

FATHER CHRISTOPHER BARRAGRY. S. D. B.

Dear Confreres,

It was whilst returning for a short rest in England that Fr. Christopher Barragry. SDB, the parish priest of Lansdowne, CP, South Africa, was taken ill on the boat and was landed at Las Palmas. He was removed at once to hospital and, within a matter of 48 hours, died there on Thursday, 3rd September 1964 at the age of 59 years. He had indeed suffered for a number of years from a number of complaints, including heart trouble and was, in fact, in hospital for several weeks during his visit to England a couple of years ago.

Christopher Barragry was born in Cardiff on Christmas eve, 1904. His parents were Christopher and Mary Barragry his mother's maiden name being Coughlan. This is rather interesting because the maiden name of the mother of Fr. Samuel Bolton, whose death occurred a few days before that of Fr. Barragry, was Coughlan. Both Fr. Barragry and Fr. Bolton were also aged 59 when they died.

It was in 1918 that Christopher Barragry came as a pupil to Battersea. After a few months there he was sent to Burwash with a number of other young aspirants to help in the work of preparing the novitiate house for the reception of the first novices after the First World War. His own novitiate was the second post-war one, that which saw the removal from Burwash to Cowley. It was at Cowley that he was professed on the 17th September 1921. Whilst at Cowley, he had an almost fatal attack of rheumatic fever, and, in the circumstances of his health at the time, his final profession was somewhat delayed. It took place at Cowley in 1929. Meanwhile he had been able to do his philosophy at Cowley - 1921-23 - and taught, with outstanding success at Chertsey from 1923-26 and at Battersea from 1926-29. He was then transferred to Farnborough, where, as at Battersea, he combined the study of theology with the teaching of the Matriculation form and other duties. At Battersea on the 14th/15th August 1930, he received the tonsure and first Minor Orders from Bishop Brown of Pella, the second Minors from Bishop Cotter of Portsmouth at Farnborough on the 28th September 1930, whilst at the hands of Bishop Doubleday of Brentwood, he received the sub-diaconate at Forest Gate on the 20th May, 1932, the diaconate at New Hall, Chelmsford, on the 20th June 1932, and at the same place, the sacred priesthood on the 15th August 1932.

After his ordination, Fr. Barragry sailed for South Africa and became Prefect of Studies at Cape Town. He returned to England and took up a similar post at Farnborough in 1936. There he remained until 1942 when he joined the forces as an army chaplain and saw service during the Second World War in France, Belgium and Germany. At the end of the war in 1945 he went to Bolton and taught there until 1951. A period of service as Prefect of the house followed at Chertsey from 1951-2, Bolton 1952-3, and Cowley 1953-55. Then he returned once more to South Africa and became the parish priest at Lansdowne. There, to his great joy, he built a few years ago, the lovely new church of Our Lady, Help of Christians, an achievement, which may, we think, be considered as the crown of a lifetime's hard work for this good, impetuous, and bubblingly energetic priest. He will be remembered as a most zealous Salesian, a great friend and a restless hard-working priest.

We cannot close this account without a warm and well-deserved tribute to the Rector and confreres of the Salesian house in Las Palmas, whose care and devotion to our departed friend was in the highest tradition of the sons of Don Bosco and will always be gratefully remembered by us all. R. I. P.