



Father John Ignatius BLANEY
(1919-2008)

*Died 2 November 2008, in Liverpool (England)
aged 89, with 65 years of Religious Profession.*

Fr. John Ignatius Blaney, Fr. Jack to all who knew him, was born in Belfast on 3rd July 1919. He entered the Missionaries of the Company of Mary, making his first profession on 8th September 1943, and was ordained priest on 19th March 1947.

He served as a missionary in Malawi for a number of years, until he was appointed to be the second Provincial Superior of the Province of Great Britain & Ireland in 1960. In 1964 he was elected to the General Council, as an Assistant to the Superior General, Father Cornelius Heiligers. After his return to Great Britain, he exercised his priestly and religious ministry in many capacities (as assistant priest in a variety of parishes, as superior in various houses, as priest-in-charge of a parish area, as a hospital chaplain, among other apostolates). Fr. John Blaney, from the time of his ordination did practically everything that a Montfort religious could be asked to do. During his religious and priestly life he has laboured in practically every apostolate and filled almost every post in our congregation. His work has taken him from Malawi to Liverpool via Rome; he has been teacher, parish priest, Regional Superior, Provincial and General Assistant.

In 60 years of ministry, Fr. Jack lived a life full of kindness, dedication and enthusiasm in everything that he was called to do. Fr. Jack suffered from diabetes for many years. In the end, having spent his final months in Ince Blundell Hall Nursing Home, and after a prolonged struggle with his many ailments, he died peacefully on the feast of All Saints -- and we feel sure he went off to join their company. Fr. Bill Considine, a former Superior General Company of Mary wrote 'I just saw the news of Jack's passing! God bless him and rest him! What a huge swath of Montfortian history he enfolds in his life'. Fr. Miguel, Provincial of Colombia, on receiving the news of Fr. Jack's death, said: "this news touched me so very much... In Colombia we have great memories of such a brotherly confrere - easy to recognise him as a Montfort religious, very welcoming and very simple in his approach. I can still remember the reverence he showed toward the sacred host after he had consecrated it". What more shining complement could a priest wish for?

I have known Fr. Jack for all my religious life and have always considered him a very dear friend. We loved to exchange a few words and sentences in Chichewa, the language of Malawi: it was the last thing we did last Saturday evening before I gave him a blessing, and wished him 'Tsalani Bwino' rest well! For me his greatest virtue was always his deep faith and his complete trust in Jesus Christ; it helped him make his way through any task that the Lord threw at him, and led him to love and to help all those he was to minister to in his long life. Fr. Jack himself, at his Golden Jubilee celebration said, 'The greatest and happiest life one can choose is to devote oneself to the work of Christ'. And he certainly did that. May he Rest in a very well deserved peace!