



Father Philip Richard WILSON
(1932-2006)

*Died 28 April 2006, in North Baddesley (England)
aged 74, with 55 years of Religious Profession.*

Fr Philip Wilson was born in Preston Lancashire, a very catholic city. He was a seminarian of Montfort College Romsey and later of St Mary's Church Stretton, where he was ordained to the priesthood. Fr. Philip was a man of many talents and, among other ministries exercised during his life, was teacher at Montfort College; editor of the Queen and Mother magazine; director of the hostel seminary in Barrhead Scotland; chaplain to the Daughters of Wisdom; provincial bursar for ten years. However, his special love was to minister to the faithful in the parishes that the province served. He was in charge of three parishes at different times, before dying in harness as Priest in Charge of the Parish of Romsey, the original home of the minor seminary and the first parish of the Company of Mary in Great Britain and Ireland.

In imitation of Jesus, one called to ministry is one called to service - as St Peter tells us he is called to be the living stone which is built into a spiritual house (1 Pe 2,5) to give himself completely. To become, for those he touches by his ministry, an easy way to get to God. He will find ways to make God present to all, whether or not they seem to be listening, whether or not they appear to respond. If he is to be a true imitator of Christ he will always seek to give and never appear to take. Fr. Philip Wilson has been such a religious and such a priest for more than 50 years now. We celebrated his 50th jubilee of priesthood in February: and I am sure, wherever he has ministered his people will tell us, that when they were searching for God, his example has always drawn them towards their goal. We celebrate the passing of one who consecrated himself to religious life and, within this consecration, accepted this ministry of service to all those whom God called him to serve. Fr. Philip became and always remained an example of religious dedication, an example to so many in the Company of Mary and to priests and faithful in the many parishes where he has been called to give witness as a priest and a religious. Fr. Wilson learnt from St Louis Marie to trust in God's providence and to take the risks he had to take when he faced the uncertain future that his ministry and apostolate always offered. He learnt to answer, like Peter: "Lord to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (Jn 6, 68).

He can thank God that he was blessed with both joys and sorrows, since both have helped him to understand the needs of people whom Christ has called him to serve. Throughout his life he constantly came closer in his imitation to Christ, and never to cease to seek ways to grow in the service of those to whom he was called to minister. Though there must have been moments, when like his namesake Philip from among the apostles, he asked Jesus, "Lord Show me the father and that will be enough for me" (cf. Jn 14, 8) - I could see Jesus, replying with a smile: "Philip, how long have you known me? To have seen me is to have seen the Father. Have faith to ask anything in my name and it will be given" (cf. Jn 14, 9.13). By now Fr Philip will have been personally introduced to the Father - he will now be sure that this is enough!

MAY HE REST IN PEACE