

The Amazon in Guyana



Province of Port of Spain

Established as Diocese, February 29, 1956

Formerly Vicariate Apostolic, April 12, 1837

Comprises whole of Guyana

Guyana, until independence, was known as British Guiana. It is a huge country of 83,000 square miles and a population of 756,000 people. It became independent on May 26, 1966 and a Republic on February 23, 1970. It is situated in North East. South America. 50% of its people are East. Indian, 30% are of African origin, 14% are Mixed, 5% are Amerindian and others are 1%.

Roman Catholics are 11%, Anglicans 14%, Presbyterians 5%, Methodists 3%, other Christians 9%, Hindus 37% and Muslims 9%. The balance, those who have not declared their religious affiliation, are 12%.

Brief History of the Roman Catholic Church in Guyana

Although the earliest beginnings of the Catholic Mission in Guyana go back to the year 1771, it was not until 1825 when the first couple of priests arrived, which included Fr. William Clancy, at this time the then Governor of the colony, Sir Benjamin D'Urban, granted a piece of land on Brickdam in the City of Georgetown for a church of which the foundation stone was laid on the 12th of November 1825. In 1837 Fr. Clancy was appointed the first Bishop of the Vicariate, he resigned in 1843 and was succeeded by Bishop Thomas Hynes O.P. (Barbados was added to his jurisdiction in 1850).

In 1856 the Jesuits arrived and took charge of the Vicariate. Later, religious sisters arrived from the Ursuline Order as well as the Mercy Order, these sisters were asked to take charge and run many of the catholic schools in the country. In the mid 1950's the Carmelite Sisters and the Scarboro Fathers arrived in the country.

On the 22nd. Of July 1956 the Vicariate was elevated by Pope Pius XII to the status of a Diocese and so became the Diocese of Georgetown, Bishop R.L. Guilly S.J. was appointed the first Bishop of Georgetown.

At present the Diocese is served by Jesuits, Scarboro, local Diocesan, Phillipino Diocesan, Fathers of the Incarnate Word and Benedictines. The female religious are from the Sisters of Mercy, the Ursulines, the Carmelites and the Sisters of Charity.

Diocese of Georgetown, Guyana, South America is the official nomenclature of the Catholic diocese of Guyana. The Diocese of Guyana is referred to the Anglican Diocese. Among the Christian denominations active in Guyana in the 1990s, the Anglican Church claimed the largest membership; about 125,000 adherents as of 1986. Anglicanism was the state religion of British Guiana until independence. The Roman Catholic Church had a membership of about 94,000 in 1985. The majority of Roman Catholics lived in Georgetown, and the Portuguese were the most active members, although all the ethnic groups were represented. The Presbyterian Church was the third largest denomination, with nearly 39,000 members in 1980.

Source: Roman Catholic Church in Guyana