

FATHER JOHN JOSEPH O'CONNOR. SDB.

Fr. John was born in Newmarket, Co. Cork, Eire, in 1892. He entered the novitiate at Burwash, Sussex in 1908 and made his first profession in 1909. He stayed at Burwash for the following two years studying Philosophy. He then moved to Farnborough to help on the teaching staff and additionally, from 1914-19, as a student of theology. He was ordained in the Church of Our Lady, Help of Christians by Bishop Cotter of Portsmouth on the 9th February 1919. His companions on that happy day were two other Salesians who had shared with him the tasks already mentioned. They were Fr James Hickey and Fr John McTague.

After ordination Fr. John went to Battersea for two years as a member of the teaching staff. He then went to join Fr. Sutherland in Ireland at Pallaskenry in 1921 and he acted as the principal of the College there for a year. When Fr. Sutherland returned to Farnborough the following year, Fr. John went with him and he was headmaster at the Salesian College Farnborough until 1927. From 1927-40 Fr. John was on the staff of Thornleigh College Bolton and he did excellent work also supplying in the local parishes, where his services as a confessor were highly valued.

A new field of apostolate opened up to him with the outbreak of the Second World War, and he served as an army chaplain from 1940-46, when he went back to Ireland once more, this time to the college at Warrenstown (Co. Meath)

In 1947 he was recalled to England and took up duty as confessor at Battersea, a house in which he had taught from 1919-21. He remained at Battersea until his death, suffering almost constantly from ill-health and pain, yet working manfully, not only as confessor to the boys but in the same capacity to convents at Carshalton and Cheam. His kindness and devotion were a byword among the nuns. Every Sunday, too, he went to Balham and celebrated two Masses, and preached, in the church there.

Fr. John was not one given to self-advertisement, but was a priest of quiet, solid Irish piety, a man of great goodness of heart and of apostolic zeal.

Fr. John died on the 15th September 1959 in St. Anthony's Hospital, Cheam, Surrey. Solemn Requiem Mass was offered for his soul in the Church of the Sacred Heart at Battersea on the 18th September, and the interment took place later the same day in the Salesian cemetery at Burwash.

MAY HE REST IN PEACE.