



Mgr. Lawrence HARDMAN
(1909 - 1996)

*Died 24 March 1996, in Blackpool (England)
aged 86, with 66 years of Religious Profession.*

Lawrence Hardman was born 8 December 1909, in Bolton. In 1925, he went to Montfort College, the Junior Seminary of the Montfort Missionaries in Romsey, Hampshire, to complete his secondary schooling.

In 1930 he went to France, where he made his novitiate for the Company of Mary at Celles-sur-Belle. There he made his first Religious Profession on 5 September 1931. He did his Philosophy and Theology studies at the Scholasticate of the Montfort Missionaries at Montfort-sur-Meu, and there he made his Perpetual Religious Profession on 15 September 1936. Between then and his ordination he spent one year as a teacher at Montfort College, Romsey, before returning to France to complete his priestly studies. He was ordained priest on 12 March 1938 in the Cathedral Church of Rennes.

Later in 1938, he was appointed to the mission maintained by the Company of Mary in the Shire district of what was then Nyasaland, now Malawi. While learning the local language, he did pastoral work among the European and Goan population, before being appointed in 1939 as Education Secretary to the Vicariate of Shire. In this capacity he was also the Diocesan representative on the Nyasaland Education Board, and a member of various Government Committees (Health, Agriculture, Brown Memorial, etc.). At the same time he was teaching first of all at the Catholic Institute, Blantyre, and later at the Zomba Catholic Secondary School. In 1947 he was appointed Principal of the Junior Seminary of Nankhunda, a post which he held until his election as Bishop of the new diocese of Zomba on 15 May 1952.

Bishop Hardpan's Episcopal Consecration took place on 7 September 1952. The new diocese covered an area of 6,500 square miles, with a Catholic population of 72,000. During his episcopacy, Zomba diocese was made smaller by the cutting off of two other dioceses, those of Mangochi and Dedza. But when Bishop Hardman retired in 1970, its Catholic population had grown to 97,000. During his 18 years as Bishop, he had founded 18 new parishes, a Leper Hospital at Balaka, a Child Welfare Clinic at Sitima, and a Medical Dispensary at Pirimiti, among others.

In 1970 Bishop Hardman resigned his see in favour of a Malawian bishop. He spent the next two years making Mission Appeals in the USA and England to raise money for his old diocese. From 1973 to 1975, he taught at the Minor Seminary for Lancaster Diocese at Underley, before becoming Parish Priest of St. Joseph's, Todmorden in the Diocese of Salford. In 1977, he was appointed Parish Priest at Kirby Lonsdale in Lancaster Diocese, a position which he held until retiring to Montfort House, Liverpool in 1994.

Complete retirement did not suit him, however, and after a short while he took on the task of chaplain to the Daughters of Wisdom at Lytham St Annes, where he remained until his death, after a brief illness, on 24 March 1996.

MAY HE REST IN PEACE