

08 July

# Fr Brian George Porter

23 March 1933 – 08 July 2024

*He was in his 92<sup>nd</sup> year of life, and was in his 72<sup>nd</sup> year in the Society; in his 58<sup>th</sup> year of Priesthood; and in his 48<sup>th</sup> year of Final Vows.*

<i>Ort.</i> .....23 March 1933	<i>Diac.</i> .....	<i>Defunc.</i> .....08 July 2024
<i>Loc. Nat.</i> .....Hornchurch, Essex, England	<i>Loc. Diac.</i> .....	<i>Loc. Defunc.</i> ..... Richartz House, Harare, Zimbabwe
<i>Ingr.</i> ..... 07 September 1952	<i>Ord.</i> .....24 July 1966	<i>Date of Funeral</i> ..... 11 July 2024
<i>Loc. Ingr</i> ..... Harlaxton, England	<i>Loc. Ord.</i> .....Manchester, England	<i>Place of Funeral:</i> .....St Ignatius College Chishawasha Harare, Zimbabwe
<i>Mag.</i> St Georges (1960), St Paul's (1961), St Ignatius (1962), Zimbabwe	<i>Grad.</i> ..... Professed of 4 Vows	<i>Place of Burial:</i> ...Chishawasha Cemetery, Zimbabwe
<i>Stud.</i> ..Dagenam, Heythrop (Oxon) (Phil and Theol),	<i>Loc. Grad.</i> .....Zimbabwe	<i>Prov.</i> .....SAP
	<i>Dies.</i> ..... 02 February 1977	



Brian was born in Hornchurch, Essex, just outside London, in 1933. He was educated at primary school near home by religious sisters and his parents chose for his secondary education Jesuit St Ignatius College, Stamford Hill, also in North London though it was not the nearest school. He used to travel there by train with other boys and made many friends.

At school he and his friends used to visit old men to cheer them up and he developed an interest in parish work and becoming a priest. He was inspired by two scholastics at the school though both later left. ‘They introduced us to Missionary Magazines’, he recalled at a community meeting at Richartz in April 2023, ‘and the lives of the English martyrs.’ The school was divided into ‘houses’ named after the martyrs – Champion, Garnet, Page. ‘All these influences turned me towards thinking of joining the Society of Jesus. I was also impressed by the headmaster, Fr Brinkworth, who gave spiritual talks and led the Sodality of our Lady (now CLC). I made a retreat in Birmingham and decided to join.’

Brian entered in 1952 at Harlaxton, in Leicestershire, along with two others who subsequently left. After the novitiate he completed the technical studies he had been doing at Dagenham and earned a teacher’s certificate in ‘City and Guilds’.

He did the normal course of studies in philosophy and theology at the old Heythrop in Oxfordshire and did his regency at three places in Zimbabwe: St George’s College (1960), St Paul’s Musami (1961) under ‘Jeep’ Davis teaching Maths and working in the mission garage, and at St Ignatius College, Chishawasha where he was one of the founding team under Fr Desmond Ford as rector in 1962.

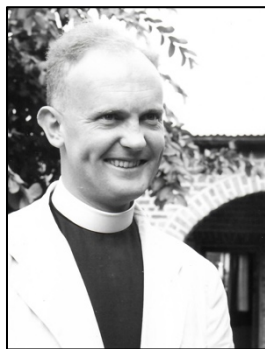


Regency over, he went back to Heythrop for theology and was ordained in Manchester in 1966 and did his tertianship the following year at St Beuno's, Wales.

In 1968, he returned to St Ignatius College, Chishawasha, where Jim Hughes was now rector and he was teacher, minister, bursar and boarding master for the next twenty years. Jim and Brian had a good relationship and would chat together in the evening. 'One day in 1969, Jim started having chest pains and I drove him to see Dr Lamplugh. On the way the pains got worse so I changed routes and took him straight to the hospital where they found he had suffered a heart attack and he soon died. I still feel a bit guilty about his premature death. I wished I had taken him straight to the hospital that morning.'

Brian became involved in a number of extra curriculum activities with the students, for example, sailing on a local dam and photography including a basic dark room.

Full of ideas, he devised a scheme of 'audio books' to sooth the juniors to sleep. He read and recorded extracts he thought would interest them and played them as the youngsters settled down for the night.



In 1989, Brian was asked to move to Garnet House as Province Treasurer and again he did a long stint, twenty years, in that job. Meanwhile he had become chaplain to the LCBL novitiate in Borrowdale and fulfilled that task from 2002 to 2015. He was reluctant at first, thinking he had little to offer them, but Fidelis Mukonori, the provincial, persuaded him and in the end, he was grateful for the opportunity. He was clearly 'a success' at the task. In 2016, he took up light duties at Garnet House, helping the new treasurer and being house bursar. About four years later he moved across to Richartz House.

Brian ended his sharing with the Richartz community by saying, 'It seems strange that, despite my early ideas about becoming priest, I never worked in a parish though I used to do Sunday supplies at St Martin's. I can say that, over my while life, I never had any miserable years.'