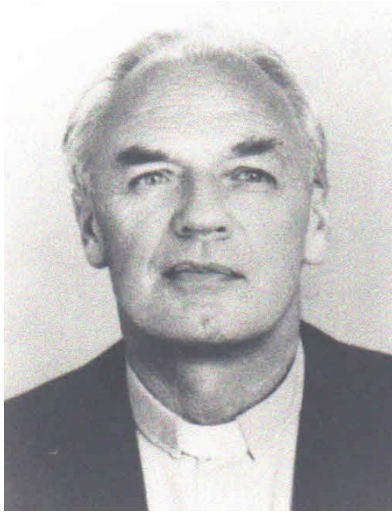


18 October

Fr RICHARD RANDOLPH 10 May 1916 - 18 October 2008



Freddie Copleston, Jock Earle and Dick Randolph were among those English Jesuits who did not grow up Catholics but came to the Church in their teens and to the Society from different backgrounds to most. All three were outstanding in the way they were unfettered by the closeted attitudes of their contemporaries and could approach issues with rare freedom. Dick came from a long established Anglican aristocratic family and grew up in a relaxed, courteous and generous atmosphere which served him through his long life. His mother, after a

morning's shopping in London, took him as a boy to Westminster Cathedral ('Don't tell your father') and he found peace there in the Blessed Sacrament chapel. Later, at Cambridge, he met the Catholic chaplain, Mgr. Gilbey, who accompanied him further and he entered the Church when he was nineteen.

He farmed for a bit but when the war broke out, he joined up. Gerry J Hughes spoke at his Requiem: 'Dick and I joined the Society on the same day in 1951, me a callow youth, he, twice my age, a former Major in the Army who had fought his way through Dunkirk, the Western Desert, Sicily and Normandy, organising supplies and transport for entire army groups as a Deputy Assistant Quartermaster General and had run a farm in Tanganyika after the war. I remember him as being exceptionally considerate and kind to me personally. ... Gerry quotes another Jesuit as writing to Dick's mother, 'one might expect Jesuit training to be strict and rigid; in a curious way Dick seems to have found freedom in it, and was in himself much less restless and searching.'

In 1961, Dick went to Africa. His brief was to sort out the finances and infrastructure of the ill-managed Jesuit farms and he took to his new role as priest, farmer and organiser, based at Monte Cassino. But the growing tension prompted by the Rhodesian government's refusal to listen to African aspirations for freedom, led for a request for him to work with the Catholic Bishops in their growing opposition to the government. Not everyone was happy. Bishop Lamont seems to have found him too diplomatic and Fidelis Mukonori writes: 'I saw in him the soldier's discipline in planning, strategizing, thinking, exercising prudence in written language and precision in decision making, but gentleness in speech. ... most of the crucial decisions which were made by the bishops

while Fr Randolph was Secretary, were not regretted. ... There was tension at times between the CCJP (the Justice and Peace Commission) and the bishops but when there was crisis Fr Randolph would be there, especially when the police raided the commission's office. He always put our differences aside when situations demanded authority.'

Dick left Africa in 1983 but was called back to plan the visit of John Paul II in 1988. He quipped that for him it was a rerun of the Normandy landings. He then retired to England to a quiet parish not far from where he grew up in the west of England. In his last years he moved to Campion Hall, Oxford, where he helped many students – particularly from Japan – in writing their doctoral theses. Another was Fr Ladislaus Lado, from Cameroon, who wrote, 'He was a very good man; I will never forget all the precious help I got from him during my years at Campion Hall'.