

Memories of Fr. Wilfred Hughes C.Ss.R

Published: 26 May
2014

by Fr. Beverley Ahearn C.Ss.R

Fr. Wilfred Hughes who died in 1977 in Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia what is now Harare Zimbabwe.

When Wilf Hughes was first ordained he was sent to Rome to study Moral Theology, and coming back from Rome just before the war he taught morals in Hawkstone before the war and during the war. He then became Parish Priest and Rector of Erdington, Erdington Abbey, our foundation in Birmingham, and he was there till 1950 when in those days of course the appointments were still being made by Rome, by the General Government. He was appointed Provincial Superior and he was reappointed three times so that altogether he was Provincial from 1950 until 1962.

One of the things he introduced towards the end of his time as Provincial was an annual holiday and how it was arranged was you could have three weeks in another Redemptorist community, but if you had family, you could go home to your family for half that time, and then go to a Redemptorist community for the other half.

If your family lived very near a Redemptorist community you could spend the three weeks in the Redemptorist community visiting the family each day.

Fr. Hughes came off Provincial in 1962, and that's the year that the second Vatican council began its deliberations, and this was a difficulty for Fr Hughes 'cause he was very much at home in the Tridentine church. He knew his morals, he knew his canon law and he knew the whole set up and when and how to seek exemptions from the law and he was quite forward looking.

But once the documents of Vatican 2 became known and he was reading those he didn't feel at all home in the church that was being proclaimed through that council, and he was very much for keeping everything as it was in the old style – the Tridentine rite and he found it very difficult in the last few years of his life during that time he was in Rome for a short time as Rector for the general house and then he went to Rhodesia as it was then, Zimbabwe as it is now and it was there that he died.