

FATHER WILLIAM ERIC TAIT. S. D. B.

Fr. William was born on the 13th March 1906 in Newcastle-on-Tyne.

He went as a boy to the Salesian College at Battersea in September 1923 and he spent a year there as a pupil before he eventually decided to ask to join the Congregation. He began his novitiate year at Cowley, Oxford in 1924 and, after successfully completing the year, he made his first temporary profession in 1925. He then stayed on at Cowley as a student of Philosophy and he became the novices' assistant there in 1927.

In 1929 he moved to Shrigley to do some teaching and in 1930 he went to the Sacro Cuore in Rome to do his theological studies. He was ordained a priest in Southwark on the 15th August 1933, and he obtained his Baccalaureate in Canon Law and his Licenciata in Theology from the Gregorianum in 1934. He then returned to Shrigley as a teacher, becoming Catechist there in 1935. On his return to England he went to the studentate at Oxford and helped to teach the students there. In 1938 he became the Rector of the community, which at that time consisted of about forty students of Philosophy, thirty aspirants and about six students attending the University. Fr. Tait was also asked to take on the role of Vocations promoter in England and Ireland.

In 1940 he moved on to Blaisdon to teach theology and in March of that same year he was appointed confessor as well and was placed in charge of the parish. In September 1941 he joined the R. A. F. as a chaplain and spent many difficult war and post-war years in that job until his demobilisation in June 1949.

In September 1949 he went to Daleside (South Africa) and in May of the following year moved to Lansdowne as the priest in charge of the parish and the confessor for the community and the boys.

In 1956 he became the Parish Priest in Johannesburg and three years later he moved to Daleside as the bursar. In 1960 he went to Manzini (Swaziland) as bursar for a year.

He remained in Manzini as a teacher and confessor until 1947 when he was made parish priest of Lyttleton. There he worked hard to build up the parish and minister to his people until he could no longer do so, due to failing health. He died in the Holy Family Hospital in Johannesburg on the 28th January 1978.

Right up to his death Fr. Tait continued to work on behalf of his parishioners at Lyttleton (Pretoria) and they, in their turn, were equally good to him during his final illness. He was much loved and respected by his people at Lyttleton and he will be sadly missed by both confreres and friends.

May he rest in peace. Amen.