

5 January

Fr RICHARD FOLEY

13 March 1922 – 5 January 2003

Richard Foley spent just one year at the Seminary in Chishawasha and accounts of his subsequent life in the UK hint as to why he did not stay. He had a ‘vile temper’ and would erupt ‘like Vesuvius’ if contradicted. ‘This meant,’ wrote John Edwards who admired him, ‘often promising friendships would end and fruitful working relationships disintegrate’ (*Letters and Notices, Vol 96 p 229*). But then he would come deeply repentant and apologise.



Richard was born in Cape Town, played for the Springboks and joined the army. He served in the Second World War in Ethiopia and North Africa, where he was captured (in Tobruk) and so spent three and a half years in POW camps in Greece, Italy and Germany. He was one of the large number of novices whom the war turned towards religious life and he joined the novitiate in 1946.

He did a doctorate in theology in Louvain and so was qualified to teach at the seminary but it seems his temperament was against him and he had to leave. He worked in parishes and Craighead retreat house. He filled the church in Manchester with his sermons especially on the Sacred Heart and his brand of devotions which seems to have consisted in prayer petitions which blended ‘rocking with mirth and tears’. He was assiduous in house visiting – ‘eight hours a day, rain or snow’. He was a man of ‘warm charity and true devotion’.