

## Memories of Fr. Francis Hawkins C.Ss.R

by Fr. Beverley Ahearn C.Ss.R

Fr. Francis Hawkins died in Bishop Stortford in 1972.

When you mention the name Francis Hawkins to most of the older members of the Province, they would immediately say do you mean Pod, Pod Hawkins. A nickname spelt "*POD*", and it came from his time before the novitiate actually, when he was at the junior seminary at Ushaw and there they had a pudding known as pod, and he was one of the few who ever enjoyed it, and he enjoyed it so much that they gave him the name Pod, a name that came with him to our novitiate and stayed with him throughout his life.

Francis Hawkins again or Pod as he was better known, had great difficulty at times in saying the words correctly, one famous occasion on reading the account of the denial of Peter, he finished up with the words "*and the cock threw chrise*"

After his ordination in the early 30s, Francis Hawkins went to Rome to study scripture. He came back at least during his second summer but on the way back to Rome, he asked the Provincial if he could stop a couple of nights in Florence, because he had read so much about it, and the Provincial said certainly.

So he wrote to Rome telling them when he would be back and that he was stopping in Florence.

So when he travelled back he arrived in Rome two days earlier than they were expecting him, someone said to him we thought you were spending a couple of days in Florence on the way. And he said well I wanted to but the train didn't stop there. They said all the main line trains stop there. He said well the only place even starting with the letter F was Firenze. *Poor Pod.*

But then he taught scripture when he returned from Rome through the '30s, did a little parish work and was then back in teaching scripture again and became Rector of Hawkstone from '47 to '53 and during that time Fr. Bernard Keating had been brought back from South Africa. So Fr. Keaton took the Old Testament and Pod Hawkins lectured on the New Testament. Soon after that he was appointed to Bishop Stortford, and soon after that went to Rome for the chapter and was elected then consuler general.

When I Beverley Ahearn was in Rome studying after ordination, Francis Hawkins was elected to the general council and he came to Rome whilst I was there, and on one occasion he spoke to me about travelling, and he said that one of his objections as consuler general was having to travel by Italian Airline Alitalia. The reason for that was ,they got, the general council got a discount from Alitalia. He said he would much by British Airways, when I asked him the reason he said well in an emergency an Alitalia captain might be much more inclined to throw his arms in the air and make an "act of contrition" preparing for death whereas a good British Airways non-believer would put all his strength and all his vigour into landing the plane as well as he could, but he still had to travel by Alitalia.