

Salesian College,
Chertsey,
Surrey.

June 1951.

Dear Confreres,

I have to send you the sad news of the death of

FATHER ALBERT WILLIAM MURPHY. S. D. B.

His sudden and unforeseen end came at about 11.30. a. m. on Sunday February the 24th, after he had said his Mass. He was thus called to his eternal rest at the age of 58, in the 39th year of profession and the 28th of priesthood.

Albert William Murphy was born at Grimsby on May 28th 1894. At the local school he was considered to be a boy of excellent conduct and above-average ability.

When he expressed a desire to become a priest, a desire in which his parents, teachers and Parish Priest encouraged him, the latter suggested that he write to Fr. C. Macey, the Salesian Provincial at Battersea. On the Parish Priest's warm recommendation of Albert as a boy of good conduct, pious disposition, good at games and study, Fr. Macey accepted him at Battersea, where his teachers confirmed those good opinions of his ability and his companions found him a lively player of games, full of innocent jokes and fun.

In 1912, he entered the Novitiate at Burwash, where he was professed the following year, afterwards taking perpetual vows in the Congregation. After two years working at Battersea, he was sent to Farnborough, where with Fr. Sutherland as his Rector, he spent the years of the first World War.

In 1919 he was one of the first group to open the new house of Chertsey, a place where he would in time spend the greater part of his Salesian life; here he completed his theological studies. The following year he began his theological studies in Battersea and, after four years, was ordained priest there in 1924. Back again at Chertsey as Catechist for some years, he was appointed bursar at Battersea in 1935. At the outbreak of the Second Great War, when the then Rector of Battersea became Provincial, Fr. Murphy took his place as Rector. The boys were then evacuated and Fr. Albert survived the bombs until 1942 when he was sent to Chertsey again, this time as Parish Priest, an office he was to hold until his death.

As Parish Priest, Fr. Murphy was undoubtedly in his element and at once devoted his considerable energies and zeal to becoming a model pastor of his flock. It seemed that all that life had taught him now served as preparation for this apostolate among the people. In his relations with his parishioners, he was patient, kind, with a smiling approach, with ready laughter but a deep sincerity. As a religious he had shown himself faithful to his rule, endowed with a prompt and ready obedience and a spirit of sacrifice, a hard worker in the spirit of Don Bosco. His spirit of fun, in his ready wit and often brilliant observations, endeared him to all; but life had always taught him the time and place for all things, taught him too to be prudent in his actions, just in his judgements and the consideration of directing all his labours to God.

It seems that there was a history of heart trouble in his family and this would manifest itself at times in Fr. Albert, with dizzy spells and prostration, when he had over-taxed his physical powers. This could have been one of the causes of his premature end. As the years of his childhood and youth prepared him for his life as a priest, so did that life prepare him for death; he expected to die suddenly.

After a week in which he was confined to bed, he got up for about ten days and on the Sunday morning ventured out to say Mass in the Convent chapel. At breakfast he was full of life and jokes, so much so that the community marvelled at his quick recovery. At about 11. a. m. he went to his room; at 11. 30, one of the community went to talk to him about some matter in the parish, and there found him dead.

The Rector hastened to do all he could for Fr. Albert; it seemed impossible that one so full of good spirits, so open in all his ways, could be dead. But the Lord had indeed called him to judgement.

There remains for us the fraternal and charitable duty of prayers and suffrages for the repose of his soul.

Begging your good prayers for this house and for him who professes to be in Don Bosco,

Yours sincerely,

Fr. T. E. Payne, S. D. B. (Rector)

Necrology: Albert William Murphy died on February 24th, 1951, at the age of 58, in the 39th year of his religious profession and the 28th of his priesthood.