

May 12

## Fr PETER MEIRING

1 February 1922 – 12 May 2013



Peter Meiring's father was South African, a Consultant Dermatologist, and his parents lived five minutes from St Wilfred's Church in Preston and liked welcoming Jesuits to their home. When Peter became one it was from his mother that he heard he was appointed to the Mount! But first Peter began his own education at Preston Catholic College and then moved to the Mount as a boy. He entered the Society in 1939 and did five years regency at the Mount beginning in 1946. Fr Michael Beattie, when he was a small boy at Barlborough, the primary school for the Mount, remembers Peter coming over and trying to teach the boys to bowl leg breaks (cricket!). Few went on to university in those days and, though Peter spent most of his years in the classroom, he had no degree.

He was ordained in 1953 and soon after returned to the Mount where he taught Latin, English and R.E. He was an enthusiast in everything he did and while he was supposed to be supervising the boys at break, he preferred to join in their impromptu soccer games. Cricket and rugby were the official games but Peter grew up with Preston North End in his blood. Beattie remembered Peter was 'always around' and made the 'harsh life of the Mount more tolerable'. His enthusiasm stretched to the life in the Spirit in the school and Peter was keen to point to the name of the school, Mount St Mary's, as a sign of our Lady's special protection of that area of the country through the preceding difficult centuries. Peter was an avid devotee of Lourdes and, later, Medjugorje. He helped to build a happy community at the Mount by his friendliness and humour. But he was highly strung and began to experience muscular spasms which drew his chin down and caused him discomfort though he never complained.

In 1973, Peter Meiring started a new life in Africa. He was 51 and spent his remaining 40 years in Africa. He began teaching French and Afrikaans at St George's and taking a deep interest in the spiritual life of the school, promoting the Sodality, retreats and collecting funds for refugees. When Jim Berry became Rector, he and Peter found they got on particularly well, each appreciating the other's gifts though, for Jim, Peter's 'devotional life was totally alien'. (Mark Hackett). They continued to work together – and play golf together - when Peter retired from the classroom and moved, first to Braeside and later to the Cathedral. Towards the end, Peter lost his gregariousness and drew into himself, becoming quiet and even depressed.