

Father Michael ROONEY

(1930-2002)

*Died 2 September 2002, in Belfast (Northern Ireland)
aged 72, with 52 years of Religious Profession.*

After his ordination on 1 January 1955, he taught in the minor seminary of Romsey for several years.

He then became Missionary in Malawi until early 1980s, when illness prevented him from continuing

Fr. Michael was from a large family, most of his brothers and sisters, including Sister Marian of the Daughters of Wisdom, were around him beside when he died.

Fr. Michael had a deep sense of commitment to the will of God. Everything, whether joyful or painful, was seen as an expression of this can be seen as an expression of this commitment. He showed tireless devotion to whatever ministry he was called to carry out; he always gave himself completely to whatever he was engaged in.

Fr Michael always showed a very great love for the missionary life in Malawi. Being in Malawi was a great source of fulfilment – having to accept to leave because of illness was one of his greatest trials. In fact, he never truly left Malawi; his heart was always there. Even when he could no longer be present there, he made great efforts to continue to support its people and those of the province that were engaged in serving them – until the very end of his life.

He always refused to admit that he was unable come to the spiritual and sacramental help of those he could still reach, even when confined to a wheelchair. Among those who benefited were those in the Nazareth House Care Village, Belfast in which Michael spent his last years.

He had Deep devotion to Mary as his mother and protector and to her rosary; as well as profound loyalty to the Company of Mary, in which he made his religious vows. It would have been a great consolation for him at the end that his family gathered round his bed and said the rosary.

There was an unshakable belief and trust in Divine Providence; he never wished to dwell on his own problems, “things are going great. Thanks be to God!” He suffered so very much over the later years of his life and offered it, not I think in sorrow but with a great determination not to let his sufferings depress him and certainly not to be an object of pity to those who loved him and cared for him. Certainly whenever I visited him I came away sad that he was in so much pain but fortified by his positive attitude and amazed by the attention that he gave to me and his interest his brothers in the province.

Yet he did suffer and gave us an example of how to do that. Now he is at peace resting with God and, I am sure, ready to come to our aid when it is our turn to accept God’s will and suffer in our turn.