

## Father George Benson Tatum, M.A., 1913—1924

FATHER TATUM WAS born in Salisbury on May 6th, 1854. He was educated at Eton and Christ Church, Oxford. Proceeding to orders in the Church of England he held for a time the curacy of St. Paul's, Oxford. He subsequently became a chaplain at Magdalen, and this post he retained until he was received into the Church by Cardinal Newman in 1883.



*Father George B. Tatum*

He made his theological studies at Oscott and was ordained priest at Southwark Cathedral on May 26th, 1888, by Bishop Butt. After a year at the Cathedral and another at Arundel, Father Tatum came here as a curate in 1890 and served for two years under Provost Moore. From here he went to Lewisham as Rector, and in 1905 he came back to Brighton as Rector of St. Joseph's. On the death of Father Wilderspin in 1913, Father Tatum returned to St. Mary Magdalen's.

Father Tatum's practical interest in the town's social and educational affairs was very much appreciated, while his work as Rector, both here and at St. Joseph's, earned him the respect and gratitude of the Brighton Catholic community. As a character, he was very much of an old world figure. Several parishioners delight to recall this former Rector with his old fashioned ways and his refined Victorian manners. In his tall silk hat, gaiters, and boots, he was a familiar sight in the town. To the passer-by whom he recognised he would most graciously raise his hat: he rarely spoke in the street, as he held the view that the footpath was not made for conversation. Quaint of accent and of diction, he was an eccentric in many ways. Yet essentially he was a holy priest whose great absorbing interest was the Catholic Church and the things that pertain to her welfare.

Strictly speaking, Father Tatum was the first Parish Priest of St. Mary Magdalen's. Formerly our parishes in England were known as Missions and their pastors as Missionary Rectors. Changes in Church Law which came into force in May, 1918, made these Missions into Parishes and the Missionary Rectors into Parish Priests.

Father Tatum died on March 27th, 1924, in a Brighton Nursing Home where he was awaiting an operation. On March 31st, Father Hopper of St. Mary's, Preston Park, sang his Requiem Mass in the presence of the Auxiliary Bishop, Monsignor Brown. After the Mass the body was taken to Salisbury accompanied by Father Hopper. Next day, after a second Requiem in St. Osmund's Church, the burial took place in Salisbury Cemetery.

*Inner Porch Door*

