



Father Bernard BUREL
(1924 - 2013)

*Died 1st November 2013, in St Laurent sur Sèvre (France)
aged 89, with 68 years of Religious Profession.*

Father Bernard Burel was born in Bain de Bretagne (Ile et Vilaine) on 11 September 1924, the son of Adrien (a railway worker) and Célestine Justal. He began his minor seminary training at Châteaugiron (Ile et Vilaine) (1939-1942), then moved to the apostolic school of Le Calvaire in Pontchâteau (1942). Later he went to the novitiate in Chézelles, where he made his first profession on 17 October 1945, then to the scholasticate in Montfort-sur-Meu where he made his perpetual profession on 15 September 1950. He was ordained priest by Cardinal Roque, Archbishop of Rennes, on 18 February 1951 in Montfort-sur-Meu.

Father Bernard was then appointed to Madagascar. He left Marseilles on 7 September 1951. He was a curate in Vatomandry from 1951 to 1960, with a leave in France in 1958 for his "third year".

In January 1960, Father Burel finally returned to France because of health problems. He stayed in Paris until 1970 (first in the Rue du Commandeur, then in the Rue de la Tombe-Issoire). He did not, however, leave aside the "foreign" missions, for he was in charge of the Mission Procure team.

From 1970 until 2005, Father Burel was at Le Calvaire in Pontchâteau. He launched into *missionary animation*, going all round various dioceses (Nantes, Vannes, Rennes), and set up the famous "Missions Museum" at Le Calvaire. This missionary exhibit was to become known throughout the region: a window on our missions, but also for the sale of objects "coming from elsewhere". He was to make Le Calvaire a place of welcome for the missionaries on leave. His commercial acumen and especially his smile, his welcoming manner and his gentleness, were to make him appreciated by everyone. All these qualities, along with his delicacy and his sensitivity to others and his sense of service, his missionary spirit and his witness of religious life, influenced his superiors to appoint him twice to the novitiate community in Pontchâteau: in 1985 and again in 1991.

Towards the end of his time at Le Calvaire, an insidious sickness began to deprive him gradually of lucidity. He was then appointed to the community of the Holy Spirit in Saint-Laurent-sur-Sèvre in 2005. He had to leave the mission for which he had given his all, and all the people (pilgrims, visitors, clients of the museum) he had loved to serve and welcome. But he would retain to the end his gentleness, his sense of service (every day he worked in the garden, weeding; he arranged the flowers in the oratory; etc.), and his love of prayer. Certainly he got lost with regard to the time, and in the pages of his breviary and the missal... But all he had left was the present moment, a moment of grace in which he was truly present to others and to God.

"Hold on," he loved to say to those he met; but he faded away quite suddenly. In fact, throughout October 2013, his state of health deteriorated rapidly; he became unrecognisable. Father Bernard finished his missionary race on 1 November. May he join the Lord in the choir of all the saints!