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Co. Laois.
Ireland.

August 1978



It is with deep regret that I inform you of the death of our dear confrere Brother Patrick Quinlan who died suddenly on 28th November, 1977.

Patrick Quinlan was born in Ballyporeen, near Caher, Co. Tipperary on 3rd January, 1897 in the peaceful shadow of the Knockmealdown Mountains. Little is recorded of his early life but he worked on the family farm and acquired a knowledge and experience which was to be of inestimable value in his work as a Salesian brother later on.

He came to the Salesians as a Son of Mary at the age of 38 in 1935 and spent a year at the school at Blaisdon before starting his novitiate at Cowley, Oxford. He was one of the Novices who pioneered the new Novitiate at Beckford and he made his first profession there in September 1937.

He spent the next four years on the staff of the Agricultural College at Warrenstown and when the war-time Novitiate was opened at Ballinakill he came here to take charge of the farm attached to it. As a solemn introduction to what was to be his life work he pronounced his perpetual vows in Pallaskenry a few days beforehand.

The next 36 years were to be spent here. He came to a farm that had been long neglected (the property had been unoccupied for years) and he set it on its feet and brought order into the chaos of derelict farm buildings. It can well be said that the present thriving farm is a monument to his hard work and to his knowledge of his craft. He cleared land and brought it to productivity at a time when machinery was not the common thing it is nowadays and he wrung fertility from the soil by sheer hard labour. And so he continued until about four years ago when a fall from his bicycle resulted in a broken hip. He was forced to abandon active work on the farm but he could not really change his way of life; work on the land in some form or other was an essential ingredient in his life and so he took to digging the vegetable garden. It was a pleasure to watch him at this; even though he was then in late seventies he had a deceptively easy action which accomplished much with little apparent effort.

However, the long years of back-breaking work did take their toll and early in 1977 there were one or two incidents of heart strain; in the words of the doctor, the heart was merely showing signs of the fair wear and tear of a life-time of hard work. The end, nevertheless, was completely unexpected and drastically sudden when it came. As he was standing in the community refectory with two or three others waiting for the community to assemble for lunch on Monday, 28th November, he fell to the ground and died within a couple of minutes.

The funeral Mass in the parish church of Ballinakill, was concelebrated by many Salesians, some of whom he had known as boys as they passed through Ballinakill, and the church was packed by a large gathering of relatives and friends from the locality who had learned to know and esteem Br. Pat over the long years as a valued counsellor in farming matters and one who was never known to refuse a call for help. Afterwards he was brought to the little college cemetery to continue in eternity his life-long association with Ballinakill.

The Salesians ideal of work being our prayer was exemplified in him to a marked degree --- he couldn't stop working and by its dedication and skill the work was a hymn of praise. Of course, he prayed actually, also; indeed in his days of retirement, one wonders how many rosaries he said in church. Certainly, he was a familiar sight there with his rosary in his hands. St. John Bosco promised his Salesians "Work, Bread, and Heaven"; Br. Pat indeed had the first two. We hope that Don Bosco will have helped him to gain the third but we ask the prayers of all for the happy repose of his soul.

C. J. Archer S.D.B.
Rector.

