

3 November

Br BERNARD GATELY

2 June 1924 – 3 November 1989



When this writer first found himself destined for Rhodesia (as it then was) he was warmly welcomed and helped by Bernard Gately then in the provincial's office in London. But raw youth that he was – and not for the last time – he jumped to conclusions. Why, if it was such a great place, did Gately leave it? There were good reasons but he did not inquire.

Bernard Gately was a Mancunian, a native of Manchester, and he entered the Society in 1942 but his novitiate was almost immediately interrupted by war service and was only resumed in 1946. After various postings in the UK in maintenance work, he went to Southern Rhodesia in 1954 and served in Mhondoro, Marymount, Chishawasha and Prestage House as secretary to Fr Corrigan, then Superior of the Mission. When Corrigan became provincial in 1964 he brought Gately with him to London. Bernard seamlessly exchanged a spanner for a typewriter and was a Godsend to more than one provincial.

Edmund (Willie) Wilson had fond memories of their time together at Marymount. Bernard, an accomplished electrician, mechanic, plumber and accountant, introduced Willie to the mission and together they planned and built the hospital, workshops and a classroom block. Willie remembers Gately unpacking the parts and carefully assembling a new engine for the lorry in his bedroom – there being nowhere else to do it. He also remembers tightening a screw so much it sheared off the bolt in the engine block. 'Without any anger or recrimination Bernard downed tools saying he would have to go to town at once to get the necessary tools ... There was no electricity or water for two days at the mission as we both drive to town (a day's journey) and back without a break. ... About forty hours after the mishap the engine was running again.'

Willie remembers Bernard going with him over flooded rivers for sick calls and once, when Sr Kiliansa was taking an overdue pregnant woman to hospital, they hit a bump in the road and the baby was born on the spot. What is remarkable about Bernard was how easily he slipped into a totally different world of typing, filing, accounting and all the other jobs in a provincial's office. He was also a pastoral man and was much drawn to helping people and used to regret that he did not become a priest. He was, one supposes, advised early on that his academic attainments would not allow him. At any rate, he did wonderful

service. He used to be moody and knew it but could not help himself. Lachie Hughes was very helpful to him when he was down. He died rather suddenly in Blackpool, aged 65.

Mark Hackett writes, 'Bernard used to come to me every evening at Chishawasha and would talk a lot and needed company for he was very unhappy. One day he had spent the whole day trying to get the engine of Toots Davies' land rover back into place. Toots used a pious prayer and Bernard a four-letter word and the engine slipped back into place. I seem to remember them discussing which expression had done the trick.'