

build a true family spirit in the parish of his beloved Corpus Christi. We shall never forget him. Father leaves two sisters, Sister Philomena Rinaldi and Filippina Rinaldi Mortara, both of Italy and numerous nephews and nieces, among them Sr. Mary Rinaldi, F.M.A. in the United States.

Yours in Don Bosco,

Rev. John Masiello, S.D.B.

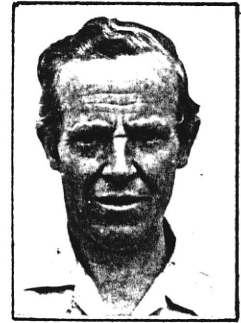
Pastor of Corpus Christi

Port Chester, New York



BROTHER JOHN BOYCE

Salesian of Don Bosco
1918-1994



Br John was born into a large Donegal family, at the end of the First World War, on the 1st September 1918, at Stranarva. He entered the Salesian novitiate at the start of the Second World War, in August 1939, joining another large family by his first vows as a Salesian. He worked in England for four years, then in Warrenstown (Ireland) for seven years, before being sent out "on the missions" to Lansdowne (Cape Town) for seven years. In 1958, he was transferred to the Transvaal and spent the rest of his life working at "Bosco" (Daleside/Randvaal).

Br John Boyce's wish was to die in his own bed at Bosco, which had been his home for 36 years. His wish was fulfilled and he died as he had lived:- peacefully, on the 26th May 94, at the age of 76, having been a Salesian Brother for 54 years. His cancer had only been diagnosed six months previously. When he was informed that he did not have much longer to live, he faced this reality bravely, accomplishing his daily tasks as if nothing was the matter, until the last few weeks when he grew too weak to perform the hundred and one little services he provided for the local community.

His whole life was spent in self-giving, especially towards those in any kind of need. It was probably because of this that he was able to surrender his life back to God without fear or hesitation when the time came for him to do so. Death seems to come more easily to those who have practised dying to themselves all through their life as Br John did. Despite the suffering caused by his cancer, this hardy but loveable little Donegal farmer never complained and remained more concerned about others than about himself, a feature that characterised his whole life. On a shelf in his room, was a plaque given to him by friends, with the inscription: *"I shall pass through this world but once. Any good therefore that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any human being, let me do it now. Let me not defer it or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again."* Br John obviously made this his personal motto, and the plaque was presented with the offertory gifts during the funeral mass, which was concelebrated by thirty priests.

Another significant item brought forward at the offertory, were jars of seeds that Br John collected in preparation for the next season's sowing. One of his great consolations in his last few months of life was the excellent rain season enabling him to produce a superb crop of vegetables in his "monastery" garden. Although he no longer could farm on a large scale he had the inveterate soul of the gardener who loves nature and delights in working the soil.

Br John also planted many other "seeds" - in the lives of people. He loved the poor, the needy, the troubled. Frequently, without breaking the need for confidentiality, he pointed out the special needs of a particular family who were short of a bit of cash, or were struggling with some or other problem and could do with a visit. He was the rector's field worker, the bursar's assistant and the community's PRO. For many he was the local vet; be it cattle, horses, cats, or dogs, he was always available to give good advice.

Few elderly people have the ability to feel at home among groups of young people. Br John was one of these, and he genuinely enjoyed the company of teenagers and children. The playground was his classroom: the marshmallows, spelling tests, the friendly presence, were his way into their hearts and an occasion for a timely word into their ear. He was always interested in their progress once they had left school and was delighted to welcome them back when they came for a visit.

This humble self-effacing Salesian was also full of fun, and was a favourite travelling companion for several of his confreres, who have many amusing anecdotes to recount. On one of his early boat trips from Europe, he won the first prize at the traditional fancy dress parade on crossing the equator. There is still a photograph to prove it: himself "dressed as St Patrick with a makeshift costume and three balloons in

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The size of the crowd attending his funeral animated with multi-lingual song, was evidence to the affectionate esteem with which Br John was held in the local area. He had a gift for languages, and having spent 41 years in South Africa he was able to communicate with any language group. He also never forgot his native Gaelic tongue, which he enjoyed practicing at any opportunity. The church was not able to hold the large congregation who came to bid him farewell. He seemed to know everybody in the locality, and judging by the many names he was affectionately called, he was a familiar figure to all, black and white alike, catholic or not. The leprechaun of Daleside, Maposti (the postman), Mapotapota (the one who is seen all over the place, always on the move), Brother John Farmer, Br Marshy, the Sweet-Brother, are all names by which he will continue to be remembered.

With Br John a whole slice of Bosco is buried, and he leaves a large gap in the community. He was our link with some of the very first friends and benefactors of the school. Someone once referred to him as Brother John Bosco, thinking that he was in fact the founder of the college. But it was more than just his name that resembled the founder of the Salesians. He certainly was a worthy disciple of John Bosco, sharing the saint's down-to-earth spirituality. He leaves us with a great example of dedication and faithfulness to the Salesian spirit.

We thank the Lord and the Boyce family for the gift John was to us, and we gratefully offer this gift back to God. "Ar deis De go raib t'anam".

Frs Pat Naughton, Jeff Johnson and Francois Dufour.

For the Necrology: Br John Boyce, born at Stranarva, Ireland on the 01/09/1918, worked in Salesian Houses in England, Ireland and South Africa; died in Bosco House, Randvaal, on the 26/05/1994 in the 54th year of religious profession.

