

Fr Harold Wong SJ (RIP) dies at 79



Fr Harold went to Mercy Hospital on Wednesday morning for his regular visit. On the Wednesday morning he had been somewhat out of breath, but when he was seen by Dr Searwar in the late morning he really was not well: Dr S immediately sent him to A&E.

Mercy hospital stabilised him well (Harold was actually observing all the maneuverings and was high in his praise the following day) but he was placed in the High Dependency Unit - Kuru's old room - when they put him onto a heart monitor to observe what was going on.

As you will all know, over the years, Harold's body has been pounded by diabetes and this has had knock-on effects on the rest of his body. The infections in his legs were always the main cause of concern; in the last 2 years he also was attacked by reverse diabetes, when his sugar levels just drop alarmingly and sent him into a couple of near-miss comas. This present attack, however, was neither of these: it was further encroachment by the diabetes but this time it was weakening the heart and this was having domino affect on the lungs.

Yesterday he was quite well and was expecting to be in for a few days. This morning, though, he took a turn for the worse. He was on oxygen but the lungs were filling with fluid. A number of us were with him at different times through the day - he was quite clued-in but a little perplexed and puzzled, as he had never had heart problems before. He didn't sleep on the Thursday night and hadn't had much appetites in the last few weeks so his body was further weakened he had some bad turns on the Friday morning, early afternoon.

Bob started to notify the Sisters in Canada that Harold was not well; at about 2.30 Harold had stabilised again and asked for something to eat and (rather surprisingly) dined well, even though - to the end..! - he felt the food wasn't hot enough.

Harold's Guyana-based sister, Joan, arrived in the early afternoon and was there with Compton, when Harold - at about 3.15pm started to have another turn. Dr Kumar and another doctor were around and Compton (as present next of kin) gave permission for a respirator to be attached - something I had talked about earlier in the day with Harold - and the nursing staff tried to stabilise him again.

This time it was to no avail. Despite the insertion of the respirator, the rest of the body gave up and Dr Kumar declared Harold dead at 3.45pm. Compton and Joan were with him.

By the time I got back to Mercy with Pat at 4.45 he was dead and so the Carmelites en masse and Sr Noel & Sr Celine (all of whom has just come to see him) were informed he had died, which caught them all slightly off-guard. We have moved Harold's body now to Merriman's Funeral home.

May Harold rest in Peace. He'll be missed by many.

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Fr Dermot Preston SJ, Regional Superior, Society of Jesus in Guyana

