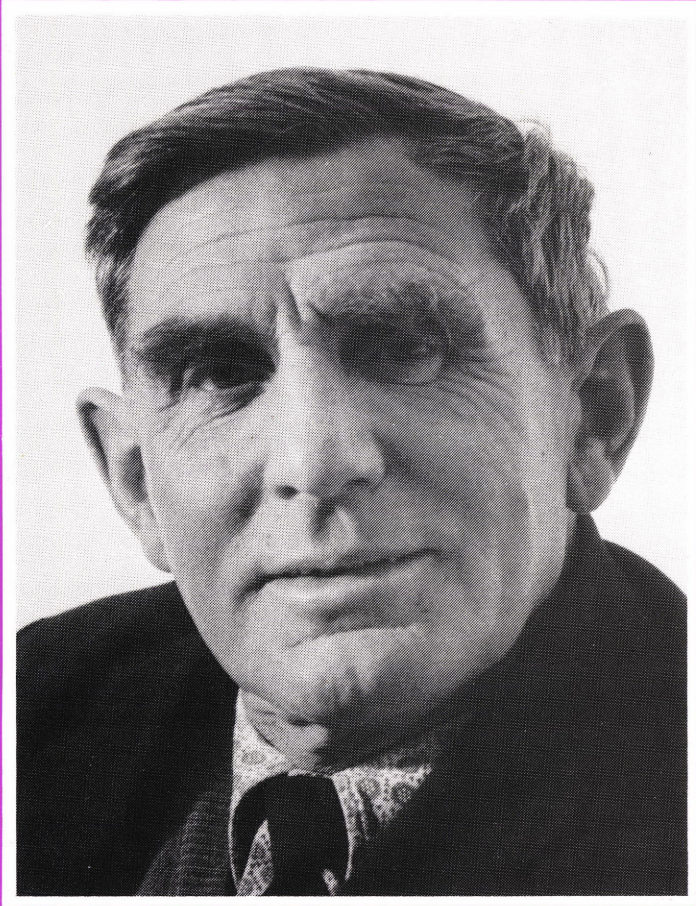


Salesian College
"Rupertswood"
SUNBURY, VIC.
3429



BROTHER LUDWIG AMANN SDB
(1907–1987)

Dear Confreres,

Monday, 23rd February 1987 began, for Brother Ludwig Amann, as had almost every other day of his at "Rupertswood" for the past sixty years — Mass, meditation, breakfast, then the trek down to the farm which took him through the yard amongst the boys and finally to the Engineering Shop where the farm boys and instructors gather for morning tea.

This day, it was the Lord's desire to himself be at the end of that path that Brother had so faithfully traced and retraced for over half a century. For a man who had lived so unassumingly and so humbly all his life, his last moments were a glorification, a lifting up that was almost joyous. A word of explanation.

As Brother was returning from his morning tea duties (he had really only retired from the heaviest farm duties, despite being in his eightieth year!), a member of the lay staff noticed that he was taking rather longer to cross the courtyard and that his face had a wan and sickly pallor. Fortunately he had to pass the infirmary where the doctor was already in attendance. At that point the diagnosis of Brother's condition was not serious, but as a cautionary measure, arrangements were set in train for hospitalization while Brother made his own way up to his room.

When the ambulance arrived, Brother was sitting quietly in his room upstairs. He recalled with some humour a much earlier visit to hospital brought on by a tractor accident, and expressed the fervent wish not to be delayed in hospital for long on this new occasion. But within minutes of this he had suffered a serious heart attack, and the ambulancemen put in the hardest two hours of their careers. They radioed for assistance — a call promptly responded to by air ambulance. Now four men, the doctor and those confreres present joined efforts to revive Brother. "That was one hell of a prayer, can we use it sometime?" was the comment of one of the men after Brother had been restored to life for the fifth time.

The helicopter had landed on the school oval. As Brother was gently loaded aboard, still alive, the entire school body surrounded him. His going up was not as tragic as it might seem. If death is an event of life, then Brother Amann lived it fully. He lived it so fully that, in the eyes of those who stood there watching, his life endured through death to that moment when it was caught up in the Lord's risen life for evermore. There have been many vivid memories of Ludwig Amann. This surely was one of the most vivid.

Ludwig Amann's life journey began in the little hamlet of Wurmannsquick near Eggenfelden in Bavaria (Germany) on 30

youth with Europe in turmoil. Some of us know something of his isolation in a country so far from his homeland. What of his endeavours to adopt the customs and the interests of the lads he gave his life to? Cruel humiliations must have come his way during the War with his adopted country in conflict with his homeland. Yet never a murmur. Surely this is the make-up we mean when we say of anyone, 'He was a MAN!'

"What changes he saw at 'Rupertswood'. He saw the first few boys arrive. He lived to see it develop into the valued boarding and day school it is today. He saw the Rectors come and go — Salesians whose names are honoured through many Provinces, and the Australian Salesians eventually to take the place of those of such renown. These latter men whom he had known as mere boys and now to whom he gave his loyalty and obedience so readily.

"He saw the fifty years of the Eucharistic Festival. No-one worked harder for its success than he did. Yet so few ever thought of him in this regard. And changes that the Vatican Council set in motion? No-one will ever know what all this meant to him but all who lived with him could only admire his simple trust in God and the Superiors set over him.

"For my last word let me go back to comparatively early times.

"Fr. Michael Maiocco, who gave up his beloved Classics to establish the 'Rupertswood' farm and was Brother's 'boss' in those pioneering days, said from his hospital bed, 'Don't let them ever forget these magnificent Brothers who have carried 'Rupertswood' on their broad shoulders for so long !'

"And, peerless among that great company, Brother Ludwig Amann. May God rest his gentle soul."

Please pray also for this community: may the dedication and example of fidelity of Brother Amann strengthen its commitment to the service of the young.

Fraternally in Don Bosco,

Fr. Julian Fox, Rector

“That was the pattern of his life, day in, day out. Weekends just a little change — an early stop on Saturday afternoon so that the horses could get their Sunday off in the ‘Lodge Paddock’. What a sight it was to see Brother with his ‘working partners’ each with a junior schoolboy astride down the Drive — Michael Clarke was never as proud bringing At Talaq (the winner of the Melbourne Cup) to the winner’s circle as those kids! or Brother!

“What it must have cost him to change over to the tractor! Especially when it is remembered that he found reading the instruction books so difficult and that he lacked the sort of contacts that the religious of today would just take for granted in a job like this.

“But change he did and now the affection he had for ‘Stocky’ and ‘Bessie’ and all the others was replaced by the meticulous care he took over the oil changes and the other services the machines demanded. You can imagine the second-hand worn out warriors he had to work with in those days so close to the poverty-line for all at ‘Rupertswood’.

“But there were other changes he had to face as the years went by. Now the casual helper was a fully-fledged agricultural student (with Brother chopping thistles and boiling the billy for lunch). What it must have cost him to stand by and see the crooked furrows and the wild turns on the headland as the new-chum learnt his craft. No doubt there were some bad moments for teacher and pupil alike, but it is to the credit of the real relationship that existed that when these lads came back to ‘Rupertswood’ as grown men it wasn’t the football coach they wanted to see but —you’ve guessed it — Brother Amann.

“There was of course the religious, Salesian life of this dedicated man. The ever-changing members (while he went on for ever, so it seemed!) could tell you of his exemplary life, of his faithfulness to the various practices of piety. Only one who has tried to combine the demands of seasonal occupations with the requirements of communal Chapel duties could know of his frustrations at having to leave urgent farm chores to attend on his God in what could have seemed to a lesser man, trivial duties. And only his God would know of the blessings his obedience brought down upon his Community, especially I feel in the area of vocations.

“Brother Amann lived through a period of tremendous change. We can only guess at the problems of his childhood and

June 1907. We know little of his family, except that his father died in 1914, and that of the three children, one (a sister) is still living. After his primary education, Ludwig came in contact with the Salesians, and in 1925 he was accepted into the Salesian Novitiate at Ensdorf. Only one year after his first profession in 1926, the young Brother Ludwig was assigned to the new "mission" of Australia. He arrived at Sunbury in November 1927 together with several other Brothers who would be responsible for the farm. That was the year when the Salesians purchased the property at Sunbury and established the first permanent foundation in Australia.

The sixty years of the Salesian story of "Rupertswood" must recognise Brother Amann's presence as its most constant and enduring. There are many confreres who have spent years in that presence and as part of that story. This community is happy to offer the honour of its telling to Fr. Terry Jennings, erstwhile Provincial, Rector, companion and even student of Brother Amann, over 55 years. The remainder of these words are his . . .

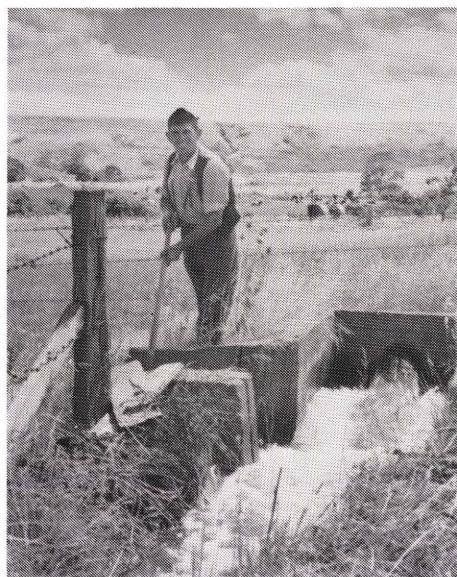
"I Remember . . .

"I first met Brother Amann in 1932. He arrived in Australia some five years before from his native Bavaria and he was perhaps the youngest of four German lay-brothers who worked the 'Rupertswood' farm, dairy and piggery. Four good men — but Brother Amann was outstanding among them.

"Apart from his comparative youth he was a very striking figure. He was a big man with obvious strength that won the admiration of the lads who worked with him and the hero-worship of the little kids who cadged rides on his beloved draught horses.

"This is my first clear memory of him: ploughing with a great team of horses. It was considered a great privilege to work with him. The harnessing of these monsters, getting the lunch from the kitchen, out to the paddocks and helping to set up implements for the day's operation: the whole ritual. There was always a job for the 'offsider' to do until it was time for lunch. Then the horses to be seen to before our own rough 'picnic'.

"That was one lesson that Brother taught: the horses must come first. We all knew that before ever we met him after breakfast he had been up long before even the early Community prayers to feed the horses and we knew that after Night Prayers — hail, rain or moonshine — he would be down to the stables again before his own well-earned rest.



Brother Ludwig Amann SDB

Born.....30 June 1907
First Profession.....15 August 1926
Perpetual Profession....8 September 1934
Died.....23 February 1987