

APRIL 16, 1998 Fr. Arthur Bridgewater, CM



Fr Arthur Paul Bridgewater died at Natovi, Fiji, on April 16, 1998. He was 86 years of age. Arthur was born in Leichardt, Sydney, on June 28, 1912, and baptized at Leichardt on August 4 at St Fiacre's Church. He attended Christian Brothers College, Lewisham, 1921-1924, and from 1925-1931, St Stanislaus' College, Bathurst. In 1931 Arthur entered the Vincentian Seminary at St Joseph's, Eastwood, being received into the Congregation on July 17. He took final vows in July 1933 and was ordained on March 12, 1938, at St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney, by Archbishop Gilroy.

Following his ordination in 1938, Arthur was appointed first to Malvern, Victoria, then to St Stanislaus' College, Bathurst, where he filled the position of Dean. From 1942-1946 he was a Naval Chaplain and won respect and admiration of those who knew him. At the conclusion of the war, Arthur became Superior and Parish Priest at Malvern from 1946-1952. He was asked to become Spiritual Director at the National Seminary at Mosgiel, New Zealand, at the beginning of 1953, where he remained until the decision to open a Vincentian Mission was made and he went with Fr Tom O'Reilly to begin that apostolate in 1959.

The last 39 years of his life were dedicated to the Church of Fiji. Arthur served as Superior and Parish Priest at Natovi and Nausori, as well as being involved in the formation house at Wailoku, which he helped establish. It was Arthur's wish to die and be buried at Natovi. He had celebrated the 60th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood.