



by George Kearney

Some of the 155 North American Jesuits who served in Patna, Delhi, and Nepal are pictured above. The names below correspond with the pictures above.

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| 1 Jerome Durack | 17 Richard Lambert |
| 2 Thomas Kelly | 18 Marion Batson |
| 3 James Creane | 19 Paul Dent |
| 4 Daniel Rice | 20 Louis DeGenova |
| 5 William Robbins | 21 Robert Schmidt |
| 6 William Eline | 22 Edwin Daly |
| 7 Thomas Gafney | 23 Marshall Moran |
| 8 John Kenealy | 24 Charles Law |
| 9 Thomas Downing | 25 Paul Faulstich |
| 10 Aloysius Pettit | 26 Edward Mann |
| 11 Eugene Watrin | 27 James Donnelly |
| 12 Edward Anderson | 28 Norman Langenderfer |
| 13 Joseph Willmes | 29 Thomas Tobin |
| 14 Henry Milet | 30 Gerald Drinane |
| 15 Charles Scott | 31 Hubert Schmidt |
| 16 Edmund Burke | |

If the story of the Patna Jesuit mission were made into a movie, it would likely begin in 1919 with grainy black-and-white footage of Pope Benedict XV issuing the Apostolic letter *Nova in Indiis*, which established the diocese of Patna, India, and entrusted it to the Jesuits.

Then it would cut to Fr. William Eline, SJ, already 50 years old, standing talking with his students on the steps at St. Mary's College in Kansas. Then the camera would show him opening a letter from his Provincial. He'd slowly read the words telling him he'd been chosen to be one of the first five Jesuits assigned to the new mission in Patna. Then the camera would show the wiry Fr. Henry Milet, SJ, teaching in St. Louis. He, too, would receive a letter. So would Frs. Edward Anderson, SJ, Patrick Troy, SJ, and Thomas Kelly, SJ.

The film would show these five Jesuits packing their bags and attending farewell gatherings. As their ship steamed under the Golden Gate Bridge, the screen would fade into the words of a letter they received before their departure from Fr. General Wlodimir Ledochowski, SJ, their superior general in Rome.

"You are very few, so your ministries should be kept within due measure. Do not undertake more than your strength can bear. Be sure to go slowly at the beginning until, with acquisition of knowledge of place and of people, you can find out by experience what means are effective in this mission... Work hard at learning the languages, following in the footsteps of St. Francis Xavier."

It was wonderful advice, but the movie, alas, would show these



Patna Province

five Jesuits recklessly disregarding Fr. General's words and pursuing their apostolic work with seemingly boundless energy after their arrival in 1921.

The movie would show how 155 Jesuits over the years, most from the Chicago and Detroit Provinces, served the people of Patna by opening parishes and schools, and how their reputation as educators caused the Diwan of Jaipur, hundreds of miles west of Patna, to invite them to open a school there. And it would include footage of the King of Nepal inviting Fr. Marshall Moran, SJ, and a group of pioneering Jesuits into the once-cloistered mountain kingdom to open schools.

Unfolding this panorama, the movie would show a substantial increase in the number of Catholics in India and steady growth in the Patna Mission until, in 1962, it became an independent Province of the Society of Jesus. It would show the Jesuits expanding into Delhi and diversifying their ministries until both Nepal and Delhi became separate regions of the Society of Jesus.

The movie would undoubtedly show Jesuits like Frs. James Creane, Henry Westropp, Marion Batson, John Morrison, Joe Mann, and Tony Grollig reaching out to the Dalits, those of the lowest caste—often deemed “untouchable”—in India, serving them and respecting their dignity as human beings in a way that few others ever had. The film would show Khrist Raja High School, founded in 1927, the St. Xavier schools in Patna, Nepal, Delhi and Jaipur, Ara Catholic High School, and St. Michael's School (which was founded by the Capuchins, run

Some of the hundreds of Native Indians who have served in Patna, Delhi, and Nepal since the Society of Jesus arrived in the region in 1921. The names below correspond with the pictures above.

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|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 Benedict Osta | 17 Daniel Raj |
| 2 Hilary Goveas | 18 John Ariapilly |
| 3 Jacob Vellingatt | 19 Cyriac Poovkot |
| 4 Ignatius Vellingatt | 20 Joseph Parekkattil |
| 5 Joseph Mannaravelil | 21 Martin Poras |
| 6 Abraham Thannikapara | 22 Jose Kunjaparambil |
| 7 Benny Moolan | 23 Varkey Perkkatt |
| 8 Sushil Sah | 24 Mathew Assarikudy |
| 9 Joseph Vellingatt | 25 Tony Dias |
| 10 Mario James | 26 K.M. Joseph |
| 11 William D'Souza | 27 MM Matthew |
| 12 Abraham Puthamana | 28 Gabriel Michael |
| 13 Francis Palliparambil | 29 Pius Osta |
| 14 Thomas Anthonysamy | 30 George Karama |
| 15 Vinal Kishore | 31 Gregory Gomes |
| 16 Anthony Pendamath | 32 Jose Kalapura |

Why Give to Patna Province?

Many generous donors from the Chicago Province were drawn to Patna and Nepal because of personal relationships with Jesuits stationed there. Many of those Jesuits are now gone. But the donors continue to be generous to Patna and Nepal. Why? We asked some of them and here's what they said.



Rosemary McNeeve and Mathew Assarikudy, SJ, Nepal region superior.

Rosemary McNeeve

"My sister and I have donated to Patna in memory of our brother, Frank McNeeve, SJ, who was a Jesuit scholastic. He wanted to do missionary work but died before he could go overseas. The Jesuits in India today are called by God just the same as the Jesuits from here."



Christopher Fussner, a Singapore-based businessman, maintains close ties with Jesuits in Patna and Nepal.

Christopher Fussner

"I first went to Nepal in 1973, and became friends with Fr. Gene Watrin, SJ, who died last February. I've been funding the mobile medical clinic in Nepal for over ten years and will continue to expand this project. I've worked with the Jesuit team in Nepal for years and am excited that they seek to continue the work Fr. Watrin started."



Charlie Mann with Gerald Grace, SJ, who served for decades in Patna.

Charlie Mann

"The answer, for me, is simple. This is what was supposed to happen. From the day my uncle, Fr. Joe Mann, SJ, arrived in India in 1928, this was the plan, to have the people of India take over the Church. It's their Church now. It's not a foreign Church. I believe that's God's plan."

by the Irish Christian Brothers, and handed over to the Jesuits in 1968) all run by the Jesuits, growing to become some of the best and most prominent schools in India and Nepal. The Jesuits running these schools have, over the years, continued to reach out to the poor, always making space for them in their schools.

The movie would show the Jesuits opening colleges in Patna and Nepal. It would show them creating numer-

ous non-formal initiatives supporting rural education and development, and a variety of vocational programs. Also included would be the various communications initiatives and the many retreat houses opened to share the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius with the people of India. The movie would show scenes of Frs. Gene Watrin, SJ, and Jim Donnelly, SJ, teaching in Nepal, and Fr. Watrin and Fr. Lud Stiller, SJ, urging the graduates of Nepal's Godavari school to reach out to the poor living in their midst through the Godavari Alumni Association. A heroic and tragic scene would show Fr. Tom Gafney, SJ, ministering to young men and women suffering from physical maladies and substance abuse. Included, too, would be scenes of Fr. Gafney challenging the drug dealers in Kathmandu, likely the same ones who entered his small bedroom in the middle of the night and killed him in 1997.

The Ending (and Beginning)

The final scene of the movie could've been filmed in summer 2004 when first and second-year novices, from far-flung parts of the Patna Province and even from other parts of India, gathered at Xavier Teachers Training Institute, Patna's Jesuit novitiate. For the first time, the number of novices in the Patna Province outnumbered the Jesuits from North America still serving in Patna, Delhi, and Nepal. As of this fall, there were 23 native Indian novices, and 18 Americans.

The future of the Patna Province is Indian. At some point in the not-too-distant future there won't be any more Jesuits from the United States serving in Patna.

To the many families and friends of the Patna Jesuits, in the Midwest and around the world, who have long supported the work of the Patna Jesuit Mission, this may seem a sad end to the story. For years, folks in Chicago, Cincinnati, Detroit, and Cleveland watched as their friends, brothers, and sons volunteered for assignments to Patna. These Jesuits walked away from everything they'd ever known, motivated by some combination of a thirst for adventure, faith in God, and a desire to serve.

Folks at home watched with wonderment and pride as these Jesuits were able to build schools, churches, a province, and a pair of regions. The folks at home waited anxiously for updates, which in the pre-e-mail days arrived in bent and battered blue and brown air mail envelopes. They sent letters back and did what they could to support the work taking place on the other side of the world. These family and friends gathered often to pray for the Patna Jesuits. They raised money. They raised awareness. It was, in many ways, their mission. So to some of them this may seem a sad end to the story.





For many years, missionaries from the Americas and Europe outnumbered native vocations. But, as evidenced by this photo of a recent Patna Province congregation, the work of those missionaries has inspired many native Indians to become Jesuits.

“But,” says Fr. Jerry Drinane, SJ, who left the Chicago Province for Patna in 1954, “it’s a perfect ending, it’s a happy ending.”

From the earliest days of the Patna Mission, the American Jesuits there realized the need to foster native vocations. Fr. William Eline’s first ministry, in addition to serving as superior of the mission, involved serving as a chaplain to the British Troops and teaching at a school that had been established years earlier by Irish Christian Brothers. In the books *We Band of Brothers: Volumes I and II*, Fr. Jim Cox, SJ, who wrote brief biographies of many of Patna’s Jesuits after their deaths, said teaching at the school was a job Fr. Eline “relished, for it would bring vocations to Patna Mission. Later he was very happy when three students from there became Jesuits.”

In many ways, that was the beginning of the Patna Mission. From the outset, there was an understanding that the Patna Mission belonged to the people of Patna, not to the white-cassocked missionaries who had traveled there from different parts of the world. Eventually, the Jesuits hoped, the Mission would be populated not by Americans almost exclusively, but by native vocations.

Today Jesuits from the United States make up only a fraction of the Patna Province, which now numbers 413 members. Many of the Jesuits in Patna came from other parts of India. A substantial number hail from Kerala, in southern India, where St. Francis Xavier and St. Thomas the Apostle had an enormous influence that’s evidenced still today by a sizeable Catholic population. But 102 members of the Province are from Bihar, the state in Northern India where Patna Province is located, and 42 are graduates of Jesuit schools. Each undoubtedly was inspired to pursue a life of service by a Jesuit. It may have been a Jesuit from the States, or a younger Indian Jesuit who was inspired by his American teachers.

And that’s where the story ends, with a vibrant Province that continues to inspire native vocations. The 18 North American Jesuits still in Patna couldn’t have hoped for a better ending to their story. The many ministries they and their predecessors helped create will continue to serve the people of Patna. The only thing changing is the color of the skin of the teachers, spiritual directors, and missionaries. They are today’s Patna Jesuits. And their American predecessors, the first Patna Jesuits, couldn’t be happier. In fact, this is all they ever wanted. ■

These Jesuits from North America are currently serving in Patna, Delhi, and Nepal. The years to the right of their names mark the year of their arrival in the region.

- Fr. Theodore Bowling, SJ (1951)
- Fr. Martin Coyne, SJ (1961)
- Fr. Edwin Daly, SJ (1952)
- Fr. James Donnelly, SJ (1961)
- Fr. Gerald Drinane, SJ (1954)
- Fr. Jerome Durack, SJ (1951)
- Fr. Charles Fox, SJ (1938)
- Fr. William Goudreau, SJ (1947)
- Fr. Anthony Grollig, SJ (1949)
- Fr. Paul Kehres, SJ (1956)
- Fr. John Kenealy, SJ (1949)
- Fr. Richard Lambert, SJ (1961)
- Fr. Norman Langenderfer, SJ (1948)
- Fr. Roman Lewicki, SJ (1959)
- Fr. John Locke, SJ (1958)
- Fr. Casper Miller, SJ (1958)
- Fr. William Robins, SJ (1977)
- Fr. Robert Schmidt, SJ (1964)
- Fr. Gregory C. Sharkey (1994)
- Fr. Ludwig Stiller, SJ (1956)
- Fr. Thomas Tobin, SJ (1961)

Though there are a decreasing number of Chicago Province Jesuits currently in Patna, Nepal, and Delhi, the Chicago Province continues to maintain extremely close ties, ties that have been formalized in a “convenio” agreement, with Patna. There are, today, many needs in the Patna Province. Your contributions can still be used to support the Patna Jesuits as they continue to serve in the ministries started by their predecessors. Please use the enclosed envelope to make a contribution or contact Jeff Smart or Mike Murray (at 800-922-5327) for detailed giving opportunities.