

5 April

Fr **BERNARD LATCHFORD** 23 September 1905 – 5 April 1983



‘Latch’ was born of an Irish family in St Ignatius Parish, Stamford Hill, London and entered the Jesuits in 1923. Ordained at the outbreak of war, he served as a chaplain mainly in India. In 1946 he came to the Regional Seminary, a year before the first ordinations. He was to remain for nearly thirty years.

‘He rode his students with a light reign (sic) (surely, rein?), influencing them by the man he was’, wrote Edward Ennis, ‘by his natural dignity, freedom from affectation and great simplicity.’ He taught almost all the philosophy to the ‘major’ seminarians as well as English and Geography to the ‘minors’. (Lachlan Hughes). Archbishop Pius Ncube recalls that he ‘taught us Logic, Epistemology, Metaphysics, Rational Psychology, Ethics and the History of Philosophy with outstanding clarity and simplicity of presentation. No one fell asleep in his class and he allowed students to express their opinions freely. Another noted that he did not go into depth in his subjects and, with that load, it is little wonder. He was imaginative and once livened up his prayer points for the seminarians by linking them to Aesop’s fables.

He was known as *Musoja* as he had been in the military and it was also perhaps because he dressed immaculately, with his hair parted in the middle. He attended all Seminary matches and his interest in football was born of his love for his home team, Tottenham Hotspurs. (Their ground, he often recalled, had been solemnly blessed but they then lost the next six matches!)

Latch was a great community man and much at home with his fellow Jesuits. He would ‘extend himself’ to make conversation. Every Saturday he set off for Rhodesville Mass Centre which Chichester wanted to develop into a parish and on Thursday he would be in town visiting people and having a training session for lay catechists in the evening. He was also Novice Master to Stephen Chiwanza, a late vocation, who did his novitiate at the seminary.

He returned to England in 1974 and was in charge of the Jesuit Development Fund with Betty King as secretary. She found him a delight to work with.