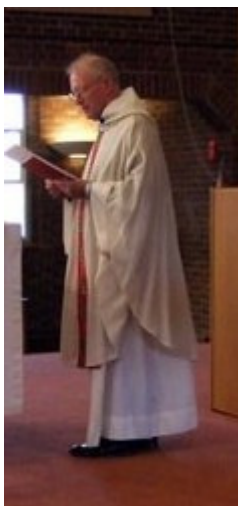


Fr Richard celebrates 50 years of vowed life.

9th February 2008.
St George's College.



It was in September 1957 that Richard Lear entered the Novitiate at St George's College.

A few months before his entry he had been captain of the school; now he was to spend a year alone in the novitiate as there were no other novices that year.

In those days the novitiate experience was a little more secluded than it is now but there were sightings of Richard from time to time sitting on a tractor mowing the fields.

The year was soon over and Richard began his long years of formation which took him to Strawberry Hill Training College, Fitzwilliam House Cambridge, Leuven Catholic University and finally Womersley seminary near Guildford.

Not long after his ordination, Richard fulfilled his ambition to go and work in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Over the course of many years Richard was to work not only in Africa but also in England and California. He is a keen bird watcher and naturalist. He once explained that he had planted trees in every region of the Congregation.

Richard has been parish priest of the Holy Family parish in Addlestone and also parish priest of Christ the King, Kinson in Bournemouth. In both parishes he was much loved by his parishioners.

The people of the Kasai where Richard worked for a number of years were quick to give him a special name in Tshiluba "Muntu wa disambila" which means man of prayer.

Among his many qualities it is perhaps his compassion which is most appreciated by those he ministers to. Richard is no stranger to sadness in his own family life. The death of his youngest brother and only sister means that he is man acquainted with grief and it is this enables him to stand by others in their hurt and pain.

In 1996 Richard was elected by his confreres to lead the Congregation as Superior General. During his time as Superior General he travelled a great deal and laid the foundations of a new optimism which pervades our religious family today.

So it was that Richard gathered his confreres, friends and family together to celebrate 50 years of vowed life. Years in which he has been a true instrument of God's loving kindness to so many people in so many different parts of the world.

In a characteristic homily during Mass, Richard gave us one of his homely chats in which he illustrated several aspects of Josephite spirituality by means of the passages from Scripture which he had chosen.



The presence not just of confreres but also of his own brother Tim along with nephews and nieces; Sisters Margaret and Goretti from the Daughters of Mary and Joseph, parishioners from Addlestone and Kinson, staff from St George's, Old Georgians etc. made this a truly family occasion.

At the end of the meal Fr William, the regional Superior, reminded us of a few of the lighter moments in Richard's 50 years as a Josephite.

After the meal a most enjoyable day was rounded off by everyone retiring to the Community Common Room for coffee and liqueurs.

Fr Richard:

Teacher.

Muntu wa disambila.

Naturalist.

Ornithologist

AD MULTOS ANNOS

