



Fr. James P. O'Hara, S.D.B.



On April 11, 1990, at 1 p.m. Fr. James O'Hara died at Nazareth House in Los Angeles, where he had been in residence for the past two years, under the loving care of the Poor Sisters of Nazareth, of complications resulting in heart failure. He was 82 years of age.

It is already six years since our beloved deceased, Fr. James O'Hara, went to his eternal rest and no obituary letter of his has been issued. For the records, and in his loving memory, I, as the province archivist, wish to do so now, though little of his life activity was found.

Father O'Hara was born on January 21, 1908 of Michael and Anne Helly in Kilmactigue, County Sligo, Ireland, the center of devotion of Our Lady of Knock. Throughout his life he was known for his devotion to Mary. He entered the Salesian House of Warrenstown, Drumree, Co. Meath on March, 1925, where Fr. Patrick O'Grady was the Rector. Interestingly, we find Fr. James buried in Richmond, California, next to Fr. O'Grady. After three years he was found ready to enter the Novitiate in Cowley, Oxford, England, in 1928. He made his first religious profession in Pallaskenry, Ireland, on November 4, 1929. He must have opted to begin his Salesian Apostolate in Malta as he pronounced his triennial vows there on December 19, 1932. His perpetual profession was made in Battersea, London, on 24 August, 1935.

He was ordained to the priesthood on July 17, 1938 at Blaisdon, England. His Golden Jubilee of ordination was celebrated at Nazareth House on a July day of 1988 with Fr. Tom Prendiville, provincial, as principal celebrant and homilist and fellow golden jubilarian and resident of Nazareth House, Alexander Nardi, MCCJ, as concelebrant with Fr. James.

In Two Continents

Father James O'Hara was in school work in Malta, as a cleric, and in Ireland and England as a priest, until he came to America in the late 1950's. Fr. Larry Byrne S.D.B. of Richmond, California, gives us the following information about Fr. James' Salesian activities in England:

"After ordination, Fr. O'Hara worked in Blaisdon and from 1940 he worked in Shrigley for some years maybe till 1943... He certainly taught in the Salesian High School in Farmborough and possibly spent a few years in Salesian School in Bolton prior to going to Dublin to open, as he used to boast, with Fr. Aloysius Sutherland, circa 1953, the Salesian University Hostel for students attending the National University of Ireland in Dublin. While there he attended National University for his English degree. He already had a degree from

London University."

"As a preacher, I remember him as quite commanding, well read, interesting and convincing as the litterateur that he was. His teaching in England was of very high calibre....very demanding. I got to know him better in California. I found that, "his bark was much worse than his bite!"

One of Fr. James' former students, James McDonnell, who happened to be visiting California, spoke at the funeral Mass at St. Joseph's Rosemead on April 16. He recalled him as an outstanding English teacher and a great athlete. Though he was known as a disciplinarian, he was always ready to counsel a lad who appeared to be down—he was frequently seen in a heart - to - heart talk with these students.

Fr. James O'Hara came to the San Francisco Province early in 1960. He taught for a year at Salesian High School in Los Angeles and received an M.A. in English from the University of Southern California in 1962. Lending himself for pastoral apostolate to different bishops, he served as associate pastor in several parishes of the Honolulu, San Francisco and Santa Rosa dioceses from 1962 to 1980. He took a leave of absence in 1976 - 77. Father served as confessor in several of our province schools and as associate pastor in Corpus Christi Parish in San Francisco. After a period of time as chaplain to the Salesian Sisters at Corralitos, Ca. (1980-85), with residence at St. Francis School, Watsonville, CA., he moved to Don Bosco Technical Institute, in Rosemead, in 1985.

He entered Nazareth House, Los Angeles, in 1988 after a period of very poor health. It was a delight for him to visit the other residents of the convalescent home, to spread good cheer and the word of the Lord. In the last months, however, he was confined to his room as he grew weaker.

Father Larry Byrne, S.D.B., remembered Father James O'Hara fondly at the graveside service on April 17, recalling him as an outstand-

ing teacher and athlete, and committed religious.

Father Thomas Prendiville, provincial, away for the General Chapter in Rome, faxed Fr. Roger Luna, director of Don Bosco Technical Institute, prayers and condolences from Fr. Martin McPake, Regional, from Fr. Joseph Harrington, Provincial of Ireland, and from himself and Fr. Richard Wanner, our delegate.

Father James O'Hara was outstanding for his great apostolic zeal among the people he served wherever he went. He made plenty of friends and drew them close to Christ. During his stay at Nazareth House he was very sociable. He concelebrated Mass or assisted at Mass daily. When his health began to fail and he realized he would not improve, he was heard praying "I'm going home to Jesus." His wish was granted on the Wednesday of Holy Week.

The Salesians are grateful to the Sisters of Nazareth House for taking such good care of our dear Fr. James while in residence. From Heaven he will certainly look down with gratitude on their selfless sacrifices.

Fr. James O'Hara's body was transferred to Richmond, where he was interred in the Salesian cemetery among our Salesian pioneers.

My dear confreres, may I ask in your charity for a fraternal remembrance in your daily prayers for this confrere of ours who labored zealously to spread God's reign into the hearts of the many people that he touched by his preaching and wise counseling. I thank you.

Pray also for this Province that we may obtain from the Lord, the master of the harvest, many laborers filled with that apostolic zeal that yearned in the heart of Fr. James O'Hara.

Fraternally yours,
Mario Mich, SDB
Provincial Archivist



Father James P. O'Hara, SDB

Born: Kilmactigue, Ireland
January 21, 1908

Professed: Pallaskenry, Ireland
November 4, 1919

Ordained: Blaisdon, England
July 17, 1938

Died: Los Angeles, Ca., USA
April 11, 1990



Salesians of St. John Bosco

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