

May 8

TERENCE CORRIGAN 30 September 1915 - 8 May 1975



On learning of the death of Fr Corrigan, Fr General Arrupe wrote, 'I am saddened by the death of my good friend Terence Corrigan ... an outstanding member and faithful collaborator of the province's apostolate.'

Terence Corrigan was born in Bristol, in the UK in 1915 and there is a photo of him with his brothers and sisters – all of them holding balloons. But only the one of Terence is airborne as he insisted in putting gas in it! He was showing early his desire for *magis*. His first assignment as a Jesuit was to Stonyhurst College and he spent nine happy years there. What the students saw was a 'man young at heart, full of enthusiasm and able to generate enthusiasm in others'. He became procurator of the farms owned by the college and developed happy relationships with the whole farming neighbourhood.

In 1958, to the indignation of the Stonyhurst community, he was appointed superior of the Salisbury (Harare) Mission. But the inoculations he had to endure seem to have brought on a mysterious illness which showed itself in sudden attacks of weakness inducing 'transitory confusion with feelings of impending disaster'. Eventually a prescription was found that brought the attacks under control but did not cure them.

Sick or well he threw himself into his new responsibilities. His 'vision, tenacity and power to inspire' were just what the mission needed in that time of immense change in Africa. He founded the Prestage Trust, putting the mission's finances on a firm basis and joined the National Convention set up to explore the political way forward in the country. He quickly picked up the germ of the idea for St Ignatius College and saw it through. He bought the property now known as Garnet / Prestage / Richartz because of its proximity to the university. He moved the novitiate to Mazowe to free up Silveira House, under Fr John Dove, as a training centre and he supported the fledgling School of Social Work set up by Fr Ted Rogers. He also insisted the withdrawal from St Aidan's was simply a redeployment of men in South Africa where he saw great apostolic opportunities.

All this bold activity made him the obvious choice for provincial in Britain though there were those who said he did not answer letters or keep appointments and that you had to 'bug' him to get an answer. 'He was never unapproachable but often hard to find!' While there was some truth in the comments made about him the reality was he put people first and some wider call drew him away from the immediate issue. He thought ahead and related everything to the future. When you did catch up with him he would give you all the time in the world. Sometimes sheer exhaustion or ill health forced him to disappear for a while to recover and carry on. He had his critics but often they only knew half the truth. Another person might have taken more trouble to justify himself but Terence was indifferent to popularity. He was ready to admit his own mistakes but equally unwilling to excuse himself by passing the blame onto others.

He was no sooner back in England as provincial than GC31 was called and he had to prepare to go to Rome for extended periods. The province was still large in those days and he experimented with Regional Delegates to share the work. He also, in 1967, launched the Jesuit Development Appeal to both raise money and to involve all Jesuits in the province in learning and explaining our apostolic goals. He believed the Society must work closer with lay people and he set up a lay Advisory Council for Stonyhurst which grew into a Governing Body of Jesuits and lay people.

Fr Corrigan is also remembered as the one who brought Heythrop College in from 'the bush' to the city of London. It was a bold decision and difficult to implement. But he saw it through. His term of office ended with the Canonisation of the Forty Martyrs of England and Wales with a large number of the province in attendance.

Relieved of his duties as provincial he was asked to be part of the team preparing for GC32 and at the same time was appointed procurator (treasurer) of the province. But in 1975 he suddenly became ill and while he was not afraid to die was worried about leaving his important job as procurator half done. In the Westminster Hospital where it became clear there was nothing further that could be done for him, it was not he but one of the doctors who broke down and wept. The nurses said it was a privilege to take care of him. One of the Ward Sisters said, 'Lots of people can take the pain but he could take the humiliation and indignity too.' He died on Ascension Thursday, 1975