

Salesians of St. John Bosco



Salesian House,
Surrey Lane,
Battersea,
London SW11 3PB

February 1983

Dear Confrères

FATHER BRENDAN O'BYRNE, S.D.B

The death took place in St. Stephen's Hospital, Chelsea, after a short illness, on Thursday 30th December 1982, of Father Brendan, at the age of 63 years.

He was born in Dublin on the 10th March 1919 but he spent most of his life in England. He joined the Salesian College at Battersea when he was just eight years old and, after completing his studies at the College, he decided to try his vocation with the Salesians.

On the conclusion of the Novitiate, which was then at Cowley, Oxford, he made his first religious profession on the 28th March 1937. He then moved to Shrigley where he renewed his vows in 1940 and he was admitted to perpetual profession at Farnborough in 1943. The years 1937-39 were spent in philosophical studies at Oxford and, on their completion, he taught at Shrigley, Beckford and Chertsey. He studied theology at Blaisdon Hall, Gloucestershire from 1942-46 and he was ordained on the 14th July 1946.

For the next twenty years Father Brendan taught in Farnborough, Chertsey, Shrigley, Beckford and Oxford. Whilst teaching at the Salesian College, Oxford, he spent much of his spare time helping to plan the building of the Church of Our Lady of the Rosary at North Hinksey. He also helped—together with other local volunteers—to clear the site in preparation for the work.

In 1966 he returned to the school where his Salesian connections began and where it was destined to end. At Battersea he carried out his teaching with great zeal and skill. He had studied hard himself to obtain the B.Sc. and B.A. qualifications from London University and he had the gift of being able to pass his knowledge on to others. He was still teaching just a few days before he died.

A man brimming over with enthusiasm, he gained a host of friends with his kindness and generosity. He was fond, amongst other things, of music, and he loved to go round in out-of-school hours to entertain the elderly and sick in hospitals and homes all over London. In a recent edition of the magazine sent out by the Co-workers of Mother Teresa we read an account of a Christmas party given for over five hundred homeless men and women. It said "Much of the wonderful happiness and fun at these parties has been due to Father O'Byrne, a Salesian priest, a born compere with his ready wit, his love of singing and a talent for providing us with a variety of caring, gifted people to entertain us. We feel sure that he is entertaining them all above and asking them to move the piano!" Cardinal Hume also wrote ... "I saw him at Mother Teresa's nuns' party just before Christmas and admired then as in the past, what he was able to contribute on that occasion. I can imagine that he will be sorely missed by your Community."

The remains of Father Brendan were received into the Community chapel on Sunday evening, 9th January, when Holy Mass was celebrated and the Office of the Dead was recited. On Monday, January 10th, the body was transferred to the Salesian Church of the Sacred Heart, where concelebrated Requiem Mass was offered, prior to the burial in the Salesian burial plot at Morden.

At both Masses the principal celebrant was Father Brendan's brother, Father Pearse O'Byrne, S.D.B. of the Salesian College, Farnborough, to whom special sympathy in his loss is expressed.

Please pray for Father Brendan and for this Community,

Yours sincerely in Don Bosco,
Bernard Higgins, S.D.B.
(Rector)

Data for the Necrology: Father Brendan O'Byrne born in Dublin 10th March 1919, died in London 30th December 1982 in the 45th year of profession and 36th of priesthood.

R.I.P.