

Brother Victor Privitera

18.02.1919 – 18.07.2008

Br Emmanuel

Though he lived only a few hundred metres from the Brothers' Stella Maris College, young Victor Privitera hardly dreamt of going to the Brothers' School and even becoming one of them. The shortage of places in the Government school at Sliema led the Director of Education, Dr Laferla to request around 1927 two or three classes. Victor's class was transferred to Stella Maris College, then in Sliema. Among his teachers were Brother Walter Joseph, then Director, Brother Sigismund Louis, and Brother Robert Pace who later was to earn immense credit in helping the Allies' Cause in Italy. They saw in him a promising youngster and directed him a long way to the Rome Juniorate at Albano Laziale, then to the Mother House Novitiate at Lembecq-lez-Hal in Belgium, then to Vimiera Scholasticate, Guernsey and to Inglewood. Each "move" was enriching. Victor became familiar with the Geography of Europe as well as with the three languages. There was later some thought of sending him to North Africa .

1938 saw him back in Malta , alternating between De La Salle College and Stella Maris College. For the first 35 years, including the WW II Years, Victor was teaching including a year's study and teaching in U.K. at Beulah Hill. Teaching is a poor word to cover his multifarious activities which included besides teaching being in charge of catering for the boarding department, moderator of the Sodality of Our Lady, Scoutmaster, Sportsmaster. He also indulged in a number of hobbies such as underwater fishing, photography and linocutting (in the 30's and 40's) and these he often shared with the Brothers and with students. He also found time to graduate B.A. General from the University of Malta with a thesis on the early dictionaries of Maltese analyzing 17th ,18th and 19th century word lists. One must include a spate of poetry writing which later appeared in a University Magazine.

These intensive years were followed by another type of activity brought about by growing deafness. Grad-

ually he withdrew from class and got engaged in another type of service, managing the college garages, catering, dependent on his blue Mini. The time came when he had to sacrifice his blue Mini but not his solicitude for the welfare of the domestic staff, encouraging some of the younger members to pursue higher studies.

Before that, Victor was devoting hours if not days to promoting devotion to our Blessed Lady, especially the local devotion at the country shrine of Girgenti. He edited the newsletter and kept in touch with the devotees both in Malta and in Gozo. Some of us would have noticed a streak of the exotic and the apocalyptic in his Mariology. But we all admired the sincerity of his devotion and his dedication.

To this same period belonged the generous and precious help he gave Brother Dominic, driving every weekend to Mellieha and managing the catering and the cooking for the many retreatants that flocked the house and thus contributing partly to the its development. All this went on even beyond his 80th birthday. One must not fail to mention Victor's fidelity to prayer, turning up every morning at 5.30 a.m. in the community chapel besides other fixed times of prayer during the day. It was not easy to persuade him to stop crossing to the school chapel for the Sunday liturgy where he stayed in the front row, even when the weather was bad and still too dark. Only very late in life did he accept Brother Kieran's invitation for a ride.

Towards the end came Victor's biggest sacrifice: it was the loss of his independence. To one who had been a leader and who mastered several skills, that last fortnight in hospital when he was unable to communicate and became dependent on the nurses must have been a severe trial which he bore with his usual courage and devotion.