



R. I. P. **Fr. Roger Dal Zovo**

**DON BOSCO TECHNICAL SCHOOL  
SHILLONG – MEGHALAYA  
Province of Gauhati (India)**

On the morning of the 8th of July the phone rang in Don Bosco School, Shillong, to tell us that Rev. Fr. Roger Dal Zovo had died during the night. The call came from Nazareth Hospital. He had been hospitalized on account of severe heart troubles. He was 63 and had spent 46 years of his life in India. In him we lost a great man and a zealous missionary.

Fr. Roger Dal Zovo was born of poor parents at Vestenanuova (Verona) Italy on the 16th of September 1909. When he was 2 years old his family moved to Piovene, Vicenza.

It was while a student in the first gymnasium, in Vicenza, that he conceived the desire to become a priest, of the assistant Parish Priest of Piovene, Fr. Gaetano Pertile, who was a Salesian Co-operator, arranged to have him admitted to the Salesian Seminary at Ivrea. Accordingly Roger entered the Ivrea aspirantate in September 1924. Two years later he was given the clerical habit, blessed by Fr. Rinaldi, the then Rector Major. The same year (1926) he embarked for India and reached Shillong on the 7th of November.

Soon after he entered the Novitiate and made his Religious Profession on the 21st of January, 1928. His priestly studies and training continued in Shillong. When the building in which the students stayed was burnt down they moved to a Villa lent to the Salesians by the Jesuits of Kurseong. Here Fr. Dal Zovo completed his studies and was ordained by Mgr. Ferrando, Bishop of Shillong. The Ordination took place at St. Mary's College, Kurseong.

After his Ordination Fr. Dal Zovo began his apostolic career which, at various periods was exercised over a wide area. His first appointment was to Krishnagar (W. Bengal). From there he was transferred to Jessore (Bangla Desh) to be in charge of a Catechists' Training School. At various periods he served as Rector in the Salesian house at Saharampur (U.P.), in the Salesian minor Seminary at Bandel (W. Bengal), in the Salesian major Seminary at Sonada (Darjeeling) in St. Anthony's College

at Shillong (Meghalaya). From 1956 to 1965 he was the Vicar General of the Diocese of Dibrugarh, Assam. It was during this period that his health began to considerably decline. He had been suffering from heart troubles long since. But now it became chronic. In 1965 he was transferred to Don Bosco Technical School, Shillong, where he remained till he died.

Fr. Dal Zovo was an excellent man, an exemplary Religious and a zealous priest. He was learned, but unpretentious, and well liked by those who knew him. No wonder then, that a large crowd of Religious and laity together with three Bishops joined him in his last journey.

As a Religious Fr. Dal Zovo was specially noted for faithful and exact observance of the «Rule» of his religious Society. This is the one thing which everyone who knew him well will not fail to remember. In this matter he was uncompromising, first with himself and then with others. It was impossible for him to understand how anyone could neglect the exact observance of the «Rule.» This was so evident in him that he was styled as «Don Rua» from the time he was student of Philosophy. Besides exact religious observance He had a deep piety grafted on sincere and firm convictions. He was Intelligent and reflexive endowed with extraordinary will power.

As a priest Fr. Dal Zovo was zealous for the glory of God and the salvation of Souls. His one great passion was, it seems, to spread uphold and defend the true doctrines of the Church. For this purpose He exercised with great advantage his abilities as a writer. He published several booklets and pamphlets, both in English and Khasi, in which he explains and defends the Church and her Faith.

All his ministry was inspired by genuine missionary zeal. He was a remarkable and tireless preacher. His sermons and instructions were greatly appreciated both for the doctrine and the unction. He had a perfect mastery of the English language and the English parishioners themselves often remarked on the elegance of his diction and his impeccable pronunciation.

He was for a number of years Superior, Prefect of Studies, Rector, Teacher in Houses of Formation. Even those who may have formed the impression that he was excessively exacting and severe are willingly and unanimously admitting that he never demanded anything in which he was not an example and guide.



He always sought the perfect religious observance and discipline and the proficiency of the young Salesians entrusted to his care, never his popularity. As Vicar General of the diocese of Dibrugarh, and Rector of the Bishop's House, and Parish Priest of the Cathedral Church he revealed another side of his great soul, that perhaps most of us not even suspected.

This man who at times may have appeared gruff and intransigent to his Confreres of whom he exacted the fulfilment of duty and the observance of the rule, revealed boundless charity and heroic patience with the poor and the ignorant, whom he was ever ready to excuse, forgive and help.

Among the population of Dibrugarh and Shillong both Catholic and otherwise, his memory will ever be cherished and venerated.

I am convinced that Fr. Dal Zovo never wasted a minute of time and every minute of it he spent for God.

He had surrendered himself entirely to God and it was his wish, which he wrote almost on every page of his diary, «to be one with God in eternal love». Now his desire is fulfilled. May he always remain a shining example for us, especially for our priests and missionaries.

May his Soul rest in peace.

Sincerely yours in Christ,  
**Fr. V. Albera, S.D.B.**  
Director

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*Necrology:* Rev. Fr. Rôger Dal Zovo born at Vestenanuova (Italy) 16-9-1909, died at Shillong (India) 8-7-1972, aged 63, 45 Profession 36 Priesthood, 17 years Rector.