

14 August

Fr TERENCE FILBY

29 July 1912 - 14 August 1974



Terry Filby is described as ‘a character, with his genial bulk’ by his obituarist, meaning presumably he was unpredictable, amusing, and original and large. He was a ‘good community man’ and was at home with old ladies, teenagers, children at the police camp and boys at St George’s.

He was born in Cambridge, educated at Jesuit Mount St Mary’s, entered the Society in 1930 and was ordained in in 1946. He taught in four schools in the UK before coming to Rhodesia in 1950 and spending fifteen years at St George’s. He taught physics there and coached rugby, started a photographic club, put on plays and began a printing press. He was ‘forthright and discerning of people and many came to him with their problems’.

In 1966 he moved to the Cathedral and was responsible for asking Pauline Battigelli to paint the picture of the Last Supper that hangs behind the altar. He made other improvements, in the lighting and PA system. He was a great host and even learnt some Portuguese, the better to be able to welcome visitors from Mozambique. He was the spiritual director of the SVP at the Cathedral and his weekly talks were ‘memorable’. He used to preach in a way that seemed ‘off the cuff’ but, in fact, much preparation went in to his homilies.

In 1972 he went to Emerald Hill as chaplain and also helped out at Rhodesville at week-ends when Fr John Gough (diocesan) was away. He died rather suddenly, when no one was expecting it, aged only 62.