

FATHER FRANCIS McCABE. S. D. B.

Father McCabe died at Beckford, Gloucestershire, on the 31st of March 1973. May he rest in peace!

Father McCabe was born on the 14th January 1899 in Darlington and later baptised at St. Augustine's, Darlington.

After serving in the forces during the war, Francis decided to try his vocation for the priesthood and he applied to join the Salesians. His application was accepted and he started his novitiate at Burwash in 1919. He successfully completed the year there and he made his first religious profession on the 21st November 1920. He stayed at Burwash for another year studying Philosophy, then moved to Oxford to continue his Church studies whilst at the same time helping with some teaching and assisting in the school. In 1924-6 he was in Turin studying theology and he was ordained in Turin on the 11th July 1926.

After his ordination Fr. McCabe returned to England but was then asked to go to Ireland to be the headmaster in the Salesian College, Pallaskenry, Limerick. He remained there for two years and then returned to England to take on the role of Catechist at the Salesian College, Chertsey, Surrey. During the years 1930-34 he held a similar post at the Salesian College, Farnborough. From 1934-7 he was Catechist at Battersea and from 1937-40 he was again the Catechist at Farnborough.

Then began a period of several Rectorships 1940-44 at Chertsey, 1944-48 at Shrigley, 1948-56 at Bolton, 1956-63 at Battersea, 1963-65 at Bolton and finally 1965-66 at Bootle. Fr. McCabe then went to Shrigley from 1966-70 as confessor and also helping with the formation of Salesian Cooperators and propaganda work. In 1970 he retired to Beckford, where he acted as the confessor for the novices and community.

Fr. McCabe was small in stature but he was a man of vision and a whole-hearted Salesian. He held posts of responsibility in the Province for many years and he spent much of his time thinking about and planning further building projects and ways and means of financing them. He was a very hospitable person and one who was well accepted by people in authority in educational spheres. He was a naturally kind person and always ready to help those who were sick and in need of help. He took a special interest in the liturgical services and the furnishing of the church.

He did not always enjoy good health, at times he tended to worry unduly, and towards the end of his life he suffered from a combination of ill-health and depression.

He will be remembered for his obvious loyalty to the Salesian Congregation, to the English Salesian province, and to the communities in which he lived. May Our Lady, Help of Christians and St. John Bosco guide him safely to Heaven.