

FR. DAVID O'SULLIVAN. SDB.

After a long illness, Fr. David was called to his reward on the 15th October 1964. His death occurred at Milford House, where he had been a patient for a long time. Fr. Provincial, who was at Burwash at the time, left immediately for Ireland and was in time to receive the remains on their arrival from the Nursing Home. There was a lengthy cortège of cars all the way to Pallaskenry. At the entrance to the village, the boys of both colleges, together with the confreres in cassock and cotta and with lighted torches and candles, led the procession through the village to the college chapel. Matins of the dead was then recited. Throughout the evening a group of boys formed a guard of honour around the coffin. Next morning a solemn Requiem Mass was sung by Fr. Provincial, at the conclusion of which he gave the panegyric. Among the clergy on the sanctuary was Mgr. Moloney V. G. who himself was to be called to eternity within a week, the victim of a car crash.

Fr. David was born in Ballinvullen, Co. Limerick on the 31st December 1895. At the age of 34 he decided to try his vocation as a priest and he decided to join the Salesian Congregation. He travelled to England and began his preparation for the religious life and priesthood at the Salesian House, Cowley, Oxford. After three years as an aspirant there he began his Novitiate year in September 1933 and made his first religious profession in September 1934. He then started his philosophical studies before moving to the Salesian Community at Blaisdon, Gloucestershire where he was asked to take charge of the large farm and supervise the boys who worked there. Fr. David was an experienced farm manager, having a number of agricultural qualifications. In 1938, David started to study theology at Blaisdon – the theologate having recently been transferred there.

Fr. David was ordained at Blaisdon in June 1942 by Bishop Lee of Clifton. He was then asked to stay at Blaisdon as Prefect of the house and also in charge of the farm. In 1947 he was asked to go back to Ireland – to Pallaskenry as Farm manager and in charge of the agricultural students. In 1955 Fr. David had to give up his good work with the agricultural students on account of ill-health. He continued his apostolate as the main confessor in the house for about two years but then, as his health further deteriorated he went into a Nursing home – Milford House – and he remained there until he died on the 15th October 1964 aged 68

What can we say was the chief characteristic of this good priest? It was his great concern for others. He was endowed by God with a gentle disposition, with unfailing courtesy, with great tact and understanding: qualities which made him accessible to all. Anyone could approach him and be assured of a sympathetic reception. He was greatly sought after as a confessor by people in all walks of life – priests and religious, the illiterate and poor – and in fact he preached several retreats to the gypsies and wandering people of Ireland. They loved him because they knew instinctively that he loved them.

One of those who had to sum up his character before his ordination wrote of him. "He has only one fault, if it can be called a fault – he is too kind, and people may take advantage of him." Thank God, this was a fault that was never corrected.

Please God, his soul is in heaven, but let us not forget to give him the charity of our prayers. Let his epitaph be that he kept the great commandments of the law, for truly, he loved God with all his heart and he loved his neighbour as himself.

May his good soul rest in peace.