



Dear Confreres,

January 1990

FATHER GEORGE VICTOR DAVIS, SDB.

George's long life drew to a quiet and peaceful close on the afternoon of Saturday the 2nd of December 1989, in the Nazareth House, Nottingham. As he lay dying he was surrounded and comforted by the chaplain, many of the good Sisters and a good number of the other elderly residents who had taken him to their hearts over the years they had spent together.

Father George was born in Farnborough, Hampshire, on 9th August 1903, and was baptized in the Salesian church of Mary Help Christians, recently opened. He often spoke of the visit paid by Don Rua to Farnborough and of the affection shown by him to the very small boy who had just entered the Salesian school.

George was influenced by the training and education given him at the school, and, on completing his studies there, he asked to be admitted to the Salesian novitiate in Burwash. He started his novitiate a few days after his sixteenth birthday and made his first vows a year later in August 1920, thereby starting a long life of 69 years as a professed son of Don Bosco, a span surpassed by but a few.

Immediately after his first profession George was chosen to attend the Gregorian University in Rome to study philosophy, but, after a very short time, a very severe illness caused him to return to England. He suffered from the effects of this illness for the rest of his life, to a greater or lesser degree. Father George was a brilliant student, and, even in his later years, showed his wonderful memory and powers of debate. In his early years, after acquiring an Oxford degree, and later a second degree at London, he was a valued teacher in many of our schools and was recognised and welcomed as a preacher and retreat-giver.

The last four years of his life were spent in Nazareth House, Nottingham, under the loving care of the Sisters, who watched over him with untiring affection. A fractured hip caused him to spend the last two years in a wheel-chair, but he never missed daily Mass, although very bad eyesight prevented him from doing any reading at all. Indeed, for a considerable time before his death he was unable to recognize and identify his visitors.

During his time in Nazareth House Father George struck up a warm relationship with Bishop James McGuinness of Nottingham and never tired of talking about him. Bishop James spent the two days before Father George's funeral Mass ill in bed, but insisted on getting out of bed and presiding at the Mass, during which he gave a warm, eloquent panegyric on Father George.

Father George's remains were taken to our Salesian church in Farnborough for the second funeral Mass in the church in which he had been baptized 86 years previously. He was then laid to rest in the Salesian plot in the local cemetery, alongside so many of his confreres whom he had known so well.

Please pray for Father George and his family, and for this Provincial House.

John Bennett, SDB.

Necrology:

Father George Victor Davis, born in Farnborough, Hampshire, 9th August 1903, died in Nottingham 2nd December 1989 at the age of 86 years, after 69 years of religious profession and 58 years of priesthood.

R.I.P.