

Salesian College,
Battersea.

Dear Confreres,

It is with great sorrow that I must announce the death of dear

FATHER THOMAS McCAMBRIDGE. S. D. B.

whom the good Lord called to himself quite unexpectedly in the evening of Sunday, June 8th.

Fr. McCambridge was born of an excellent Catholic family in Portsmouth on February 17th 1885. He was educated from his childhood in ideal Catholic surroundings and soon enriched himself with that profound piety and gentle courtesy which he showed throughout his life. He was educated at the Benedictine school at Douai, which, after six years he left in order to enter the Diocesan seminary at St. Edmund's Ware, where he received the tonsure and minor orders.

However, feeling that his inclination was more to the religious life he applied to Fr. Macey at Battersea. He was duly admitted as an aspirant and then passed to the novitiate at Burwash. After first profession he was sent to our newly opened house at East Hill, Wandsworth, returning for a while to Battersea and then being sent to St. Patrick's Malta.

During his long stay of some sixteen years in Malta, during which he was only able to make one visit to England. He gave himself completely to the apostolate there, coping with difficulties of language, customs and of the sometimes difficult climate. He was one of only two clerics who bore the main burden of assistance. Then later as a priest, after his ordination on June 14th 1919, when he added the duty of Economist to his already overcrowded day. At the same time he found time to be with the boys in recreation and indeed taking part with them with surprising vigour.

During 1926 he began to feel the heat of Malta somewhat exhausting and accordingly he was moved to England, where he was given a spell at Battersea and Bolton and finally, in 1928, in Chertsey, where he worked for eight years as teacher and later as curate in the parish. He made many friends as was manifest at the distress of the people when they heard he was being transferred to Battersea in 1936. Our Sisters too, were dismayed when they found that their faithful and gentle confessor was leaving them.

At Battersea, he continued much the same apostolic labour, as confessor to the community, Sisters and boys and as assistant in the parish. After some eight years he fell dangerously ill and for a while his life was despaired of; however, he made a good recovery, although at times the illness reoccurred in apparently less dangerous forms.

In the weeks preceding his death, he had seemed in the best of health and spirits. On Saturday evening, he had led the service in the church; he loved the liturgy of the Church and with his very fine voice he encouraged everyone to take part. He was particularly happy that evening since on the following day he was due to go to the parish church of his two sisters, there to carry the Blessed Sacrament in the Corpus Christi procession, an honour he was keenly looking forward to.

But when he woke on the Sunday morning, he found that he was unable to move. He managed to attract the attention of his neighbour, who went to inform the Rector, Fr. Sutherland, that Fr. McCambridge could not say his allotted Mass that morning. When the Rector visited him, he was alarmed at his condition and he immediately sent for the doctor. After treatment, his condition seemed to improve somewhat; but towards evening, he got worse and Fr. Sutherland again consulted the doctor. Arrangements were then made for Fr. McCambridge to be admitted to the Sisters' hospital at Cheam. The Sisters knew Fr. McCambridge well because he was their regular confessor.

Two priests went with him in the ambulance, but in spite of their care and concern, he died during the journey to the hospital. The doctors said that there was nothing the Sisters could have done even if he had reached them in time. His funeral at Battersea, where he had worked in the parish for many years, was attended by many religious and diocesan priests, as well as by many Sisters and a full congregation of parishoners.

When the time of our calling comes, as come it must to us all, may we be as ready to listen to the Lord's voice as Fr. Thomas was; his good Master will have received him as a good and most faithful servant.

Whilst begging you to be generous in your prayers and suffrages for the soul of this good Salesian priest, may I beg you also to pray for the needs of this Province and for the many intentions of

Yours most devotedly in St. John Bosco,

F. V. Couche. S. D. B.

Necrology: Fr. Thomas McCambridge, born at Portsmouth, Hants, died at Battersea, London, June 8th 1947, aged 63, in the 41st year of profession and 28th of priesthood.