

FATHER WILLIAM HAUGHEY SDB

Dear Confrères,

On Sunday November 11th 1984 Father Haughey followed his usual practice of studying the readings from the Mass of the day and a commentary on them although it was some time since he had said a public Mass. The second reading began with the words: 'We want you to be quite certain, brothers, about those who have died, to make sure that you do not grieve about them, like the other people who have no hope' (1 Thess 4, 13). The gospel finished with Christ's warning: 'So stay awake, because you do not know either the day or the hour' (Matt 25, 13). He was not to know that the next day, Monday, November 12th 1984, while finishing breakfast he would suffer a massive heart attack and die within minutes, giving his confrères just enough time to administer absolution and the anointing. Just before breakfast he had been at Mass and communion.

William Haughey was born in Maryhill, Glasgow, on the 28th of May 1908. Although he was to spend the greater part of his life away from them he always had a great love for Scotland and his native city. When he was fifteen years old he wrote to the Rector of the Salesian College, Battersea, London: 'For the past four years I have had the desire to become a priest and moreover to serve in the Foreign Missions'. This latter ambition was soon fulfilled. After a year at Battersea and his novitiate in Cowley, Oxford, he travelled out to India, first to Shillong in 1926 and then formed part of the first group of Salesians to work in Bombay. He was ordained in Shillong on 29th of April, 1933.

In 1936 Fr. Haughey returned to Great Britain and just before the outbreak of war went to Turin as the editor of the English version of the Salesian Bulletin. Italy's entry into the war meant that he had to return to London. In 1941, at the request of the Colonial Office, he was appointed as Rector of the Salesians in Hong Kong. He was interned for a while when the Japanese invaded Hong Kong but was eventually released because of his Irish family connections and continued to guide the Salesian work in the colony until the end of the war.

After the war Fr. Haughey returned to Great Britain. He was in Germany for a year before being appointed to the Salesian Missionary College at Shrigley in 1947. Here he spent the next thirteen years, first as a teacher and then for ten years as promoter of Vocations. This involved him in a tremendous amount of travelling and enabled him to use his great gifts as an entertaining story-teller and attractive speaker. He was involved in many of the large scale Vocations Exhibitions that were held in those years.

The ten years from 1960 to 1970 find Fr. Haughey in his native Scotland at St. John Bosco School, Aberdour. Here he had care of the Salesian Cooperators and gave a lot of his time to the preaching of retreats and days of recollection. At this time too he undertook a lot of the Bursar's work in book-keeping and accounts.

After two years in Chertsey as Bursar, he returned to Shrigley in 1972 where he was confessor for the next eleven years, once again giving very generous support to the Bursar. His last few years saw a decline in his usual robust health and when in August 1983 he came to join us in Blaisdon, having just celebrated his golden jubilee of ordination, he was far from well. He made great efforts to be with the community for prayers, meals and moments of relaxation and he always went out of his way to make visitors welcome.

He was in no doubt about the state of his health and I am sure he was prepared for his death, though he could have no idea that it would come so suddenly. In his prayer book and on his desk he had written out by hand this verse of the hymn from Evening Prayer:

'Grant to life's day a calm unclouded ending
An eve untouched by shadows of decay
The brightness of a holy death-bed blending
With dawning glories of the eternal day'.

We believe that God heard and answered Fr. Haughey's prayer by the way He called him to Himself.

Please pray for the repose of his soul and ask God's continued blessing on our work here in Blaisdon.

Yours sincerely in Christ

Fr. George Robson S.D.B.
Rector.

Data for Necrology:

Fr. WILLIAM HAUGHEY. Born 28/5/08 in Glasgow, Scotland.
Died 12/11/84 in Blaisdon, England, aged 76 years, in the 59th year of profession and 52nd of priesthood.