

20 December

Fr PATRICK McNAMARA 29 April 1923 – 20 December 1988



Pat McNamara was born, the youngest of thirteen, in Jarrow-on-Tyne, NE England. Caught up in the war he only entered the Society when he was 25, in 1948. He arrived in Southern Rhodesia in 1961 and studied the language at Monte Cassino before going to Kutama the following year as assistant pastor. He was then

in Kadoma for a short while before being called into administration in Salisbury where he remained for the rest of his life. He became secretary to Archbishop Markall and later superior of the Salisbury Mission. The picture above is of him standing with Edward Ennis in the foreground and Archbishop Markall in the background.

Brian Enright, who knew him well, says he always remained a private person, hard to get to know even though he was ‘one of the boys’ in his youth. He did not enjoy his years as Superior and felt there were others who could have done a better job. But he applied himself to the task as best he could and was known for seeing the different sides of a case and keeping confidentiality.

He was still Superior when the war intensified and one of his last tasks was to care for the relatives and religious – Jesuits and Dominicans - who were deeply affected by the Musami killings in February 1977. Dunstan Myerscough, the only survivor of the massacre, phoned him that night and he had the terrible duty of phoning Mother de Pace of the Dominicans. Next morning they both drove to Musami. De Pace later recorded that ‘Fr McNamara reminded us how some of our best men/women will falter and we may have to cope with reactions which are not to be misunderstood ... Fear will grip many. Is it me/us next? He was so reassuring.’

His experience seems to have affected him for, when he came off being Superior, he withdrew into himself and, very unlike him, could be distant with people. In his last years he served the archbishop in his offices and then illness took hold of him. It was on a trip to visit his family in Europe that he

unexpectedly died. Two funeral Masses were offered for him; one in Wimbledon and the other in Harare.