

Salesians of St. John Bosco



Salesian House,
Surrey Lane,
Battersea,
London SW11 3PB

October 1985

Dear Confrères and Friends,

BROTHER REGINALD WILKINSON S.D.B.

On Sunday morning, the 4th August 1985, at our Salesian house at Battersea, God called to himself the soul of Bro. Reginald at the age of 83 years.

Bro. Reginald had been admitted to Putney hospital about two months previously and he was later discharged as it became clear that he was suffering from incurable cancer. The hospital authorities readily agreed to take Bro. Reginald back again when he became in greater need of help, but Bro. Reginald later expressed the wish that he should die at home. He received the Last Sacraments and Holy Communion for as long as he was able to do so. He was very patient and grateful for any help offered during his last difficult days.

Born in Bedford, Leigh, Lancs on the 9th December 1901, and baptised in his home parish of St. Joseph's at Leigh, he first made contact with the Salesians in the mid-nineteen-twenties and he was admitted to the novitiate, which was then at Oxford, on the 26th September 1926. He then made his first religious profession on the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes 1928 and his final profession at Warrenstown, Co. Meath, Ireland on the 24th September 1933. From 1928-31 he attended a technical training course at Liege, Belgium and, whilst gaining his qualifications in that discipline, he was, at the same time, helping the younger students at the Salesian College there. He was eventually fully qualified and later, in England, he obtained the City and Guilds certificate in building. There is much evidence of his good work in many of our houses in England, Ireland and Overseas.

From 1931-35 Bro. Reginald was in Ireland at the Salesian Agricultural College, Warrenstown. The college was then in its infancy, and he was engaged in a variety of works connected with engineering, farming and building. From 1935-37, he was stationed at Blaisdon, Gloucestershire at the Salesian School for deprived youngsters, and from 1937-43 at the Salesian Missionary College, Shrigley, Cheshire, working on tasks of a similar kind. A period of five years at Battersea followed, and here his skills were much in demand before and after the return of the school, which had been evacuated to Oxford at the beginning of the war.

In 1948 and for the next eighteen years Bro. Reginald used his skills working with Salesians in mission areas in India and Africa. He began at Tirupattur in the Madras Province. From 1953 he was working at Panjim, Goa and from 1956 at Negombo, Sri Lanka. In 1958 he was asked to go to Africa and he worked with the Salesians at Manzini (Swaziland) from 1958-9, at Johannesburg from 1959-60, and at Daleside from 1960-66.

Two of Bro. Reginald's sisters were also members of religious congregations. One of them, Sister Joseph O.P. was shot and killed whilst working at the Chishawasha mission in Zimbabwe in 1977.

In 1966, Bro. Reginald returned to England and to the house at Battersea where he was to spend the rest of his ever active life. His mortal remains were brought to the College chapel on Wednesday, 7th August and the Concelebrated Requiem Mass, attended by many Salesians, relatives and friends, was offered on the following day. The burial followed in the Salesian plot at Morden cemetery.

Please pray that the soul of this good and faithful Salesian may now be at peace with God in Heaven. Pray also for the Battersea community.

Yours sincerely in Don Bosco,
Bernard Higgins, S.D.B.,
(Rector)

Data for the Necrology: Bro. Reginald Wilkinson born in Leigh, Lancashire on the 9th December 1901. Died in London on the 4th August 1985 at the age of 83 after 57 years of religious profession.

R.I.P.