

FATHER NATHANIEL MARSH. SDB.

Fr. Marsh was born in Beaminster, Dorset on January 30th 1880 of strict Anglican parents. His mother particularly, was a person of great faith. Nathaniel was a good student at school and he was able to study classics – his study of Latin was to be a great help in later years.

Towards the end of his school days, the Boer War was just about to begin, and he thought it his duty to serve his country by volunteering his services. He also thought it would help if he studied Africaans – he didn't realise then that it would be of great help later in life when he was working in the army of the Lord.

During that time Nathaniel also thought deeply about religious matters and he became rather dissatisfied with the answers suggested by his Anglican faith. He eventually decided to make a deeper study of the Catholic faith and he went to a priest in Manchester and placed himself under instruction. Soon after his reception into the Church he felt that God was calling him to the priesthood and, on the advice of the late Fr. Lester S. J., offered himself to the Very Rev. Fr. C. Buss SDB at that time the superior of the house at Battersea.

He eventually entered the Novitiate, which was then at Oxford, in September 1921. He made his first profession on the 16th of September 1922 and spent the next two years at Cowley, Oxford. studying Philosophy. From 1924–25 he studied theology besides acting as the assistant bursar at Cowley. In 1925 he moved to Battersea and continued his theological studies whilst also doing some teaching in the school. On the 22nd September 1928 he was ordained a priest at Wonersh. In 1929 he was asked to go to Cape Town to act as the bursar in the Salesian House there. . One who knew him there writes: – Fr. Marsh pursued his duties with an undisturbed tranquility which can only be described as supernatural. He played the part of Martha with the soul of Mary. He had a quiet attention for every caller. While his remarks were brief, they breathed the peace and charity of Christ. Never abrupt, he became all things to all men. Thus inside and outside the house he won the confidence and esteem of all. His deference and quiet way was inspiring and one felt in the presence of a holy and gifted person. As a religious, he was an example to his confreres, and he had a profound respect for those in authority over him. His religious obedience was the foundation of all his other virtues. He was reluctant to complain and would bear inconvenience without the slightest murmur. His general health gave some cause for concern and he had to undergo an operation for peritonitis and he never recovered fully from the effects of the operation. He died peacefully on the 12th July at the age of 55.

May he rest in peace.