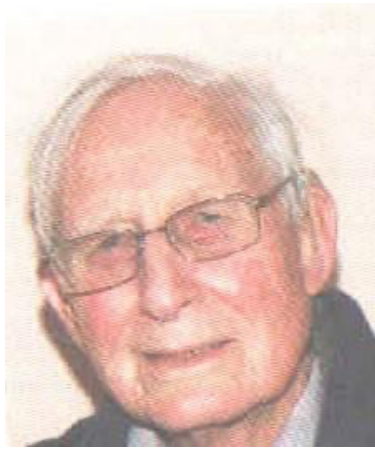


21 February

Fr GERARD LORRIMAN 2 January 1915 – 21 February 2011



Dying at the age of 96, Gerry was the oldest member of the British Province at the time and had the further distinction of being the only father in the province. 'On his ordination day', Nicholas King tells us, 'The rector of the Gesù was surprised to see his room festooned with woman's underwear ... his daughter, Francesca, was washing her clothes'.

Gerry is remembered for standing in front of the on-coming Casspirs (SA armoured cars) at a political funeral. In apartheid South Africa these were dangerous affairs as people were often shot. Many clergy were afraid of conducting such events. But not Gerry. Police started firing tear gas and the pallbearers fled. But Gerry shook his fist at the Casspirs and shouted, 'Fuck off, you bastards!' The driver of the leading vehicle was so shocked to see the vested padre that 'he stopped and turned and bugged off.' On another occasion he tried to get the police to stop the destruction of Crossroads and his testimony later, which included his WW2 record, won damages for the people.

Such was Gerry Lorriman and Paddy Connors tells us, a lapsed Catholic, noticing the picture of Gerry confronting the armed vehicle in a church porch in Liverpool, returned to the Church. 'Real Jesuits are always in unexpected places', he said.

Born in the NE of England, Gerry graduated in medicine at Newcastle and served as a doctor in WW2 in N Africa and Italy. He married an Italian in Lucca and later became a chest specialist in Brompton Hospital. She died in 1970 and a couple of years later Gerry, aged around 58, applied to join the Jesuits. Julian Hoffman, who had studied with him in Rome, suggested he be chaplain at Groote Schuur Hospital in Cape Town for a year, which Gerry did in 1983. It was around that time that he supplied for a great friend of his, a diocesan priest Des Curran, who was going on holiday. The man had a growing parish at Crossroads and Gerry offered to help. The parish was later divided and Gerry became the first PP of Nyanga, and moved into the newly built presbytery and church on the understanding that, when he retired, the Jesuits would return the parish to the Archdiocese.



He was not the easiest of people to live with and was quite determined to do what he wanted in spite of superiors. It was more a question of finding a job for the man than the man for the job. He was not above shouting at superiors until he realised that the tactic did not work. And superiors had a problem getting him to retire. 'I'm only 93.' But when his health began to fail he did retire, first to the Elms and then finally to Nazareth House where he died with his daughter Francesca among those present.