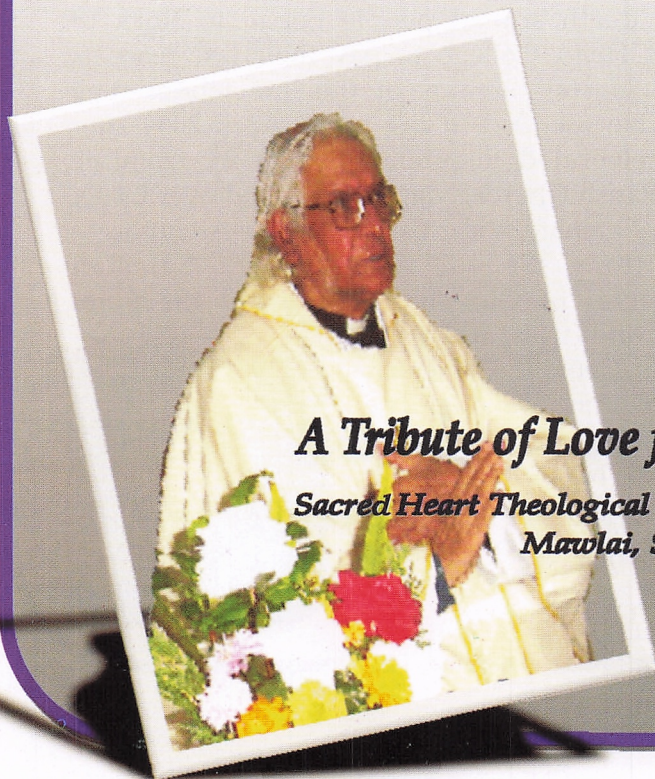




**FR. HAROLD J. SHRIEVES, SDB**

**( 1924 - 2009 )**



***A Tribute of Love from...***

***Sacred Heart Theological College,  
Mawlai, Shillong***

## FR. HAROLD JOSEPH SHRIEVES SDB (1924-2009)

'Loved ones, our brothers and sisters, at their death, don't go away; but they go before us'. Fr. Harold Joseph Shrieves, after 85 years of his pilgrim journey on this earth, had been called to eternity on 16 April 2009 at 2.40pm at Nazareth Hospital, Shillong. Indeed, for the community of Sacred Heart College the passing away of Fr. Harold created an irreplaceable vacuum. He had been in the community since 1979. As the news of his death spread people began to flock to Sacred Heart College to pay their last respects to the mortal remains of the one whom they loved. He was laid to rest on 18 April 2009 after a concelebrated Requiem Mass at St. Dominic Savio Parish Church, Mawlai, presided over by Fr. Hilarius Lamare, Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Shillong. Fr. Joe Almeida, the Salesian Provincial of Guwahati conducted the Final Commendation after the Mass at Catholic Cemetery, Laitumkhrah, Shillong. The funeral cortege from Mawlai to Laitumkhrah was a grateful farewell to a faithful son of Don Bosco.



### • *Early life...*

Fr. Harold was born to Joseph Walter and Josephine Irwin in Tatanagar, Bihar, on 21 November 1924 as the last born of 21 children. Harry grew up in a strict Catholic family setting. The pious parents and the loving family atmosphere sowed the seeds of religious vocation in him at a tender age. He made his novitiate in Shillong, and professed on 6 January 1947. He pursued his philosophical studies at Sonada from 1947 to 1950. He did his Practical Training in Sonada (1951-52) and Liluah (1953-54). He made his final profession on 7 December 1952. He did his theological studies at Sacred Heart Theological College, Mawlai, Shillong from 1954-57. He was ordained a priest on 8 December 1957 in Shillong.

### • *Priestly Ministry...*

Fr. Harold's first appointment as a newly ordained priest was at Sonada as Catechist for three years upto 1961. From 1961 to 1979 he served in different parishes of Northeast India, mostly as Assistant Parish Priest. Some of the Parishes were the Cathedral



Parish, Dibrugarh (1961-63), Doom Dooma (1963-67), Jorhat (1967-68), Golaghat (1968-71) and Mawlai (1971-73). He served as acting Parish Priest of Upper Shillong for eight months from December 1973 to August 1974. He continued to serve as Assistant Parish Priest in the parishes of Mawkhar (1974-75) and Umsohlait (1975-79). From 1979 Fr. Harold made Sacred Heart Theological College his home till he was called to his eternal home on 16 April 2009.

- *Missionary Zeal...*

Fr. Harold had a passion for the Missions and was creative in his missionary endeavours. He was best known for his catechetical instructions making use of audio-visual aids. This was his passion all through his priestly life. He had a large collection of audio-visual programmes for religious instructions in the villages. He sought financial help from his relatives, friends and benefactors for one thing, i.e. to update himself with audio-visual equipments for the missionary work. Normally he would allot two days for a programme in a village. There would be a retreat that began in the evening and ended on the following morning. The retreat included instruction, catechesis, administration of the sacraments of baptism and reconciliation and the

celebration of the Holy Eucharist. He frequently made use of audio-visual aids for instruction. The audio-visual programmes consisted of films on Jesus Christ and the Saints, but they would start with comedies of Charlie Chaplin and the like.

On returning from mission stations he would spend time in dubbing or recording the films. He dubbed many religious films into local languages. When he was at Sacred Heart College, he converted a number of video films into CDs with the help of the brothers. He showed immense love for the Northeast and its people, whom he served almost all his life. Once, while visiting Colle Don Bosco, he wrote expressing his disappointment noticing that the Northeast was not represented sufficiently in the Colle Don Bosco museum. He wanted the Provincial to do something about it.

We can see the priestly enthusiasm of Fr. Harold when in the last year of his quinquennium he wrote: "...from now on I could really enjoy my theology by plenty of good reading instead of being confined to my old text books which gave me the

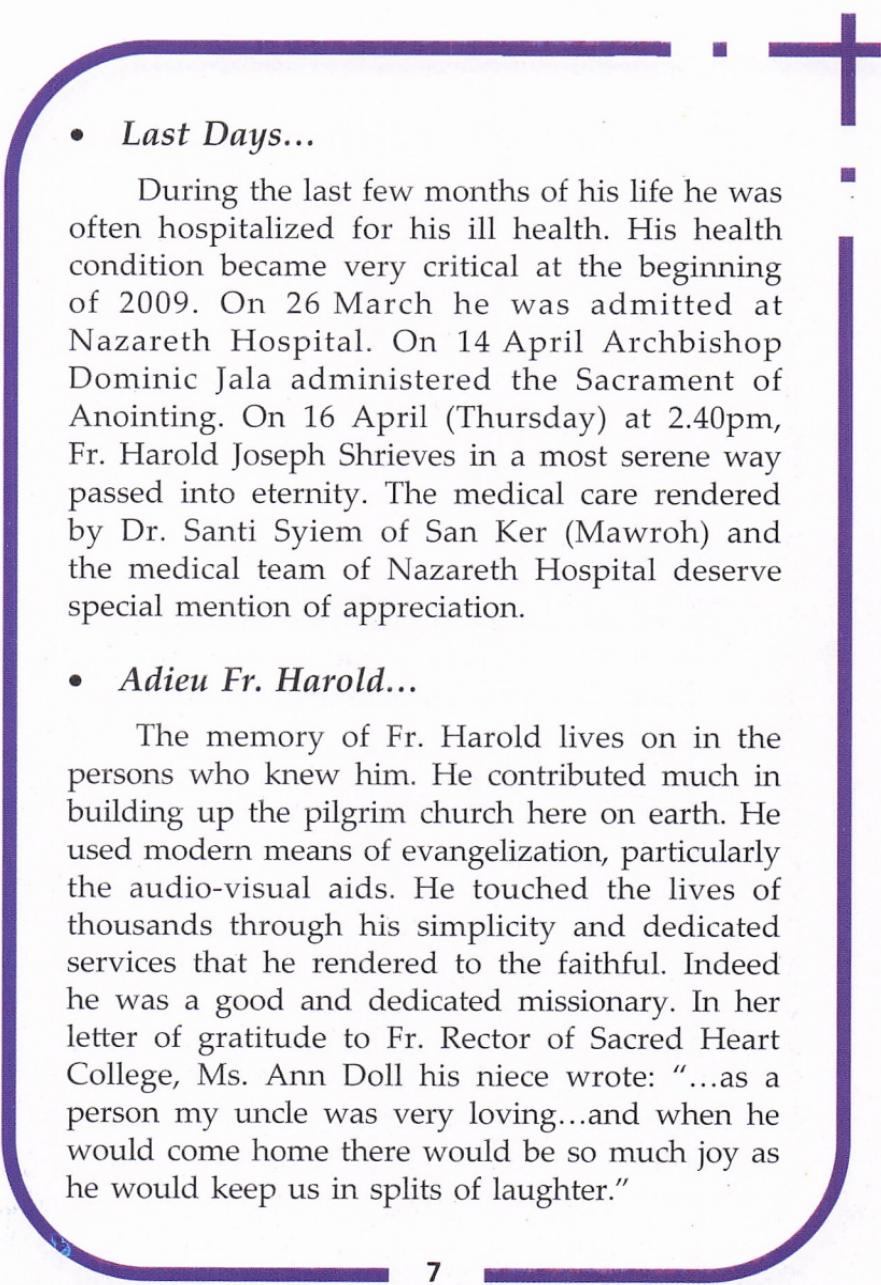


key: but now I see that the text books are still haunting me." Fr. Harold always spoke of our blessed Mother, whether in his homilies or in the good night talks. He would say that he owed a lot to her. He sought her intercession and the prayers of the confreres, especially when he or his family faced difficulties.

The priestly zeal manifested most concretely whenever someone approached him requesting the Sacrament of Anointing and Holy Communion for the sick. Fr. Harold would forget all his tiredness and schedule; within no time he would be at the side of the sick.

- *Special love for Children and Young...*

Fr. Harold had a special love for children and the young. Whenever he saw a group of children outside his room, he would throw sweets out of the window and create a melee. He was happy to see the kids enjoying these fun-moments. Later, not only the children but the theology students also were looking forward to such moments of fun. He would spend quite a bit of the contribution from his benefactors for the purchase of medals and rosaries to distribute among the villagers, especially for the children.



- *Last Days...*

During the last few months of his life he was often hospitalized for his ill health. His health condition became very critical at the beginning of 2009. On 26 March he was admitted at Nazareth Hospital. On 14 April Archbishop Dominic Jala administered the Sacrament of Anointing. On 16 April (Thursday) at 2.40pm, Fr. Harold Joseph Shrieves in a most serene way passed into eternity. The medical care rendered by Dr. Santi Syiem of San Ker (Mawroh) and the medical team of Nazareth Hospital deserve special mention of appreciation.

- *Adieu Fr. Harold...*

The memory of Fr. Harold lives on in the persons who knew him. He contributed much in building up the pilgrim church here on earth. He used modern means of evangelization, particularly the audio-visual aids. He touched the lives of thousands through his simplicity and dedicated services that he rendered to the faithful. Indeed he was a good and dedicated missionary. In her letter of gratitude to Fr. Rector of Sacred Heart College, Ms. Ann Doll his niece wrote: "...as a person my uncle was very loving...and when he would come home there would be so much joy as he would keep us in splits of laughter."

*Our beloved Fr. Harold is no more,  
In peace he reached the Beatitudes' shore  
Where death has no more power;  
In place where souls are joyful every hour.  
"Adieu" – peaceful rest, for thee we pray,  
May thy soul in Paradise make hay!*



**FOR NECROLOGY –**

<b>Born</b>	<b>: 21.11.1924</b>
<b>Professed</b>	<b>: 06.01.1947</b>
<b>Ordination</b>	<b>: 08.12.1957</b>
<b>Died</b>	<b>: 16.04.2009</b>

**Fr. George Maliekal SDB (Rector)  
Sacred Heart Theological College, Shillong**