

MARCH 11, 1966 Fr. William McGlynn, CM

"The missions in Victoria, based upon Malvern, did not have the same prosperity (*as those in NSW and Queensland, based at Ashfield*); it is likely that the missionaries available in Malvern were already well known, and there were not enough of them to give a needed variety which both priests and people expected. At the request of Fr. Macken, two Irish missionaries came to Australia in 1933, Frs W. McGlynn and J. Carroll; in 1937, however, Fr. W. McGlynn was appointed as Parish Priest of Malvern in succession to Fr. John Barry (sen.)."

(The History of the Vincentians in Australasia : D.F. Bourke, CM, page 186)

Fr McGlynn returned to Ireland in 1939. A letter from Fr R. Macken to Fr Harry O'Connor, the Irish Provincial, dated 14th March, 1939, indicates that Fr McGlynn requested his return to Ireland for health reasons. An article in the CM Student Magazine "Evangelizare", November 1966, spoke of him as having "a zest for living and breadth of active interest in what was going on in God's world" which may be best be accounted for "by the rather cosmopolitan background that was his."

"Calling to see the late Fr Willie McGlynn in the early stages of what was to be his final illness, he informed me that his own diagnosis of his condition was that he had something akin to lumbago, brought on by a fall, which he had while bathing off the coast of Spain some months earlier. A wave seemingly had knocked him down – and that was it. The man was 85....."

The diagnosis may or may not have been correct, but it was very indicative of what many would regard as Fr Willie's greatest natural gift – a zest for living. It would seem to have been a cardinal point in Fr Willie's philosophy of life that one should enjoy to the full every good gift coming down from the Father of lights, whether that gift be a local school opera or concert (and there were very few he missed in Dublin when the Christmas season came round), a trip to Australia – or the enjoyment of a glass of wine. And this right up to the age of 80 and beyond. Not only did he have a zest for living, but he had an immense interest in life as it was lived in the world around him – from the antipodes to Antrim and to Iceland. Indeed some days before he died, he underwent a major operation and a confrere who called to see him after it, was surprised to find Fr Willie sitting up in bed reading the evening paper."

"Born in Scotland and educated in Holland – he taught in Castleknock for some years after his ordination – he went to the Irish College in Paris, - travelled to Australia on a missionary tour – returned to Cork and finally to Phibsboro. He had seen 'many citizens and many men' in his day, and had gathered a sizeable repertoire of stories and anecdotes – which he would recount with such obvious enjoyment that he could hold a group captive in the telling."

"One could not help feeling at times that his last years were somewhat lonely. Increasing deafness cut him off from enjoying to the full the laughter and talk of friends, although the sight and sound of television (God be thanked, too, for hearing aids) seemed to relieve the isolation that comes to all who are hard of hearing. During the last few days of his life he seemed anxious to be off and 'to be with the Lord' whom he had served well, and many of whose priests he had helped through his retreats and conferences. He left this world 'fortis in fide' – convinced that the 'best was yet to be', when sight and sound would give place to vision."

(Extracts from Article in "Evangelizare", November 1966 : MC)