

sches Wappen bezeichnet werden sollte) und das (rechts) des hl. Fidelis bzw. seines Martyriums (14). Leider schweigt sich J. Betz über den Künstler aus, dem die Bilder zuzuschreiben sind. Von einzigartiger Bedeutung ist schließlich das romanische Kruzifix aus der Mitte des 12. Jahrhunderts (16). Der Kunstführer wird jedem Besucher dieser an Kunstwerken so reichen Pfarrkirche schätzenswerte Dienste leisten.

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*M. Grace Shembetu OSF (Mahenge): Edgar Aristides Maranta OFM Cap. Askofu mkuu wa Dar es Salaam. Misha yake na uanzilishi wa shirika la masista wa upendo wa mt. Franzisko wa Assisi. Mahenge-Roma, Scuola Tipografica S. Pio X, 2000, 106 pp., ill.*

The Swahili book "Edgar Aristides Maranta OFM Cap., Archbishop of Dar es Salaam", with the subtitle "His Life and His Role as Founder of the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of St. Francis of Assisi" merits a review in *Helvetia Franciscana*, even if few subscribers can read the book. Little has been written about this outstanding figure apart from a few articles and some biographical sketches in German, Italian and English. To my knowledge this is the first full length biography of Edgar Aristides Maranta, appropriately written in Swahili, the language of the people of Tanzania (formerly Tanganyika), to whom he dedicated the greater part of his life and where he is still well remembered 30 years after his departure.

The book is divided into three parts: the first part describes the life of Edgar Aristides Maranta from his birth in Poschiavo in 1897 to his retirement as Archbishop of Dar es Salaam and return to Switzerland in 1969; the second part concentrates on his role as founder of the Sisters of Charity of St. Francis, a congregation of diocese

san right with its mother house in the Diocese of Mahenge (until 1964 part of the Archdiocese of Dar es Salaam); the third part describes the years of retirement until his death in 1975. The book also contains some 30 pages of photographs, not all of good quality, but forming an interesting complement to the narrative. The book lists the principal dates of the life of Edgar Aristides Maranta in a useful table for easy reference and concludes with a short bibliography of sources used by the author.

Three quarters of the book are devoted to the biography of the protagonist: Aristides Maranta was born in 1897 in Poschiavo, the Italian speaking part of the canton of Graubünden in southern Switzerland, received his formal education in the Capuchin colleges of Appenzell and Stans, joined the Capuchins in 1917, made profession in 1918 under the name of Edgar, was ordained a priest in 1924 and the following year he left for Africa. At the age of 33 he was appointed Vicar Apostolic of Dar es Salaam and remained in office for 39 years. It was a time of great expansion of pastoral and educational services, rapid growth of the national capital and the transition from British rule to an independent national government. In 1954 he became the first Archbishop of the newly erected Archdiocese of Dar es Salaam, which was divided in 1964, when the new Diocese of Mahenge was entrusted to Mons. Elias Mchonde, who had been his auxiliary since 1956. In 1969 Cardinal Laurean Rugambwa was transferred from Bukoba to Dar es Salaam and a few months later Archbishop Edgar Aristides Maranta left in very good health for his retirement in Switzerland. He spent the remaining years in the country of his youth as assistant to his own brother Reto, the Parish Priest of San Vittore. Archbishop Maranta died on 29 January 1975 after a short illness and was buried in the Capuchin cemetery of Lucerne.

The book informs well on the family background and training of Edgar Aristi-



des Maranta, has many interesting observations on his character and personality but is rather sketchy on his activities and achievements in the development of the Archdiocese and the Church of Tanzania as a whole. More could have been said about the pastoral ministry of Archbishop Maranta, his influence on government policy on education (his immense work in the creation of educational and health facilities is given due credit), his contribution to the setting up of the Tanzanian Episcopal Conference, his relations with other churches and their leaders, with the local and national government before and after independence and many other aspects of this highly intelligent and very active public figure. This was, however, not the intention of the author as she clearly states in the introduction.

The author wanted to produce a manual that would help formation personnel to present the history and charism of the congregation through the life and example of the founder. The middle part of the book first gives a theoretical framework on the process of foundation, the different types of foundations and the canonical steps from the initial idea of the founder to the final recognition of a new foundation by the Church. She then goes on to analyse the origins of the Sisters of Charity of St. Francis and the role of Archbishop Maranta in the process. In 1926 Pope Pius XI called for the foundation of indigenous religious communities in all mission territories (*"Rerum Ecclesiae* of 28 February 1926, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 18, Ns. 65-83), but only in 1939 did Archbishop Maranta accept to start his own congregation, after several failed attempts to get existing congregations in neighbouring vicariates to train his sisters. A group of local girls and young women had been living with the missionary sisters of Divine Providence of Baldegg (Switzerland) since 1934, but not until 1942 did the first ones enter the novitiate. On 6 January 1944 Sr. Klara and Sr. Elizabeth were the first to make

profession (photographs show them as young girls and as newly professed sisters). According to the author Archbishop Maranta is the founder of the congregation. He asked the Baldegg Sisters to assist him in the formation of the indigenous sisters and the young community. The missionary sisters accompanied these with personnel and financially. The Divine Providence Sisters of Baldegg were and still are called the "Mothers". The indigenous sisters were from the beginning considered a new foundation, different from the congregation of the missionary sisters, who only provided one or two sisters at a time to form and lead the young community. The three missionary sisters who fulfilled this task in the span of 30 years are given credit in the book with a short biography and a photograph: Sr. Opportuna Stadler (1940-1950), Sr. Laeta Kessler (1951-1953) and Sr. Christophora Künzli (1953-1970). On 15 December 1970 the young congregation became fully independent with the election of Sr. Agnes Choma as its first Tanzanian Mother Superior.

Sr. Grace Shembetu, who is a member of the Sisters of Charity of St. Francis, wrote this book during a sabbatical year from her duties as formation mistress and councillor of her congregation. She entered the congregation when Maranta was about to leave the country for Europe. The older sisters kept the memory of their founder alive, the local people talked admiringly of him and had many stories to tell. The congregation felt the need to record history and Sr. Grace took up the challenge. On her personal initiative she decided to write the biography of Maranta and his role in starting the congregation. Her aim was practical rather than scientific but she tried to combine the two, with good success as the result proves. The book is well presented and clearly structured, here and there some errors have remained undetected due to the pressure of time. Sr. Grace draws on rich, though scattered source material, from oral tradition as well as



archival and library research in Tanzania, Switzerland and Italy. She was able to profit from her daily contact with the founding members of the congregation and interviewed active and retired Capuchin missionaries and missionary sisters in Tanzania as well as in Switzerland, who had played an active part in the setting up of the congregation. She received the active cooperation of the Maranta family, especially Dr. Edgar Maranta, a nephew of the Archbishop, also visited Poschia-

vo and many other places. The book is vividly written and richly illustrated with anecdotes and photographs. The author deserves congratulations. Her congregation will be the first to profit from her work, but ordinary readers too will enjoy it - even older people who have never learnt to read will be happy to look at the pictures and then tell their own story of Archbishop Maranta and the congregation.

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