

15 April

Fr CUTHBERT DONNELLY 12 May 1901 – 15 April 1977



‘Cuth’ Donnelly was involved in the training of priests on three continents. Besides a long stint in England, he had three sessions in India and his final years were in Zimbabwe. Born in Liverpool he was educated at St Francis Xavier’s. In the Society he went to Campion Hall, Oxford, where he was awarded First Class Honours in English

Literature. Except for relatively short breaks elsewhere, he was at Heythrop for thirty years (1935-65). He was athletic and once saved a boy from drowning.

One of the breaks was at Manresa Teacher Training College in London where he was one of those who devoted great energy to building up the institution. Its closure in 1954 pained him immensely and he struggled to accept it. (Something similar happened to Heythrop itself in the teens of this century and there are people alive today who were deeply upset by that decision). It was in 1965 that Cuth came to the Regional Seminary in Chishawasha and he was still there up to the end of his working life. (See picture where he is in a white coat).

So much for the skeleton facts of his life; in the midst of it there was this energy and enthusiasm that everyone who knew him marvelled at (John Russell). He never did special studies in anything, except English at Oxford. But he taught many branches of philosophy and theology throughout his life. The list would include New Testament, History of Philosophy, Cosmology, Metaphysics, texts of St Thomas, pedagogy and so forth. He could give lectures on Teilhard de Chardin, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Chaucer, etc. And he was not superficial but went into depth.

Above all, he loved personal communication and had a huge correspondence which he pursued with ‘warmth and wit’. Mike Hannan wrote an appreciation of him; ‘He had the gift of wholeheartedly respecting, admiring and furthering the projects and outlook of his Jesuit companions.’ The present writer remembers John Dove, in the early days of Silveira House, feeling the coolness and criticisms of fellow Jesuits with one or two exceptions, among them, Cuth Donnelly.

When Cuth died, Bruno Brinkman reflected that he (Brinkman) was one of those who asked too much of Cuth. He was a man who always said ‘yes’. But he somehow felt that he was not appreciated.