



Fr. JOHN KILMARTIN...Rest In Peace

It was Thursday night the 15th April, just a week or so after Easter. I was phoning my good friend of many years little thinking that it would be the last time we would speak to each other in this life.

John Kilmartin, our dear priest and confrere joined the Congregation in the same year I did, 1977. Six of us started the novitiate together in Roby Mill, Upholland in September of 1977. For one year the rickety, old, homely farmhouse was to be our home. By the end of that year, two had already left, within a few more years two more left, and only two went on to final profession and ordination; 'Two peas in a pod' as we were often called, myself and John Kilmartin. In his studies he excelled in his study of the Reformation to which he was introduced by his Jesuit teacher in Wimbledon College, and he often read books about the English martyrs.

After we were ordained we went separate ways as our Congregation called us. I went to Jordan, a Muslim country in the Middle East and John went to Boston USA, two very different countries, poles apart in distance and culture, not at all like the 'two peas in the pod'. Although we remained on other sides of the world for the rest of our lives we always maintained contact, by telephone, by e mail and occasionally, when this was possible, meeting up. As you can imagine our conversations were often full of reminiscences of 'the good old times'. Plenty of laughs and some complaints! Although John had had a difficult life, being

involved in a terrible road accident that meant the shortening of his leg and leaving him walking with a limp, the loss of his youngest brother Michael to cancer at the tender age of 28, who left behind his wife and a very young child, and then the sudden and unexpected death of his father. You would think that was enough for anyone in this world of ours. But later John also contracted diabetes and eventually lost his leg and had to give himself insulin injections daily. Despite all these setbacks he worked hard, first in the shrine we have at Boston and then in his parish of St. Joseph and St. Lazzarus, and as a prison chaplain for some years.

He continued to have a healthy sense of humour, tempered by the knocks that life throws at us, and never lost his faith in God or the motherly protection of Mary. He remained open to the needs of others and was rather special in hearing people's confessions and counselling them. Anyone who went to talk to him with a problem always left feeling uplifted and ready to carry on the battle. Next year he would have celebrated his silver jubilee on the eve of the feast of Saints Peter and Paul, 28th June. God however decided that this lovely occasion would be spent in his heavenly home with those who have gone before him marked with the sign of faith.

When John went into hospital, it was the second time. He had already been in hospital and in a near death state just before Easter. He made a good recovery and



celebrated the Holy Week services in his parish with his parishioners. But only a few weeks later he was back in hospital in a coma with little hope by doctors of a recovery like the last time. It is as if God allowed him to celebrate his last Easter with his beloved parishioners and his mum and brother Clive before saying 'Now I want you to come to the eternal Easter in heaven'. We have all been saddened by the loss of our dear confrere. I am particularly sad because now there is only 'one pea in the pod'. I have

lost a dear friend, confidante and brother. It makes me think of the finiteness of this world, but John would be the first to remind me that 'here we have no lasting city'. We too, will follow the same path one day. "Dear John, please pray for us and help us to be brave and courageous in facing, with faith, the battle of life. Thank you for being a good example to all of us Sons of Divine Providence. You were a true and rare friend. Amen."

Fr Philip Kehoe FDP

A Letter from Fr. John's Mother & Brother

Dear Friends,

We would like to thank you so very much for all your kind thoughts, words and deeds during these sad and difficult times. Your kindness means everything to us. It is a great comfort and strength to us to know that you stand side by side with us, united in our grief and sorrow for the passing of such a Beautiful Person in Fr John.

We were so proud of him when he was ordained to the Priesthood in June 1986. We knew that wherever the Sons of Divine Providence sent him, his Ministry would be a very fruitful and special one. As his surviving Family, along with our granddaughter and niece Lisa, we are so grateful that you all welcomed Fr John with open arms into your wonderful community in East Boston. You also welcomed him into your hearts and became his 'Extended Family' for which we are eternally grateful.

Fr John was a great man of God and a True Priest. I am sure you will all agree that he carried out his Ministry with such youthful zeal and enthusiasm. He was never judgemental and always approachable. He certainly helped me in my darkest moments when I struggled with alcoholism. I remember him writing to me saying that Our Lord is ALWAYS THERE WITH OPEN ARMS. I took great comfort from this and am so grateful to be sober now and for the last 13 plus years.

Fr John was a great strength when Michael, our youngest son and brother died at the tender age of 28 years. His unshakeable faith shone through and he showed his human emotions.

Fr John was a wonderful example of a devout and faithful disciple of Christ. His Homilies and Sermons were always concise and he was able to get his point across with ease. It was a pleasure to listen to him during his Masses and we always went away uplifted. He always gave us plenty to ponder and reflect on.

In summary Fr John will be deeply missed by us all. Please be assured that you will ALWAYS be in our thoughts and prayers. We will pray especially for you all and that your beautiful parish of St Joseph and St Lazarus, which was Fr John's home, will continue to thrive and prosper.

*We thank you once again and send you our Love, Prayers and Best Wishes.
Hannah and Clive Kilmartin*