

## The Departure Is Announced

The Cardinal is dead, and without any sense of "religious correctness", we can simply say that we are glad for him; glad that his life in the imminent shadow of death was short. The speed with which he has been carried off is a clear reminder to us of the limited nature of our work, our value as earthly players, and our sufferings. All of these are short, provisional, only for a time. It would not do to live our lives around them, when in a couple of months they can be brought to an end.

### Workings of Providence

It takes a long time to understand the weight of bereavement; I for one already feel a great sense of personal loss in his passing, and I know that is true of many people. His presence among us was so unlikely, a late flowering of that miraculous imagination which Pope Paul VI occasionally showed; out of the inevitably overworked ranks of our diocesan hierarchy some dull chap could surely have been found to take up the burdens of Cardinal Heenan. Instead, we were given the unnerving sight of a gaunt monk, who frankly looked as if he needed a good square meal, walking into Westminster Cathedral like a man going to the scaffold. Having thought all his life that his destiny would start and finish with Ampleforth, he found it widened to include two nations' Church, the pastoral care of the tenth-largest city on earth, and the election of two Popes

### A Good Story

He needn't have been so nervous. In twenty-three years his face filled out, his humour survived, his Benedictine breadth of soul seemed to take fire from the welcome he found in so many quarters. The words of appreciation people are using about him are often qualified by the word "transparent" or "patent"; he was not only holy, but clearly, obviously, instantly holy. When he remarked that, having been used for years to communicating with words, and through ears, we must now become used to communicating by vision, and through eyes,

he was speaking a truth he had already epitomized.

### What We Have Lost

His voice was measured, wise, and trustworthy. He could be relied on to say the best thing, and only the right thing. It is usually a boring individual who is called "a safe pair of hands". The Cardinal was reliable in a much deeper way. All the years he has been at the head of the column, he has allowed the Gospel in where he has gone; and the record is amazing. He has been to the Vatican and to Buckingham Palace, and he has been to the famine-fields of East Africa and the dossing-places of east London. He has used his influence in Downing-street and in Wormwood Scrubs. I never heard anyone, in all this time, suggest that he was proceeding from mixed motives. Our leadership was, indeed, safe in his hands; the life of London, and of the whole country, is the poorer today, and the reality of our loss is a true cause for regret.

### Eminently Simple

The Cardinal once came to Derby to consecrate a new church. In the afternoon he came to our church for Vespers, attended by the MPs, the Anglican Bishop, and lots of people. Afterwards he stood in the sacristy. I said, "All the big cheeses have gone to have tea in the hall." "Do I have to go?" he said. "No," I said firmly, "the Bishop's in the study." "Who's in the kitchen?" "My mother," I said. "And a cup of tea," said he. So the Cardinal sat on a high stool in the kitchen eating plum cake, and chatted for a quarter of an hour. I said: "You *enjoy* being the Cardinal, don't you!" He thought for a moment, and then said: "Well, you can make a lot of people feel very happy." The last words he heard: *Go forth, Christian soul, from this world.* The last word he spoke: *Ouch.* God reward him. *Fr Philip*