

FATHER PATRICK SHERLOCK. S. D. B.

Fr. Patrick Sherlock died in the County Hospital, Portlaoise on the 23rd December 1981. He had reached the ripe old age of eighty – eight, and had been a member of the Ballinakill community for twelve years. He was a most orderly man who paid great attention to detail. This can be seen from the following biographical notes which he himself prepared for his mortuary letter. "Born in Dublin on August 16th 1893. Went to Malta as an aspirant in 1908. Then to Turin to finish his aspirantship. Made his novitiate in Burwash in 1912–13. Back to Malta where he was ordained in 1922. His was a varied career; Parish priest of a French parish in Guernsey; Army chaplain in England; chaplain to the Salesian Sisters in Henley and in Colne; taught Latin, French, Italian, and Spanish in various colleges in England and Ireland; confessor in a college in Belgium and France; taught Canon Law and Moral Theology."

Fr. Sherlock also left instructions about his anointing, the prayers to be said at his death, the friends to be notified. He requested that there be no panegyric, no memorial cards and a poor man's coffin. His notes conclude.. "So passes the glory of the world. I thank all for their kindness to me. I thank Bro. Pat Mahony for helping to keep my body and soul together so long and for serving my Mass. I ask pardon of all whom I may have offended." Fr. Sherlock was a holy man, devout, humble, strict with himself in all things. He had a sense of humour all his own. He loved community life and he liked to reminisce. He suffered from poor health for many years but managed to join in the life of the community until the very end. He was still teaching up to three or four years before his death and worked at the translation of Salesian literature up to the last few weeks.

On November 5th, he celebrated the 59th anniversary of his priestly ordination. He gave a little speech at supper that evening – a practice run, he said, for his diamond jubilee. Alas it was not to be. He fell ill shortly after the feast of the Immaculate Conception. He found it very hard to eat and became very weak. On December 19th he was taken to Portlaoise General hospital where he was very well cared for by the Sisters, Doctors and nurses. He was anointed the following day and, although he continued to weaken it still came as a shock when the hospital authorities phoned about 3.30. a. m. on December the 23rd to say that he was sinking fast. He was already dead when two of his confreres arrived some thirty minutes later. After concelebrated Requiem Mass on Christmas Eve, Fr. Patrick was laid to rest in the small community cemetery in Ballinakill. Amongst the funeral congregation were many Salesians and friends of the house as well as his own relatives and friends, and a particularly large number of Salesian Sisters, whom he loved so much and with whom he worked for many years. May the memory of this saintly man be an inspiration to all of us. Please pray for the happy repose of his soul and for the confreres of this house.

Michael Smyth. S. D. B. (Rector)