

FATHER JOSEPH CASEY. SDB.

Dear Confreres,

It is my sad duty to inform you of the death of our dear confrere Fr. Joseph Casey who died at Farnborough on January 20th 1947 at the age of 68.

Fr. Casey was born on the 26th November 1878 in New York. When Joseph was still quite young, his father died, and his mother, in order to be closer to her family, took him with her to London. At the age of 11 Joseph entered our college at Battersea, and in those first pioneering days of the school he learned to love the name and heroic life of Don Bosco. The example of those first faithful followers of Don Bosco attracted him irresistibly to imitate their zeal and work and he applied to join the Salesian Congregation. He entered the novitiate in 1898 and was professed as a Salesian the following year. He then returned to Battersea as assistant to the boys, who were learning trades, and some time later he went to the house of East Hill, Wandsworth, where he remained until 1905. After finishing his theological studies he was ordained at Portsmouth on May 25th 1907. This zealous son of Don Bosco spent the first five years of his priestly life among the young artisans and boys at Battersea, and his humility and simplicity made him dear to all who came in contact with him. In 1912 Fr. Joseph was asked to go to South Africa and he worked hard in helping to develop that part of the Province during the next twelve years.

He returned to England in 1924 and was asked to go to Burwash to help in the Preparatory school there. It was the type of work for which he was particularly suited, and he spent sixteen very successful and enjoyable years there. When the war started, Fr. Casey, because he was of American nationality, was obliged, as a neutral, to leave the proximity of the sea coast. He was asked to go to the Salesian College at Farnborough and help in the junior forms there. Soon his health started to deteriorate and he found difficulty in walking about. His many friends, Catholics and Non-Catholics alike came to see him when he was forced to remain in bed.

On Monday, January 20th 1947 he passed from this life at the age of 68. Fr. Casey was a pious priest and a simple, humble and charitable personality. In appearance he resembled Don Bosco – he also had many of his characteristics. We hope that he already enjoys his reward in the company of Don Bosco. If, however, he may have need of our suffrages, I ask your prayers for the repose of his soul.

Yours affectionately in Don Bosco,

William A. Walsh.