



Father James Cree (1924 - 2012)

*Died 29 October 2012, in Ince Blundell (England)
aged 88, with 62 years of religious profession*

Father James Cree was born on 2 May 1924 in Glasgow, Scotland, to Adam Cree and Annie, née Lappin. He was baptised two days later in the church of Our Lady and St Margaret in Glasgow. He received his primary education at Our Lady and St Margaret's school, and went from there to Holyrood Secondary School from 1936 to 1939. Called up for military service during the Second World War, he served in the Cameronians, fighting in North Africa and in the Allied landings at Anzio, Italy. At this time he made a promise that, if he should survive the war, he would offer his whole life to God. So, when the war ended he entered the novitiate of the English Province (as it was known in those days) in Ashurst in 1949. He made his first religious profession of vows as a lay brother on 7 October 1950, taking the religious name of Francis Xavier.

Brother Francis spent his first year after profession at St. Joseph's, Ashurst (the novitiate), working on the farm and in the garden, and as a general handyman. In 1951 he was appointed to the Junior Seminary, Montfort College, in Romsey, where again he worked on the farm, eventually becoming the main dairyman. After 10 years of this work, he was appointed in 1961 to St. Mary's Scholasticate in Church Stretton, Shropshire, where he remained until 1968, mainly employed in fund-raising by making and distributing Christmas cards and calendars. When the English scholasticate was transferred to Heythrop Park in Oxfordshire, Brother Francis went there too, and continued his fund-raising activities from there. In 1970, he was appointed to Montfort House, Liverpool, where he continued his fund-raising and was instrumental in founding the Montfortian Lay Associates group.

In 1983, Brother Francis's life took a new turn when he was appointed as a parish assistant and bursar in the parish of Our Lady and St Dominic in Homerton in the East End of London. During this time, his desire to be a priest manifested itself, and in 1986 he began the study of philosophy and theology at the Franciscan Study Centre in Canterbury. He was ordained priest on 7 July 1990 in the church of Our Lady of Lourdes in Glasgow. His first appointment as a priest was to Montfort House, Monaghan, Ireland, where he was involved in various activities, including the giving of retreats (1990-1995). He also acted as the local bursar.

Father James was appointed to Montfort House, Barrhead, Scotland in 1995, where he continued to exercise his priestly ministry in retreat work, and also acted as local bursar. Around this time he began to suffer difficulties with his legs, and had to spend some time in a Nursing Home in Hawick in Scotland. After a remarkable (though incomplete) recovery he returned to Barrhead, where he remained until he was appointed to act as chaplain to the Daughters of Wisdom at their retirement home in Lytham St Anne's. After some time in this role, he himself retired to Montfort House,

Liverpool; but he continued to act as chaplain to a local convent, until his ailments became such that he had to enter a local nursing home run by the Augustinian Sisters nearby. It was there that, after a number of alarms, he finally died peacefully on 29 October 2012, while Mass was being offered in the chapel for his intentions.

Both as Brother Francis and as Father James, he was loved by everyone especially for his infectious laugh, and he never let his ailments get him down. May the Lord and Our Blessed Lady receive him into the dwellings of eternity.