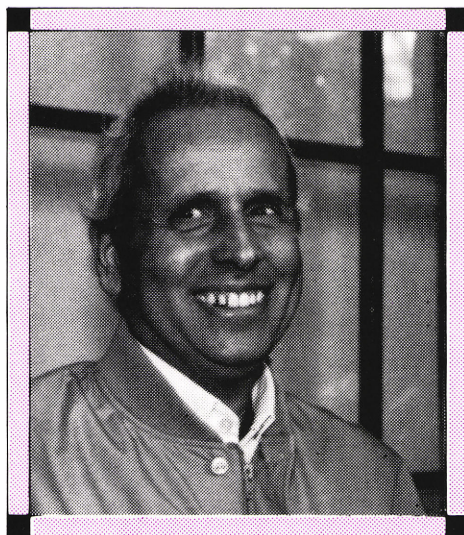

DON BOSCO
715 Sydney Road
Brunswick, Vic. 3056




**FATHER JOSEPH LATTUCA
SDB**

It is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruits of righteousness which come through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

(Philippians 1:9-11)

FATHER JOSEPH LATTUCA SDB

 Father Joseph Lattuca died peacefully at the Repatriation General Hospital Heidelberg just before midnight on Wednesday 5 June 1991, thus ending his five year battle against a rare blood cancer with which he was afflicted in 1987.

Joseph Lattuca was born at Raffadali (Agrigento), Sicily on 20 February 1940. He went to the Salesian school at Pedara at the age of eleven and studied there until 1955 when he entered the Salesian Novitiate at San Gregorio di Catania. In those days novices received the religious habit in a clothing ceremony shortly after the novitiate began, and Joseph received his cassock from Father Alvin Fedrigotti on 4 November 1955. Brother Joseph took his First Vows on 16 August 1956 and then studied philosophy at San Gregorio. He went back to his old school at Pedara for practical training (1960-1963), and then studied theology at Castellamare di Stabia (1963-1967). He was ordained a priest by Bishop Moscato at Salerno on 20 March 1967, along with Fathers Hans Dopheide and Michael Ledda from the Australian Province. Next March he would have been celebrating his Silver Jubilee of Ordination with them.

Father Lattuca arrived in Australia on 1 September 1967 and was assigned to the Boys' Town community at Engadine as teacher and assistant. He was appointed catechist there in 1969. Father's family had previously migrated to Australia, but they returned to Sicily at the beginning of 1970. Father Lattuca also returned and rejoined the Sicilian Province. The whole family returned to Australia in October of the same year, and Father Lattuca was welcomed back to the Australian Province and resumed his post at Boys' Town, Engadine.



Sub-Deacon J. Lattuca (c.) with Companions of the Australian Province - Salerno - May 1966.



Father J. Lattuca (r.) talks to his Rector - Major and fellow Sicilian, Father L. Ricceri - Sunbury - November 1973.

Father was transferred to Ferntree Gully as catechist in 1973 and remained there until the end of 1976 when he went to Don Bosco, Brunswick, to pursue a course of tertiary studies. In 1978 he was appointed Rector of the Brunswick community, a position he held until the end of 1982.

When the parish of St Margaret Mary, North Brunswick, was entrusted to the Salesians in January 1982, Father Lattuca was appointed the first Salesian parish priest. He held the position until 1987 when, because of illness, he was replaced by Father Michael Jackson. He spent the remainder of his life as a member of the Brunswick community, helping out in the house and parish whenever possible.

Father Joe, as we all affectionately knew him, will be remembered by his confreres at Brunswick and indeed by all the confreres of the province for his ready smile, his great generosity, his welcoming manner, his gentleness, his good example and his deep religious spirit. His devotion to Our Lady, under the title of 'Mary Help of Christians' showed his deep love and reverence on the occasion of her Liturgical Feasts. He lived the Salesian tradition of daily 'yard duty', and the children of St Margaret Mary's School experienced his interest and concern for them as they crowded around Father Joe, knowing that they were recognized and loved. He endeared himself to all with whom he came in contact, to his pupils throughout the years and to the parishioners at North Brunswick, particularly to those who had migrated from Italy. One parishioner summed up his life: "Father Joe was a great priest and a great man. He was a priest who wasn't afraid to love". He is sadly missed.

Masses of Thanksgiving for the life and death of Father Lattuca were celebrated at Bairnsdale on Sunday 9 June and at North Brunswick on Monday morning 10 June. At both Masses the churches were packed to capacity with friends wishing to pay a last

tribute to one who had touched their lives. Many people from Bairnsdale, Coburg, Preston, Brunswick and North Brunswick also travelled to Sunbury for the Funeral.

On Monday afternoon 10 June Bishop Joseph O'Connell presided at the Funeral Mass in the Salesian College Sunbury Chapel. Father Julian Fox, Provincial, was main celebrant. 31 Salesian priests of the province concelebrated with him, as did some of the priests of the area.

At the beginning of the ceremony Father Provincial thanked all those who were present for coming to farewell Father Lattuca and console his father and relatives: Bishop O'Connell, Salesians and other priests, doctors who attended Father Lattuca, nurses of the Sacred Heart and Repatriation Hospitals and all others present. At Father Provincial's invitation, Signor Vincenzo Lattuca, father of Joe, placed the book of the Gospels on the coffin and novice Martin Tanti the book of the Constitutions and Regulations.

In his homily Father Julian Fox stated: "On Wednesday 5 June, the Lord called Father Joe Lattuca to himself. The fifth of June had its own special significance, for it was the 150th anniversary of Don Bosco's ordination to the priesthood.

"Such are the marks of God's love. Joe had an element of the 'chosen' about him. God had determined to love and to purify his servant in a way that would be an example to us, and would reveal something more about His love. I am convinced, now, that Joe's body and being did not simply succumb to the disease that had ravaged his body for nearly five years. The fifth of June was a choice: a dignified human act and a wonderful divine act. For Joe it was the central act of his priesthood, a ministerial act, a most meaningful, dignified 'I do' in the face of the Lord's call.

"For God it was the moment to reach out and heal. Joe is now well again. It was also the moment to make clear to us the real meaning of the priesthood of the New Covenant. It is Joe the priest,

and the priest with the Salesian heart, whose entry into eternal life we are celebrating today".

Father Provincial pointed out that the First Reading, in fact the whole of the Letter to the Philippians, was a running commentary on Father Joe's life, and referred to his ability to influence the lives of those with whom he came in contact by his winning ways and his infectious smile. But he had more . . . he had "the mark of indestructible life".

Father Provincial concluded his homily by saying: "We are sad that we have lost a son, a brother, a friend, a confrere. But we have a certainty about God's love, about eternal life, about the fulfilment of all we believe. We commend this good Salesian and priest to that God in his belief.

"Lord Jesus, Saviour, Bread of Life, Blood of the Covenant, heart pulsating with love for us all, in naming you this way we offer you our brother Joe, your priest. Accept our prayers for him. Unite this our concern with your unbounded concern for Joe and for all God's people. Give him eternal life and do not deprive us of the gift of good and holy priesthood; inspire others by his example; strengthen those who are already priests; be with all who suffer."

Please pray for this community that we may continue the good work of all those confreres who have been called by the Lord over the last few years.

The "Don Bosco Brunswick" Community.

FATHER JOSEPH LATTUCA SDB

Born: 20 February 1940 - Professed: 16 August 1956

Ordained: 20 March 1967 - Died: 5 June 1991
