



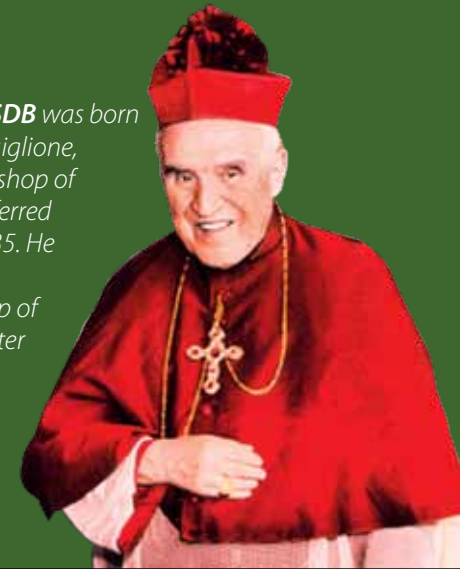
# St. John Bosco parish

In the late 1920s Dr. Ferdinand Perier SJ, Archbishop of Calcutta along with Mgr. Joseph Fernandez, Vicar General and Mgr. Louis Mathias, Salesian Provincial, were in search of a suitable site to build a church for the Catholics residing on G. T. Road and a school for the technical education of the Anglo Indian boys. When Fr. De Wachter SJ, the parish priest of Howrah showed them a plot on the Abhoy Guha Road not far from the Eastern Railway Workshop, Dr. Perier asked, "How many Catholics are there in this area?" When he was told that there were around 800 Catholics, mostly in the Railway Colony and they attended Holy Mass in a club room, the search was ended. "Very well," said His Grace, "this is the place and here we shall have the first church dedicated to Don Bosco." Don Bosco had not been canonized a saint yet! It was March 1928 and the words would turn prophetic!

In May 1930, Mgr. Mathias with his characteristic 'dare and hope' bought a workshop structure belonging to Parry & Co. in Howrah and had it transported to Liluah. The skilful architect Gogree transformed this structure into a chapel, residence for Salesians and a boarding school for 50 boys.



**Rt. Rev. Stephen Ferrando SDB** was born on 29 September 1895 at Rossiglione, Italy. He was appointed the Bishop of Krishnagar in 1934 and transferred to Shillong as its Bishop in 1935. He founded the Congregation of Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of Christians in October 1942. After his term as Bishop of Shillong, he left for Italy in 1969 where he died on 20 June 1978. The cause of his beatification and canonization was introduced on 3 April 1999.



The Liluah parish created history by being the first church in India to be established in honour of St. John Bosco. On 8 December 1937, at 3.30 P.M., His Grace, Archbishop Ferdinand Perier SJ, blessed the parish church. The ceremony had all the appeal of the catholic liturgy. Mgr. Vincent Scuderi, the Salesian Provincial, read an address in which he recalled Don Bosco's dream wherein he saw his Salesians at work in Kolkata. He reminded those present that this parish was being set up to look after the spiritual needs of the European and Anglo Indian catholics. At the end of the day, Fr. Attilio Colussi, the Rector, in his good night talk begged all to pray at the Holy Mass the following day that no sacrilege ever be committed, no bad Holy Communion or Confession ever be made at the newly blessed Church of St. John Bosco.

On 9 December 1937, the first Mass in Don Bosco's new shrine was celebrated at 7.00 A.M. by His Lordship Dr. Stephen Ferrando SDB, Bishop of Shillong. Quite a number of parishioners were present and approached the Holy Table. Mgr. Ferrando preached a moving sermon on the humble beginnings of Don Bosco's great work in the sacristy of the Church of St. Francis of Assisi in Turin and its subsequent development. The mustard seed planted at Liluah would develop into the greatest of all the trees and shelter in its shade the innumerable Anglo Indian youth who would live here as one great family.



From the time that the church has been built, there have been several reasons for celebration and praise to God Almighty. During the mass on 14 August 1938, 7 boys received their first Holy Communion and immediately after Mass 27 boys were confirmed by His Grace, Archbishop Mgr. Perier. The parishioners celebrated the first Parish Day and the Feast of Don Bosco on 5 February 1939, with a Pontifical High Mass at 7.00 A.M, celebrated by the Vicar General, Mgr. Joseph Fernandez.

Four students from Liluah, Roland O'Hara, Peter Lourdes, Joseph Felix and Theodore Biddle left to be aspirants in the recently started Apostolic School at Bandel. They were not just aspirants but the first fruits of the effective work done by the pioneering community in the Indian school. 22 January 1940, the day they left is definitely a high point in the Salesian calendar but more importantly it marked the beginning of a long line of vocations which Pope Leo XIII had envisioned when he said, "*Filii tui India, administri tibi salutis*" (Your own sons, O India, will be the heralds of your salvation).

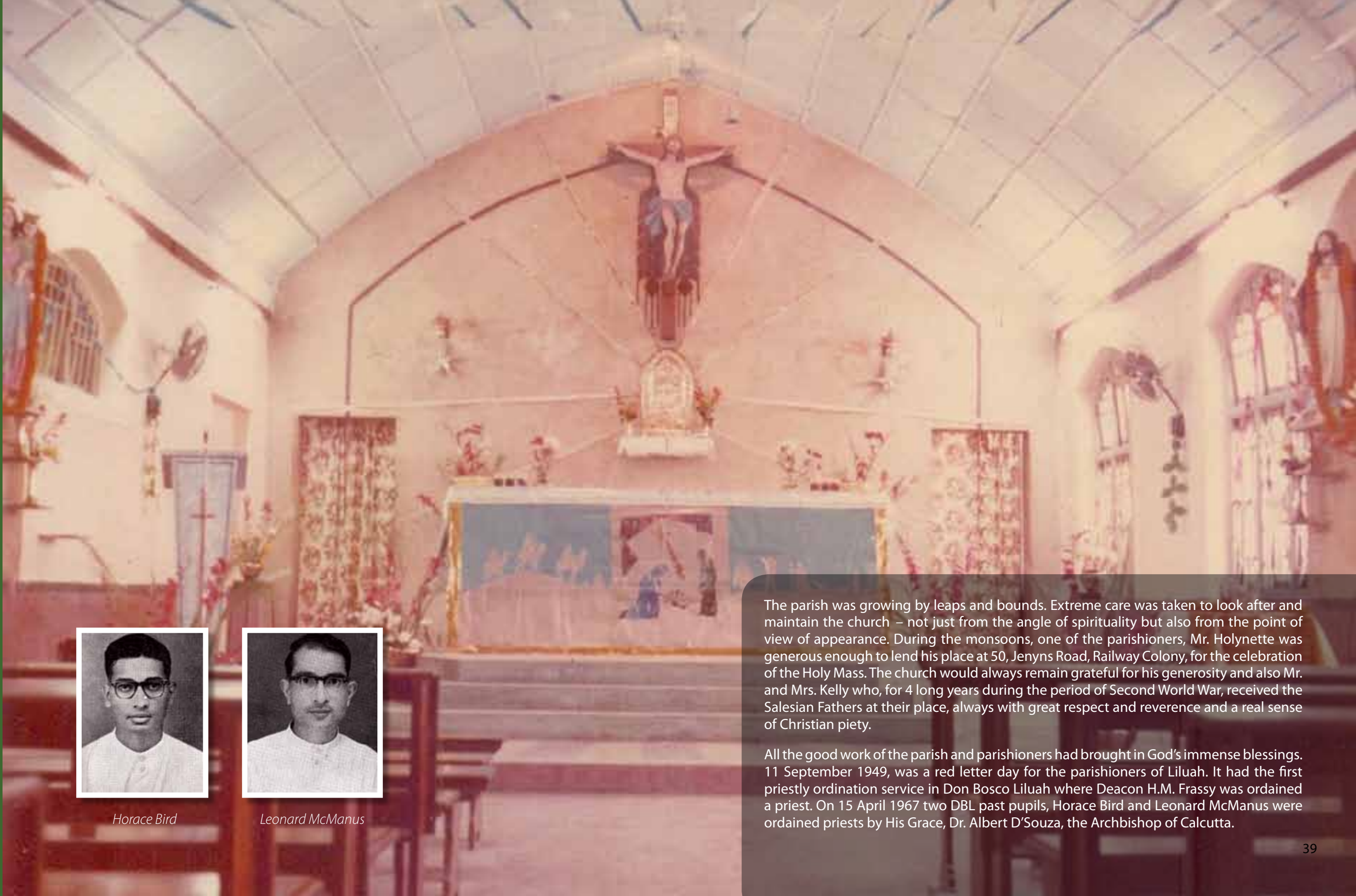


The Big Four from Liluah (Peter Lourdes, Roland O'Hara, Joseph Felix and Theodore Biddle) at Bandel Seminary

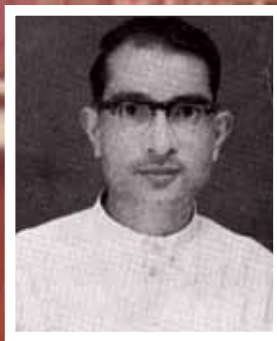


From L to R: Maurice Nicholson, Joseph Felix, Roland O'Hara and Peter Lourdes at Salesian College Sonada before entering the Novitiate in 1943





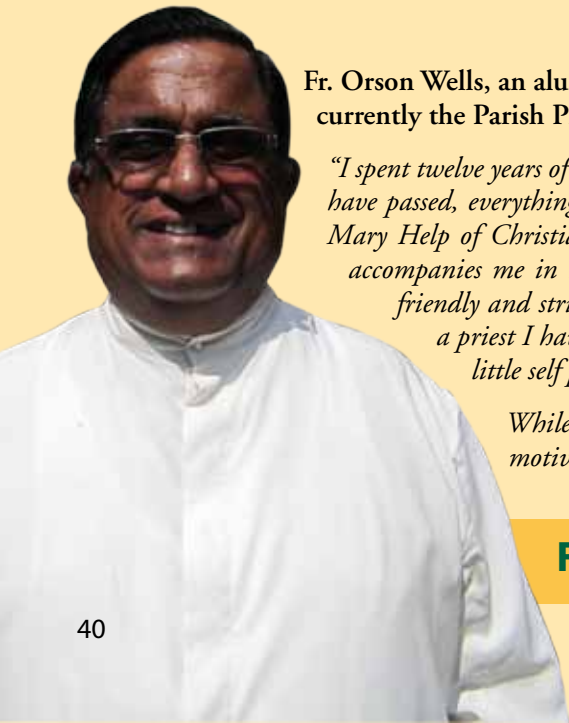
*Horace Bird*



*Leonard McManus*

The parish was growing by leaps and bounds. Extreme care was taken to look after and maintain the church – not just from the angle of spirituality but also from the point of view of appearance. During the monsoons, one of the parishioners, Mr. Holynette was generous enough to lend his place at 50, Jenyns Road, Railway Colony, for the celebration of the Holy Mass. The church would always remain grateful for his generosity and also Mr. and Mrs. Kelly who, for 4 long years during the period of Second World War, received the Salesian Fathers at their place, always with great respect and reverence and a real sense of Christian piety.

All the good work of the parish and parishioners had brought in God's immense blessings. 11 September 1949, was a red letter day for the parishioners of Liluah. It had the first priestly ordination service in Don Bosco Liluah where Deacon H.M. Frassy was ordained a priest. On 15 April 1967 two DBL past pupils, Horace Bird and Leonard McManus were ordained priests by His Grace, Dr. Albert D'Souza, the Archbishop of Calcutta.

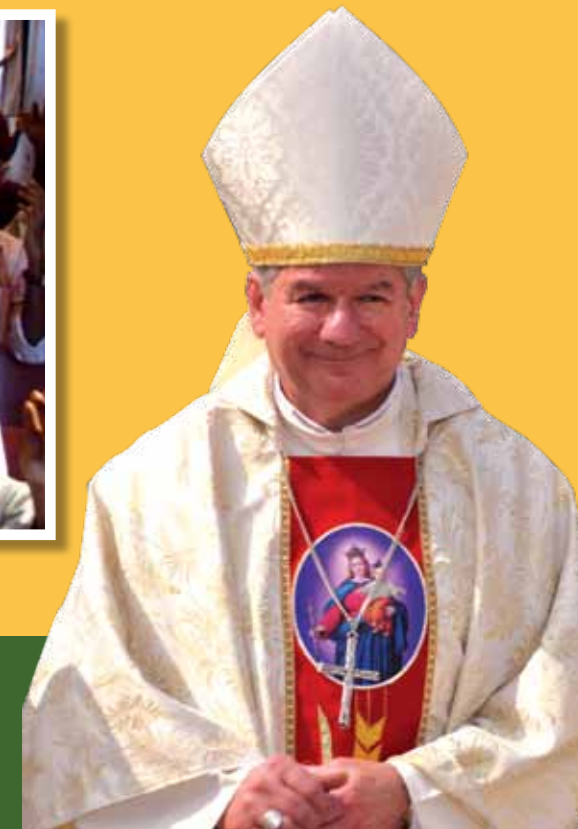


Fr. Orson Wells, an alumnus, who became a priest in the Archdiocese of Kolkata, is currently the Parish Priest of Sacred Heart Church, Chandannagar.

*“I spent twelve years of my life on the premises and passed out in 1972. Though 41 years have passed, everything is as if just yesterday. The spirit of Don Bosco and devotion to Mary Help of Christians which endeared us to the Salesian fathers and brothers still accompanies me in my life as a Priest. My vocation is much due to the dedicated, friendly and strict priests who balanced discipline with love and friendliness. As a priest I have great joy when people ask ‘are you a Don Bosco father?’ With a little self pride I say to myself: You have lived up to the spirit of Don Bosco!”*

*While we serve the LORD with gladness, may the spirit of Don Bosco motivate us to be at the service of youth.”*

**Fr. Orson Wells** (Batch of 1972)



**Dr. Kiss-Rigó László,**  
Bishop of Szeged-Csanad,  
Hungary

The closing of the Platinum Jubilee Celebrations saw the visitation of one of the school alumnus, Dr. Kiss-Rigó László, Bishop of Szeged-Csanad, Hungary. He had studied in DBL from 1966 to 1969. Mr. Kiss-Rigó, his father, was a metallurgical engineer in a Calcutta firm. Master Laszlo's family lived in Konnagar and they used to attend Sunday Mass at St. Thomas Church, Middleton Row.

*"I spent the happiest years of my life as a youngster at Don Bosco Liliuah starting my studies in class V in 1966. I studied three years at DBL and then moved on to Don Bosco Park Circus in 1969 for a half-semester before my father returned to Hungary. I remember Fr. Albert Thottunkal," he recalled, pronouncing the house name without any hesitation, even after 40 years. Then he rattled off the names of several other Salesians starting with fellow national and veteran missionary Fr. Bartholomew Varga, Fr. Patrick Sheehy, Fr. Rappati, Fr. Thomas, Fr. Maiques, Fr. Strocio Rosario and Fr. Dino Colussi.*

*"Looking back now, I guess, those years at DBL instilled in me the seeds of my priestly vocation which prompted me to join the seminary in the days of the communist regime," Bishop László added. He also remembered with nostalgia the days of the annual spiritual retreat organized for Catholic boys.*

*He concluded by saying that in constructing the projects for the next 50 years, the Fathers and Superiors must be faithful to the ideals of Don Bosco. "All at DBL must work in tandem for the well-being of the institution. With the intercession of Don Bosco, the DBL family will find real happiness in life, in spite of all conflicts and difficulties that obstruct their way and this happiness should be shared with everyone."*





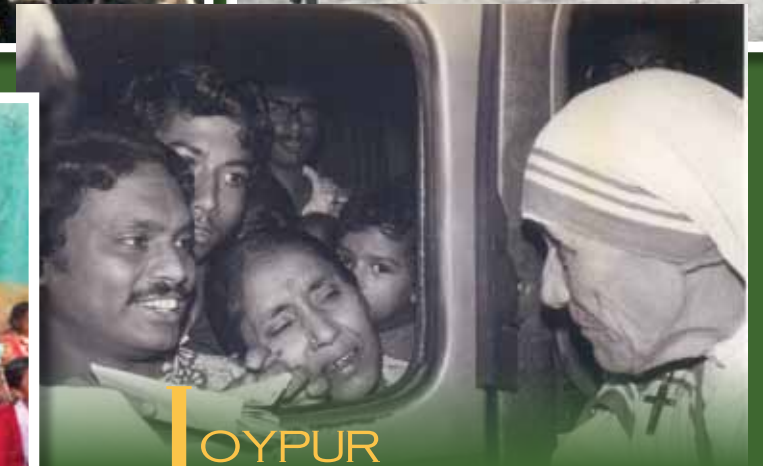
On 31 January 1983, Rev. Fr. Joseph Kezhakkekara, the Salesian Provincial, blessed and laid the foundation stone for the present Church, designed by architects Dulal Mukherjee and Associates and constructed under the supervision of Rev. Br. Isaac Puthumana SDB. The construction was completed in two years and on 8 December 1984, Fr. Joseph Kezhakkekara, the Provincial, blessed the new Church of St. John Bosco at the DBL premises. He was assisted by Rev. Fr. Attilio Colussi and Rev. Fr. Mariano Uguet, former Rectors of DBL who were present in 1937, when the first church was blessed by the late Archbishop Ferdinand Perier SJ.





The area around Hind Motors came under the jurisdiction of Liluah parish on 29 March 1986. Uttarpara and Konnagar too were added to the parish in the same year. On 18 December 1992, the Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of Christians were given a warm welcome to the Liluah parish. On 15 August 2001, the Holy Family Sisters joined the parish at Bhattanagar in order to further the family apostolate through family visits and education.

St. John Bosco parish with John Bosco as the patron saint is the main centre with three other units: Bhattanagar, Chandmari and Joypur. Today the Liluah unit has a cosmopolitan multitude consisting of Bengalis, Anglo-Indians, Malayalees, the tribals, etc. The Bhattanagar and Chandmari units mostly consist of tribals from the Chotanagpur belt while the Joypur unit has more of a Bengali speaking crowd.



# J

## JOYPUR

In 1950, the village of Joypur was given over to the St. John Bosco parish. On 24 March 1964, the Salesians purchased in Joypur, 41 cottahs of land, for Rs. 6000. Another 21.5 cottahs of land was bought on 20 April 1964, for Rs. 3407. Soon this became a Mass Centre with a chapel. A new Work Centre was constructed and it was blessed on 18 November 1979 by Fr. John Topno, the assistant parish priest. On 27 January 1980, Cardinal Lawrence Picachy came to Liluah and it was the first time that a Bishop visited Joypur. With much effort and prayers a new church was built and blessed on 8 December 1985. A beautiful statue of Our Lady was installed in the Joypur church on 24 April 1993 and the annual feast at Joypur is celebrated on the anniversary of its installation. Today the cemetery of the parish is located at Joypur. There are around 105 families in the Joypur unit.





It was on 30 November 1991, that the registration of the land for the parish at Bhattanagar took place. 13 June 1993 was the day chosen to announce the commencement of the Bhattanagar sub-station. The new land bought at Bhattanagar for the parish had a building which was given over to the Sisters Adorers for two years to do their apostolate in the parish. The building and the statue of Our Lady was blessed by the Rector, Fr. Joseph Manippadam. An official letter from the Archbishop was received only on 14 June 1993 to start a substation in Bhattanagar. The Archbishop in his letter expressed his wish to see this substation grow into a full fledged parish one day. On 14 August 1994, the new Mass Centre at Bhattanagar was inaugurated and a new chapel to serve the Christian community of that area was blessed by Archbishop Henry D'Souza. Later, the land adjacent to the sub-centre was purchased by Fr. Davis Veliyan and developed into the S.M.P.C. complex housing many of the parishioners. Today, Bhattanagar boasts of 115 active Catholic families and has a preparatory school, coaching centre and a boarding for the non-formal students of the technical section. Don Bosco Ashalayam has 3 homes for the orphaned boys and the Sisters Adorers have a home for the homeless girls in this area.



*Holy Family Convent School at Rabindra Sarani, Liluah run by the Congregation of the Holy Family*



*Navajyoti Bhavan at Bhattanagar run by Sisters Adorers*



# C HANDMARI

With the settlement of many Catholics close to Belur station, the Chandmari unit gradually evolved into a Mass Centre in the 90s. On 8 December 2003, the foundation stone which was blessed by His Holiness Pope John Paul II, was laid for the Divine Mercy Church. A beautiful church came up through the efforts and prayers of the Parish Priest, Fr. Antony Vayalil. The consecration was on 6 February 2005 by Archbishop Lucas Sircar SDB. Even though there are only 60 families in Chandmari, they make up for the numbers with their religious fervour.





With about 155 families in Liluah and its surrounding areas, the Liluah parish has a total of 435 families with 2047 members. Today St. John Bosco Parish is not just a chapel but a Parish catering to the spiritual needs of these members and evolving into a big wonderful family. The members of Liluah, Bhattanagar, Chandmari and Joypur units comprising the Catholic Sabha, Mahila Sangh and Youth Groups are very active and their participation and mingling with each other through conventions, retreats, pilgrimages is helping the Parish to grow. The youth groups play vital roles in all liturgical celebrations in every unit and their presence is prominent at every deanery and diocesan level events such as football matches, talent contests and bible quiz. They are marching ahead as committed leaders, true lovers and followers of Christ and their active participation has made our little chapel into a home, a wonderful place for all to come together and worship and adore the Lord.