

3 April

Fr GERALD McENHILL

14 July 1926 – 3 April 1978



Gerry was a Scotsman, born at Wishaw, and he worked at Inland Revenue for a while before joining the Society in 1947. Ordained ten years later, he came to Rhodesia in 1961 and worked in Monte Cassino, Makumbi and Kutama and by 1974 he was in Martindale. He came to town in 1979 first

in Highfield and then in Mabelreign. His last assignment was at the Marist novitiate at Rothwell Farm where he suddenly collapsed and died while fully vested for Mass.

Gerry was someone who liked to be hidden ‘behind the scenes’ and it was ironic that his was the first of the new style funerals in the province. Up till then there was Mass and the burial – ‘all over in three hours.’ But for Gerry, there was first a vigil the night before at Mbare where people could gather to pray and celebrate his life.

Gerry was strict and demanding. If you missed a class for confirmation, you got a, ‘Come back next year.’ He was a great preacher but late in life he preferred not to preach. Was he overawed by the words of scripture themselves? Mark Hackett thought him a ‘model of preaching in depth in a few words.’ At his funeral Tom Jackson said, ‘Gerry longed for people to deepen the roots of faith in their lives.’ Gerry praised John O’Malley’s book on the first Jesuits for its treatment of the rarely mentioned apostolates of the first Jesuits, particularly the emphasis on one-to-one conversation (Ignatius, Favre). He admired Fr Magan of the New York province who did ‘city centre parish work’ by setting up a ‘tiny Mass centre in Rezende St’ in Harare for a time.

He was a supporter of MUKAI, the periodical for theological reflection and wrote articles for it which he, infuriatingly, labelled ‘not for publication but to stimulate others!’ He was a thinker and much that he wrote centred on ‘Christ our Ancestor’. He enjoyed printing just before his time-honoured methods were consigned to history. He called himself ‘Gerry Atric Press’ and produced cards, certificates and decorated programmes. His Christmas cards featured the Mother and Child á la Dürer.

He enjoyed teaching English and Sacramental Theology to the novices at Rothwell and the Sunday Shona Mass with ‘normal’ people, that is, people who could bring perspective to his weekly work. When he died, one of the Marists wrote, ‘he was a man of God, cultured and much in touch with the signs of the time in the world and in the Church.’ Dominic Tomuseni remembers ‘Maki’ preaching with few words but with his while being. ‘We had a hill of an altar (at Mbare) and the priest’s chair was up at the centre. Gerry preferred to take his place at the foot of the hill with the altar servers (one of whom was Dominic). Dominic wrote in farewell:

Ndangariro dzazuro	Remember the past
Vavarira yanhasi	Be intent on the present
Tariro yamangwana	Hope for the future
Ngazvitisunganidze	Let us sweat together
Zororai murugare, Baba!	Rest in peace, Baba!