

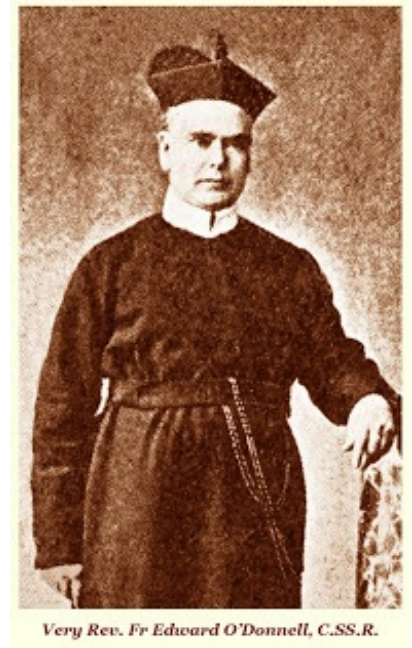
Very Rev. Fr Edward O'Donnell, C.S.S.R. (1825 - 1881)

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When the Bishop of Limerick, the Most Rev. Dr. Butler, whose confessor he had been, heard of his having been anointed, he wrote to one of the Fathers, at Perth, as follows:

"I am grieved to hear that my poor dear friend is so low. I often used to think that I should have him at my bedside when I was dying, but it seems this is not to be. I must only say with himself, '*Fiat Voluntas Tua.*' What a comfort for those who love him to know that he is approaching his end with such calmness and resignation and holy joy. But any other end would be out of keeping with his life. He is dying as he lived – a good priest, a 'faithful servant,' a true son of St. Alphonsus."

On Friday afternoon, February 24th, a sudden change, betokening the approach of death, came over him. When he became aware of his danger, he asked what day the next day would be, and when he heard it would be Saturday, a smile lighted up his face. The next morning at five o'clock, the Community assembled around his bed and commended his soul to God, in the beautiful and consoling words of the Church. So calmly and so gently did death come, that none could tell the moment in which he passed away. Thus amidst the prayers of his brethren, our beloved Father yielded his holy soul into the hands of God. He died on Saturday, the 25th of February, the Feast of the Commemoration of the Most Holy Redeemer, on a day specially consecrated to Our Blessed Lady, to the Divine Infant, and Our Blessed Redeemer. As soon as he was dead, Holy Mass was celebrated by each priest in the house, for the repose of his soul. We have good reason to hope that he now wears the beautiful crown which St. Alphonsus saw prepared for every Redemptorist who lives in observance and dies in the Congregation.



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The Provincial wrote as follows to all the houses of the Congregation: "Our dear Brother was always constant in the way of the Lord from his novitiate to his death. As a subject he was remarkable for a spirit of prayer, piety, and obedience. The same spirit shone forth in him during the nine years and more that he filled the responsible position of Rector of Limerick. An unwearied confessor and missionary, beloved by the bishops, the priests, and the people, he was a constant model of regular observance. Being seized by a slow but deadly disease, having ceased for the last six months to be Rector, he gave himself entirely to preparation for death. He edified all by bearing with the utmost patience all the pains and weariness of sickness. Having received the Last Sacraments in good time he expired most peacefully in the Lord."

The Most Rev. Dr. Fitzgerald having heard of his death, wrote the following letter to the Rector of Limerick: "I read with extreme regret of the death of the truly good, and most worthy Father O'Donnell. I sympathise deeply with your community on the loss of so fine a priest and of so wise and genuine a counsellor and friend. For my part I feel that I have lost almost a personal friend, for although the years of our acquaintance were not many, I entertained for him the deepest respect and regard and had entire confidence in the soundness and safety of his advice and judgment. I shall on an early day say Mass for his eternal repose." †

(This necrology concludes with the information:
"Written by a Father who lived long years
with him and knew him well.")