

Father Oscar Leake, 1951—1953

FATHER LEAKE WAS born in Willesden Green on September 26th, 1885. He studied at St. John's Seminary, Womersley, and was ordained priest in 1912. He worked as a curate at Preston Park, Melior Street in London, and at Woolwich. While at Woolwich his interest in the Seminary Fund caused the Bishop to appoint him to the office of Procurator at the Seminary. He was always economic in his administration, and the savings he effected were very welcome to the diocesan authorities at a time when the financial position of the diocese was insecure. From the Seminary he worked the new mission at Barnes and was appointed full time in 1923. In 1929 he was appointed to Oxted, and while there showed great foresight in buying several acres of land in the centre of Edenbridge, which now possesses a large hall for Mass. At Dover to which he moved in 1936, he had to face the aerial bombardment and cross channel firing. He was to see the church of St. Martin destroyed and he himself received a wound in the leg from one of the many shells that landed in the town. In 1942 he went to Leatherhead and readily sacrificed this handsome new church for the ruins of the Cathedral when he was appointed Administrator of St. George's in 1945. He had a serious illness in 1949, and after a period of convalescence was appointed Rector of Coulsdon.

In 1951 he succeeded Monsignor Wallis. During his two years at St. Mary Magdalen's his health was not good. Nevertheless with his customary determination he

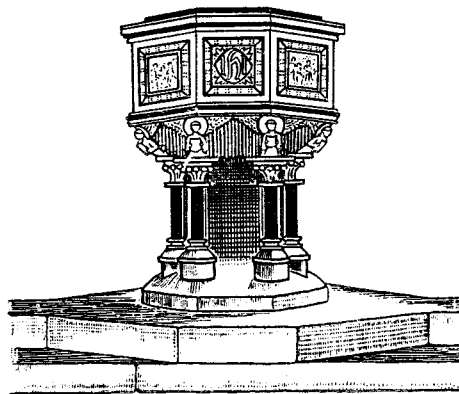
paid off in less than two years a large debt which had accrued owing to the purchasing of some property in Spring Street with a view to extending the school. He was deeply attached to the parish which he knew from boyhood, and he gave to it most generously from his own personal means.

In Father Leake there were many qualities which endeared him to his



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parishioners. He was always very approachable and gracious, kind and courteous. He died at St. Anthony's Hospital, Cheam, on June 30th, 1953. Bishop Cowderoy presided at his Requiem at St. Mary Magdalen's on July 6th, and Father Arthur Flanagan, Parish Priest of St. John the Baptist's, officiated at the graveside in Hove Cemetery.



The Baptismal Font