

BRENNAN Joseph



Salesian House,  
St. Teresa's Road,  
Crumlin,  
Dublin 12.

August 15th., 2002.

Dear Confreres,

Fr. Joseph Brennan passed away peacefully after a long illness in the early hours of the morning on March 17th. - the feast of St. Patrick. Being the great Irishman that he was, it was only fitting that the good Lord should call him to celebrate the feast of our National Apostle in heaven with his parents, other members of his family and the many friends who had gone before him.

Joe had made a great impact on the lives of many people during his life and this continued during his final illness. May I quote from a letter written to us by the head of the medical team at St. James' Hospital that looked after him: "From the perspective of all of us working at St. James' Hospital it was a pleasure and indeed a privilege to have been involved in caring for Fr. Brennan. His good humour and positive outlook were clear to all who met him during his many attendances with us.

Joe was born in Kiltimagh, Co. Mayo on April 22nd. 1914, the fourth child of Francis Patrick Brennan and Bridget Murphy. There were six children - three boys and three girls - in the family. After completing his primary education, Joe entered the Salesian College, Pallaskenry in January 1934. In 1937 he set sail for the Argentine, where he entered the novitiate at Bernal in November of that year. He made his first profession there in 1938.

He completed his study of philosophy at Bernal in 1939 and transferred to the Pius X Salesian College in Buenos Aires for practical training. He entered the theologate at Corduba in 1943 and was ordained priest there in 1946. For the next twelve years he filled various positions and offices in and around Buenos Aires: Assistant, Catechist, Bursar. During these years he displayed great dedication, patience and kindness. He had the great gift of forming friendships. In his ministry he formed many lasting friendships. This was shown in 1995 when, in celebration of his Golden Jubilee of priesthood, pupils and friends brought him back to the Argentine to revisit the places where he had worked in his earlier years. He was treated royally. Joe enjoyed this visit back to the Argentine and often spoke about it.

Joe returned to his home province in 1958 and was confessor in Shrigley until 1965. He was back in Ireland in 1965 and spent two years in the novitiate in Warrenstown. In 1967 he joined the Ballinakill Community as Vocations Director. He travelled the length and breadth of the country, spreading the story of Don Bosco and the Salesian Mission. He cultivated great devotion to Mary, Help of Christians and gave her blessing in schools, hospitals, private houses and . . . cross roads!

He made friends everywhere: his jovial and positive outlook captivated people. There would never be a sad moment when Joe was around.

He came to Crumlin as Bursar in 1982. Joe was always at hand to oblige anyone in need. He brought a lively spirit to the whole house and he was especially appreciated by the novices. He was transferred as Bursar to Ballinakill in 1986. His energy and attentive way was given to the needs of the community and the school. Joe made himself the servant of all. He became acquainted with large sections of the local community. A large number of these people were present at his funeral Mass in Ballinakill parish.

To quote Fr. John Horan: "Joe had a great desire to celebrate . . . but, over on the other side, I suppose, penance for him in many ways. But I must say, he combined the two of them extremely well. Many would say they were glad to have known Joe Brennan and we are now praying that he is experiencing the joy he gave to so many."

While we continue to pray for Joe, pray also for this Community.

Fr. John Foster,

*John Foster,*

Rector.

