

FATHER EDWARD MULDOON. SDB.

Fr. Muldoon died at the hospital of Mt. Alvernia, Guildford, on June 2nd 1951 in the 77th year of his age and the 47th of his sacred priesthood, fortified by the rites of Holy Mother Church.

Fr. Edward was born on December 2nd, 1874, at Hunslet, Yorkshire, of good Irish and Yorkshire stock. Early in life he showed a desire to dedicate his life to the service of God and he began his studies for the priesthood at Glastonbury, the cradle of British christianity. It was in the shadow of the ruins of that great monastery that he absorbed the qualities that strengthened and deepened his already strong Catholic spirit. He continued his studies in France and in England, and, having heard about the work of St. John Bosco, he asked to be admitted to the Salesian Society. He was directed to the Salesian Novitiate at Burwash and he made his first profession there in 1900, his perpetual vows in 1902 and he was ordained a priest at Battersea on the 24th September 1904.

Early in his priestly life he showed those qualities of courage, determination and efficiency that were to make him a very successful teacher and preacher. The superiors soon saw the ability and sense of responsibility that marked him out for important positions. He was appointed Rector of the small school at Farnborough in 1907. Immediately he put his energies and his talents to his task and made great improvements and laid the foundations that helped to develop this important school. During his time at Farnborough, at the request of the Bishop, Fr. Muldoon began the mission at Fleet. He cycled there – a distance of twelve miles each Sunday to say Mass for the Catholics there.

After finishing his three years as Rector of Farnborough, he was asked in 1910 to transfer to Battersea to join the teaching staff there. At Battersea he gained a reputation as a self-sacrificing and efficient teacher and as a preacher of attractive sermons. In 1921, Fr. Muldoon was asked to go to the recently-opened College at Chertsey as the headmaster. It was a difficult time after the first World War but his energy and understanding helped greatly in building solid foundations for this new Salesian work. In 1930, we find him again at Battersea, carrying on where he had left off as a preacher in great demand and as an efficient teacher. His health, however, was giving some cause for concern and in 1935 he was moved to Farnborough, where it was thought, the country air would be beneficial to his constitution. But there then followed a long series of operations and hospital treatment which he bore with all his usual courage, fortitude and cheerful spirit. In spite of his illness, whatever work he could do, he did with willingness and his usual charm of manner.

In February 1951 he had undertaken to preach a Lenten course of sermons in the Salesian Church at Farnborough, but his ill-health compelled him to ask to be relieved of this task. Eventually he had to be taken to Mount Alvernia hospital at Guildford, where the devoted Sisters watched over him and cared for him for many months. Towards the end of May his condition worsened and gradually the end grew near. He passed peacefully to his Creator on Saturday, June 2nd, fortified by the rites of our Holy Mother Church.

On one occasion when preaching at Westminster Cathedral, Father Muldoon ended his sermon by quoting the words of St. Paul: – "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; as for the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of justice which the just judge will render to me in that last day." No better epitaph could be written on the life of Father Edward Muldoon. He was above all a militant lover of Christ; he was a fighter to the end. The Crusades would have been his natural element. There was no compromise with evil: he gave no quarter nor asked for any himself. He fought the good fight and he fought it with all the determination so characteristic of the men of Yorkshire. He has finished the good fight, he has kept unsullied the faith he received amongst his beloved Yorkshire moors and we hope and pray that he will soon receive the crown of glory from his Loving Saviour.

Father Muldoon was a worthy priest full of zeal for souls and for the good of others. The young never appealed to him in vain and he was never happier than when he was surrounded by Past Pupils and it was a pleasant sight to see them gathered round him with evident signs of appreciation and enjoyment.

He helped to form the early traditions of this Salesian College of Farnborough and there are qualities in those traditions that have persisted from generation to generation. He has earned our gratitude and it is fitting that we should feel his departure very much. Let us then, because of what he was, pray earnestly for the repose of the soul of Father Edward Muldoon. The dignity of the priest is great, the opportunities he has of friendship with Christ are also great; but these intimacies, these dignities, carry with them corresponding responsibilities and God's ways are not our ways, nor are God's thoughts our thoughts, and so it behoves us in our charity to pray earnestly for the repose of his soul. We have loved him in life; let us not forget him now that he may be in need of our prayers.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

William A. Walsh, S. D. B.

Necrology: Fr. Edward Muldoon died at Guildford, England on June 2nd, 1951, in the 76th year of his age, the 52nd of profession and the 47th of priesthood.