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INFORMANT: FR. EUSEBIO SILVA
CONDUCTED BY: DOUG DENATALE
DATE: JANUARY 25, 1988

E = FR. EUSEBIO
D = DOUG
I = OTHER

LFP DD-R045-R046

INTERVIEW BEGINS WITH 2ND INTERVIEWER IN MID-SENTENCE:

I: Doug DeNatale.

E: Don't talk, don't make me talk too long. Ask questions.

I: All right, okay. Um, and that we're interviewing Fr. Eusebio Silva on the afternoon of January 25th, 1988.

E: That's right, yes [says this in a whisper].

I: Um, perhaps you might just begin by telling us what you remember of Bishop Silva?

E: Um, I never met Bishop Silva. What I know is from stories I heard from Fr. John Silva. And Fr. John was in this parish for thirty years. [phone rings]

I: That's okay. Do you want to answer that?

[Tape is turned off so he can answer phone]

E: The stories he used to tell about Fr. John, he stayed in this parish for thirty years. And when he came here a lot of people in the city have known Bishop Silva. So very often he met people coming to him telling him stories about Fr., I mean Bishop Silva. Um, because he was pastor in this parish for, since 1911 - 24. And also the Cardinal in Boston used to ask him to go to different parishes to administer confirmation and for some other functions. So other the people in

Lowell met him personally. Fr. John didn't, and neither did I. But a lot of people in Lowell met Bishop Silva. So they knew something about his life. And Fr. John has a good memory. So he kept all of those stories. And what I heard, that's what I know. Nothing personal. [I: Umhm]

D: Okay. What kinds of stories were they?

E: Well uh, Bishop Silva was a, what we call a different person from the rest of us. He had been educated in the palace. He was a cousin of uh, of the king. So he was brought up in the, in the palace in Lisbon. And in those places the best teachers were brought up to teach the king's children, and all those who lived, the relatives who lived in the palace. So they had the best teachers. Uh, music, languages. Bishop Silva could speak I don't know how many. I don't know exactly, but he could speak English fluently. He had been Bishop in [Gowa?] in India. Um, he could speak German. He could speak French, Italian. In fact the Cardinal, whenever he had visits, someone visiting him, he used to call Bishop Silva, "come over and have diner with us." Because he needed someone to interpret for him. [All laugh] And Bishop Silva knew all of the languages.

In fact there is a story about delegation. German people, I don't know exactly the occasion, but they came to Lowell. I don't know if it was related to the factories. In those days there was this uh, Lowell was famous throughout the world with this industrial revolution. And people came to Lowell from German, from Germany. And uh, of course the dignitaries in the city were kind of afraid, because no one could speak the language. Who is going to interpret, who is going to talk for us? And someone suggested Bishop Silva. And they called him. And there he goes. And the companies, they're visiting people coming from Germany. And in the end someone asked him, "Bishop how can, you can speak the language so well?" "You sound like you were brought up in [unclear], or something." And he said, "well you know, I was brought up in a palace." And he told the story. So he had a schedule. Our daily life has a schedule. Like from 9 to 11 in the morning we were allowed to speak only French to the parents, to the servants, to only this language. From 11 to 1 in the afternoon we were allowed to speak only German. So they have the best teachers in the way. They used the language, of course they could speak it fluently. See, that's one.

I: I'd like you to tell again the story of Bishop Silva playing the piano.

E: Oh I wish Fr. John was here. [Both laugh]

I: But sometimes he'll say he wished you were here.

E: Well the way I heard of this is more or less, and I try to keep it within the facts, not the [unclear], because when, with people like this sometimes we tried to have something of our own. I try to avoid that. But what I heard was there was concert schedule for the Lowell Memorial Auditorium. A pianist was suppose to come that night and give a concert. And on the way over he had an accident. So the auditorium was full of people waiting. All of the dignitaries, Bishop Silva was there in the front row. He had been invited. And all of a sudden a cruiser, uh, a policeman came and he said, "I have an announcement to make, the pianist had an accident on the way over. He is not able to give the concert tonight." So the dignitaries said, "what am I going to do now?" And someone said, "why don't you ask Bishop Silva, he is here, to play for us

at least." And he got up and go on that stage and he gave a concert. The way people use to say is, they had never heard anyone in the city play the piano like that. He gave a concert like no one has ever heard in the city of Lowell before. And I can understand it because he had been instructed in the parish, you know.

D: He must have been an extraordinary man?

E: Yes. [I: Yes] Yes.

I: Now we've said off the record, but you could say on the record, he came to Lowell because of this house, didn't he? Was that? [Unclear], is that part of it?

E: Well [laughs] I cannot read his mind, but the way this came to me was exactly like that. In those days this was the best rectory in the Archdiocese. Even in the diocese surrounding Boston. This was one of the best, if not the best rectory. So he felt like a prince. And you know, in the states you never had the kings or queens so we are not very used to that style of life. But we know something in Portugal, you can relate a little bit. At least we have the history books, we have the palaces, so we know the way they lived. And they were always putting down people, because they were princes, princesses and kings, and the bishops the same thing. The same thing. So we always were used to put down people. Everyone was a servant. In the palace the kings and queens had servants for everything. So he use, he was used to that style of life. And uh, this being the best house around. Of course he came here and settled in the rectory like he was. The honor. And after awhile the pastor, Fr. DeRosa went to Boston, asked the Cardinal, "I have a priest, I have a Bishop living with me, I don't know what his situation is. You never told me why he was coming to the rectory, or what he was going to do." And the Cardinal [unclear], "you were not expecting to have a Bishop as your associate." And the Father said, "no, I didn't." And he came here, he packed his belongings and he went to his house. And the Bishop was in charge. [Interviewers laugh]

I: And that, can you say the year again please?

E: Uh, this was more or less in 1911.

I: Because he couldn't go home, is that right? There was (--)

E: Well that takes us to the reason why he was in this country in the first place. [I: Uh huh] He came to the states to bless a new church in Fall River. Um, and while he was in the states there was a revolution in Portugal, and his cousin King Charles was assassinated. So being his cousin and of the Royal Family he uh, he was afraid to go back. That's why he stayed in this country.

D: No was Saint Anthony's originated as a national parish, or did it become a national parish?

E: It was establish for the Portuguese speaking people. Nowadays this term national is not used as often as it used to be. Um, in the past it was very common for certain ethnic group to have their church and parish, and they call it national parish. For people established for, to help the people from that specific nationality. That's why we have this, we have the Polish church,

Lithuanian, some French churches in Lowell.

D: With Father, Bishop Silva knowing so many different languages, he, was there much interaction between him and the pastors of the other, the other um (--)

E: I cannot answer that. I don't know exactly. I wish I knew more about Bishop Silva, but I don't know too much. Only what I heard. And it's too bad no one has written something about the past, the priest, or the catholic church in the archdiocese,, even the Portuguese priests and bishops in this archdiocese of Boston. Because someday at least some details will be lost forever.

I: Was Fr. DeRosa the first?

E: The first pastor.

I: The first pastor.

E: The first one to minister to these people, to our people was Father Pimental from Cambridge. He came up here a few times and he organized the parish. He had some meetings with the people. And then Father Rosa was the first one to come. And when the Archdiocese established this parish he was the appointed pastor. [I: And the church?] And the parish was established in 1901. [I: Uh huh, and the building?] The parish.

I: The parish. And the building began?

E: The building. In the beginning they used an old building they bought from some Protestant group, I don't know exactly. Uh, up there on Gorham Street. And then they bought this piece of land and started this building in 1908.

D: Was the Portuguese neighborhood here already, or did it grow around the church?

E: No, it was here already.

D: It was here.

E: Yeah, it was here already.

D: Was there any particular reason why people settled in this part of Lowell?

E: I don't know. I don't know. Maybe because there was some boarding houses. So it was much easier for them to get a home to live. I don't know exactly.

D: Back in those days, were most of the people, did they work in the textile mills?

E: Yes, umhm.

D: That was quite a contrast between the kind of life that Bishop Silva had known and what the people he was ministering to (--)

E: Yes. yes. Um, there is a little, it's a little story, doesn't add too much to his character, but um, he always felt that he was the prince and everyone was a servant, and everyone had to, to do everything for free. So a man had been in the rectory or the church doing some work. I don't know exactly if it was a plumber, or an electrician, or whatever. And he came here many times requesting to be paid. And Bishop Silva used to say, "oh, God bless you, God bless you. Thank you, God bless you. God bless you." And they'd say, "well that's beautiful but it doesn't pay my bills. I cannot support my family with blessings." So he came here a few more times and the Bishop dismissed him. Oh God bless you. Oh God bless you. One day he went to the club. He took a few drinks and said, "today is the day. I'm going to go to the Bishop and demand my money." So he came up here and asked the Bishop. "I have my family to support and I need the money, please pay me." The Bishop said, "oh God bless you, come on, oh." And the man said, "listen, at least give me half of the money, [enough?] in blessings." [All laugh] It is also uh, at least what I heard was that the church and the parish had no, no credit. He didn't pay anyone. [All laugh] Had no credit at all.

I: No that's, that probably has something to do with one of the [unclear] Figuera, who told me that the church was built with all volunteer labor.

E: [Sighs] Could be. I don't know.

I: It may just be he knew a lot of people who didn't get paid.

E: It could be. I don't know exactly. Uh (--)

D: It must have been, it must have been very tough to get a parish going back in those days. I mean people were [unclear] so little money.

E: Right, right. And I've been told about Saint Peter's. It's a different kind of building. But I was told that the parishioners did most of the work up there. In this parish I don't know exactly. Because the rectory was built before the church. [I: Umhm] And uh, it seems that the pastor spent a lot of money, if not most of it in the rectory. And then when he, when he was ready to put up the church there was not enough money. That's why he um, the church was left with just the basement for many years. And also because the Bishop never cared too much to finish the work.

I: Uh huh.

D: It sounds like his interest went beyond the parish. Is that (--)

E: He uh, didn't really care. He just wanted a nice place to live and that's it. There's nothing in this parish we can point and say, this was done by Bishop Silva. Or this was done while the Bishop Silva was the pastor. Nothing.

I: And after Bishop Silva (--)

E: Came Father Grillo.

I: Father Grillo?

E: Grillo.

I: GR?

E: ILLO.

I: Okay.

E: Umhm.

D: And the school. There was, is there a school attached to the parish?

E: Not a parish school.

D: There wasn't.

E: No. This building across the street used to be a city school. A school from the City of Lowell. And then at one time it was closed and used for awhile as maintenance building, repair, school material like the chairs and tables and all that. And then at one point they decided to sell it. And Father John bought the place. They did some renovations inside and that's been used as a parish hall, also a place for Sunday School classes, fund raising activities. In the past there were some dances for the youth. The Ladies of the Rosary Sodality and all kinds of meetings.

I: Was there anything in particular that Father Grillo's is remembered for?

E: Father Joseph Grillo, there are some parishioners who remember him very well and they say he was a saint man. He uh, came to the parish at a difficult time. He was pastor during the depression. And uh, it was difficult for him in those days to maintain the buildings. But he did it. He did it. He had a difficult time, because people had no money. Just had no money. Had no jobs. And with the little they donated to the church, he uh, he kept the parish going. He ministered very well. He could speak the language very well because he uh, he finished his studies in Boston at Saint John's. So he could speak Portuguese, I think English better and Portuguese. [I: Umhm] Because he had come to the states at an early age. But he could speak it. And people understand him very well. But he was a very good man. That's what they, the old parishioners tell me. Very dedicated to the people. And carrying the parish in a very difficult time.

I: And how long, for how long?

E: From '24 to '48. [I: Oh!] Twenty-four years.

I: A long time. [E: Yes] So he got a little feast with his famine towards the end did he? Things got better. [E: Yeah] Yeah. And then Father John came in '48?

E: Father John came in '48 to this parish. After a few months he left us to go to Gloucester. And then he went from Gloucester to Cambridge. And from Cambridge on Father Grillo's funeral day, he came to Lowell to take part in a Mass with the Cardinal. And the Cardinal asked him to stay here, starting that day. And the priest who was here, Father [Cascise?], was sent to Boston, I mean to Cambridge. And Father John was in this parish from '49, I mean '48 to '78.

D: The parish has really been fortunate in that the priests have stayed for a long period.

E: Yeah, yeah. It's not a policy of this Archdiocese to keep priests that long in a parish. But because we have, we don't have too many Portuguese speaking priest, we have to stay longer. Because if you keep moving after awhile we'll be back in the same place. Like we have Boston, I mean Cambridge, Peabody, Lowell, Lawrence. So uh, they're not too many options. But the Archdiocese makes those decisions. And if they feel at one point they have to remove the priests around, they will do it.

I: And Father John, did he retire?

E: He retired in '78. He asked before his uh, age for retirement, because the Archdiocese has a policy of (--) The priest can ask to um, for an early retirement at seventy, but at seventy-five they have to leave the active ministry with a parish. They can always after that help some priest who need them, but they have to retire from the official duties of setting a parish, at seventy-five.

I: Umhm.

E: So Father John was sixty-six. But prior to that, it was before Easter, uh, before Christmas of '77, he had a little problem with his heart. He was celebrating Mass, a funeral Mass, and he past out. He fell down right on the altar. [Unclear] I rushed immediately to church. He was taken to the hospital. It was a slight heart attack. So he took that as an opportunity to request for the Cardinal to give him permission to leave.

D: Some of the other uh, the history of some of the other churches, the French churches, the Polish church, um, I've heard it said that some of the people in the, that were from different ethnic group, felt that the, that the Cardinals and the authorities in Boston weren't always responsive to the communities needs. Um, was there any ever feelings like that in the Portuguese community?

E: Yes there is. There is. Um, you know sometimes because they are from a different, or from a specific ethnic group, they think they have to provide for everything. They have to build a church, the [unclear], even look for priests. The Archdiocese never really got interested in organizing the apostolate for this specific ethnic group until the Spanish came. And for the Spanish the Archdiocese has done it. [D: Hm] If you look at the parishes you see this church

built by our people. The rectory. The parish is a national parish, but everything here was built by the people. The [unclear], the Archdiocese never spent a cent with us. If you go to Peabody, to Cambridge, everywhere, even the Polish, the French, the same thing. But then with the great influx of Spanish speaking people, especially from Puerto Rico and the countries in Central and South America, um, because there was no tradition of Spanish parishes, the Archdiocese when they saw this big influx they opened their eyes and said, well we have to do something for them. And uh, they did. They have them trying to get priest to help them. The Oblates have helped a lot. Even with some priests who worked in South America, there is a society, Saint James the Apostle Society was established by the late Cardinal Cushing. [Phone rings] He um (--) I'm going to answer that now. [Tape is turned off momentarily and begins again in mid-sentence]...South America or Central American [unclear]. Because in those days when Cardinal Cushing was here [phone continues to ring] there used to be 40 or 50 ordinations. 40 or 50 priests every years. He had no place to uh, for them. In fact before the ordination he used to tell them, listen, I'm going to ordain you, but some of you I have no place for you. So if you find another priest, another bishop willing to accept you, you are free to go. And some did. Some went to different par...uh, diocese. Connecticut, to some other areas. And because there was so many priests he established this um, Saint James the Apostle Society. And for a couple of years they could renovate that, two years, four years. They used to go to South America, Central America and uh, be missionaries there. So there are a lot of priests who can speak Spanish in the Archdiocese. So it's easier to find someone to minister to the Spanish speaking people.

D: In a case like that where the community itself has to come together and establish the church [E: umhm] and support the church, is that something that's a disadvantage, or is it something that helps hold the community together? What kind of effect does it have on the community?

E: Uh, I think it's helpful. It is helpful, because this way the initiative comes always from the people. They feel a need to have their church. They feel a need to have their parish and they stay together. And they always uh, feel this need to support what is theirs. They are not relying on someone else's help. And when they need something, well your [unclear] will do it. We don't have to care for this. There are so many Spanish speaking people, they don't have a church. Well the Archdiocese will provide. They need this and they need that. Well the Archdiocese will provide. And they never get together for anything, because the Archdiocese will provide everything for them. And this way uh, any ethnic group trying to have their church, they keep united longer. Of course there are always after a few years with intermarriages, we have Portuguese people married with all kinds of nationalities. They go away from this area and from the parish. It is understandable. If the boy marries a girl from Saint Margaret's, and the girl has been to Saint Margaret's all of her life, I understand that she wants to remain in Saint Margaret's. Okay, so we lose a man from Saint Anthony's. But after a while a Polish guy marries a girl from Saint Anthony's and he stays in Saint Anthony's. And so it's uh, we have all kinds of mix marriages now.

D: That's interesting. In, speaking to the people from other parishes or from other groups they say well, you know, the French aren't as strong as they used to be, because you know, we've intermarried with other groups and you know, people have lost that French identity. Since the history of the Portuguese it's different with the later influx of people. Has that played out differently in the community?

E: Yes. When there is new blood it is always a chance for this spirit and the culture and the traditions to be kept alive. Because the old ones, they feel like Portuguese, but they don't, they don't um, really relate to the new generations. And people coming, even those who come from Portugal now are different from those who came fifty years ago. There are more opportunities, more opportunities for education, for work. Everything is different now. So we see different people coming. [D: Uh huh] And this new blood keeps this alive.

D: When that group first, first came in, what kinds of, what affect did they have on the Portuguese culture here in Lowell? I mean what kinds of things were strengthened? How did they change?

E: Um, I don't know exactly if I understood your question.

D: Well was there, was there a revival of Portuguese culture when the newer group came in?

E: Not really a revival, but um, maintaining of this tradition, but in a different way.

D: Uh huh. How was it different?

E: Um, well you know, for instance we have feasts.

side one ends
side two begins

Side two begins with interviewer in mid sentence:

D: To give an example of the differences when a new group came in.

E: Yeah. Like we have feasts. And um, and the feast always has a religious part and some entertainment also. And the parish always tries to provide this religious background, but [unclear] today, not years ago. Years ago the Mass was in Latin. The way priests gave their sermons was different. So we have been through a lot of changes in the liturgy, the way we go to the streets in procession. It's a little different now. So we have to accommodate a little bit to the different, to the present generation. They are not um, in a small village like they used to in Azores, or Madeira, or mainland, where everybody went to church. Here is different. Those who go more or less is more voluntary, is more sincere. You understand?

I: Umhm.

E: Because they are not in a little village where everybody knows everybody. Here they have to work and work hard. So they have to set aside some time to go to church. And when they do that just because they want to do it, they make a sacrifice to do it, okay, it's different. And for the entertainment, of course the music has changed. So in the old days you uh, you look at that

picture and we see the violas and the guitars, the old style, today the music is different. So they keep this the same tradition, the same spirit, but in a different way.

D: But how did the (--) You mentioned the processions. [E: Umhm] How would the procession today be different than the way it was back then?

E: Uh, the processions have not changed that much, the procession itself, but the mass, the way we celebrate the mass today is different. Um, the music is very different. The procession itself has not changed very much. [D: Unclear] We try to keep it as a religious event, as a demonstration, as a public demonstration of our faith.

D: So back in the villages it would have been the same, where you would have, you would have had a band?

E: More or less the same. Yes, yes.

D: [Unclear].

E: Some small villages, they cannot afford a band, so people sing. They accompany the statues and they sing, or they pray the rosary, or some other prayers. There are some instances where they can't, cannot afford a band all the time. So they uh, to keep themselves busy and within the spirit of a religious event, they pray and they sing since the moment they leave the church, until they come back.

I: Do you have a procession for Our Lady of Fatima?

E: Yes.

I: And is that a candlelight?

E: Candlelight procession.

I: Is there any music for that?

E: No, there is not music.

I: Okay.

E: And we uh, we do that as a commemoration of the operations of Our Lady of Fatima. And on the 12th of each month, before the 13th, the 13th is the main celebration, and on the 12th at night they in Fatima, they carry the statues from the little chapel to the sanctuary. And this is always at night. That's why we have this candlelight procession every year.

D: And when is, when does that take place?

E: Uh, in May. In May. The closest as possible to the 13th. 12th and 13th of May.

I: Do you have any sort of entertainment after that?

E: Not after this candlelight procession. No. For other feast, after we finish the procession we go to a different place, Holy Ghost Park and have some entertainment in the afternoon. It's a way of keeping the families. It's always, it's between uh, feast and picnic, family picnic, parish picnic all combined. We see people up there like on Labor Day Weekend on at Saint Anthony's ,you never see them around throughout year. But they come from all over the city, because they are Portuguese, and they know that on that day there is a celebration in the parish and they come. And they see these people every year. At that time only.

D: That was one of the things that really impressed me about the, the, um, the festival at the park. It's just how many families, how the families were all there to get together. [E: Yes] It was clear that that was very strong.

E: Yeah. Still yes. We are loosing a little bit of that.

I: Not at the rate that other americans are.

E: No, no. But, and the reasons is when, especially young people come at this critical age, teenagers, when they come to this country and they are teenagers they, it's difficult for them to adjust. They go to school and they, everything is different the way other kids behave. They were not used to that. And sometimes [unclear] very influential for good, or for bad. If they are, if they are able to keep their values, or the way their parents advise them, okay, they can adjust slowly, but some of them they are lost forever. They try to immediately feel independently like the american kids to go here and to go there. And the family is [defronted], because the parents cannot understand that. They are not used to that. So it is difficult sometimes.

D: What, what would be the strong, strong values that people would hold within the family?

E: Religion and the ethnicity. The language so the people, so the parents can communicate with the children. If some of them are more comfortable in a language than the other, the children as soon as they start going to school, the in a few months they can speak the language. And the parents, they can spend years and years in this country and never learn. So if they at least try to keep the language they can communicate, they can talk, they can help each other. If there is a barrier [snaps fingers] it's lost. Yeah. And so families, they do a good job in trying to learn a little bit, but always when they are together speak the language, speak Portuguese. And some young kids, they understand that. They know that the parents are unable to learn in a few months like that. So they, they try to keep that united. But when they start to get this independence feeling, they don't care. As long as they can communicate with their generation they don't care about the parents. And that's too bad.

D: So is it mostly the family that, that keeps the language alive, or are there other institutions within the community where Portuguese (--)

E: The family, the parish. The parish has been always central point for everything. Not only for

religion, even for culture, for language, for everything.

D: What kind of youth activities are there in the parish?

E: Uh, to be honest with you right now we don't have too many. But we uh, we had in the past a few youth groups. We are now in the process, we are meeting with the, with people from the Boy Scouts. And we are talking and see how we can start a group in the parish.

I: Is there any Portuguese Boy or Girl Scout Troop in Lowell?

E: Not in Lowell.

I: Not in Lowell.

E: I think there is one in Cambridge. I'm not sure, but at least in the past there was one in Cambridge, [unclear] Cambridge. But we are now in this process of organizing a Troop in the parish.

D: I wanted to ask you about the procession. How was the root of the procession, how was that decided upon. Is it the, is there a committee that, or has it always, has that always been the root of the procession?

E: No. In the past it was longer. It was longer. But you know with the traffic we had to make some adjustment. We used to go at least for the Labor Day Weekend, we used to go to Gorham Street up there to even to Charles Street. So all the way passing in front of Saint Peters and the court down there. But we noticed with so many, so, so many cars coming through the Lowell Connector we were disrupting the traffic at that point. And the Connector now is very important for the city. So we decided no, we cannot do that. We never have any problems. The city always gave us the permit. But we felt it was not fair to held up the traffic at that point for half an hour. So we decided to have a shorter, within the parish boundaries more or less.

D: That, the earlier root, did it, did it more or less go around the whole neighborhood?

E: Well it is always difficult to do that, because we are, we have a large area. And to cover the whole area we'd have to spend all day [laughing] walking around. I don't know how many people could put up with that. The people down there to the Concord River. Lawrence Street, up there. The Holy Trinity is surrounded by Portuguese people now. They don't have too many Polish people up there. The Lithuanians the same thing. Perry Street, Concord Street, Pleasant Street, it all Portuguese. So we cannot go all the way (--). Some people have suggested we should have a procession from here to the Holy Ghost Park. And I told them, "are you crazy!" [I: {Laughs}, Yes] "Are you out of your mind?" "Don't you realize you have to go to route 38 all the way?" "Look at all that traffic!" [I: Yeah] It's impossible. It's impossible.

I: Yeah. I wanted to ask if this church was strengthened in any substantial way by having a Portuguese-American Cardinal in Boston?

E: Uh, well it was an honor for the Portuguese. As far as strength, I don't see any special influence that fact had in the parish. But it was always good to have him up here and show the whole city of Lowell that the Cardinal was realizing it is our Cardinal. But other than that, you know, he had so many obligations. He had so much to do. The Archdiocese is so large that he had no, not too much time left to cater only for Portuguese [I: Umhm, uh huh] and dedicate more time. I believe he wanted to do that. At least one think is, is um, is still functioning and something that started with him. At one time we were called to the Chance(--), to the, to his residence. The Portuguese speaking. Not only the Portuguese, but also those who are ministering to the Portuguese. There are some in Somerville. Italians, Franscican Italians for the [few words unclear], and some others. So they called, he called us and they suggested that we should get together once in a while to discuss the life you know, of the parishes, projects, ideas, and they're been doing that since. And Bishop Daly was more or less in charge of this. He could speak Spanish fluently, and he could even celebrate Mass in Portuguese with a book understand, but he could do a good job. He's down there in Florida now. And we had been meeting every two months since then. We uh, even plan activities together, days of reflections. We always talk about what's going on in the parish, what activities are you starting? What is working with you? What plans do you have? So it has been very helpful for us.

I: During the time that I talked to Frank Carbone, and Maria Cunha, and Henry DeSousa, they mentioned the group that has formed to address the particular needs of the Portuguese community. And while they weren't very specific they told me that there were a number of issues that they were concerned about, like rebuilding networks within the Portuguese community. Uh, for Mr. DeSousa it was uh, encouraging more Portuguese Americans to register and vote, and so forth. Are other parishes, or are other Portuguese parishes around Massachusetts finding the same issues coming up for them?

E: Yes, more or less the problems are the same. Um, in this group I have a strong faith in them. They are young and they uh, they have a plan to get all the organizations, at least if they cannot work together, when there is something for the benefit of the community, the whole community to get united and this group will be a voice going to the City Manager. [E: Umhm] And uh, I was glad they asked me to be with them. So um, I'm very very anxious to see, to see them start. And their plans are for special areas. Education, Politics, Culture and Community Services. So they want to establish more or less communication with the City Hall. When they want something for the Portuguese community to know they will know there is this group. And they in turn will spread word and they will get organized. When we want something form City Hall, we as a group will get everybody's ideas and we will go to the City Hall. So this will be the communication link. And then we are very very enthusiastic about it and I'm very very glad to be with them.

I: Okay. Now I'd also like to know, are most of the Brazilians in Lowell members of this parish, this church?

E: Uh, some of them. Most of them I don't know exactly, [I: Oh] because really not too many come to, come to church. But there is a good number of them living in this area. More Tewksbury.

I: But this would be considered the church for them?

E: Yes, yes.

D: Was there a particular reason for, for immigration from Brazil to this area?

E: Uh, I know the situation in Brazil has been pretty bad, pretty bad. And uh, a lot of people have been affected by the conditions. There's a lot of poverty. So they have no way to turn other than leave the country and try someplace else. That's why they came to the states, because things are [I: comment unclear] very very bad down there. Yeah. Even some are going to Portugal to the mainland. [I: yes] Years ago the Portuguese used to go to Brazil. My father was an immigrant in Brazil. [I: Oh!] Yup, and now things have reversed themselves and people from Brazil need to leave the country and immigrate. Yeah.

D: Well at the very beginning I guess we already touched on the Feast of Our Lady of Loreto, [E: umhm] which (--) Now that is not recognized within the, the official dogma of the church? Is that (--)

E: No it is not.

D: So it's when (--) I guess people refer to it as Folk Catholicism?

E: Um, well I'll try to translate this little [I: all right] pamphlet. The house in which the Holy Family lived in Nazareth was since the first centuries of the church venerated as a special place, because the Holy Family had lived there. Um, [pause] it doesn't say exactly at what time, but around the twelfth or thirteenth century with the invasions from the Moorish people, and afraid that the house would fall into their hands, God permitted that this house was transported in 1291 to Loreto, it's a place in Italy. That's a belief. It's a legend. I don't know exactly. I believe that God could do that and not to let those faithless people take care of the house where the Holy Family had lived, transported that house to another place where people could keep, keep in and venerate the place. It's their faith. I'm not going to judge them. After that the news spread all over the world about this house in Loreto. And the Italians venerated this house. And after awhile this veneration was, was taken to other parts of the world. There is one now in Madeira, a chapel, a church with the same designation, Our Lady of Loreto, and some other parts of the world. So that's how it is.

D: So it was the particular devotion in Madeira which, which came to the Lowell community?

E: Yes. Those um, the first people came coming from Madeira, the first settlers, they brought with them this devotion. And twenty five years ago they asked the priest here if they could start a feast, because it's something for them to remember the Island Madeira. Like we have the Holy Ghost for especially from those who come from Azores. [I: Umhm] And Saint Anthony for the Portuguese at large. [D: Umhm] Everyone venerates Saint Anthony, even the Italians. But it's mostly from the mainland where he was born [unclear].

I: Can you tell me what the Holy Ghost Society here in Lowell says was the origin of the Feast?

What (--)

E: The origin of the Feast in Lowell, or the origin of the Feast in the beginning?

I: No, the origin of the Feast in the beginning.

E: Um, there are some facts about this and also have caused a little bit of legend mixed. And the facts are there was a Queen in Portugal, Isabel, married to a King Dennis. And this Queen is in the history books, was very religious and charitable. She used to go around Lisbon and helping the poor people. In this village of [unclear] not too far away from Lisbon, one day the Queen was taking part in a procession. And as she walked, was walking she noticed a man, a person who was seriously ill. She placed her crown, the Queen's crown, she placed the crown on his head and he was cured. And since that time in memory of her devotion to the Holy Spirit, in memory of her devotion to the Holy Spirit, and the miracle which she performed, I don't think this is the correct word. God performs miracles, not the saints or the Queen. We still have this crowning, crownings for the seven weeks between Easter and Pentacost. That's where the crown starts with the Queen. She took her royal crown to place on this person's head. And that's why you have the crownings now.

I: And what is the book that you were reading from?

E: You don't have one of these? I can get you one.

I: I would love one of those.

E: I can get you (--). We have plenty of them downstairs.

I: Oh, I beg of you. Now I must tell you [E: It's for the 50th anniversary] Now I must tell you that in a year of reading the literature that I have available that is one story I've never read.

E: And this is the truth. Because what, what happens is our people are very religious, but you know, the faith they live is a simple faith. And they, they get um, overwhelmed by some signs, or some facts they believe are facts, and they are not facts, they are legends. And after awhile those episodes get in the way of reality and become the story of the crownings. And it is not. This is the reality. Okay?

I: Okay.

D: Is, is that where, and I have to, I have to confess my total ignorance here, is that where the, in the procession which of course was for Loreto, where the young women were dressed and wore crowns, is that where that comes from?

E: Exactly. [D: Uh] Um, that doesn't belong to that procession, for that, to that feast. [D: Right] But because they belong to another organization, for every feast we invite the organizations to come to the processions. And that particular girl was a queen for the Holy Ghost Feast. So she was invited to come and carry this crown as a symbol and what people um,

it is difficult for them to understand. Because this crown is just a symbol. We should not venerate this. This is a piece of silver, or some other material. But you know, that's because their simple faith doesn't help them very much. But they venerate this piece, this crown like it is God itself. It is not. It is not. And then they fail to live the faith. They can kneel down and not tell them [few words unclear], no. That's, that's what happens. That's what happens, okay.

D: But that's, that's, that's real, that's reality everywhere.

E: Yeah, they can kneel down before this crown and never enter the church for the rest of the year. [I: Yes, that's true] Okay. So I try to uh, to get [unclear] about this. That's what I learned in Lowell. This devotion was started in Lisbon. And for many years the Portuguese in the mainland, they had this devotion. And then when they went to Azores they took the devotion with them. And I went through the seminary years, for twelve years and I never heard about the Holy Ghost Crown, never. In my formation as a priest I never had one teacher, one priest, or anyone else tell me about this. [phone rings] So being one of the main devotions in the past, no one at that time knew anything about it. [Chuckles] Everything I know I learned in Lowell. And I, I've been trying to learn as much as possible from the beginning, not what they believe now, but from the beginning. What the devotion was all about. Why it started?

I: Why does Lupa have a crown?

E: Lupa has no crown.

I: Oh, but in the slides that I brought to show you?

E: Yeah, okay, okay.

I: We will find it again (--)

E: It's confusing, it's confusing.

I: Yes.

E: Lupa um, organized a feast. A feast with a religious name, Saint John, but other than that has nothing to do with the church. It's a civic celebration in Azores. [Says phrase in Portuguese] Feast of Saint John. But are only civic celebrations in Versada, in Azores. [I: Umhm] And at one time a couple of years ago, or four or five years ago, they um, started this celebration in Lowell. That's why you see those cars decorated and all that. And they have a queen also. And because we have two or three crowns in church. And for the queen to carry something in her hands we gave her a crown, that's all. [Laughs]

I: Oh. So she, she, her function is [rest of comment unclear].

E: In fact that queen should not walk on the procession, that religious procession. No.

D: Because that's a civic [unclear].

E: She belongs to a civic celebration. Okay. She could go like someone else. We never uh, ask anyone to uh, to uh, [D: you let us walk along] to leave, to leave the procession. But dressed up as a queen of that particular civic celebration, that was not a place for her. Okay. But she came all dressed up, okay, take this crown and at least you have something in your hands. [Laughs] That's right.

D: So that every year they choose queen, a queen, or several, or (--)

E: One for the Holy Ghost Feast.

I: And that's a great tradition.

E: Okay. And this is chosen not as a contest like the girls go up there and people vote for them, no. Because it is as I said, it's a symbol. Is a queen carrying the crown like Saint Elizabeth [I: Umhm]. Oh, and I forgot to tell you that that particular queen was canonized, is a saint now. The Pope Urbano VIII, in 1625 he canonized Saint Elizabeth. So this queen is a symbol of that particular queen in Portugal. At Saint John's Feast it's like a contest. People vote for the most beautiful, well dressed and all that. And the religious feast, some people have asked me, "Father we should do a [unclear]." No, this is not a beauty contest. This is someone to carry the crown and there's this religious [unclear] attached to it. It is not a beauty contest. So we take the name. The girls write their names on a piece of paper for the town, place it into a bowl and someone just takes, picks out the names.

I: And that is how, that's how the Holy Ghost Queen is [E: Yeah] chosen?

E: Yeah. It's one, that's all.

I: And so she has, she has no relation to the sponsor, to the, the (--) [E: No, no] But she does carry the crown in the procession?

E: She carries the crown. She has to be related to a member. If the parents are not members of the society they cannot put them in [fades out]