

FEBRUARY 6, 1989 Fr Ron McDonald, CM



Fr Ron McDonald was born on February 24th, 1908, in North Fitzroy, Victoria. He came to live in the Vincentian parish of Malvern, and it was here that he discerned his vocation to the priesthood within the Congregation of the Mission. He was received into the community at the age of 30. Before this step was taken he had done several things with his life, including a stint in the Royal Australian Army Reserve where he gained the rank of sergeant. He was ordained priest in 1944 and during the next 16 years was stationed in Perth, Mosgiel (NZ), Eastwood and 1947 in Bathurst as Bursar. His Scottish ancestry never left him, and even though he was bursar for the one year, the students quickly decided that his nickname would have to be “Scrooge”, a name which continued into the sixties when he returned to the college. This decision was confirmed by the fact that, like his Walt Disney namesake, he also was seen to wear a Homberg hat whilst riding his motorized pushbike around the town.

Fr Mac often said he joined the Congregation to work in the parish apostolate, a desire he never realized. In 1960 he was sent back to St Stanislaus’ Bathurst, to join the teaching staff and was to remain there for the rest of his life. During those years he was Vice-President for quite some time, was Master of Mathematics for years, and for the last half of 1968 he was in fact the President of the College. He also served several terms as Superior of the Vincentian Community at the College.

Fr Mac was a devoted man – devoted to many important people, particularly his family, and important things. He was also a devoted teacher and believed deeply in the school apostolate. He was a very good teacher of Maths, and he taught Religious Knowledge with great enthusiasm. He always remained a contemporary man who kept up with the students in their ideas and interests, as well as in their jargon. He had been a runner in his youth (the Malvern Harriers) and his love for tennis and golf never left him.

It was at the age of 78 that he decided that teaching was too much for him, and at the age of 80 that he could not manage to offer Mass for the boys in the Chapel any more. The steps were too much for him.

The Cathedral in Bathurst was packed on February 9th for the Requiem Mass for Fr Mac. Fr Brian Spillane, CM, was the main celebrant, assisted by 36 priests, including Fr Gerald Scott, CM, Provincial, members of the Vincentian communities throughout the Province, Mgr P. Shannon, Vicar-General of the Bathurst Diocese and members of the diocesan clergy. In his absence interstate, Bishop Dougherty sent written condolences to the Vincentian Community. Fr Mac was laid to rest in the Bathurst Cemetery.