

20 December

## Br STANISLAUS TAMKVAITIS

25 February 1912 –

20 December 1982



We could not pronounce his name – and settled for Tam – nor the place of his birth but he came into the word in Padrečiai, near Marimpolė (the city of Mary?), Lithuania. He trained as a shoemaker and joined the Society in 1929. He worked for some years in Europe before coming to Africa. This writer remembers asking him when he came and his answer was ‘4

o’clock’. There was then a long pause before he gave me the date and the year (1938). He served in Driefontein (briefly), St Benedict’s, the Seminary, Mhondoro, Monte Cassino, the School of Social Work and finally St Ignatius.

Dick Randolph tells us about his service in one of these places: Monte Cassino, where Dick was superior in the 1960s. The three brothers, Tam, McGuigan and Hayward ran the plumbing, the carpentry and the 5000-acre farm. Tam’s job was water. 36,000 gallons were needed each day. There was a pump from the river (Macheke) a mile away which yielded 26,000 a day and the water was stored in tanks on the hill behind the mission. Four 200 feet deep boreholes, run by diesel engines, provided the balance of 10,000. The water fed the school, the farm (dairy cows) and the swimming pool.

Tam also cared for the two thirty horsepower engines that provided electricity from 6 pm to 9 pm in the days before they could link to the national grid. The electricity was also needed for McGuigan’s saw mill. ‘Constant attention was needed to provide the near-perfect performance’ of all these interlocking initiatives. Tam had the ‘ingenuity and the imperturbability’ necessary. Randolph also tells us his conversation was exhaustive – every detail was given – and exhausting (to the listener!)

The room where he died in St Anne's was 'a most cheerful place'. He was asked if he could now forgive the Russians (who had overrun his country) and he smiled a 'yes'.