

FATHER PATRICK McLOUGHLIN. SDB.

The Very Rev. Fr. P. McLoughlin, Rector of St. Patrick's School, Sliema Malta, and Provincial Delegate of the Salesians, died in hospital there on the 8th August 1962, after being ill since May. Fr. McLoughlin was born at Manorhamilton, Co. Leitrim, Eire, in the diocese of Kilmore on March 11th 1892, and so was just 70 years old at the time of his death.

His was a most active and varied career, for he joined the Irish Christian Brothers in his native country in 1908 and taught in their schools in Malaya from 1910-17 and then from 1918-19 in England. On his return from the East during the first World War he was torpedoed in the Bay of Biscay and spent several hours in the water. There he made a vow to become a priest if he was saved. Out of a shipload of 1700 only 12 arrived home safely. In 1919 therefore he entered Osterley College to study for the priesthood. From there he came to the Salesian College, Battersea as an aspirant in September 1920 and he made his novitiate in the Salesian Congregation at Oxford from 1921-22. He made his temporary profession there in the latter year and was perpetually professed at Burwash in 1927. His tremendous kindness and gentleness of character made him deeply loved by the small boys of the preparatory school at Burwash just as they did in so many other places during his life. His philosophical and theological studies were done at Burwash and Battersea respectively. He was ordained priest at the age of 39 by Bishop Amigo at Southwark on the 15th August 1931.

After a further short period of teaching at Battersea, he returned to Burwash in 1932 and, in the following year, became Prefect at St. Patrick's Malta. He stayed there until 1936 and began what was destined to become a long, extremely fruitful and holy connection with the island. In 1936 he became Rector of Pallaskenry and in 1941 of Ballinakill, remaining there until 1946. The reputation which he acquired during those years for sanctity, was, as is well-known, quite extraordinary and there is no doubt that, as a fruit of his personal holiness and his disarming simplicity of manner, allied to the gentleness, to which reference has already been made, his impact upon the people in Ireland was profound and their faith in his blessing and prayers knew no bounds. He was unceasing in his preaching of the power of the blessing of Our Lady, Help of Christians and many people came to receive it from him.

The story of his pious life continued unbroken with his return to Malta in 1946. He was to stay there until his death. He was Rector there from 1946-54, Provincial Delegate from 1954-61, and Rector again from 1961 to the end. A man of intense priestly character and charm, he was loved by all, and, as those who were with him in Malta – and especially those who held positions of authority there-unanimously affirm, his qualities as a diplomat were invaluable in his relations with the priests and people of the island. He was held in particular esteem by his Grace Archbishop Gonzi, who revered him as a priest and a friend, and who commended him as an example to the clergy of the island.

Many are the stories of incidents in his life as a student, when with his studious avoidance of giving the right answer, he literally brought the house down and left his teachers in confusion. There was always the charming smile, the disarming "Well now" and one was no wiser than before. There is too the story of the meeting between H. M. Queen (then Princess Elizabeth) with Fr. McLoughlin in Malta after the war, after which encounter she is reputed to have said that Fr. McLoughlin was "the nicest priest she had ever met."

After his death, Fr. McLoughlin's body was brought from the Blue Sisters hospital to the Salesian Church and, among the many, who came to pay their respects, was His Grace, Archbishop Gonzi. Fr. Mangion, Rector of St. Alphonsus' celebrated the Requiem Mass on Thursday, August 9th, and Fr. Fonde preached the panegyric. He stressed the deceased's extraordinary kindness and charity to the poor, his love for the boys at St. Patrick's, and his dedication to the expansion of the Salesian work in Malta, his exemplary piety and his devotion to Our Lady, Help of Christians.

Fr. Inguanez, P. P. an intimate friend of Fr. McLaughlin, officiated at the graveside. At the Requiem Mass there were present Provincials of religious orders, many priests, secular and regular, and nuns, in particular the Blue Sisters. Also there were the Minister of Education and his assistant – Salesian Co-operators, past and present pupils, the communities of St. Patrick's, St. Alphonsus's and Gozo oratory.

To his sister, a Dominican nun in USA and to his nephew, Father Brewster, SDB. , and his other relatives, as well as to the community in Malta, who so deeply mourn his loss, prayerful and sincere sympathy is extended.

MAY HE REST IN PEACE.