

## OBITUARY

Fr. GAVIN PATRICK O' SULLIVAN SJ (HAZ)

[1923 – 2019]

**Fr. Gavin Patrick O'Sullivan SJ**, was born in Adelaide, South Australia, on 02 March, 1923 to Mr. Lionel O'Sullivan and Mrs. Ethel. At the time of the World War II, when Australia was in danger of being invaded by Japan, he was enlisted at the age of 18, in the army and worked as a dispatch rider in Northern Australia. It was during this time, while he was engaged in military service that he was helped by the Unit chaplain to hear the call of the Lord. With the chaplain's help he obtained release from further service and entered the Australian Vice-Province of the Society of Jesus, on 15 June 1943 in Loyola College Watsonia. He took his first vows on 16 June, 1945. Soon after his first vows he completed his Juniorate and Philosophy studies in 1949 in the same campus of Loyola College of Watsonia. From 1950 to 1952 he did his regency in Xavier's Preparatory school Kew. And from there he was missioned to Hazaribag Mission in late 1952.



After arrival in India, Fr. Gavin continued his Jesuit formation of Theology in St. Mary's College Kurseong, India, from 1953 to 1956. Meanwhile, he was ordained Priest on 21 November, 1955 in St. Mary's Kurseong by Most. Rev. Archbishop PERRIER.

In 1957 he was sent to Ranchi to learn Hindi. No sooner did he complete his Tertianship in St. Stanislaus College (SSC) Sitagarha in 1958, than he was appointed the Parish Priest of Maheshmunda. As a new Parish Priest of the rural Parish and a flourishing Santhal mission Fr. Gavin carried out his sacramental ministry with great enthusiasm and vigour. After serving for 5 years as a Parish Priest in Maheshmunda, he was transferred to Chandwa as a Parish Priest in 1963, yet another rural but very significant Parish of the Hazaribag Mission. When he was in Chandwa, which was the center for Catholic Aid and distributions of relief and development goods. Then, the Chandwa parish covered what now we have the parishes of Latehar, Daltonganj, Kanjia, Mandair etc.

Soon after his four years stint in Chandwa he was assigned to Mahuadanr Parish as the Asst. Parish Priest in 1967. When in Mahuadanr, the parish covered the whole of the Chechari valley and beyond to Mayapur, which now has 9 Parishes. Being a keen motor cycle rider, which he inherited during the war time, he probably enjoyed those long rides to distant parts of the parish but it was his missionary spirit that sought out parishioners in far flung places to give them the sacraments. For him, a parish man, one rarely in the bungalow, but was usually out on the road. Gavin loved parish work and he was very much committed to visiting his parishioners in his parishes in Maheshmunda, Mahuadanr, Kanjia and Chandwa. Visiting in those days meant a lots of sacrifice and full of Challenges.

For one year he was assigned to teach the novices in 1971. And later, in 1972 he was sent to National Biblical Catechetical and Liturgical Centre (NBCLC), Bangalore for Catechetical Course and his talents were recognized by Fr. Amal, the director. Hence, he was sent for an Audio Visual training programme in Lyon, France, after which he returned to be a staff member of the NBCLC Bangalore. He always retained an interest in media and communications after his time in Bangalore.

In 1977 Gavin was appointed to St. Xavier's School, Bokaro first as a manager which was a responsible work in such a big school, where he had looked after all the minor details of the school activities. Later he was also appointed as the vice Principal of the school. As an administrator he combined the strictness with compassion which he served for 6 years. As a result he earned the title Uncle by the staff of the school.

Gavin was appointed as the minister and Treasurer of the two major houses, St. Xavier's Hazaribag and St. Stanislaus College Sitagarha. After a long period of his active life in the frontier missions, he spent many years as a librarian of the province library in St. Xavier's Hazaribag since 1999. Maurice Dullard used to order the new books for library and Gavin did the rest, cataloguing, assigning them to their particular place in the library.

He was a deeply spiritual man devoted to prayer and to the zealous administration of the sacraments. He was much appreciated especially by religious, for the retreats and recollection and homilies. Gavin was a very good friend and companion. He lived a simple life, very much committed to his Jesuit vocation. He was a community man and was very punctual for the community activities. He had been taught these ways in the novitiate and he would follow them strictly. He was not a person to seek the limelight.

Gavin was a man of all seasons and Mission. He had his share of apostolates from Parish apostolates and education apostolates to formation, Communication, administrator, and Librarian etc.

The most striking characteristic of his life as a Jesuit priest had been his ready availability, to the superiors first of all, but also to the different Jesuit communities and to the parish communities he was called upon to serve in different capacities. He was always a warm hearted, welcoming and hospitable man. He had invariably shown his readiness to remain or to be moved according to his superiors' decisions as the times required. For many of the younger members of the province, as well as the candidates aspiring to membership, he stands out as a model of what it means to be a man for God and for others.

In April 2018, Gavin was transferred from St. Xavier's Hazaribag to SSC Sitagarha as he grew weaker and needed an assistant and nursing care. By August 2019 he became very weak and on 29 August he experienced breathlessness during the day and breathed his last in the evening at 07.15 PM., in St. Stanislaus College Sitagarha, Hazaribag, India.