

Salesian House,
Crumlin,
Dublin 12.

Dear Confreres,

It is with deep regret that I announce the death of our confrere,

FATHER WILLIAM COLE. S. D. B.

who gave his soul to God on the 10th September 1975.

Born on the 11th September, 1915 in Blackrock, Co. Dublin, of William and Margaret Cole. After his early years in Ireland he entered Shrigley Park, Cheshire, England on the 19th September 1929 as one of the school's first pupils. Four years later Willie began his novitiate year in Cowley, Oxford and he made his first profession on the 8th September 1934. Immediately afterwards he left for the missions in India where he continued his studies. He was eventually ordained to the priesthood in Shillong on the 8th October 1944 by Bishop Ferrando S. D. B. A letter from a past pupil summarises the influence of Fr. Willie in the field of Salesian education. "Many of your old boys from St. Anthony's hostel, Shillong, still remember you. It seems that the thorns of sacrifice you had made for us, have turned into roses of success."

After his ordination and prior to his departure for Hobart, Tasmania, Fr. Cole spent some time on parish work and as the catechist in one of our schools in Mandalay, Burma. He was head of Savio College, Hobart from 1947-52. In January 1952 he became the bursar in the same college and the following year was appointed Rector. After three years he was appointed Rector at Brooklyn Park, South Australia, where he remained until 1960. The year 1961 saw Fr. Cole Rector in Brunswick, where he remained until 1964. He returned to Chadstone as bursar in 1966 and worked until 1973 in Boys'Town, Engadine, N. S. W. where he was engaged in the preparatory work for the Regional School, scheduled to be opened in 1976-7.

In his early years in Australia Fr. Cole was a valued member of the staff at Don Bosco's Boys Camp in Dromana near Melbourne. He was indefatigable in his efforts to play with and entertain the boys. Father was an outstanding example of the "apostolate of the playground". In an age when this apostolate was being neglected, Fr. Cole was always to be seen with the boys. His ready wit and cheerful disposition, characteristics with him all his life, made his apostolate so successful. He was a shrewd organiser and, because of his great rapport with authorities, civil and religious, his influence regarding Salesian affairs was quite considerable. He was a successful teacher, specialising in the English language. The schools in which he taught and where he held posts of responsibility were schools in which there was a real Salesian presence and spirit. They were well-run, disciplined with an emphasis on christian values and spiritual formation.

Fr. Willie had a great and practical devotion to Dominic Savio. He saw in Dominic a young man who had his priorities right, a person of courage and manliness, one on whom the youth of to-day could well model their lives. The parents of the pupils valued Fr. Cole's talks on education and Salesian pedagogy. Although of genial and friendly manner he could be firm and uncompromising when solutions to problems had to be found. But to anyone in trouble he was a true friend and guide. Indeed his advice was sought by many.

Fr. Willie was through and through a Salesian. His sense of humour, his ability to sing and act endeared him to boys, confreres and friends alike. From his first days with the Salesians in Shrigley, Willie was a born entertainer. This was his hall-mark, a happy disposition which was his right up to the very end. It was remarked and noticed that he was laughing and exchanging jokes with the staff as he was entering hospital in Mount Carmel, Dublin. Up to a day or two before he left us there was still a twinkle in Fr. Willie's eye.

The hard work of the years had begun to take their toll. As he remarked to one of his confreres as he was leaving Australia for Ireland in 1974 - "The heart has gone out of me. " He had slowed down noticeably on his return home, yet he was willing to spend the last few months of his life working with the Irish who had emigrated to London. This was his last task.

In June this year Fr. Cole was admitted to a hospital in London and transferred in the middle of August to Mount Carmel Hospital, Dublin, where he died peacefully about 5. 30. a. m. on the 10th September. This intrepid worker and likeable Salesian rests in the quiet cemetery of the Missionary College in Ballinakill, Co. Laois, Ireland.

God rest you Father Willie.

Please remember him and all of us in your prayers.

J. Delahunty. S. D. B.