

Salesians of St. John Bosco



Salesian House,
Surrey Lane,
Battersea,
London SW11 3PB

September 1984

Dear Confrères

BROTHER HERBERT FITZGERALD

On the 29th August 1984, about mid-morning, our beloved confrère, Bro. Herbert, died peacefully in his room at Battersea at the age of 80 years.

His passing was as tranquil and as orderly as his life. He had risen early that morning, as usual, and he attended Holy Mass. Later, at breakfast he seemed alert and cheerful and he made arrangements with Father Collins to go for a car drive after lunch. Some time later he must have felt unwell and got into bed. When he did not come to the dining room for lunch, two confrères went to investigate and they found him dead in bed. Shortly afterwards, when the doctor arrived, she estimated that Herbert had been dead for about two hours. Herbert was anointed and given every blessing.

Herbert John Fitzgerald was born in Lambeth, London on April 27th 1904. Herbert was just six years old when his father died and just thirteen years old when his mother died. In the same year, 1917, Herbert entered the Salesian School, Battersea and, after three years there, he decided that he would apply to join the Salesian Congregation. He therefore joined the Salesian novitiate at Burwash when he was sixteen years old.

At the end of his novitiate he was professed at Cowley, Oxford in 1921. After studying Philosophy at Cowley for two years, Bro. Herbert then started his studies at Oxford University. He was awarded his B.A. in 1927 and M.A. in 1930.

Bro. Herbert started his teaching career in 1927 at the Salesian School in Bolton and, at the same time, he began his theological studies. As a result of prolonged ill health, Bro. Herbert had to abandon his studies for the priesthood and in 1933 he joined the community at Battersea and he continued as a member of that community for fifty-one years until he died. Bro. Herbert taught Maths, History and Economics in the Salesian College with much enthusiasm and much success. He was a great sporting enthusiast, being fully involved in all the sporting activities of the school and also an outstanding sportsman himself.

Among the Old Boys he was a general favourite. For many years he was the secretary of their association, the keeper of their archives, the recorder of their membership, and the one on whom many odd jobs were thrust and were willingly undertaken. He was always happy to welcome them and to hear all that they had to say and he kept contact with many of them over the years.

Bro. Herbert was by nature a kind, patient and humble man. He was also a very spiritual man with a great love for the Salesian Congregation and the many members whom he had known over the years. The many letters of sympathy which arrived after the news of his death testify to the genuine affection in which Bro. Herbert was held by very many Salesians and friends.

On Wednesday, September 5th the mortal remains of Bro. Herbert were brought to the College chapel, where he had attended morning Mass so many times. Requiem Mass was celebrated by many Salesian priests and attended by Salesian Sisters and several Old Boys and friends.

On Thursday, 6th September, in the Parish church Solemn Requiem Mass was concelebrated by many priests and attended by Old Boys, friends and pupils of the College. Bro. Herbert was later buried at the Salesian plot at Morden cemetery.

Please pray for Bro. Herbert and for this Community.

Yours sincerely in Don Bosco,
Bernard Higgins, S.D.B.
(Rector)

Data for the Necrology: Bro. Herbert Fitzgerald born in London on the 27th April 1904 died in London on the 29th August 1984 in the 62nd year of his religious profession.

R.I.P.