



STILL GROWING



The Buxar Church-- now a Cathedral

The last month of 2005 brought us news that we had expected for several years: the creation of a new diocese, Buxar, comprising the western area of Patna Archdiocese, and the promotion of Delhi Region to become the youngest (and largest) Jesuit Province in India. Numerically, Delhi has just over 100 Jesuits, but in territory, it is the largest. Along with these important announcements, came the appointments of Fr. William D'Souza, S.J., as the first bishop of Buxar, Fr. John Ariapilly as the first provincial of Delhi, and Fr. Joy Karayampuram as the next provincial of Patna. Fr. William will be ordained Bishop on March 25, 2006, Fr. John has already taken over (from himself) as first provincial of Delhi, and Fr. Joy will become our new Patna provincial on May 31, 2006. Now a bit of history:

BUXAR DIOCESE

At the time when Frs. Sontag and Batson were establishing a system of schools and mission stations in the eastern area of Patna Mission, Fr. Henry Westropp was doing the same

thing in Bhojpur (then called Shahabad District). In 1934, Fr. Westropp started a boys' school at Ara. On March 30, 1937, he offered the first holy Mass in Ara, and soon after a small house was rented. In two years, Ara became the first permanent abode of the Lord in Bhojpur.

Fr. Westropp soon became a familiar figure in the area as he toured a third of Bhojpur District, and kept more than 200 villages in his visiting list. In 1939, Bishop Sullivan built the first chapel and residence at Ara. No sooner were these buildings completed than the zealous Fr. Westropp saw the need of a boarding school. He gave his residence to the boys, and made his own quarters in the sacristy. Fr. Nicholas Pollard followed Fr. Westropp in Ara in 1941, Then Fr. Welzmilller succeeded Fr. Pollard who went on to establish a mission at Shahpur.

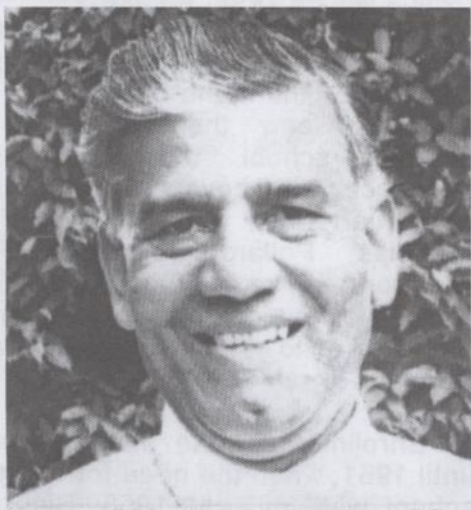
Enrollment in the school grew until 1951, when the need for a high school was felt. In 1958, Bishop Wildermuth decided that there

should be a larger building, and a year later the new building accommodated 150 boys. The primary and middle school remained in the old building. Altogether there were 250 boys from the mission stations of Shahabad District.

Meanwhile, Fr. Westropp went farther west to Buxar and with the help of Fr. Bernard D'Cruz established a girls' school there, to be run by the Sacred Heart Sisters. Today it has grown into a high school.

In 1938, when the eastern sector of Patna Mission was given to the T.O.R. Franciscans, more Jesuits were available to work in the western sector (the new diocese of Buxar). This led to the opening of mission stations at Sasaram, Koath, Itarhi and Piro. Many other stations were started, and today they are flourishing.

So it is the privilege of Bishop William D'Souza to strengthen these existing parishes, and establish new ventures. Our prayers are with him to further the works of charity and spreading the good news of the Gospel.



Bishop William D'Souza, S.J.