

Father Joseph KELLY **(1921-2005)**

*Died 26 October 2005, in Liverpool (England)
aged 84, with 62 years of Religious Profession.*

Fr. Kelly was professed as religious of the Company of Mary in September 1943 and ordained priest in 1948. Fr. Joseph Kelly, or Fr. Joe, as he was universally known, was a priest and religious of great availability and many talents. This is evident from the many ministries he was able to fill during his 57 years of priesthood. He was, among other things, Manager and Editor of the province magazine *Queen and Mother*, a post he held for 14 years; during some of these years he taught in the minor seminary at Romsey and was assistant novice master; he served as chaplain to the 'Novices and Juniors' of the Daughters of Wisdom Congregation in North Berwick for five years from 1962. He spent some time as bursar and teacher in the major seminary; some time as provincial secretary and provincial bursar; for many years he was in charge of Montfort Press. In his later years Fr. Kelly accepted the task of Superior of the Community at Montfort House, Liverpool.

From 1955 to 1959, he was the Chaplain to the Sisters and those living in Nazareth House, Crosby. Father Joe was evidently extremely well suited for this, since he twice took up the chaplaincy again: in 1969 and 1976. He returned to serve his beloved sisters at Nazareth House Crosby in 1986 and remained their chaplain until he was too ill to continue. However, his association with the sisters and community at Nazareth House was to continue, for it was there that he spent the last ten months until he died peacefully, surrounded by the Sisters saying the Divine Office as Fr. Joe slipped away to the Lord.

Endearing gentleness and kindness were the special characteristics of Fr. Joe Kelly, perhaps this is what we remember most in him. Did he ever make any enemies? It would have been extremely difficult to become his enemy. He was known by all he met as a lovely man, a gentleman, a kind person and a man of great understanding, with a wry sense of humour and a twinkle in his eye. But he was above all a man of deep religious devotion and prayer. We his confreres had no hesitation in seeking his advice and his direction in our own lives, of valuing his closeness to God and cherishing the insight and understanding he offered when we needed him. There can be no doubt that when he was called to the Lord he could echo the words of Ecclesiasticus: "My very core yearned to discover Wisdom ... I have now acquired a good possession."