

BROTHER JOSEPH HANLEY. SDB.

On Wednesday January 15th 1969. Bro. Joseph Hanley, the oldest member of the Province, passed to his reward at the age of 87. Bro. Joserph was born on May 29th 1881 of John and Margaret Hanley in Mallow Co. Cork. He lived quite an eventful life and travelled widely before joining the Salesians in his fifties. As a young man in Ireland he was interested in Catholic action particularly among the young. His main interest was in dramatics and concerts for the youngsters. Through this interest he met many famous members of the acting profession and was well-known to all the clergy. It is interesting to note that when he applied for admission to the Salesian Society he nominated an Archdeacon and two bishops as referees.

He travelled in many parts of the world and finally settled in Melbourne, Australia, where he became a friend of Dr. Mannix. He had travellers' tales to tell of many lands, which never lost anything in the telling. He returned to Ireland in the early 30s and through the influence of Bro. Patrick Brassil, well-known to the older members of the Province, he applied to become a Salesian in 1936 at the age of 55. He spent some time at the hostel in London before entering the Novitiate in 1937. In 1938 he made his first profession and the remarks passed about him at that time regarding his suitability was that he was practical, handy, self-sacrificing and loyal – qualities which marked his whole Salesian life. In 1941 he made his perpetual vows and he was appointed to Chertsey, where he remained until he died.

The story of Bro. Joseph's life is the story of a sincere and humble man, who for 30 years lived a life of service to others and fidelity to the rule he professed. For many years during his time at Chertsey he acted as infirmarian and, although he had no natural attraction to the job he fulfilled it patiently and uncomplainingly. For many years he had the care of very sick confreres such as Fr. Poggio and Fr. Hawarden but he never shirked his duty or complained. Even when another person might have excused himself from jobs on account of age or sickness, Bro. Joseph was always ready to be of service to the community.

His last illness was short and his death came rather as a surprise. He had been complaining of colds on and off for a few months. The doctor had called to see him occasionally and when he called one morning he was alarmed at Bro. Joseph's condition. Bronchial pneumonia had set in and the doctor gave little hope of recovery. He was anointed and responded with the confreres who were present. As his death seemed imminent the community gathered around him and as the final prayers were said Bro. Joseph died peacefully. At the Solemn Requiem Mass Very Rev. Fr. Provincial was the principal celebrant, assisted by many priests. Fr. C. Harris preached a fine and touching panegyric. Interment followed in the cemetery adjoining the College.

May he rest in peace.