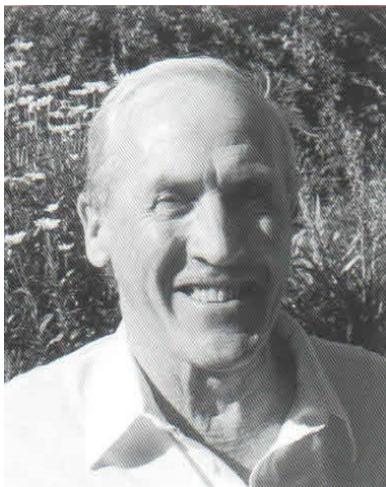


May 5

Fr JOHN GILLICK

27 March 1916 – 5 May 2005 (050505)



Born in Cheshire, England, at Wallasey, Jack entered the Jesuits in 1934 and took first class honours in history at Oxford in 1941. Ordained in 1948, he went to Beaumont where he shared ‘his infectious enthusiasm for history with us’ (Fr Michael Bingham). Bingham continued, ‘he never talked down to us or was ill-tempered but his teaching was marked by good humour, encouragement and respect. We looked forward to his classes. He brought the same ways to his coaching of cricket. He introduced group reflection to the Sodality, a way pioneered by

Fr Bernard Bassett, and started the Lourdes handicapped children’s pilgrimages. He invited Catholic writers and politicians to talk to us. But, as my vocation crystallised, I found myself avoiding his attentions.’

Some felt he was too pushy with regard to vocations and I have heard he later apologised to some who found they were in the wrong place and left the Society. Certainly Christopher Corcoran, who was one of them, found it quite a struggle to leave and Robin Mulcahy, later an attentive doctor to Jesuits, took ten years to do so and felt a bit bitter about it.



In 1960, Jack was at Manresa using his photographic skills to the full and the collection he made while staying in Zimbabwe is the pride of our collection. Here is one example (Sr Kiliana and n’anga Jacobo at Marymount, 1961). He became headmaster of Beaumont from 1964 until it closed in 1967. He then went for a counselling course in Chicago and

came back to found and run *Fons Vitae*, a programme for updating sisters about the insights and teaching of the Second Vatican Council, in South Africa from 1970 to 1985. Some 800 sisters passed through the course. David Dryden thinks it was ‘an enormous contribution to the church in South Africa and Jack became the best known priest in the country’. Later he was spiritual director of St Peter’s Seminary and in 1989 developed an apostolate of counselling for people living with HIV/AIDS

Tom Shufflebotham quotes some spiritual notes Jack shared with him which develop the theme that God asks of us in prayer 'to receive and accept our helplessness. So he 'frustrates' our efforts ... to pray 'successfully'.

Gerry Lorrimer, who lived with Jack in Cape Town considered him 'essentially reserved and it was hard to be completely relaxed with him.' He was courteous and brave in his final illness and died in Cape Town. David Dryden 'found Jack very pleasant, but he always dominated. He quickly became an expert in whatever he did.'