





done. The Salesians and the hundreds of boys who were watching the game were awe-struck. Their beloved Father Rector was no more. He died on "Children's day" and while playing. For, in spite of his age, he had still retained the simplicity of a child. He had played his game well to the last.

His death is a great loss and we all feel it keenly. But we find comfort in the words of Don Bosco, "When a Salesian dies in harness, you can say that that day is a day of glory for the congregation, and God's blessings will descend abundantly on it."

If Father Murphy was loved and esteemed during life, his true personality was revealed at his death. The large crowds that filed past his body and attended his funeral, the many Salesians that came from all over the province bore witness to his goodness. In homage to his memory all the educational institutions in the town remained closed for the day.

He was a man of simple tastes and habits. Unassuming, jovial and full of wit, he would make friends easily. Probably due to constant work and a keen sense of wanting the more perfect thing for himself and for others, he would occasionally lose his temper. But he would as easily approach the person offended and humbly apologise.

A keen sense of justice, an absolute sense of honesty and a great love for the poor were other human characteristics which no one could fail to notice in him.

As a religious, he was every bit exemplary. A man of prompt obedience, he accepted to be a Rector though this was very much against his nature. To his sister he wrote: "No one really likes this job but someone has to do it. The responsibility is very great and some people in life are cut out for leadership and some are not." He felt that he was not meant for the post and repeatedly asked superiors to be relieved. But at their word he would promptly submit and carry on just because "someone had to do it."

His spirit of poverty was proverbial. In this specially, he kept the fervour of his novitiate. He managed with little, was very careful in the use of money and never failed to give an account of the expenses made.

His piety was simple and unassuming, none the less solid and

fervent. He was particularly conspicuous for his frequent visits to the Blessed Sacrament.

He often complained that though he had come to India to be a missionary, he was never sent to the missions proper.

Yet his priesthood was not fruitless. His simple, well-prepared and original sermons had a power of their own in convincing his listeners. He spent the best years of his life in training and forming future priests and religious. With reason he could write home: "I am not indispensable. There are more worthy and better qualified people to take my place tomorrow." He was a priest, and a good priest at that, in every place and circumstance. He consecrated and sanctified the simplest things of life. No wonder the Lord called him to Himself during the Liturgy of a recreation. He was ready. In a letter to a benefactor a few days earlier he wrote: "We shall also pray for those who passed to the next world -- the world we all are meant for." And on the picture he kept in his Bible: "Death is a new birth to life everlasting."

He lies buried in the small Salesian cemetery where nine other Salesians, an aspirant and a past pupil await the day of their Resurrection.

No conclusion could be a more fitting tribute to the life and work of Father Murphy than what he himself had written in the college magazine of 1963 as a tribute to a professor who was retiring: "Go valiant warrior to enjoy your well-earned rest. Go and live again in memory the years which have passed. And may every memory be one of bliss and happiness, satisfaction and gratitude, that you have been able to do the great work which God, in His almighty wisdom, sent you into this world to do."

By general consent of the Salesian community of Tirupattur, the following epitaph will be engraved over his tomb: "Defunctus adhuc loquitur - Though he is dead, his life speaks."

May the Lord send us many Salesians like Father Murphy.

Pray for the Province and

Yours in Christ Jesus

Fr. THOMAS PANAKEZHAM

*Provincial*