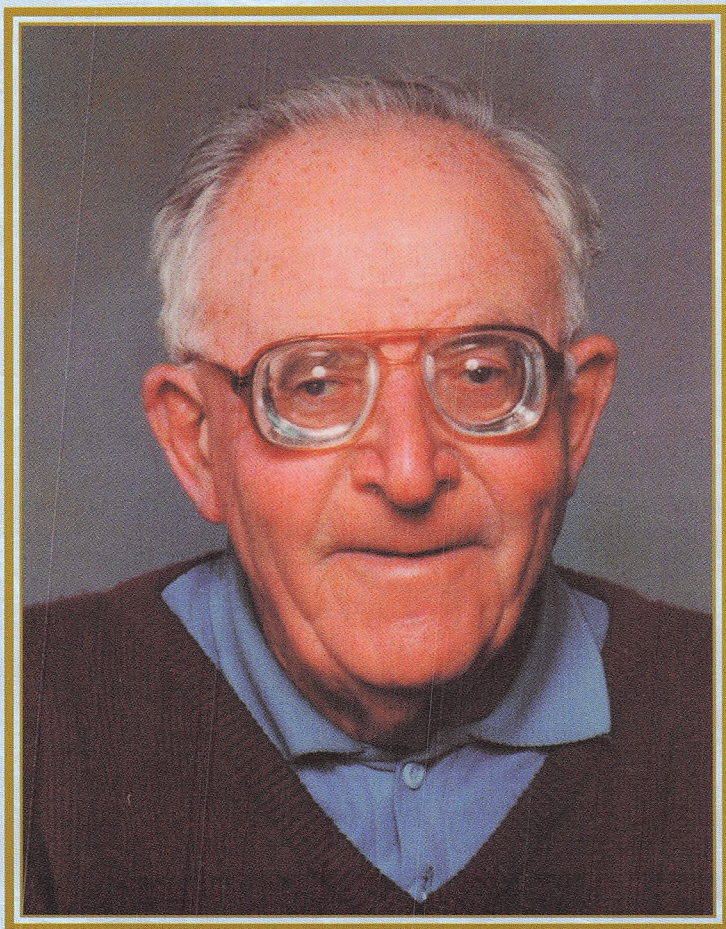


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## **Brother Herbert Josiah Schutz**

Born: 25 September 1923, Burra, South Australia  
First Profession: 31 January 1946, Sunbury, Victoria  
Perpetual Profession: 31 January 1952, Sunbury, Victoria  
Entered Eternal Life: 14 October 2002, Brooklyn Park, South Australia



## Brother Herbert Schutz SDB (1923-2002)

*"Well done, good and faithful servant,  
come and enjoy what the Lord has prepared for you!"*

Brother Herbert Schutz's life is one of faithful service in the vineyard of the Lord and among his brother Salesians. He served them with a simple and loyal heart, a selfless and loving attitude, and a friendly and welcoming outlook to all with whom he came into contact. Most of our memories of Herbert recall his simplicity, his obedience, and his loving service with others and for others.

On 18 October 2002, Brother Herbert Schutz died peacefully in his room after finishing his breakfast and talking to his brother, Gilbert, on the phone. He passed away in the same unassuming and quiet way as he lived his life. He was seventy-nine.

Brother Herbert Schutz was born in Burra, in the mid-north of South Australia, on 25 September 1923. He was the fourth of five sons of Edgar and Elsie Schutz. His father was employed by the district council and worked as a labourer and miner in Western Australia as a young man. Herbert was baptised in St. Joseph's Church and grew up in Burra. In 1936 he was confirmed in St. Joseph's church by the then Bishop of Port Augusta, Norman Gilroy.

According to the recollections of his brothers Jack and Keith, there were a number of factors that influenced Herbert to enter into religious life. Firstly, he was a man of simplicity and he never saw the acquisition of material things as being of any importance to his life goal and achievement. Furthermore, in 1938, two Redemptorist priests, Father Green and Father Packer came to St. Joseph's church to preach a retreat on vocation, which strongly influenced him. Advertisements had been placed in the *Messenger of the Sacred Heart* as part of a recruitment by the Brothers of St. John the Baptist, a community founded by Monsignor Healy. Herbert successfully applied to join their juniorate. After that he went on to the novitiate. As a Brother of St. John the Baptist, he took the name of Brother Benedict. He was a professed member of the Institute for two years.

In their fifty years of existence, the Brothers of St. John the Baptist had established a parish school at Thebarton, and a reformatory and shelter for homeless men at Brooklyn Park. A pattern of declining numbers in the reformatory and the shelter for homeless men saw both works absorbed into a new senior boys orphanage for the Archdiocese of Adelaide, which opened in 1941 and was known as Boys Town. The Brothers of St. John the Baptist were asked to run this new orphanage at Brooklyn Park. They were also asked to extend the parish school at Thebarton in order to provide a technical education for Catholic boys. Stresses and strains, internal and external, continued to increase. New recruits were few, and not all stayed.



In 1942, Archbishop Beovich made the difficult decision to close down the Diocesan Institute of the Brothers of St. John the Baptist, and invited the Salesians to take over the orphanage at Boys Town. At this point, Herbert found himself at the crossroads, having to make his life's choice all over again. He was one of three Brothers of St. John the Baptist who decided to try out their vocation with the Salesians. When he was interviewed years later, the reason Herbert gave for his decision was that he saw no future for the Institute. While he might not have been one to talk the talk about vocational discernment, Herbert was certainly one who walked the walk.

Herbert served his aspirantate with the Salesians in 1943 and 1944, and during that time his solid religious virtues were recognised by Father John Biloni, who supported his application for admission to the novitiate. Herbert went to Rupertswood for the novitiate in 1945 and made his first profession as Salesian in 1946. Three years later, when the time came to renew his vows, he wrote, "My only regret has been my past shortcomings but beginning from now I will try and live better the true Salesian life and better my devotion to Mary. The past three years have been very happy ones for me both spiritual and otherwise." Every day Herbert renewed his religious life, faithfully practising his vows. He also had a great devotion to Our Lady, and he said his Rosary daily without fail at 4:30pm with a group of parishioners.

Herbert spent from 1946 to 1951 at Brooklyn Park, where his vegetable garden helped to support Boys Town by putting food in mouths and reducing the bills at a time when both food and money were in short supply. His duties also included looking after the community library and assisting the boys.

In 1951 Herbert began twenty years of solid hard work at Rupertswood, which included assistance and helping out on the farm. When the agricultural course was introduced at Rupertswood, Herbert was asked to look after the vegetable garden as part of the curriculum. The Salesian cemetery at Rupertswood was established in the same year as the Melbourne Olympics, and when it came to the back-breaking work of digging graves for the new cemetery, Herbert was a contender for the gold medal. He went on to become the official grave digger for many years, with a reputation for ensuring a smooth passage of the coffin to its final resting place, hardly surprising in the light of the admission he made about one of his graves, "I lay down in it and tried it for size!"

When Herbert returned to Brooklyn Park in 1970 his duties included those of linenarian, infirmarian, gardener, and groundsman at Salesian College. These were the years before pop-up sprinklers, and the green belt clearly visible from the air until a few years ago was a tribute to Herbert's round the clock manual work, changing untold numbers of cumbersome aluminium pipes. He got up at 4:30am and started his duties. The task of putting out Safety Sallies in Lipsett Terrace was one that Herbert embraced with zeal. No one ever had to worry that they weren't out early enough. To this day, a peculiarly South Australian monument to Herbert Schutz can be seen in Lipsett Terrace outside St. John Bosco Church: painted on the stobie pole is a colourful Safety Sal.







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Herbert was a man for all seasons. He was a holy and humble man, quiet and unassuming, and never liked to be in the limelight. He was faithful to his religious commitments such as daily Eucharist and Rosary, Meditation and Morning Prayer, Spiritual Reading and Evening Prayer, and to his daily commitment. He was a kind and caring person to his brothers and their families, the Salesians, and all the people with whom he came in contact, such as pupils, parents, teachers, parishioners, neighbours, and friends. At the Farewell Mass at Brooklyn Park, the church was packed. They all came to say farewell to a good, faithful, holy and selfless man. They shared many fine memories of Herbert's great but simple caring services as he catered for the needs of others. They ranged from simply collecting pine cones for their home kindling in winter, saving bottle corks for the kindergarten children for arts and recreation, gathering newspapers and bottles for the Salesian Missions, to a heroic act of saving one young boy from drowning in the creek at Sunbury, Victoria, and many more.

Until old age and sickness began to take their toll, Herbert liked to demonstrate his ability to memorise and repeat names and addresses of scores of people in the neighbourhood of Brooklyn Park and families whose children went to the College. Words seemed to fascinate him; one or two were enough to set him off where a favourite riddle was concerned. He loved a good yarn and a sherrbert or two, and always enjoyed company. Many have good reason to remember Herbert affectionately and gratefully for his readiness to answer the phone and to show visitors their room with a great sense of hospitality.

In 1996, Herbert's Golden Jubilee of Profession as a Salesian was celebrated in the community with a Eucharist and dinner (his four surviving brothers Jack, Gilbert, Walter and Keith were among the guests), and in St. John Bosco Parish with an evening Mass and barbecue.

In the last few years he suffered from severe arthritis. Yet he continued to offer himself to help out in gardening, in washing, in cleaning, and in setting out the table. His basic attitude of life was one of obedience and one of service to others: "Can I be of any help to you?" He often did not think about himself. Because of his bad arthritis in his back, he would do something for others and with others, and bend his back in doing so and suffered as a result.

At the Requiem Mass at Rupertswood, Father Ian Murdoch, the Provincial, said: "I have no hesitation in declaring Herbert Schutz a legend of the Province and inducting him into our Salesian Hall of Fame". At the Farewell Mass at Brooklyn Park, Father Kelly Kam, the Rector of the Community, said: "Well done, Herbert, you have lived your life as a shining example for us to follow. Your life is the sermon. Thank you for your life-long services and thank you for being you. Good and faithful servant, come and enjoy what the Lord has prepared for you!"

Kelly Kam SDB  
Salesian Community, Brooklyn Park, South Australia

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