

## Father James Murray (1940 - 2015)



James Thomas Murray was born in Airdrie, Scotland, on 16 July 1940, the feast of Our Lady of Mt Carmel, and baptised on 28 July in St Patrick's church, Coatbridge. He was the eldest child of James Murray and Mary Helen (née Maguire), and is survived by his sister Maureen and his brother Tom. Jim was confirmed, again in St Patrick's, Coatbridge, on 18 October 1949, and, having completed his primary schooling in Coatbridge, he entered Montfort College, Romsey, the Junior Seminary of the Company of Mary, to receive his secondary education, in September 1952. In September 1959 he entered the novitiate in St. Joseph's, Ashurst, where he made his first religious profession of vows on 8 September 1960. From there he went to St Mary's Scholasticate, Church Stretton, Shropshire, for his studies in philosophy and theology. Having made his perpetual profession in Church Stretton on 19 August 1965, Jim was ordained to the sub-deaconate, the deaconate, and finally the priesthood on 5 March 1966. He was ordained priest in St John's, Barrhead, Scotland, a town where he was due to spend much of his priestly life.

Father Jim's first appointment after ordination was to Montfort College, Romsey, where he taught for three years, before being moved in 1969 to Montfort House, Liverpool, to become the editor of the "*Queen and Mother*", the Marian review conducted at that time by the Company of Mary in England. But it was his sad task to wind up the production of the magazine in 1971.

Father Jim was then appointed to Montfort House, Barrhead, in Scotland, to take part in the formation of young men from Scotland aspiring to become Montfort Missionaries. From 1974 until 1986 he remained in Barrhead, conducting parish missions and retreats in various parts of Scotland as well as in Montfort House, along with other members of the community. In 1980 he was appointed Superior of the community in Barrhead, and his mandate was renewed for a second term in 1983.

In 1986, Father Jim was appointed to the residence of the Company of Mary in Monaghan, Ireland, as Rector. There he spent the next five years conducting parish missions and retreats, before being transferred once again to Barrhead, Scotland, in 1991, where he joined a new itinerant Mission team with Father Ronnie Mitchell and Father Bob Douglas, and a small group of lay associates who were called upon to conduct missions in various parts of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales. For a year or so during this period, he also acted as curate in our parish in Homerton in the East End of London, before going back to Barrhead to be Superior and in charge of the retreat ministry conducted in Montfort House there. In 2006 it was his sad task to close the house in Barrhead. After its closure, however, he remained in Scotland, helping in a parish in Paisley, until in 2009 he was appointed to be the Superior of Montfort House, Liverpool, a post he filled, together with various ministries to local religious communities, until his heart-attack and subsequent death on 13 October 2015.

Father Jim always had a very tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin. It is perhaps no coincidence that his life was bracketed by her presence: having been born on the feast of Our Lady of Mt Carmel, he died on the anniversary of the last apparition of Our Lady to the children of Fatima, 13 October. His profound understanding of Mary's role in our lives was particularly evident in the commentaries he gave in the two videos, *Jesus Living in Mary: The Life of...* and *The Spirituality of ... St Louis Marie de Montfort*, published in 1997 and 2001. May his beloved Mother now receive him and bear him safely to his heavenly reward.