

3 August

Fr WILLIAM BRODERICK 11 September 1928 – 3 August 2005



Bill Broderick was only in Africa for two years but from scraps of information it can be deduced that he left his mark in his own ‘perceptive, patient and quiet way’ (John Fairhurst). Born in Listowel in Ireland, he lost his mother at the age of two and years later, John tells us, when at the closing event of a retreat participants were invited to place a symbol representing something significant in the retreat, Bill placed a box of tissues by the lighted candle with the words, ‘Tears shed for the joys of childhood which I missed.’ The family moved to

England and Bill entered the Society in 1947 and was ordained in 1963. He did ‘Greats’ at Oxford and taught at St George’s and St Aidan’s for his regency (1959-60). He was not happy in the community which he described as ‘a remote detachment of the Foreign Legion’ (Gero McLoughlin). Like many of his generation, he was destined for the classroom and was a ‘great teacher’ for the decades leading to 1980, a ‘watershed’ year (Alan Harrison) for him. He taught, and was also rector, in both St Ignatius and Stonyhurst.

In 1980 he spent a sabbatical in Wernersville, imbibing the renewal in Jesuit spirituality, a cascade in the States since the centenary of Ignatius’ death in 1956. Despite his success as a teacher, he was ‘diffident’ (Fintan Creaven) in those earlier years, but now he flourished as a spiritual director and retreat giver. He moved to St Beuno’s (1981-89) where he consolidated the 3Ms – the three-month programme of renewal including a 30-day retreat - experienced by many. He also encouraged the growing number of lay people in both making and giving the Exercises.

In 1990 he moved to Craighhead, the retreat house in Scotland, where, Gero tells us, ‘He was able to draw into the retreat ministry people from different Christian traditions.’ On leaving Craighhead in 1996, Bill hoped to pursue his interest in ministry to people living with AIDS but instead he was asked to help the Congregation of Jesus at the Bar Convent in York set up their spirituality programme.

‘He was a humble self-effacing man who taught with immense authority born of long experience and insight’ (A Church of Scotland minister).