
[Michael Louis Fitzgerald was born]

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Artykuł został opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie przez Muzeum Historii Polski w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego. Artykuł jest umieszczony w kolekcji cyfrowej bazhum.muzhp.pl, gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych.

Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.

Michael Louis Fitzgerald was born on 17 August 1937 in Walsall (Great Britain). In 1950 he entered a minor seminary of the Society of the Missionaries of Africa (M.Afr.), also known as “The White Fathers”¹, in Saint-Boswell (Scotland). He continued his formation in Bishop’s Waltham (England). After his novitiate in Holland, he moved to study theology (1957-1961) in Tunis (former Carthagine, Tunisia), where he also learnt Arabic. He was ordained priest by cardinal William Godfrey on 3 February 1961 in London. He wanted to work among Muslims in Nigeria or Tunisia, but instead was sent to specialise in the dogmatic theology at the Gregorian University in Rome. Nevertheless, he managed to do some pastoral work among Muslims there. After obtaining his PhD in 1965, Fr Fitzgerald further specialised in Islamic Studies in London. In 1968 he was engaged as a lecturer at the Pontifical Institute of Islamic and Arabic Studies (PISAI) in Rome. A year later he moved to Uganda, where he lectured on Islam at the Makerere University in Kampala. In 1972 Fr Fitzgerald was appointed Director of the PISAI. During his six years tenure, he promoted Muslim-Christian encounters on theological and pastoral fields, and initiated the publication of journals *Encounter*, *Documents for Christian-Muslim Understanding* and *Islamochristiana*. He also organised special sessions on Islam for missionaries (*Journées romaines*). From 1973 to 1978 he served as a consultant for the Secretariat for Non-Christians and cooperated with the World Council of Churches. In 1978 he moved to Sudan where he worked among the persecuted Christians. In 1980 he was elected superior general of “The White Fathers”. In this capacity, he continued to promote Christian-Muslim meetings in various African countries. After finishing his term of office in 1986, he returned to work with the PISAI. From 1987 to 2002 he was Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID). In December 1991 he was appointed titular bishop (*episcopus titularis*) of Nepte (Tunisia) and was consecrated by Pope John Paul II on 6 January 1992. On 1 October 2002 he was raised to the dignity of archbishop. From 2002 to 2005 he was the President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. He made this dicastery more dynamic by initiating relations with Buddhists, Hindus and Sikhs, among others. From 2006 to 2012 he was Apostolic Nuncio in Egypt and Delegate to the League of Arab States².

¹ Missionaries of Africa (M.Afr.), also known as “The White Fathers”, were founded by cardinal Charles Lavigerie (1825-1892) in Algiers (Algeria) in 1868. Their charism and first priority are relations with the Muslim world and missions in Black Africa.

² Biographical note based on: Mgr M. Fitzgerald, *Dieu rêve d’unité. Les catholiques et les religions: les leçons du dialogue*. Entretiens avec A. Laurent, Paris 2005, p. 5-19.