldiers of the Balkan wars (1911-1913), mainly Catholic Albanians from Northern Albania, were buried along with parishioners, and among them Zef Prek Ujka (Gjolaj) from Krševo, who was severely wounded in the battle at Dečić and died in Podgorica.

Soldiers who fell in the First and Second World War rest here.

In 1971, headstones from the graves were broken in a barbaric manner, after some pamphlets were issued.

### **DURING THE PERIOD OF AUSTRIA (1916 – 1918)**

One detail from the period of Austria is known. It was requested to display the flag of Austria during the ceremony of confirmation in 1916, and Monsignor Nikola Dobrečić opposed because he was the Archbishop of Bar and Primas of Serbia so the Serbian flag was displayed.

First missions that lingered in the Parish of Podgorica were recorded on 17.11.1916 by Jesus Friars, Frano Genovizzi S.D.

### **THE PERIOD OF FIRST YUGOSLAVIA (1918 – 1940)**

A Secretary of the Archdiocese, Don Marko Aškić, wrote to the parish priests of Podgorica, Zatrijebač and Koće on March 13, 1923, asking them to send data on children alive (how many boys, how many girls), who were born between 1910-1916 as soon as possible. This was requested from the Education Inspectorate in Cetinje (dated March 6, 1923).

Here is a content of the letters sent by Archbishop P. Anton Campanella:

Campanella wrote to the Archbishop on February 18, 1918.

He speaks about the church plot in Podgorica, near the Ribnica, which was appropriated by Sokol Baci. He bought it for 12,000 crowns. If they pay that money, they (the church) can have a parcel. He told lawyer Zerović that they



had documents about the purchase, but he replied that Montenegrin laws did not make any difference, and that the plot was being sold for the period of 10 years. Then he explained in more detail how the case came to court and how Sokol Baci and his son reacted, as well as a saleswoman Kalistiani, who did not have any approved document that the plot was hers.

Campanella wrote to the Archbishop, Monsignor Dobrečić on November 21, 1927 – a report of the visit to Deanery.

Campanella wrote to the Archbishop on November 30, 1927. (The beginning is missing). He wrote about families and members, and he also wrote about Berane, Kolašin, Danilograd, about the number of baptisms, weddings, deceased, confessed, and communed. He also wrote about the piety of these people, and finally about charity.

By the end of the term of office of P. Anton Campanella, according to the scheme of 1939, the Parish of Podgorica counted 1,876 believers. According to the same scheme, there was don Marcel Dubravica, a military priest in

Podgorica, and also fra Bono Šapin, who sent a letter to Rome, describing difficult situation of the Parish of Podgorica, criticizing parish priest P. Anton Campanella for being a scrupulant, as well as a bad organizer, especially during the Mass celebration.

In a letter to Propaganda Fide, 1940, he wrote about difficult position of the missionaries because they had little help. He asked for help.

### **PERIOD OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR (1941 – 1944)**

Yugoslav authorities did not give permission to P. Anton to stay in Podgorica, so he had to leave as soon as possible. His servant Kona, who saw him off to Božaj (Hani and Hotit), had stolen his bag where he kept money turned into Napoleon gold coins. As a result, he had a heart attack and died in Shkodra. The last Franciscan parish priest, P. Engjëll Vjerdha (1940-1943), was appointed instead P. Anton during the bombing of Podgorica, that is on May 5, 1944, when the church was damaged and the priest's servant Kona lost her life at the home door. Before the bombing, P. Engjëll took the archives, which were quite rich, as well as registers and library in the Parish of Bajza - to Albania. According to Monsignor Petar Perkolić, P. Campanella spent a long time in Podgorica. Apart from being a priest, he was also a doctor because he studied medicine, so he established diagnoses to patients and gave them prescriptions.

### **PERIOD AFTER THE WAR: COMMUNIST YUGOSLAVIA (1944 – 1966)**

Immediately after bombing of Podgorica and departure of P. Engjëll Vjerdha, the parish remained without a priest (parish priest), so Archbishop of Bar, Monsignor Nikola Doberčić, named Don Josip Dević parish priest in Podgorica. Under the pretext that he did not have a place to live, because the house was occupied and the church was damaged, he went to his hometown Srijem (Ilok), only to return to the Archdiocese again in 1956.

After the Second World War, the Parish of

Podgorica remained without priests; the parish house was seized, church windows and bricks were broken, and the church was emptied. In new Titograd, Don Bernard Austermann from Germany, a prisoner of war who served the sisters of the Holy Cross, was a priest and he lived in Titograd from 1945 to 1948, when he returned to Germany in May. Don Zef Demiraj from Grude and Don Pavle Marvulić from the Parish of Tuzi knew him personally and visited him occasionally in Podgorica.

With the departure of Don Bernard Austermann for Germany, Archbishop Nikola Doberčić appointed parish priest Don Pavle Marvulić from Tuzi (1948-1952), to take care of Sisters of the Holy Cross. He celebrated the Mass for the first time in the chapel of nuns on January 21, 1948, and then until June 1952, when the nuns withdrew from Titograd.

The municipality of Podgorica, that is, Titograd, carried out nationalization of the Church and church estate, and ultimately gave it to the Yugoslav National Army. When the church and the parish house were demolished in 1957, the Army House - the JNA House (1962) was built in that place. During the period, Catholic believers carried out religious needs in the Parish of Tuzi, or in the parishes from which they came, until the arrival of the Salesians in 1966. Also, P. Gjergj (Anselmi) Marstepaj (1960-1966) kept records of the Parish in Podgorica, where he registered more than 260 Catholic families, mainly of Albanian nationality. He also served and celebrated the Mass to Sisters Servants of the Little Jesus in Kruševac settlement. He also carried out the blessing of homes of Catholic families.

Here is a testimony by Zef Ivanaj, an emigrant from Albania who lived near the church concerned, about demolition of the church: "The church was in good condition, except for broken windows and walls. It was built of stone and surrounded by yard, which was also made of carved stone. The house was filled with emigrants and other newcomers to Podgorica, some of whom kept pigs, chickens and cows. The church was approximately 6 metres wide, 11 metres long and 9 metres high, paved with

square tiles in colour. It had a tall bell tower, with positioned bell, bound with a rope that descended to the ground, and an entrance from the inner side behind the altar”.

In 1964, the Municipality of Podgorica entrusted demolition of the church to Albanian emigrant, Nicol Noci Guraj, the job for which he received a prize of 42,500 dinars.

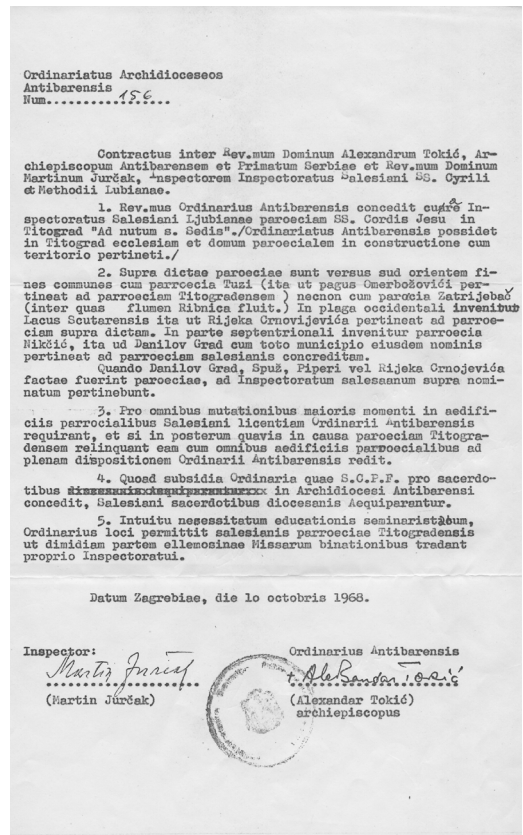
According to Zef Ivanaj, Podgorica had 200 (Catholic) families, mostly of Albanian nationality, listed by Leka Marashov Pepaj.

As for inventory of the old church, according to P. Kol Berishaj, before Anglo-Americans bombarded Podgorica, he had reported to the parish priest P. Engjell Vjerdha, who took away with him: one harmonium (or-

gano); archives with church books: registers of baptisms, marriages, deaths, and the library which ended up in the Franciscan community in Bajza - Kastrat (Albania) with the intention to return them after the war. P. Kol entrusted liturgical vestments to a believer who lived near the church, and after the war, P. Kol was authorized to take them with him in Hoti, to keep them, where they are stored to this day. After the war, church bells were taken over by a Montenegrin company and were given to workers in Zeta. P. Kol organized several believers from Hoti who, without the knowledge of the company, took the bell and brought it to the village of Rraza Qafes by the oxcart, and from there to Traboin, where it still serves as a little bell even today.

## V THE PERIOD OF SALESIANS, FROM 1966

The Catholic Parish is located in the city of Podgorica, the capital of Montenegro. There are 185,937 inhabitants, out of which 110,664 Montenegrins, 43,248 Serbs, 3,687 Bosniaks, 28 Bosniaks-Muslims, 105 Bosnians, 4,122 Muslims, 56 Montenegrin Muslims, 850 Serbo-Montenegrins, 685 Egyptians, 85 Malisors, 9,538 Albanians, 664 Croats, 24 Italians, 310 Yugoslavs, 81 Hungarians, 30 Germans, 117 Slovenians, 350 Macedonians, 3,988 Roma, 135 Russians, 22 Turks, 8,892 those who will not declare themselves, and 1,222 others. From the religious aspect, there are: 14,575 Orthodox, 7,947 Catholics, 16,275 Believers of Islam, 4,608 Muslims, 285 Adventists, 225 Gnostics, 3,698 Atheists, 52 Buddhists, 568 Christians, 90 Witnesses of Jehovah, 70 Protestants, 1,961 others, and 4,583 those who do not want to declare. On the basis of blessings, we have more than 2,000 registered Catholics, 80% of whom are Albanians. The number of families is about 460. Surely, the number of believers is much higher, counting mixed marriages, as well as people of different nationalities residing in Podgorica.





Podgorica is located near the old town of Duklja. While in the Middle Ages it was called Ribnica, the name of Podgorica appeared for the first time in 1326. After the Berlin Congress in 1878, it belonged to Montenegro. It was called Titograd from 1946, but after the referendum of 1992, it regained the name Podgorica.

Podgorica is located 15 km north of Shkodra Lake. The rivers Morača, Zeta and Ribnica go through the city, and the Cijevna and Sitnica near the city. It is characterized by Mediterranean climate, dry and hot summers and cold winters. The average precipitation is 1,554 mm, temperatures are above 25 degrees Celsius for 135 days a year, while the average annual temperature per day is 16.4 Celsius. It has an average of 115 rainy days per year, as well as about 60 windy days.

The church in the capital of Montenegro, Podgorica, is dedicated to the Heart of Jesus. It is located in a plot purchased near the Catholic cemetery in Konik, after a long battle concerning the site, as the authorities initially offered a location near Dajbabe, where it was not appropriate for the believers, to the Mill of Petar Tokov. After three years of waiting, the land was bought on January 31, 1964, under the number 05-6677/63.

On January 27, 1965, approval for a new church was requested from the Bureau for Urbanism in Podgorica. The land near the cemetery of the old church was purchased. A fee for four families in the amount of 5,600.000 dinars was paid. Bar, 03.06.1965.

During this time, signatures were collected against the construction of the church. On the other hand, Catholics collected about 3,000 signatures for the construction of the church. For this reason, Kol Gjyshi Pecaj was imprisoned and the signatures were confiscated. However, the permission given by the President of the Republic of Montenegro Blažo Jovanović allowed the construction of the church, which began in 1967.

## **JURISDICTION AND BOUNDARIES OF THE PARISH**

Borders of the old Parish of Podgorica included, except for the city of Podgorica, the village of Omerbožaj; the Cijevna River bordered with parishes of Tuzi, Danilovgrad and Nikšić from 1933, when it was established as a separate parish. By agreement between the Archdiocesan Ordinary of Bar and the Slovenian Inspectorate of the Salesians of St. Cyril and Methodius, the parish was entrusted to the Salesians "ad nutum sanctae Sedis" in 1968. The parish also included Rijeka Crnojevića, which once used to belong to the Parish of Cetinje, then Spuž with Danilovgrad, as well as Zeta and Omerbožaj. The present parish borders with the Parish of Gusinje (Mojkovac), the Parish of Koče on Kakaricka Gora, the Parish of Nikšić in Danilovgrad, the Parish of Cetinje near Rijeka Crnojevića, the Parish of Šestani in Virpazar, the Parish of Tuzi on the Cijevna river, and with the Parish of Grude in Dinoša. City districts or settlements and outskirts of the Parish are: City Centre, Preko Morače, Blok 5 and Blok 6, Tološi, Momišići, Donja and Gornja Gorica, Zagorič, Zlatica, Masline, Konik, Vrela Ribnička, Stari aerodrom, Drač, Dahna, Zabjelo, Tuški put, Bioče, Rogame, Spuž, and Omerbožaj.

Friars who operate in this parish are: Salesian friars of the Slovenian Salesian Province of St. Cyril and Methodius, and nuns - the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the Franciscan province, with headquarters in Cetinje.

Preliminary design of the church was done

by the Faculty of Architecture in Zagreb, led by Prof. Eng. Zvonimir Vrkljan. The church was built by the "Prvoborac" company from Herceg Novi, and it was financed by Caritas International (International Caritas), led by Secretary General Carlo Bayer. The entire object with infrastructure costed 355,504.43 US dollars.

The church has the shape of a ship and it is all made out of concrete. It is divided into two parts: a sacral part and a place for residence. The sacral space of the Church is in the form of a square of 22 x 22 metres. The presbytery is large, while open space above the altar reaches 25 metres, from where the light that illuminates the presbytery comes in, while the rest of the church is not well illuminated, because there are no windows on the side walls. The church has a magnificent choir, which is reached through the stairs.

Paintings of the Stations of the Cross were painted in 1991 by Albanian artist Martin Luca from Lezha (Albania).

There is a large hall under the sacral space, which was equipped in 1995 for the operation of a youth centre: football, basketball, tennis and volleyball. After 2010, the playground for football was arranged and covered with prefabricated "balloon" construction.

Residential part was renovated in 2003, and it is also used as a school.

The church has got a large bell tower (height of 42 metres), with three bells. In autumn 2004, craftsmen from Slovenia electrified these bells, so that the ring time can be programmed. Almost all parishioners took part in the financing.

### **DON JOSIP BAKAN PERIOD (1966 – 1977)**

Monsignor Aleksandar Tokić requested the Salesians to send a priest. Inspector Martin Jurčak sent Don Josip Bakan (1966 – 1977), who was appointed parish priest of Tuzi as late as 1957 (No. of the Certificate of Appointment 184, Bar, December 16, 1957), but the adopted certificate of appointment was not carried out.



At that time, mons. Aleksandar Tokić made a promise to the president of Montenegro Blažo Jovanović that Don Ivan Bušić, who did not accept the Parish, would be appointed parish priest of Podgorica. However, Gjergj (Anselm) Marstjepaj demanded that this parish belong to the Franciscans, as it was before, but Tokić entrusted it to the Salesians. Salesians came to Montenegro, Podgorica, for the second time on February 11, 1966 (Certificate of Appointment of the parish priest, No. 18/66, Bar, February 11, 1966). Not only the parish was entrusted to the former priest of Priština, Don Josip Bakan, but also the construction of the church, that is concathedral, the monastery of religious sisters and confession of nuns of the Holy Cross in Bar, on September 18, 1966, and so on. Initially, administrative work was conducted by mons. Jakov Rendić, from June 1, 1965 until November 22, 1966, when competencies were passed to Don Josip Bakan (number of Protocol, Bar, 122/66). Apart from being entrusted with the parish, the Archdiocese of Bar authorized Don Josip Bakan on July 13, 1967 as a representative of the Archdiocese, to sign an agreement between the Archdiocese of Bar, mons. Aleksandar Tokić and Entrepreneurship of "Prvoborac" from Herceg Novi, its director, Adjansko Vojislav, Titograd, July 1, 1967, serial number 2750.

Church "The Sacred Heart of Jesus" was completed and, at the same time, blessed on June 29, 1969, in the presence of the Archbishop of Bar, mons. Aleksandar Tokić, an apostolic delegate with headquarters in Belgrade, mons. Mario

Cagna, numerous bishops and priests, as well as the Salesian inspector Martin Jurčak. The parish was entrusted to the Salesians, as long as the Salesians and the Pope want it. (Ad numtum S. Sedis) Bar, April 8, 1968.

According to the Yearbook from 1975, the parish had 3,000 Catholic believers, 500 of whom migrated to Western countries.

During Don Josip Bakan's term of office, the sisters Servants of the Little Jesus were in charge of the kitchen and religious education. After dissolution of the two congregations, the sisters Servants of the Little Jesus based in Germany, and the Servants of the Little Jesus in Sarajevo, left the parish.

Mass was served in the parishes only in Croatian, at 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., and during the week it was served on Tuesdays and Fridays at 4:00 p.m. After the departure of Don Ivan to Priština, religious education was held only during summer, for one month, before the first communion or confirmation.

Note: Some believers, especially from Omerbožaj (and the petitioner was Nua Gorvokaj), complained that parish priest Don Josip Bakan did not adhere to the tradition of Albanians that the blessing of homes is done in the Albanian language. In the period 1976-1978, Archbishop of Bar, mons. Aleksandar Tokić orally authorized P. Zef (Fran) Jankaj, for the believers of Koće and Zatrijebač (1973-1978), and P. Anselm (Gjergj) Marstepaj for Omerbožaj, to bless the believers across the river, in Kakaricka Gora and Omerbožaj, and



that believers go for Sunday mass, baptism, first communion, catechism and other sacramental obligations according to their wishes. Pater Zef had also a room of the parish priest of Titograd (Podgorica) in the chapel in Kruševac, taking care of the celebration of mass during the week for the sisters of the "Little Jesus".

#### **DON IVAN TURK (1969 – 1973), CHAPLAIN**

Don Ivan, who was the assistant of Don Jože Bakan, worked in the Parish of Podgorica, and later in Nikšić, but with a place of residence in Podgorica. He left a very positive sign among the believers and youth in an effort to create the parish identity. He was a hardworking and tireless worker. He occasionally celebrated Mass in Spuž and Bioče, where he conducted religious education as well, and also blessed houses and apartments before the feast of St. Nicholas.

#### **DON CIRIL ZAJEC PERIOD (1977 – 1985)**

In Don Ciril's period, the rooms of priests and nuns were being renovated, the ceiling was laminated and various offices were arranged, as well as the parish office, and the wooden cross was placed in the church (presbitery) instead of cross-shaped neon lamps.

During the period, the Albanian language was introduced into the liturgy for the first time.

During 1982, Sisters of the Franciscan Order from Cetinje came to serve in the parish, and later a contract was signed between Don Ciril







Zajec and Provincial Mother Gregora Ketish.

Furthermore, at the behest of the chief superior Egidio Vigano, the canonical Salesian community "Sacred Heart of Jesus" was named in Podgorica on December 2, 1981, to which Prishtina belonged, and Don Zef Gashi was appointed Director.

Religious education, which theretofore was carried out only 20 days during summer, was now organized once a week throughout the whole year, where the candidates were divided into two groups. The first group consisted of candidates for the first communion, while the second group consisted of candidates for Confirmation, led by Don Nosh.

During this period, mass was occasionally celebrated in private houses, in Spuž and Bioče, and the same goes for confessions and reli-

gious education. The blessing of houses and apartments before the feast of St. Nicholas is introduced as a rule, etc.

While Don Ciril was working in Podgorica, there was also a Salesian brother, Lojze Krese (1979-1980), who took care of the kitchen and the garden. Another Salesian brother, painter Ciril Jerič, who painted on canvas Don Bosco and the Lady of Prompt Succor, also came here on vacation.

**PERIOD OF DON NOSH GJOLAJ, CHAPLAIN AT THE BEGINNING (1977-1985), PARISH PRIEST (1985-1992) AND COMMUNITY DIRECTOR (1990-2001), NOW SPIRITUAL ASSISTANT (FROM 2006 -)**

Don Nosh Gjolak began his pastoral life as a chaplain (1977-1985), together with Don Ciril Zajec (Certificate of Appointment issued in Bar, on December 31, 1977, No. 142/77). He immediately devoted himself to pastoral "clinical" work, visiting families and registering believers, creating a parish file with 1,092 units. He also initiated the third mass which would be held at 12:00 noon but now, for the first time in the parish, in the Albanian language, which was a thorn in the eye of communist authorities as it was the only institution where the Albanian language was used. He organized the enthronement of Archbishop Mons. Petar Perkolić, and later the ordination of priest Don



Nick Ukgjini. On April 19, 1984, he was elected to the Presbyterian Council.

He was appointed pastor on March 1, 1985 (No. of Regulation 90/85). During the period when he was a pastor, the roof of the church and the house of a total value of DM 85,000 were renovated (1988), Stations of the Cross, with a value of \$ 4,500, was made by the famous painter Mr. Martin Pietri from Lezha, Albania. Three rooms for religious education, common rooms in the basement, a museum with elements from the Illyrian period, as well as from the Albanian past, and a library with an inventory of 4,855 books, as well as inventory of the house and church were decorated. All bedrooms and offices were decorated with new furniture, necessary repairs in the kitchen were done, and new appliances were provided. Mass is celebrated in Croatian at 9:00 a.m, in Albanian at 11:00 a.m, while the third mass is celebrated at 6:00 p.m, in Kruševac settlement.

#### **DON JAKOB ŽALAR (1985–1986), CHAPLAIN**

He served in Podgorica as an assistant of the parish priest, who came from Nikšić, and his Certificate of Appointment was issued in Bar, on March 3, 1985, No. 91/85. He assisted in the parish for confessions, the blessing of houses, conversations with the sick and elderly. The 50th Anniversary of Priesthood Invocation was organized on his name day (July 25, 1986).

#### **DON FRANC JAMNIK (1986–1990), CHAPLAIN**

He was appointed assistant of the parish priest on September 17, 1986 (under No. 265/1988). Later, he was appointed confessor of the Sisters of the Holy Cross in Bar on February 9, 1988 (no. 83/88), and then regular confessor of the Sisters Servants of the Little Jesus in Podgorica, as well as of the Franciscan Sisters in Cetinje, after the death of P. Emanuel Kljajić (1988).

He made friends with the parish believers. Under the supervision of a regular parish priest, he arranged the parish archives because Don Franc had beautiful handwriting.



He regularly visited the sick and elderly, especially on the first Friday in a month.

#### **DON JOŽE ZABRET (1990–1992), AGAIN (2001–2002), CHAPLAIN**

Don Jože Zabret, who was appointed chaplain on February 21, 1990 (No. of the Certificate of Appointment 77/90) came after the departure of don Franc Jamnik, who had injured his leg and left for Slovenia for health reasons. He operated during the disolution of Yugoslavia and the war in Dubrovnik. He also held the same position in Prishtina (1992–2001), but he returned to Podgorica where he assisted the parish priest Don Andrej Baligač and the Salesian community. He also served in Nikšić.

#### **DON ANTE MARĐOKIĆ (1991–1993) – KRUŠEVAC**

Monsignor Petar Perkolić, in agreement with the parish priest, sent a diocesan retired priest, don Ante T. Marđokić to Podgorica, i.e. in the settlement of Kruševac, on November 3, 1991 (No. of Protocol 418/91). He celebrated Mass for the nuns during week, as well as confessed

them. The Franciscan sisters, who had just arrived in Podgorica, took care of Don Ante's health until his death on October 29, 1993.

#### **PERIOD OF DON ANTON MAROŠ(1992–1994)**

At the beginning, from early 1992, he was Don Nosh's chaplain, but without a Certificate of Appointment, which arrived from Prishtina just on August 29, 1999, when he was appointed parish priest (No. of the Certificate of Appointment 265/2).

He was quite involved with the parish Caritas, as well as with the provision of aid to the poor. He also visited the poor and elderly. Then he was appointed confessor of the nuns in Cetinje (by the Certificate of Appointment No. 360/92), on November 7, 1992.

#### **DON JANEZ MIRTEK PERIOD (1992–1994) CHAPLAIN, 1994–1998 PARISH PRIEST, AND PARISH PRIEST AGAIN FROM 2004 TO THE PRESENT**

Don Janez came from Prishtina, where he was a chaplain and, at the same time, studied Albanian. His arrival was significant to fill the gap regarding the Albanian language. The Certificate of Appointment was issued to him on September 1, 1992, No. 270/92 and he quickly adapted to new environment. He became a parish priest in 1994 and he ran the parish of Nikšić at the same time, until January 18, 1997, when don Milorad Defar replaced him.

However, don Janez was relieved of his duty of a parish priest on September 4, 1998, and he then became a member of the Salesian community in Shkoder and a parish priest in Brdica until 2004, when he was reappointed parish priest of the Parish of Podgorica by the Certificate of Appointment issued in Bar on January 30, 2004, No. 02/2004, a duty he still performs today. He was later appointed member of the Laity and Youth Council at the Episcopal Conference of Cyril and Methodius in Belgrade on July 10, 2006, No. 52/06. Likewise, he is a member of the Youth Council of the Archdiocese of Bar. During don Janez's term of office, many meetings were organized

at the diocesan and inter-religious levels.

In addition to this, Mass is regularly celebrated in the settlement of Omerbožaj, as well as religious education before mass during the year. Mass and religious education are also served during the year on Sundays in private houses in Spuž. Every first Friday in a month he visits the elderly, as well as the sick, confesses and communions them. He regularly takes care of the blessing of houses and apartments. He regularly supplies with candles not only his own but also other parishes, especially with those he brings in cups from Slovenia. Likewise, he supplies not only his parish but also Albania with calendars that he makes himself. In 2011, he began publishing the parish newsletter in two languages (Albanian - Croatian), and during the Christmas and Easter holidays greetings are sent on behalf of the Salesian community and nuns in the parish.

Don Janez regularly organizes pilgrimages to Lač and Međugorje.

He partially resolved the problem of boundary of the parish in Kakaricka Gora, together with P. Pasko Gjojčaj, parish priest of Koće, after 79 families had signed a petition on December 5, 2005 that they wanted to belong to the parish of Podgorica.

He also performs duty of a Director of the Salesian community.

#### **PERIOD OF DON ANDREJ BALIGAČ (PARISH PRIEST 1998–2004, CHAPLAIN 2004–2007, DIRECTOR, VICAR AND FUNCTIONAL MANAGER)**

At the beginning, don Andrej Baligač was appointed parish priest by the Certificate of Appointment issued in Bar on September 4, 1998 (No. 261/98), and then member of the Archdiocesan Council (reference 132/99) in Bar, on May 28, 1999. He was also appointed director of the Salesian Community in Podgorica (2000–2006). Before that, he was a vicar of Podgorica – Prishtina Community, and after that only of Podgorica Community. Afterward, he was appointed Director of the Centre for

Education and Upbringing Don Bosco, as a founder of the school, so he was relieved of duty as parish priest and was appointed chaplain on January 30, 2004, Ref. No. 01/04.

The war in Kosovo occurred during don Andrej's term of office. At the time, he worked a lot on the provision of food supply to refugees from Kosovo. He even received believers from the Parish of Glavičica led by don Tomo Petrović. During the war, he fenced the courtyard of the church to ensure greater security for the believers. He provided funds to improve the road on Kakaricka Gora and he fenced the cemetery, but this project remains unfinished due to a petition from a number of believers, fearing that the Podgorica Salesians will assimilate!

He did not get the school permit but he used the promised funds for radical renovation of the parish house. He renovated underground floor getting a big hall, and he also arranged and furnished four classrooms. In the basement, he arranged storage rooms, laundry, central heating, and many other maintenance tasks. On the first floor, a sacristy was arranged in two rooms, one as a "sacristy" and the other part as a room for altar servers. Former garden became a meeting room with audiovisual equipment, and a new window was opened in the office of the parish priest. The kitchen was newly refurbished. Former library became a school office. One office was turned into a library and a community room. Rooms for priests were refurbished. The garden was elevated by one floor. In the part of the house where nuns reside, rooms for the nuns were provided, as well as a guest room. Roof insulation was done and the rooms were air-conditioned.

A church hall for sports activities was activated. Only foreign language courses and computer courses were carried out in the school, as well as mechanics in the garage. Sports activities were taking place in the gym, etc. He has established good relations with the Slovenian Embassy, as well as with businessmen, creating a tradition of meeting every Tuesday, etc.



By permission of mons. Zef Gashi, Ref. No. 27/04, Bar, on March 30, 2004, he hired Mr. Miroslav Kummer – Wenzel as an associate in Don Bosco Centre in Podgorica.

### **DON FRANC KUCHAR (1994–2000)**

Don Franc Kuhar was relieved of duty of Nikšić parish priest which he performed from September 8, 1989 until August 18, 1994, and was appointed spiritual priest of the Parish of Podgorica on August 18, 1994, No. 297/94. He was a confessor of the nuns, as well as of the priests from the Archdiocese of Bar, and he was also in charge of Nikšić during 1997. He visited the sick and elderly in the parish, assisting in the blessing of houses and apartments. On November 4, 1995, he celebrated the 50th anniversary of his priestly vocation.

### **DON RUDI TISEL (2000–2004), CHAPLAIN**

Don Rudi Tisel was appointed responsible chaplain of the Youth Centre and Oratory, by the Certificate of Appointment Ref. No. 3/000 issued in Bar on January 14, 2000. He was a tireless worker with both the youth and altar servers. A record number of altar servers was recorded in his time - over 40. He worked and painted Don Bosco Centre himself, organizing the youth and altar servers. He was engaged in liturgy with altar servers in a concrete way, he established the Oratory, activated animators, etc.



## **VIKTOR GANC (2004 – TO PRESENT)**

Victor Ganc, a chaplain, vicar (2004-2006) and Director of the Salesian Community (2006 - ), Director of the Centre for Education and Upbringing Don Bosco (2007 - onwards), functional manager, etc. After the departure of Don Rudi Tisel, Don Viktor Ganc was appointed the Parish chaplain, Ref. No. 68/2004, on November 28, 2004. He took over the Youth Centre, animators and the Oratory, as well as altar servers during 2012. He performs duty of a Vicar of the Salesian Community in Podgorica. In 2006, he was named Director of the Community, and after the departure of Don Andrej Baligač, he was appointed director of Don Bosco Centre and the school, and also a community functional manager. On Sundays and for holidays, he acted as a chaplain of the Parish of Nikšić. During his term of office, he organized a room for animators, and a hall where music band, the founder of which is himself, would practice. The classrooms were equipped with video projectors and new techniques, confessionals in the church were designed, and he participated in their realization as well. He adapted speakers in the church. He managed to register the school, whose diplomas are recognized by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare of Montenegro. He has written and prepared new projects. He has collaborated with the Caritas of Archdiocese in Bar on the organization of foreign language and computer courses. He built a gym. He also arranged some reception rooms. He has maintained

contacts with the Slovenian Embassy and Slovenian businessmen. He organized excursions/visits outside Montenegro for animators and altar servers, as well as meetings and spiritual exercises in Slovenia, Italy, Spain, etc. He also established NGO Don Bosco Centre which has recently become internationally positioned and cooperated with a number of EU partners (Don Bosco mission, Don Bosco Youth Net, Salto...). He is involved in the Erasmus project (EVS), and international volunteer exchanges (30 - 40 exchanges a year). He carries out the oratory twice a year, in the summer and in the winter. He organized joint activities with the Slovenian youth in Podgorica and beyond, cleaning the Cijevna River, marking some paths to Bukumir Lake, and some other areas, etc. In addition, he is an associate of the Vatican Embassy and represents the nuncio at various diplomatic receptions when the nuncio is not able to visit Montenegro.

## **THE SALESIAN FIELD OF ACTIVITY IS DIVIDED INTO THREE DIRECTIONS:**

### **1. THE CHURCH OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS**

The Parish has got a church, which is in need of renovation, both internally and externally. Mass is celebrated every day, at 5:00 p.m. according to the winter schedule, and at 7:00 p.m. according to the summer schedule, one

day in Croatian, another day in Albanian. On Sundays and holidays, mass is served in Croatian at 9:00 a.m, and in Albanian at 11:00 a.m. Occasionally, Mass for foreigners and diplomats is organized in English, on Saturday nights (by appointment). In addition to the parish church, there is a chapel in settlement Kruševac near Podgorica Hospital, where mass is celebrated every Sunday, in the afternoon at 6:00 p.m. in the winter and at 7:00 p.m. in the summer. There are also two chapels in the cemetery in settlement Omerbožaj, where religious education is conducted and Mass is celebrated on Sundays, Saturdays during the school year, and on the Feast of St. Anthony and Our Lady of the Rosary. Mass is also celebrated in private homes in Spuž on Sundays, and religious education is conducted during the school year, because there is a lack of religious facilities.

Lectures are occasionally organized in the parish: "Open Forum".

Press: Yearbook of the Parish of Podgorica 2000/2001, containing 64 pages, with many photographs, as well as the history of the parish, was published within the parish. Then we continue with the magazine "Don Bosco", from 2002 to 2005 – a total of 14 issues in colour. The weekly, "Lymere/Announcements" has been issued since 2011, once a week, in two languages: Albanian and Croatian.

Religious education is conducted during the school year and is divided into groups: I-II class – communion candidates, V-VI and VII-VIII



– groups of confirmands. Each group has its own class. Religious education is organized on Saturdays. Religious education is also carried out in the village of Omerbožaj on Saturdays and in Spuž on Sundays. Total number of participants for the school year 2007/2008: 176 people, 2008/2009: 125 people; 2009/2010: 155 people, 2010/2011: 147 people, 2011/2012: 174 people.

The group of altar servers consists of 20 members. Currently, altar servers are led by Don Janez. They regularly attend Masses on Sundays, but also throughout the week.

House blessing: We do house blessings on a regular basis. The blessing included 548 houses and flats (2011).

Devotion: Also, in the parish, on the first Friday in a month, we do adoration, and we visit, confess and commune the elderly and the sick. On Fridays, during Lent, we regularly organize the Stations of the Cross.

Then there are devotions on the 24th in a





month and the blessing of Mary the Helper, as well as 13 Tuesdays of St. Anthony. Pilgrimages are organized in Ljač and Međugorje.

**Church Committee:** The parish has got a Church Committee, which meets 4 times a year.

**Church Choir:** We also have a church choir, a children's choir, run by the nuns, as well as a band. Earlier, there was a classical music choir.

**Caritas:** Parish Caritas, which played a very significant role during the dissolution of Yugoslavia, during the war and after the war, also functions. The activities of Caritas are divided into two areas: working with refugees and helping poor families in the parish. It had good cooperation with Caritas Tuzi, in the provision of assistance to refugees from Kosovo. In the local area, it still helps people with disabilities, the elderly, the sick, and poor children. It helped build 3 houses and renovate 5 houses, and there is also a care for medicines, etc.



Register books have been kept since 1966, with the exception of the register book of confirmands, which have been kept since 1978. Register books of the old church are in Tirana!?

According to the register book of baptisms, 1,372 people were baptized from 1966 to 2012, with an average of 29 children per year, with the highest number recorded in 1990: 52 people (the fall of communism) and the smallest number, only 13, in 1977.

According to the register book of marriages (at church), there were 428 weddings from 1966 to 2012, or an average of nine weddings per year. The greater number of weddings were in 1994: 20 weddings, and only one wedding each in 1966 and 2003 was recorded.

According to the register book of confirmations, there were 754 confirmands from 1978 to 2012, or an average of 31 persons per year (not counting 3 or 4 confirmands during the term of Don Jozef Bakan).

According to the register book of deaths, which were kept from 1978 to 2011, there were 106 deaths, or an average of 4 people a year. The highest number of deaths, 16 people, was recorded in 2009, and the least number was recorded in 1983, 1985 and 2001 - no person.

The first communion is done every year and the number of candidates varies from an average of 20 to 30 annually.

**Files:** There are 1,092 units of paperboard divided into 4 categories.

The Parish Chronicle has been kept neatly since 1978. We have only photochronicles from the previous period.

## **2. DON BOSCO CENTRE (Youth Centre)**

The structure of the Centre was formed by the arrival of Don Rudy Tisel in Podgorica, when a hall under the church was built and plastic floor was laid in the hall. He organized a team of animators, started up the summer oratory, organized various sports tournaments, as well as a daily oratory.



During 2002, classrooms were arranged, as well as a small kitchen.

Animators Meeting Room, which is also used for the needs of religious education, is equipped with audio and video equipment.

During 2009, a music hall was arranged, for which the instruments – the guitar, drums, etc. with the value of 5,000 euros, were purchased. It is used by the music band, which plays at the liturgy. Sometimes they organize concerts, both in the Church and in the hall, and cooperate with guests from Slovenia.

In 2010, an artificial turf mini-football pitch was made and the iron construction was covered with canvas.

Football is played every day on the pitch and is used by four clubs for regular daily trainings.

Since March 24, 2010, the Youth Centre has joined EVS (European Voluntary Service). In this way, we have been enabled to exchange volunteers in the European Union (for the time being we have exchanged volunteers



with Slovenia, the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Spain, Malta, France, Austria, Czech Republic).

On February 25, 2011, the NGO Don Bosco Centre was established.

During September 2011, animators were preparing the hall for their meetings.

In 2012, for the first time, we were able to participate in a competition for EU projects, where we recorded success with youth programmes. The project was supported by the Fund for Active Citizenship (FAKT), funded by the European Union (EU) through mediation of the European Union in Montenegro.

### **Animators**

Animators are active in various activities, both in the Youth Centre and in the parish (3 animators for religious education and two for altar servers). We have more than 30 animators. Animators have regular meetings once a week.







- Formation of animators (animator school), later various seminars also outside Montenegro.
- Various European projects.
- Socializing.

Animators participate in the Oratory project, both winter and summer.

The oratory lasts 2 to 3 weeks. More than 70 elementary school students participate.

Animators regularly participate in spiritual exercises. They also participate in projects at the level of the Salesian Province (Inspectorate). Joint working actions are organized, mainly with the Celje Youth Centre. In 2013, our animator and altar server Pavel Koroš went with a group of volunteers from Slovenia to Mozambique (Africa), and a year later to South America (the Andes), where he helped children with Maths and English, and animated them through play.

Marking of mountain trails through Mrtvice



Canyon, Treskavac - Bukumir Lake, etc.

We have been cooperating for several years with the Celje Oratory, where we gain new experience.

During the summer, joint vacations, walks, camping, etc. are organized.

### 3. SCHOOL: CENTRE FOR EDUCATION AND UPBRINGING DON BOSCO (COODB)

Centre for Education and Upbringing Don Bosco is very active in organizing courses in English, Spanish, German, Slovenian, Italian, and Albanian, as well as a culinary course. There also used to be courses for electrical installers and business secretaries. All courses are carried out twice a week and last two hours each. These courses allow students, young people and adults alike to open up knowledge horizons in a variety of areas, as well as to prepare themselves better for the profession that awaits them. The courses are open to both young people and adults (seniors).





Centre for Education and Upbringing Don Bosco began operating in 2003 as a language school. In classrooms prepared solely for this purpose, learning was organized in the evenings, and in the recent years even before noon. Initially, the first participants were young people from Don Bosco Youth Centre – Podgorica.

In September 2004, services expanded and two activities in parallel were conducted: courses for electrical installers and business secretaries.

Enrolment candidates have been sent to us from the Employment Agency of Montenegro. During 2004/2005 school year, 11 people attended the course for electrical installers, while 24 people attended the course for business secretaries.

On 17.5.2006, Centre for Education and Upbringing Don Bosco (COODB) obtained decision about the registration of the Centre as Ltd. in the Commercial Court, under the reg-



istration number 5-0297174/0012, in accordance with the Law on Business Organisations (Official Gazette of the Republic of Montenegro No. 6/02).

On 22.10.2008, Centre for Education and Upbringing Don Bosco (COODB) received decision from the National Council of Education and Science of the Government of Montenegro. Finally, the licence was obtained on May 20, 2009.

During May 2011, COODB collaborated with Caritas of the Archdiocese of Bar in relation to education and upbringing in our programmes. The school has 4 classrooms, a seminar room and a round table. All classrooms are equipped with the latest technology. The total number of participants so far is 1,736.





**SOME IMPORTANT DATES, NOT ONLY FOR THE PARISH OF PODGORICA, BUT ALSO FOR THE ARCHDIOCESE:**

The blessing of the church, or concathedral in Podgorica took place on 29 June. The Apostolic Nuncio, His Excellency Monsignor Mario Cagna, with many archbishops and bishops of former Yugoslavia, as well as clergy, not only from Montenegro but also from Kosovo and many republics of Yugoslavia, numerous nuns and believers, about 5,000 people, attended the ceremony. The Mass was accompanied by a choir from Kotor. Representatives of the Orthodox Church, led by the Metropolitan of Montenegro, His Excellency Danilo, accompanied by Orthodox priests, and the President of Islamic Community of Montenegro, Mr. Šukrija Bakalović, etc. participated.

Visit of the Apostolic Nuncio, His Excellency Monsignor Michele Cechini happened on May 18-20, 1978.

Second Visit of the Apostolic Nuncio,



Monsignor Michele Cechini, happened on March 17-18, 1979, on the occasion of the ordination of the new Archbishop, Monsignor Petar Perkolić.

Ordination of Archbishop Monsignor Petar Perkolić took place on March 18, 1979, at 10:00 a.m. The Mass of ordination was led by the Apostolic Nuncio, msgr. Michele Cechini, Archbishop of Bar mons. Aleksandar Tokić, President of the Yugoslav Episcopal Conference, msgr. Franjo Kuharić from Zagreb.

Msgr. Severin Pernek (Dubrovnik), msgr. Marko Jozinović (Sarajevo), msgr. Marjan Oblak (Zadar), msgr. Petar Čule (Mostar), msgr. Pavel Žanić (Mostar), msgr. Nike Prela (Skopje - Prizren) were also present.

On the part of Orthodox Church, there was the Metropolitan of Montenegro, His Excellency Danilo, with 6 priests.

President of the Islamic Community of Montenegro, Mr. Idriz Demirović, accompanied by the Podgorica hodza, more than 30 priests, many nuns, as well as representatives from the Government: Secretary for Religious Affairs Radivoje Radmilović, President of the Committee on Religious Affairs, Mr. Veselin Đuranović, and more than 1,000 believers were also present.

NB: Nuncio tried to merge two dioceses in Montenegro – diocese of Bar and diocese of Kotor, into one diocese based in Podgorica, which encountered strong resistance from the clergy, both of Kotor and Bar, where Msgr. Perkolić was ready to step down from his duty as bishop.

The death of the Archbishop of Bar, Msgr. Aleksandar Tokić, happened on May 6, 1979 in Podgorica.

He was kept for one night in the Concathedral Church in Podgorica. Petar Perkolić led the Mass on 7 May at 11:00 a.m, accompanied by Don Josip Bakan (Nikšić), P. Anselm (Gjergja) Marstjepaj (Tuzi), Don Ciril Zajec, parish priest, priests, nuns, as well as more than 80 believers.

Meeting with Caritas representatives, on June 28, 1979, at 11:00 a.m - Italian, Swiss, German,

Croatian Caritas. Msgr. Petar Perkolić (Bar), Msgr. Severin Pernek (Dubrovnik), representatives of the Diocese of Kotor, as well as 22 priests from the Archdiocese of Bar and the Diocese of Kotor were present. The issue was about the construction of churches and parish houses damaged and demolished in earthquakes.

The visit of Cardinal Agnelo Rossi, Head of the "Propaganda Fidei" (1970-1984), on September 10-12, 1980, accompanied by the Apostolic Nuncio Msgr. Michele Cechini.

Ordination as Priest of Don Nikë Ukgjini (10 June 1982) and Don Viktor Dedaj (2001). The first ordination of a priest in the Parish of Podgorica was done by Monsignor Petar Perkolić on June 20, 1982. Don Viktor Dedaj was also ordained by Monsignor Petar Perkolić in 2000.

Celebration of the 115th Anniversary of the Parish of Podgorica, on June 20, 1982.

On the occasion of the jubilee year of pilgrimage and the meeting of monks and nuns in Podgorica on November 26, 1983, at the invitation of Archbishop Msgr. Petar Perkolić, 52 nuns of the Holy Cross, Franciscan and Servants of the Little Jesus, Provincial nun Gregoria Ketish from Cetinje, and the Provincial Nuns of the Servants of the Little Jesus from Sarajevo participated, as well as the Franciscans from Tuzi headed by P. Gjergj (Anselm) Marstjepaj and the Salesians from Nikšić and Podgorica. Two lectures were given: Sister Matej of the Holy Cross: Presentation of the Holy Year; and Sister Magdalena, the Franciscan: "Salvation through the Sacrament of Confession".

The visit of the Apostolic Nuncio mon. Francesco Colasuonno, June 4-6, 1686, accompanied by mns. Petar Perkolić. On the first day, at dinner, apart from Nuncio and the Archbishop, the following people were also present: P. Anselm (Gjergj) Marstjepaj, Don Štefan Zorko, SDB, don Ciril Zajec SDB, don Nikë Ukgjini, the host, don Nosh Gjolaj SDB, mother Gregoria Ketish, accompanied by sister Domitile, etc.

The visit of Nuncio Msgr. Gabriele Montalvo, from 3 to 5 February 1987, who was a guest of the Government, was marked by an incident.

The jubilee of the Parish of Podgorica is manifold: There was a Mass regarding the 120th anniversary of the parish (1867), the 30th anniversary of the arrival of the Salesians (1957), which, in the presence of more than 300 believers, was led by the Archbishop of Bar, Msgr. Petar Perkolić together with Msgr. Nike Prela (Skopje-Prizren), Salesian inspector Don Anton Košir, along with 14 priests from the Archdiocese of Bar and 8 priests from Kosovo, numerous nuns from Cetinje, Nikšić, Dobrota, Petrovac, Bar and Tuzi.

On January 31, 1989, Archbishop of Bar Msgr. Petar Perkolić formally proclaimed the 900th anniversary of the Archdiocese of Bar, solemnly, at the Podgorica Cathedral. At the end of the 100th anniversary of Don Bosco and entering the 900th anniversary of the Archdiocese, Msgr. Petar Perkolić concelebrated the Holy Mass in the presence of more than 250 believers, in two languages (Albanian and Croatian), with priests. Nuns from Cetinje were also present, led by Provincial mother Gregoria Ketish, then those from Nikšić, Dobrota, Petrovac, Bar, Tuzi and Podgorica. Mr. Hajji Roman Šćekić, a monk in Dajbabe, was among other guests.

Msgr. Petar Perkolić appointed by the Certificate of Appointment the parish priest of Podgorica don Nosh Gjolaj as organizer and coordinator, and in connection with the celebration of the 900th anniversary of the Archdiocese it was decided that a symposium should be organized and a monograph should be prepared.

On Easter night 25-26 February 1989, a burglary occurred in the church, that is the parish office, and it is suspected that the act had been committed by the secret police of Montenegro.

A group of charismatics from various Christian churches from Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Nigeria, North America, South America, Bolivia, and from Europe: Sweden, Norway, Poland, Germany, France, England,

Ireland, Belfast, Switzerland, Greece, from Former Yugoslavia: Zagreb, Sarajevo, Mostar, Dubrovnik, Subotica, Novi Sad, Belgrade, and Skopje, met at a church in Podgorica, on June 14-18, 1989.

The closing of the house of the nuns Servants of the Little Jesus in Podgorica - Kruševac. A council led by Msgr. Petar Perkolić (October 23, 1989): Msgr. Mark Kolović, Vicar General, Msgr. Simon Filipaj, and other priests were present. A decision was made that day to evaluate the house, which was built mainly with the help of Caritas, but ownership was not regulated on time and with an adequate contract.

The Blessing of Oil, Holy Thursday, April 12, 1990. The Mass was led by Msgr. Petar Perkolić with the priests: Vicar General, Msgr. Simon Filipaj, who commented liturgical symbols of the Holy Thursday, the nuns from Tuzi, Cetinje, Nikšić, Bar, and more than 800 believers.

Don Nosh Gjolaj SDB, the first Albanian priest to enter communist Albania after the closing of the borders, May 3 to 9, 1990.

Meeting of the Salesians from Diaspora with the Archbishop of Bar and Provincial Mother Gregoria Ketish, on the occasion of the appointment and oath of Don Nosh as Director of the Salesian Community, September 6, 1990: What do they expect from the Salesians? Msgr. Petar Perkolic expressed his preoccupation: fear of various sects, which multiply like mushrooms after the rain. He expected the Salesians to do something about it.

The Parish of Podgorica was constantly attacked, especially during the war in Dubrovnik, and the life of the church staff was in danger, both the lives of nuns and the parish priest Don Nosh Gjolaj. The assassination attempt took place during the Mass on Easter Day with dum-dum bullets at the entrance of the church and shots were flying overhead, at the seat behind the altar. Then at the door of the parish house, three bullets hit the wall next to the body. During the Orthodox Christmas, on January 6, 1992, as soon as the Christmas tree fire was lit near the churchyard, the church was under a salvo of weapons and bombs until morning. For New Year's Eve, on January 13, 1992, around 11:45 p.m, there was a strong explosion outside the house, making a hole. According to experts, it was a vitezit explosive, and they missed by half a metre to tear down the kitchen! There were threats to life so that the president of the Islamic Community, Mr. Idriz Demirović offered his house as a shelter for the pastor and nuns, and he also offered his own defense gun. We thanked him and stayed in the church bunker, but with the gun of a believer.

On the occasion of Don Bosco holiday, January 31, 1992, the Stations of the Cross by the Albanian painter Mr. Martin Luce (Ljuce) were blessed by Archbishop Msgr. Petar Perkolić and numerous concelebrating priests, as well as 200 believers who were present.

Don Ante Marđokić died on October 29, 1993 in



the Parish of Podgorica. A year earlier, on June 28, 1992, a celebration of Don Anto's and Msgr. Petar Perkolić's 70th birthday was organized, as well as the 50th anniversary of the priestly vocation of P. Kola (Kolja) and Msgr. Stjepan Bulat. There were 69 confirmation candidates in the Mass and it was celebrated before some 700 believers by Msgr. Petar Perkolić, with numerous priests for the occasion.

The reception of refugees from Kosovo in 1999, especially from Glavičica, led by parish priest

Don Tomo Petrović, on March 31, 1999, when the police guarded the church from surrounding residents who were trying to attack it!

On March 26, 2009, Don Milorad Defar died in Podgorica and was being kept in our church. The Funeral Mass was concelebrated on March 27 by Archbishop Msgr. Zef Gashi, Mgr. Ilija Janić from Kotor, as well as numerous priests.

The opening of the Apostolic Nunciature office in Podgorica was planned.

## VI CONTRIBUTION OF NUNS

### **CONTRIBUTION OF RELIGIOUS SISTERS (NUNS) OF THE HOLY CROSS IN PODGORICA (1912–1913)**

During the Balkan War, especially in the war to conquest Shkodra, there was no Montenegrin family that did not lose someone in the war for Shkodra. Not only many people died, but even more were wounded and severely infected. In such conditions, on October 18, nuns were invited, with the intervention and recommendation of the Bishop Msgr. Uccelini. These nuns arrived in Cetinje on October 24, 1912, and later in Podgorica, and were placed in military barracks, where there were 1,600 severely wounded people. Also, the nuns from Podgorica went to Taraboš, where there were 700 wounded and severely infected people. It was the time when Montenegro wanted to conquer Shkodra, regardless of the price.

Initially, there were four nuns who went to help the wounded: Sister Regina Summereder, Sister Bonavita Cuconjić, Sister Lina Boshnjak and Sister Bonaventura Mozolovski. King Nikola honoured them with the "Order of Danilo".

They had completed the "Samaritan" mission on April 21, 1913, after which they returned to their province in Đakov, Croatia.

### **NUNS OF THE HOLY CROSS IN PODGORICA FOR THE SECOND TIME (1948–1952)**

On January 11, 1948, the Ministry of Public Health from Cetinje invited Nuns of the Holy Cross to take up work in a newly formed hospital. The job in the new hospital in Podgorica was taken over by nuns led by sister Klara Lucić and five more nuns, and later by sister Pacis with seven nuns. Sister Pacis was the head of this community. The hospital was still under construction, with only a few wards in operation. The nuns had a furnished house with a chapel, and Mass was celebrated by a German priest, a prisoner of war, Don Bernard Austermann, who was doing carpentry work at the new hospital. On the feast of St. Agnes, on January 21, 1948, the nuns celebrated Mass in their chapel for the first time.

After the departure of German priest Don Bernard to Germany, the nuns were left without a priest, so they did not have mass every day but once a week. Don Zef Demiraj from Grude Parish or Don Pavle Marvulić from Tuzi came. The communist government did not allow a priest to celebrate Mass every day, as it was agreed in the treaty. They had problems with the apartment, as well as with the peace. Due to such conditions, nuns of the Holy Cross left Podgorica on July 2, 1952.

## **SISTERS SERVANTS OF THE LITTLE JESUS (1962–1991)**

During 1962, Dr. Eva Velimirović asked Sisters Servants of the Little Jesus to take care of the Children's Hospital in Podgorica, and they were received by Dr. Boro Filipović. The first sister to come was Sister Arcadia, then Sister Damascene for the kitchen and Sister Crescence for the children's ward. She was followed by Sister Nives, Sister Jelena and Sister Sekundina, respectively. Nurses had an apartment in the children's hospital, where they had three rooms upstairs. With the increase in staff at the hospital, they were given a three-bedroom apartment on the ground floor, close to the children's hospital, and they turned one room into a chapel. Mass was celebrated for them by P. Anselm (Gjergj) Marstjepaj, from the Parish of Tuzi.

In addition to working at the hospital, the nuns also went to the field to visit the poor, give them necessary medications, etc.

With the increase in the number of nuns (religious sisters), as well as excellent cooperation with doctors and nurses in the hospital, the need to build a house for nuns was recognized, for which a parcel near the tobacco factory was allocated to them, and the nuns provided 500,000 dinars for this purpose. They began to build a house and a chapel, not only for the nuns but also for the believers.

With the arrival of the Salesians in 1966, Don Jože (Josip) Bakan completed an unfinished house and a chapel for the nuns. They were blessed by the Archbishop of Bar Mons. Aleksandar Tokić, and the chapel, which also served as the parish, was called "The Sacred Heart of Jesus". In that chapel, the first child was prepared to receive the first communion, and then the confirmation, until 1969.

The first parish priest, Don Josip Bakan, moved to a newly opened church on June 29, 1969. Along with Bakan, two nuns would also arrive, serving both in the pastoral and in the kitchen. After the beginning of the dissolution of Yugoslavia and at the beginning of the war

in Bosnia, Sisters Servants of the Little Jesus sold the house to the Archbishop of Bar Msgr. Petar Perkolić for DM 300,000, then moved to Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and some to the province of Dalmatia.

## **SISTERS (FRANCISCANS) OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE PROVINCE OF CETINJE**

At the invitation of the Salesian Inspector, Don Rudi Boršnik, that he sent to the Provincial mother, Gregoria Ketish in Cetinje, the sisters of the Franciscan Congregation of the Immaculate Conception from the Montenegrin province in Cetinje came to Podgorica. They came to serve in the Parish of Podgorica on January 27, 1982, and the first sisters who came were Sister Veronika Kočović and Sister Bernarda Dani, who took care not only of the kitchen, but also of the garden, church, religious education and church choir.

With the departure of nuns Servants of the Little Jesus, the Archbishop of Bar, Msgr. Petar Perkolić entrusted the house and chapel in Kruševac to the Franciscan sisters. The nuns will play a significant role in the Podgorica hospital, especially in the oncology ward, where there once was the famous sister Silva Adžamić, and after that sister Lusha Bisaku continued her work here with a dedicated and tireless attitude.

Nuns in the community in Kruševac decorated the house for the girls' home. In that house, the nuns took care of Don Anto Marđokić, the former parish priest of Štoj, and of Don Milorad Defar, the former parish priest of Gusinje, Bistažin, Škrelj.



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