

My dear Confreres,

For the first time this house was visited by the Angel of death on 25th April 1975 calling to his eternal reward

Rev. Fr. ERNEST ZANON

at the age of 69 :

Fr. Zanon hardly ever complained of any indisposition and was always a picture of health. Feeling a general weakness, he approached a certain specialist, Dr. Mitra, a great friend of the Salesian Fathers and Sisters ; he underwent a thorough check up of the heart and lungs and was declared to be in normal health. However, gradually Fr. Zanon began to lose appetite and kept on becoming weaker and weaker, whereupon the house doctor advised us to have him taken to another specialist. A number of X'rays proved beyond doubt that Fr. Zanon by now was in the last stages of a cancer of the stomach which had already affected even his liver. The advice of the specialist was to perform an operation as soon as possible. This was done by one of the most famed surgeons in Calcutta, Dr. S. K. Agarwal. The result of the operation was only to prolong his life for about a month, as the doctor himself put it. In fact, Fr. Zanon lived for over two months more after the operation from 10th February 1975 till 25th April 1975,



Born at San Vito al Tagliamento
(Udine—Italy)
on 23.8.1905
Died in Calcutta (India)
on 25.4.1975



thanks to the most loving and dedicated attention given to him by the Sisters of Mary Immaculate, the Confreres of Don Bosco, Park Circus, the Sisters of 'Nazarethville' and the Salesian Sisters of Park Circus. True to his nature, knowing well that his days were numbered, Fr. Zanon lived his last days without any anxiety. The orderly life that he always lived saw him most ready and prepared him to take the final step towards his eternal Home in Heaven.

Father Zanon was born at San Vito al Tagliamento, Udine (Italy) on 23rd August 1905. It was a region that produced a number of vocations to the priesthood. He did his aspirantate at Ivrea and came out to India as a member of the group of the Golden Jubilee Year of the Salesian Missions. Fr. S. Ferrando, his Novice Master, who later became Bishop of Shillong, testifies that Bro. Zanon was most regular in all his varied activities—'a good and faithful servant' and possessed a soul 'without guile'.

He was assistant of the Novices. After completing his theological studies he was ordained priest on 7th July 1934. About 30 years of his apostolic life was spent in Assam—Gauhati, Tura, Barpeta, Tangla and Dibrugarh. He was a pioneer Missionary who worked with great dedication, undergoing many sacrifices for the good of the people.

As a young priest, he did pioneering work, at Tura among the Garos. He overcame the handicaps of the language with the help of the Catechist. Fr. Zanon worked with great zeal from 1940 to 1953 at Barpeta with a short break of 7 months as prefect at Sonada. Shortly before his death he told one of his confreres that this obedience to Sonada was the most difficult one of his life. But he also added that he was happy to have obeyed. Because of his zeal Barpeta witnessed a number of improvements. The Church gained considerably in numbers. He opened a boarding school for the boys who whilst attending the Parochial School, were trained to work more efficiently on the farm. Once again he was the pioneer to start the Apostolate among the Boro tribe which today thanks to his zeal is a flourishing Catholic community.

From 1953 to 1959 we see Father Zanon as the Rector and Parish Priest at Gauhati. Here is a testimony of one of his confreres who lived with him all those 6 years. "I was alongside of him all the six years as Headmaster and Assistant Parish Priest. He was always kind with the boys. We had over one hundred and fifty boarders. He never dismissed a boy except for something very serious. He would always pardon and give a young boy a chance to amend himself. He trained us priests to have a pastoral sense, in



liturgical functions, in preaching and in visiting families. Regarding poverty he never allowed anybody to waste anything. He kept a watchful eye on the account book and kept the house out of the red. In those days it was customary for the Rector to be prefect as well. He was a born prefect and economer. He was not stingy but he tolerated no waste and personally supervised what was spent and how it was spent.

"I remember how the water supply for the house of Gauhati had been inadequate for years. Within his first year as Rector he arranged for a copious water supply. In the town of Gauhati he was always in good terms with the authorities. Some still remember him with affection. He stood by our Salesian Rules and kept a good Salesian Family spirit in the house. We could not see eye to eye regarding the solution of certain problems, yet if any misunderstanding arose, he would make up for it on the very same day. Never was he afraid to follow the view of another if he thought the other point of view was better. When after six years he was transferred to Dibrugarh, handing over the keys to his successor he said, 'Remember, you too will have to give up the keys one day'."

At Dibrugarh while nursing the small existing school he saw to the construction of a new big school.

With the Chinese attack on the northern borders, Fr. Zanon was sent to Calcutta in 1962. From 1962 to 1965 he was the Manager of the Catholic Orphan Press, attached to the Cathedral. For a period of about a year Fr. Zanon was in charge of the Parish of St. John Bosco at Liluah from where he went to New Delhi in 1966. In Delhi Fr. Zanon did a marvellous job in seeing to the construction of the Technical School Complex with the aid of Misereor. He sacrificed a lot of his time and energy in getting the land for the site and later in having the equipments for the workshops. His sheer simplicity and tenacity helped to break all barriers that stood in the way of obtaining the necessary permissions from the Government officials. While in Delhi he endeared himself to the community of the Sisters who are looking after the Holy Angels Nursing Home. He was their Chaplain.

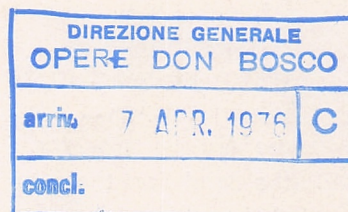
The final transfer came in June 1973 when Fr. Zanon was asked to come to this House of Liluah as the Parish Priest. We are told that this was a painful order but once again obedience got the better of him.



His last one year and a half as the Parish Priest of the Parish of St. John Bosco was a period of intense apostolate particularly among the Ranchi Christians who form the bulk of the Parish. Needless to say his regular and steady work for them brought about a certain rejuvenation in the Parish. Fr. Zanon was responsible to have the Sisters of Charity (Mother Teresa's) working in this Parish. He worked silently and unostentatiously till 4th February 1975 when he was literally forced to go to the hospital.

Dear Confreres, we have been praying for the repose of the soul of our dear Fr. Zanon. Let us continue to do so. In your charity please pray for this Institution particularly for this small parish and also for me,

Yours in Don Bosco,
(Fr. A. J. Sebastian)
Rector



NECROLOGY : Rev. Fr. Ernest Zanon, born at San Vito al Tagliamento (Udine—Italy) on 23.8.1905.

Died in Calcutta (India) on 25.4.1975 at the age of 69, 48 years of Religious life and 41 of Priesthood.