



Salesians of St. John Bosco

THORNLEIGH HOUSE
SHARPLES PARK
BOLTON BL1 6PQ



November 1988

Dear Confrères,

At about 10 a.m. on the morning of Sunday, 6th November 1988

FATHER GEORGE LOUIS BOLGER, S.D.B.

died peacefully at St. Mary's Nursing Home, Moston, Manchester.

George was born in Ancoats, Manchester on the 19th August 1897. He was baptised in St. Patrick's church and later attended the Parish school. After leaving school he showed a great interest in working with and for young people and he was an active worker and promoter of the Scout movement. He had also read about Don Bosco and he was so impressed with the way Don Bosco had dedicated his life to helping young people that he decided to apply to join the Salesian Congregation. He was professed as a Salesian in 1927 and then started his studies for the priesthood. In 1934, the year of Don Bosco's canonisation, he went to Turin, Italy and, after absorbing all the enthusiasm and excitement of that event, he was ordained in 1936, a month short of his 39th year. He had already spent three years in South Africa and he returned there immediately after his ordination, and he stayed there for the next 42 years.

During the war, his past work with young people and his Salesian experience made him an ideal choice for the apostolate of an Army chaplain. He was easily approachable and always ready to help. After the war, he was asked to take charge of the parish at Lansdowne, outside Capetown, and he remained there for the next four years. He then moved to Johannesburg to start a Working boys' hostel. He stayed there for nine years and the work he started there is still flourishing. He then moved to the parish of St. John Bosco, about two miles away. The parish didn't have a presbytery, so Fr. George stayed at the hostel and cycled around the parish every day. He remained in charge of the parish until he was over 70 years old.

About this time the Salesian Rector Major had been visiting several Salesian mission foundations in South America and, on his return, he asked the Provincials of the European provinces to stress the missionary aspect of the Congregation and allow more of their confrères to volunteer for work in South America.

Fr. George took up this challenge and began to study Portuguese privately, so that he could then go to Mosambique for a short time to get some practice in speaking the language, before eventually going to South America, if it was thought that he would be able to help there. The Mission Office thanked him for volunteering but suggested that it would be unwise to start a missionary career at his age.

In 1978, at the age of 81 and having worked in South Africa as a Salesian for 45 years, Fr. George returned to England. For nine more years he offered his priestly services in the spirit of Don Bosco, with the Salesian student community at Ushaw College, then he acted as residential chaplain at St. Cuthbert's hospital, Darlington, and, finally, as an assistant priest in the Salesian parish at Huyton, Liverpool. At the age of 90, as his health deteriorated, he joined the community at Bolton. In April this year the Alexian Brothers accepted him into their nursing home at Moston — a short distance from where he was born. He spent several peaceful months there until he died on the morning of the 6th November just before the Community Mass, during which prayers were said for the repose of his soul.

Fr. George's religious life was always worthy of the man; simple, unaffected, dedicated, and above all, a service of the warmest love. His remains were received into the Thornleigh chapel on Thursday, November 10th. Concelebrated Requiem Mass was offered on Friday, November 11th, at 12 noon, prior to the interment at St. Mary's Cemetery, Wardley, Manchester.

May God, our Father, through the intercession of Mary, Help of Christians and St. John Bosco, quickly grant him the reward of those who die in the Lord.

Fr. Michael Cunningham, S.D.B.

Data for Necrology: Father George Bolger. Born on August 19th 1897 in Manchester England. Died in Manchester on November 6th 1988, in the 92nd year of his age, the 52nd year of his sacred priesthood and the 61st year of his religious profession as a Salesian.

R.I.P.