

FR. EDWARD GREY, R.I.P.

(The Editor would like to thank Fr. Richard McElligott SDB of Pallaskenry, who was a life-long friend of Fr. Grey, for helping him with the information for this obituary.)

Another good and cheerfull Salesian has gone home to God. Fr. Eddie Grey, the *Salesian Echo*'s famous punster O.Y.Knott, slipped off to meet his maker on the 4th May, 1978 in Cape Town and left the world a little sadder place. His gentleness, good humour and down-to-earth common sense will be sorely missed.

Many years ago he wrote his own epitaph in the form of a little collaboration with the famous Will Shakespares. If the Newsletter gets past the pearly gates, he will enjoy it again:

To pun, or not to pun, that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The scowls and scoffs of the hol pollo,
Or tell them where to go to.
Am I to take it lying down - and lose
The name of action? Not on your lifebuoy!
For where there's life there's soap.
To fight - resist with blows and kicks,
The slings and arrows of outrageous scorn
Would never do. But 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wished. To fight, to kick;
Ay, there's the rub. For in that play of feet
The risk that's run ere I have shuffled
From the scene of strife, must give me pause.
The undiscovered strength of carping critics
Thus makes us rather bear those ills we have,
Than fly to others that we wot not of.
So, scoffers, get you gone to where-you-know,
From whose burn no traveller returns.

Fr. Grey was born in Templemore, Co. Tipperary on the 25th August, 1890. He went to Battersea in 1906 where he and our own Fr. McElligott were aspirants together. Later, in 1908 they went to the Novitiate, which at that time was in Burwash, Sussex, with Fr. Simonetti as novice master. It was there, too, that they did their philosophy under Fr. Brown. Later they returned to Battersea where Fr. Grey worked with Fr. Conway in the office at the accounts. He made his perpetual profession in Battersea on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, 1912.

It was suggested that the young Eddie Grey then go to Belgium to do his theology so he started learning French under Dr. Lever. But then the war broke out and it was impossible to do theology in Belgium. Instead Fr. Grey did his theology in Battersea. By

this time he had been separated from his friend Fr. Mc Elligott who had been asked to go to South Africa (at that time it was a case of going for good).

Fr. Grey got his subdiaconate in Battersea in September 1917 and exactly a year afterwards, on 21st September, 1918, he was ordained to the priesthood there.

Fr. Grey was working in Battersea when Fr. McElligott was permitted to return from South Africa in 1924. They were in a bad way for personnel and Fr. McElligott asked for and got Fr. Grey and three young clerics at the time, Dan Broder, Francis Boate and Jack Sheehan - the last two also now deceased. The five of them sailed for Africa.

When he arrived in Cape Town Fr. Grey started work in the accounts office and became editor of the *Catholic Directory* and made a very good job of it during his years in charge. He was also confessor to the House.

Fr. Grey worked in Cape Town until 1931, seeing his friend Fr. McElligott off for Ireland in 1929 when he was made Rector of Warrenstown. He himself left for Shrigley two years later where he became Confessor, but his stay there didn't last long, for in 1934 he returned to his office work in Cape Town and to his duties as House Confessor.

He remained at his post in Cape Town for the next twenty-six years, bringing his own particular brand of humour to everything. He wrote a great deal and once commented on his own unwillingness to burst into prose of majestic dignity with the remark: "Let the other great writers of fiction soar to the heights; I'm content to remain on the ground."

And remain on the ground he did, a hardy man who was always active until in 1970 he had to retire due to ill health. This must have been a very difficult cross to bear for so active a man but he accepted it with good grace and a cheerful spirit.

In his final years he was cared for by the good Sisters of Nazareth House who took him to their hearts. His sister Kitty was at his side when he died. His brother Connie was also a Salesian and no doubt they are swapping stories in Heaven right now. When he died Fr. Eddie Grey was 88 years young. As Fr. McElligott remarked: "He was a very sincere, dedicated man, a good religious and a gentleman in every sense of the word." May his gentle spirit rest in Peace.