

# Memories of Fr Martin Hayes C.Ss.R

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Fr. Martin Hayes died in 1958 at Bishop Eton.

He belonged to a time when there were a lot of Confessions on call at Bishop Eton, particular in the days before it was a Parish, and people could come, press the bell and the confessor of the day would come down, or they could wait and ask the sacristan for a particular priest.

And I remember the time the sacristan Brother Stanislaus saying, telling me, how many people, about 80% of those who asked for a particular priest asked for Fr. Martin Hayes in his old age. And it fitted in I think so much with what he said about himself.

*He said one thing he regretted in life was that he didn't understand the love and mercy of God as a young man in the way he did as an old man, as if he had his preaching would have been far different.*

He had the reputation of being a full blood and thunderer preacher of missions but he said he wished he could have preached much more about the love of God and the benefits, the fullness of Redemption.

Fr. Martin Hayes, talking about Confession reminds me of Fr. Martin Hayes in the latter years of his life. He had spent all his life giving missions and retreats and he was well known as a blood and thunder preacher through most of his life. But in the last few years of his life when he was at Bishop Eton – he was always available for Confession and brother sacristan, Brother Stanislaus said that about 80% of people who rang the bell looking for a confessor asked for Fr. Martin Hayes.

And he said himself not long before he died that he wished that he had learnt in his young life the mercy that he had learnt in his later life. That his preaching and care of people would have been so different but he thanked God that towards the end of his life he did understand God's mercy and God's love much more fully and was able to communicate it through the penitents who came to seek his help in the sacrament.