



Salesian College,
Pallaskenry,
Co. Limerick.

Fr. Peter Campbell S.D.B. 1922-1992

The 2nd February, 1922 (2/2/22) is one of those unique dates which only happen once every eleven years. It was therefore fitting that Fr. Peter Campbell, who died on the 15th December, 1992, was born on this date because Fr. Peter was indeed a unique man in every sense of the word. His death was the cause of great sadness and sorrow to his immediate family, his Salesian confrere and also to the many friends he had.

Fr. Peter was born into the farming family of James and Margaret Campbell, Gortnaguig, Coalisland, Co. Tyrone. He was one of a family of eight. His brothers Paddy and John and his sisters Annie and Mary are the only members of the family who are still alive. He received his early education in St. Brigids Primary School, Brockagh. In 1938 he went to Pallaskenry and began his secondary education for the purpose of joining the Salesian order of which his cousin Fr. Peter Hanna was a member. He went to Ballinakill, Co. Laois to do his novitiate in October 1942 and on the 11th October 1943 he was professed into the Salesian Congregation along with six other young men. He continued his studies in philosophy in Shrigley, England and when the war ended in 1945, Fr. Peter returned to Pallaskenry where he worked in the Agricultural College. In 1948 he started theology in Pallaskenry and moved to Blaisdon a year later. He finished his final year in theology in Beckford. Fr. Peter and Fr. Matty Aherne came to Pallaskenry and were ordained there on the 19th July 1952.

After his ordination Fr. Peter remained in Pallaskenry working with the agricultural students, among whom he was greatly loved and respected. The students looked on him as a caring and wise counsellor whose concern was always the well being of the students. He showed great initiative on the farm and the many sturdy iron gates around the farm in Pallaskenry are a tribute to his keen engineering mind. He was instrumental in building the poultry section in the college. In 1958 he was sent to Warrenstown as farm manager. A new college was being built at the time in Warrenstown and Fr. Peter's initiative, wise decisions and hard work along with his ability to get others, both staff and Salesians, to work together soon made Warrenstown into a very efficiently run Agricultural College. Fr. Peter had a great respect for the land and a great love for the animals which lived on it. His nineteen years at Warrenstown went quickly for Fr. Peter and for all who worked with him there. He was a much loved member of the community and played a very important role in the life of the community in Warrenstown. He was a deeply spiritual man, quiet by nature, but at the same time was a very friendly, warm caring person who was generous to a fault. Throughout his life he possessed a great devotion to Our Lady and in his early priestly years was most active in organising the Legion of Mary among the agricultural students.

In 1977, Fr. Peter volunteered for mission work in South Africa and spent six years as parish priest in the parish of Littleton near Pretoria. This was a very big sacrifice for him to leave Ireland and the way of life that he knew so well, but it was typical of the generosity of the man that wished to give some of his years on the missions. Fr. Peter silently suffered from very severe bouts of migraine throughout his life and was no stranger to pain but the illness which began to manifest itself while in Africa forced him to retire from his parish work and to return once more to his beloved Ireland. He spent

some time in the Salesian house in Crumlin, Dublin and then returned to Pallaskenry, where he spent so many formative and happy years of his Salesian life. As his illness progressed he had to move to the nursing home at Carrigoran, Newmarket-on-Fergus, Co. Clare. It was here in July 1992 that three of his ordination companions, Fr. Dennis Corcoran (Maynooth), Fr. Pat Aherne (South Africa) and Fr. Larry Byrne (California) celebrated Mass with him in his room to commemorate their ordination forty years previously.

During Fr. Peters sojourn in the nursing home his family made the long journey down to see him on a very regular basis. This long journey to see their much beloved Fr. Peter was never seen as a duty or a trouble, but was seen by all as a delightful and happy meeting of much loved friends. In 1992 Fr. Peter moved to the Sandville Nursing Home, Coalisland, near his home place and near his family and life long friends. God gave Fr. Peter Campbell to the Salesians after he had spent the first few years of his life with his family in Coalisland and it was fitting that Fr. Peter would spend his final few months among his own before going to meet his God and Friend on the 15th December, 1992.

Fr. Campbell was one of nature's gentlemen and a man of great religious conviction. He was totally unselfish, dedicated to his work, the Salesian Congregation and the church. He also possessed a great sense of humour. Although most of his life was spent in Pallaskenry, Warrenstown and South Africa, his roots were around the loughshore amongst his many friends in the Coalisland district to whom he returned to visit at every available opportunity. One of his greatest loves was celebrating mass in St. Brigid's Chapel in his own beloved Brockagh. Indeed it was fitting that his Requiem Mass took place in this chapel. The very large congregation which consisted of his fellow Salesians, local clergy, family and friends bore witness to the great love and esteem in which he was held by all. Fr. Campbell, a man who loved God and who loved his neighbour throughout his life was the first priest to be interred in the cemetery at Brockagh adjacent to the parish church.

A lifelong friend and fellow priest, now residing in America, upon hearing of Fr. Peter's death wrote the following "Fr. Peter gave of himself, his energies and abilities to Pallaskenry and Warrenstown. His frequent migraine he bore with patience and silence. His final years were sad ones. Then came the darkening of the mind. May God reward him for his great generosity for others and to others. He was a man who certainly worked for the church and the Salesian cause in Ireland."

Ar dheis De go raibh a anam.

**Fr. Peter Campbell S.D.B.
R.I.P.**

Born Coalisland
2-2-1922

Professed Ballinakill
11-10-1943

Ordained Pallaskenry
19-7-1952

Died Dungannon
15-12-1992

May he rest in Peace