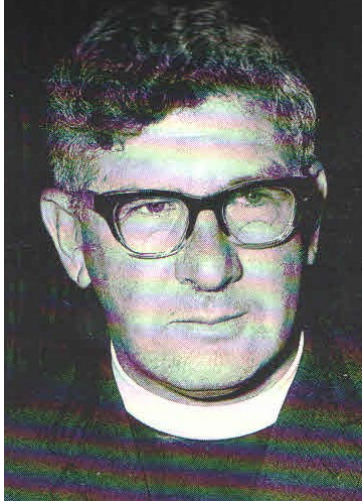


8 October

Fr WALTER BARTON WATSON

29 October 1916 – 8 October 1989



Bart, as he was known, was born in Pretoria and was educated by the Christian Brothers there and the Society at St Aidan's. He entered in 1935 and did six years regency during the war at Wimbledon. After ordination in 1940, he went to St Aidan's for nineteen years, followed by time in the home province at Barlborough, the preparatory school for Mount St Mary's. Then he went to Southwell House and finally Farm St.

Robert Carty, a contemporary, says he was 'a tower of common sense' in the years of formation when that quality was often in short supply. He used to say, 'Survival', Robert, 'that's the key.' He was deeply pained when St Aidan's was closed and struggled with the decision. But he was 'fiercely loyal' to the Society and the Church despite his disquiet at the reforms of Vatican II. He distanced himself from 'middle-class white South Africas' and this seems to have contributed to his return to England even though he 'loved the country that formed him.'

When in Barlborough, he responded to requests that the hitherto boys only school be opened to girls and welcomed day-girls at first, gradually expanding. At Southwell House, a retreat centre with a broad agenda, Billy Hewett, a fellow Jesuit, used to taunt him on his mixed parentage and origin, 'With a Jansenist Dublin Mum and a proddy-dog Ulster Dad, born in a fascist South Africa, you never had a chance.' Bart would enjoy the mocking and laugh. He made Southwell House 'a miracle of total hospitality' welcoming all sorts, from the poorest to the 'way out' whom Billy would invite.

After his death he was seen off to the 'magnificent yet simple strains of Fauré's Requiem'.