



**Cathedral Rectory**  
Krishnagar—741 101  
Dt. Nadia, W. Bengal.

## **Rev. Fr. Aldo Decaroli, s. d. b.**

Dear Confreres,

Rev. Fr. Aldo Decaroli expired quite suddenly in Thursday, 21st November 1985 at the Cathedral Rectory of Krishnagar. He was 73 years old. Of the 53 years he spent in the Salesian Congregation, 44 years were as a Priest and his ministry was mainly in Nadia and Murhidad districts of West Bengal.

### **The last day of Fr. Aldo**

Fr. Aldo began the last day on earth as usual. He went for his regular chaplaincy at the Holy Family Convent (Senior). Being the feast of the Presentation of Our Blessed Lady, it was solemn occasion. Added to this, it was the annual day of renewal of vows for the Sisters of Charity. Fr. Aldo, in his homily, stressed the importance of doing God's will—only this can make us the brothers and sisters of Jesus (based on Mt. 12 : 46-50). Being a feast day, the sisters tried to get him to stay for breakfast, but he preferred to be with his community and so excused himself saying that he would come later with the whole community.



The sisters had in fact invited the Fathers for lunch. The breakfast went on as usual amidst jokes and laughter.

As usual Fr. Aldo went up to his room. He finished praying his breviary. Then he was busy with his correspondence—typing and writing letters. Around 9.15 a.m. a few youngsters gathered at the Cathedral ground making a lot of noise. In fact, there was a tension at the “R. C. Para” between the Christian and Muslim youngsters from the previous few days. Fr. Aldo came out the verandah to assess the situation. Evidently he was upset that they should gather in the church compound and use abusive language. He went back to his room and began to feel a pain in the chest. Fr. P. K. Joy who was in the next room heard Fr. Aldo calling for help. He went into Father’s room only to find him lying on his bed suffering. He rushed to Fr. Sushil, the parish priest and Fr. Santosh and then to the sisters of St. Joseph’s Dispensary. Soon the doctors from Mary Immaculate Hospital too arrived. By this time the trouble-makers had disappeared from the premises. The Sisters could do little and their injection and other efforts to revive his heart were of no avail. Fr. Aldo had already said good-bye to this world. Fr. Sushil anointed him with the Holy Oils and everyone present joined in the prayers for the dying. The exact time of his death was 9:45 a.m.

### **People’s homage to Fr. Aldo**

Soon news was passed around among confreres and friends. The religious communities of Krishnagar as well as friends irrespective of religion and caste flocked to the Cathedral premises. Fr. Provincial reached by midday. Fr. Aldo’s body was laid in state at the Cathedral Church and thousands paid him their last homage. At 5:00 p.m. Rev. Fr. Varkey, the Vicar General of Krishnagar Diocese along with 15 priests offered the Holy Eucharist for the dear departed. Rev. Fr. Austin Guarneri introduced the Mass and Rev. Fr. Luciano Colussi, in his homily brought out the peace-loving aspect of Fr. Aldo. He could not eat or sleep when the atmosphere was not peaceful in this Parish and among his people. And he died, to a certain extent, for the same case.

On Friday, the 22nd November, the Calcutta dailies carried the news coverage of Fr. Aldo’s death. The Statesman gave his obituary



while The Telegraph announced "Don Bosco priest dead." At 6.00 a.m. there was a packed Church attending the Holy Mass, presided over by Rt. Rev. Lucas Sirker, Bishop of Krishnagar, praying for Fr. Aldo's eternal repose. By 8.00 a.m., the coffin was placed in the ambulance which left for Bandel, where the funeral services would be solemnized.

Fr. Aldo's body was laid out in the Shrine of Our Lady. The boys and confreres of Bandel took turns to pray by the coffin. At 3.00 p.m. the concelebration with 38 priests began, presided over by Rt. Rev. Lucas Sirker, Bishop of Krishnagar. Fr. Provincial, in his homily, highlighted few of Fr. Aldo's qualities as a Salesian Priest. He started saying that it was no coincidence that Fr. Aldo should die on the Feast of Our Lady and be buried on the Feast of St. Cecilia. It was a short of summary of his life. He was always a man for others. He loved his people tenderly and spent practically the whole of his priestly life as a pastor among the people of West Bengal. He was always in a hurry to go back to his people whenever he happened to be in Calcutta for work or for medical check-up. Fr. Aldo loved music and singing like St. Cecilia. He was great devotee of St. Dominic Savio and spared no effort to spread devotion to this young saint.

After Holy Mass, Fr. Provincial conducted the funeral service and by 4.30 p.m. Fr. Aldo was laid to rest in the tomb amidst prayers and hymns.

### **A brief life-sketch of Fr. Aldo**

Aldo Decaroli was born at Turin ( Italy ) on 5th January 1912, the son of Giuseppe and Furbatto Anna. He did his elementary studies at New Jersey ( USA ) and his secondary school studies at Turin. We find him at Ivrea from 1928 to 1931. During this period he had decided to come to India. He did his novitiate at Shillong in 1931-32, and made his first profession on 8th December 1932. After his philosophical studies, he was secretary to the Provincial in 1934 at Shillong. In 1935 he was assistant and teacher at Don Bosco Krishnagar till he began his theological studies in 1938. He was ordained priest on 5th June 1941 at Mawlai ( Shillong ). Soon after his ordination he was appointed Headmaster and Prefect of studies of Don Bosco Krishnagar. In 1945 he was appointed Asst. Parish Priest of Ranabondo and the next year at Bhoborpara ( now in Bangladesh ). From 1947 to 1951 Fr. Aldo was Parish Priest at the Cathedral in Krishnagar. In 1952 he was given a



break when he was appointed Prefect at Don Bosco Krishnagar. For the rest of his life he was always a pastor in 1953 at the Krishnagar Cathedral, in 1960 at Maliapota, in 1965 at Ranabondo, in 1975 at Berhampore and in 1981 at Raghampur. He had a long sick-leave in 1973-74. He was so happy when it was made possible for him in 1983 to come back to the Cathedral Rectory, no more with the responsibility of the parish. He was living a sort of retired life, active with chaplaincies and other spiritual ministries, particularly with the sacrament of reconciliation. He was always punctual in the play ground to be with the boys, the juniors—supervising them at games, dispensing smiles and good words to all those who approached him.

Anyone who has known Fr. Aldo will remember his exactness and orderliness in everything he did. In spite of his heavy schedules, one would find his office and room clean and orderly, an external manifestation of the personality of Fr. Aldo.

He was most scrupulous with permissions, even for his daily visits to the dispensary, for check-ups and medicines.

It was a motive of edification to see him come along for the signature in this little diary where he kept the account of the few Rupees he was spending for rickshaw or for medicine, or the few Rupees he was getting from the sale of paper and empty bottles. Proverbial was his enthusiasm for the work he was doing with the little ones, the friends of Dominic Savio, or his old people at the home, or his interest for spreading of the knowledge of Catechism, or of all good books in general!

He is still present among us with his smile and his western songs, with his innocent jokes and his Bengalee popular and typical expressions, for which he was highly appreciated by all,

We all miss him. May his soul rest in peace! He is the third veteran Salesian Missionary who dies in this community in the last 3 years. As you remember Fr. Aldo Decaroli in your prayers, do not forget the few confreres still remaining in this community.

Yours sincerely in Don Bosco  
**Fr. Dino Colussi, s.d.b.**

*Rector*

#### **For the Necrology**

*Born at Turin (Italy) on 5th January 1912*

*Professed on 8th December 1932 at Shillong, Meghalaya*

*Ordained a priest on 5th June, 1941 at Mawlai.*