

Father Frank Carey
Funeral Mass in South Africa
Memorial Mass in Liverpool

The funeral of Fr. Frank Carey went very nicely, thank God. It was held in the chapel of the funeral home where his remains had been taken, so we had to bring everything for the Mass from Edenglen. Some of us had been a little worried about the setting but in fact it proved to be lovely, being relaxed, calm and cosy. Piet Verkleij brought a lovely picture of Frank from Ndola. This was placed by the candles on the ledge behind the altar and provided a helpful focus.

Twenty-three Confreres, including priests, brothers, students, and a new associate, were there to celebrate Frank's life and mission on earth and his new life in Christ. Among them were Fr Toon van Kessel, from Kabwata Parish in Lusaka, representing the Provincial, Fr Christopher Chileshe, who was in Rome for the Chapter, and Fr Piet from Ndola, the community to which Frank belonged. Also present were Sr. Lynn Walker who represented the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, a congregation with whom Frank was closely associated throughout his ministry; and Dorothy and Mike Jay, a couple known to Frank since his early days in Mbala. (They now live in Irene, south of Pretoria, and visited him several times during his illness.) Frank's family had asked Sr Lynn to represent them also as they were having a Memorial Mass for him in Liverpool on 20th May.

Fr Ray Fortin acted as MC throughout, welcoming everyone and directing proceedings. He stated that he had lost not only a confrere but also a very good friend. A moment of deep emotion somehow demonstrated the feelings of the whole group and the atmosphere of brotherhood was tangible.

Toon Van Kessel, the main celebrant, made a beautiful introduction to the funeral. He said something like this:

Frank has been a blessing to us, a person with many gifts who had been given to us by his family. This is an occasion to thank his family for that gift. The Society of Missionaries also has profited greatly from Frank as a person, the way he was and for what he did. Today we, his confreres, want to thank God for that. The Christians also greatly profited from Frank and his work and vision. This is a celebration of thanksgiving for the gift of Frank to all of us. We ask forgiveness for the times we have not understood Frank or appreciated him enough. We human beings hurt one another and cause pain, and we ask the Lord to forgive us for that. Frank too had his shortcomings and might have said a wrong word or given a wrong remark. We forgive him and ask God to forgive him. We like to start our celebration with a clear mind and pray with a clean heart.

Piet read the Gospel and gave the homily, the complete text of which is in the appendix. In it, he spoke about his own relationship with Frank since student

days, and some of Frank's ministry, connecting this beautifully with his reflection on the Readings.

The students from Merrivale led the music, which was in English, French, Soto and Zulu. They did this beautifully, really enhancing the celebration of the Mass of Resurrection. Some of them, and Fr Raphaël, had known Frank from Totteridge, Lusaka or Ndola. Among them were two Zambians, one of whom travelled all the way back to Merrivale on the overnight bus to meet a 10a.m. commitment to the Confirmation Mass there the next morning.

Towards the end of the celebration, Ray read some of the letters he had received, one of which was from Fr. Ulrich Piwek in Germany, who had worked with Frank in his days in Lwitikila and Mpika. He wrote:

"I want to give my heartfelt condolences to all his confreres and also to his family. We lost such an inspiring pastoral worker and such a good friend. I think the time he was teaming up with us at Mpika, with Bob Lavertu, Konrad Berg and myself, was very important in his life. And it was the beginning of many important developments for our Diocese. I owe him very much. Because without him our inspirations at St. Andrew's would have remained mediocre. With him there were great developments. For example the founding of the Institute of Christian Leadership at Mpika. United in sorrow and prayers. Yours Ulrich".

Another letter was from Sisters of the Sacred Hearts in UK who knew Frank initially in Zambia and latterly in UK. They wrote:

"Wanting to offer the deepest sympathy and loving support of all the Sisters at Marian House. We all knew and loved Fr Frank and have been holding him in our prayers and masses for the past weeks. It was with very great sadness and tears that we received the news of his death. Please will you convey our sympathy to Fr Frank's family and confreres."

Sr. Lynn gave the eulogy at the very end of the service. There was laughter in the appropriate places and applause at the end. This was a masterpiece of eulogy. It showed that she knew Frank really well. She once said to me that it was as if he was her big brother. Lynn described how Frank had always been closely related the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, and delivered her tribute to him most graciously and pleasantly. The text of her eulogy is in the appendix.

The burial plot is in Westpark Cemetery, on the other side of the city, close to that of Louis Blondel. Both Dorothy and Lynn noted the soil, which is just exactly like the red soil in Lwitikila, a mission where Frank spent several years. They also saw that the grave was under the branches of a jacaranda, a tree Frank loved.

Ray officiated at the graveside and, again, the students led the singing. Each person then scattered petals over the coffin and said his or her own prayer or words of farewell. Several of those present then proceeded to fill in the grave.

After the burial, we returned to the house in Edenvale for a barbeque, which really was delicious, with Réal, Gaetan, and the students helping. As throughout the day, René quietly kept things flowing smoothly. Dot and her husband Mike joined us,

which gave Lynn time to catch up with them, having visited Dot's home in Mbala with Frank when she (Lynn) was still a lay person and the town was still called Abercorn!

Appendix

1. Homily given by Fr Piet Verkleij

I Cor. 15:1-10a; Luke 12:42-44

Dear friends,

I have been together with Frank since 1959. That started in St. Edward's College in Totteridge, London. After our ordination in 1963 we went together to Zambia, the Diocese of Abercorn, later Mbala and now Mpika Diocese.

I have chosen the Gospel reading of the faithful, active steward, because it definitely applies to Frank. I look at his curriculum vitae: it is a full page of appointments. A rich missionary life.

His first experience of missionary life was at Kayambi mission. Kayambi means beginning. It was the place where Bishop Dupont, Bwana Motomoto, began the Christianizing of Northern Zambia. From Kayambi he went to Kopa Mission, far away in the bush, where, as Frank used to tell us, people go to forget and be forgotten.

Then followed a transfer to Serenje, where Frank got involved in the teaching of R.E, Religious Education, a vocation he would continue for the rest of his life. Soon he was transferred to St. Mary's Seminary at Mbala, while I took over from him in Serenje. The next step was to Lwitikila Girls Secondary School, where he would work for many years. That was in Mpika Deanery where Frank worked together with other priests to renew the Religious Education in the parishes. It was just after the Second Vatican Council. Before that time it had been the question and answer catechism, but now it became an inculturated approach, Zambian stories and proverbs which led to the full Christian teaching. The course was called Apatebeta Lesa. Literally it means: where God cooks, there is no smoke. God's ways are a mystery to us. Also, while at Lwitikila, Frank was involved in the start of the ICL, the Institute for Christian Leadership. In between Frank also was the first National Inspector for Religious Education, when he visited the whole country of Zambia from Livingstone to Nakonde to promote good Religious Education in the schools. And also he got involved in giving seminars to teachers all about Religious Education.

Meanwhile he did research, especially concerning witchcraft. And he got involved in Cambridge University. Recently he did research in view of giving more seminars.

Now why did I choose the first reading, 1 Corinthians? Frank was very much spiritually interested in the Resurrection of Christ. He had read - this is again in

the sixties - a book about the Resurrection which was quite well known. I have been trying to remember the author. And this morning I finally remembered the author, Durwell. Frank also was much interested in the theologians of the Vatican Council, Rahner and Schillebeeckx. The text we just read in chapter 15 of 1Corinthians is the first text in the New Testament which speaks about the Resurrection. The old theology had been the theology of Good Friday. Christ dying for our sins. The Resurrection remained in the background. Vatican 2 theology saw much more the Resurrection of Christ as the center of our faith.

Frank now enjoys the Resurrection we may believe and hope. Just this year he gave the White Fathers a retreat in Lusaka, and if he would still have been alive, he would have given this month in Kasama the retreat to the students of the spiritual year.

We, his community, we realized that he was not fully healthy. He complained about it, but still went on doing his research, to prepare his talks. When he went to South Africa, we had expected him back. He looked still quite all right. But God decided otherwise. While we are here to bring him to his last resting place, there are Memorial Masses in Zambia and in Liverpool in England.

We are here at Mass praying for Frank. That he may enjoy the Resurrection, the new and everlasting life with Christ.

2. Eulogy given by Sr Lynn

Francis Carey, known to his large family as 'our Fran', was born in Bootle, Liverpool, on 20th September 1938, just a year before the Second World War. At the age of three, his family home was hit by a bomb and Frank always considered this trauma to be the cause of the stutter from which he suffered so much in his early years, a stutter that almost prevented his ordination.

He went to a Christian Brothers' school in Liverpool, where his friend was Tom O'Connor, who today is a very well-known British comedian. Frank told me that it was Tom O'Connor's father who really encouraged his priestly vocation, although evidently many thought Tom would be the priest and Frank would be the comedian! I wonder why?!!

He was just sixteen years when he left home to begin his formation, and was ordained priest in Liverpool on 29th June 1963. Already links had been made with our congregation as, with his student friends, he visited one or other of our Liverpool communities while on home leave.

September of 1963 saw him, along with his friends John Doherty and Frank Larkin, as well as some of our Sisters, at the language school in Illondola, and it was here that Frank's profound love of Bemba was born. The initial learning of the language was not without its moments of hilarity, however. An often recounted tale was of the threesome going out one afternoon early in the course and meeting an old man on the track. At that stage, they had very few words of Bemba and to everything the old man said, they happily responded, 'Ee, mukwai,' 'Ee, mukwai,' 'Ee, mukwai.' There was a commotion during supper that evening, and the Superior

went out to see what the noise was about. Coming back in, he asked, "Which of you went out this afternoon and bought a pig?" They were totally unaware that they had negotiated a price and everything with the old man!

Frank's early years were spent deep in the bush, initially in Kayambi, one of Zambia's oldest missions, and then in the relatively new mission of Kopa. It was in Kopa that I first met him in September 1966. He had just come back from tour and as I stuck my head around the doorway of the Fathers' grass-roofed tin hut, he was happily tucking into Heinz spaghetti – straight from the tin! It was his 28th birthday, and the Sisters at Lwitikila, where I had arrived the previous weekend as a VSO, had sent me laden with cake and various goodies for him! He was a regular and popular visitor to Lwitikila, coming to hear confessions and give talks to Sisters, students and staff. I have memories of his very mud-splattered person arriving in the rainy season on his motor-bike – he was covered in mud from head to foot – and Mother Stanislaus handing a box of matches to a Sister, telling her to light the geyser and run a bath for Father "and, Sister, be sure to clean the drains out afterwards!!"

In January 1968, Frank was moved into education, something he found challenging but really enjoyed. A year later, he joined the staff at Lwitikila and it was here that I experienced first-hand his complete fascination with language, culture, proverbs and local history. He spent hours listening to elderly people and recording their stories, and students found him an inspiring teacher. Years later he told me how very blessed he had been to have the opportunity, and I quote him, to sit at the feet of Fr. Jean Jacques Corbeil, with whom he was in community several times, and Bishop Adolf Fürstenberg. I know from my own experience, they both were remarkable men, both, in their own ways, deeply imbued with local culture and history.

After three years as the Inspector for Religious Education within the Ministry of Education, during which he established that particular office, Frank began a process of more intense study at the Institute of Education in London. When he completed his diploma course, having not found his name on the board displaying exam passes, he began to walk away, feeling dejected. "Hey, congratulations Frank!" a fellow student called. His name was actually right at the very top of the list where, humble man that he was, he had not even bothered to look! He had been awarded a scholarship which took him to Russia.

In the following years, he worked from Mbala with Sr. John Vincent, one of our Sisters, running various training courses for teachers and establishing teachers' centres. In collaboration with Hugh Hawes, from the London Institute of Education, and Zambian teachers, they really utilised the Child-to-child approach, thus ensuring that education reached way beyond the confines of the classroom, and that positive health education messages were disseminated to children and, through them, to their parents, in the hopes of reducing the incidence of preventable diseases. Frank was instrumental in establishing the Institute of Christian Leadership in Mpika in 1985, alongside Icengelo, a Homecraft Centre, run by Sr. Patricia, another of our Sisters, assisted by Sr Devota. These two facilities worked hand-in-hand, providing a residential centre for the rapidly developing work of training leaders of many kinds for various communities far and wide. They

also provided a base for the distribution of written materials produced by both Frank and Sister John.

Throughout this period, Frank worked on what was to become his doctoral thesis. His tutor really pushed him, right up to the last moment, so much so, that, on the morning of his *viva voce*, he was an absolute nervous wreck, convinced the work was no good. I went into the university to try to keep him calm. While he was in the examination, his tutor told me they had never before had a thesis of such excellent quality, and that it was all the more amazing as it was extensively multi-disciplinary, yet integrated the disciplines so very, very well. I wish she had told him that!

In 1990, Sr. John Vincent was elected our Superior General. A year later, Frank began the African Justice and Peace Network in London. We were developing a JPIC centre in Chigwell, and Frank became very involved in that development. At the same time, we began nurturing vocations in developing countries for our own congregation, and also started an Associate programme. Frank became very involved in our formation programmes for both groups, both in UK and Zambia. Younger members today tell me how they were fascinated that this priest had such a deep understanding of our charism and knew so much of our history. And they loved doing Bible Study with him. It was also during these years that Frank worked with the MIL, the Missionary Institute of London, and then first as a Fellow at St Edmund's College in Cambridge University, then as Acting Dean, and finally as Director of the Von Hügel Institute within St Edmund's.

Frank was in constant demand as pastor, confessor and retreat director. He was a deeply spiritual man, though, like us all, he had his own struggles, not least of which was his battle with alcohol. Latterly, after hitting rock bottom, he became open about it. He was into his sixth year of being dry, and was quietly helping other sufferers.

Frank was a wonderful friend to many people. However, after once waiting in the car for hours for the Sisters to return with their shopping, he did decide to draw a line there! I'll do anything, he said, but, please never again ask me to take you shopping!! He was the kind of friend who would go the extra mile to support you when things were tough. Since way back in the sixties, I've known him travel hundreds of miles to be there for someone in need. And I know that, personally, I would not have got through the last 18 months without his constant support.

Many Sisters have talked of Frank as being a person of great compassion who had enormous respect for the dignity of the person, especially the most vulnerable. After commenting about the manner in which he always greeted you, especially if you were Bemba, several people have told me, 'Sister, he always made you feel you were worth something. The way he spoke to you, in just a very short time, he made you feel good about yourself.' I quote one group who wrote, "There are just so many stories and experiences that testify to Fr. Frank's kindness, care, thoughtfulness and great sense of humour. He was always a good friend, a wonderful priest, and a great missionary."

Frank, along with your confreres, family, and friends, our Sisters thank you for the very real and precious gift you have been to us. We pray that your noble, gracious and very gentle soul enjoys eternal happiness and peace as you are re-united with

all those you loved so much. We now have another wonderful friend in heaven. God bless you abundantly.

3. Homily Peached by Joseph Cummins. M.Afr.

At Frank's Memorial Mass in Bootle, Liverpool 20/05/2010

Frank the son of John and Margaret Carey was 71 years of age when he died. He went to Africa in 1963 after his priestly ordination. The grand sum of 47 years, living and working in North Zambia, Kasaama diocese.

Frank, a local lad from Bootle - did his schooling here with the Christian Brothers, Crosby, and was ordained at St, Richard's Church.

Much loved by ordinary people. He had an amazing energy for work – He was in charge of Education for many, many years and Manager of all the Catholic schools in Zambia.

To the Carey family he was a good brother, for us he was much more ... He was a giant in education. Doctorate in Education from London Institute of Education – bringing his hands-on experience from Zambia to the University.

At the Van Hugal Institute, Cambridge he was a senior research fellow of St Edmond's College. At one time Dean and Chaplain and a Fellow of St Edmond's turning the college around to focus and address Africa and world poverty and development issues.

Recently on returning to Zambia he helped lay the foundations for the Catholic University in the Copper Belt.

In Justice and Peace work - he taught himself economics.

He was part of an inner-circle of people pushing and campaigned for debt relief for Africa. Many times Frank was invited by invitation to speak in the House of Lords and in the House of Commons.

He joined with the Chigwell sisters in Setting-up J & P Programmes in the Brentwood Diocese. His soul-friend and mentor Sister John DCD 3 years ago.

Sister Lin Walker and Frank worked on a new project together this present year in Zambia. Sister Lin must feel a great emptiness with out 'Our Frank.'

Frank was the family favourite. If there was a baptism to do and he was 'on home leave' Frank would always loved to be asked. Family would journey from afar to be there, from Manchester and South of Liverpool.

Frank would be at the centre, telling many of his famous tales/stories from Africa. Always the joyous, and funny side, never the dark and rough side of daily life in Africa.

Nephews and nieces would exclaim '*you told us this one last time you were home!*' Frank would reply '*No, this is a brand-new one!*'

Frank always had time for people. Picking people up when they were down. He was always there for you!! He was certainly always there for me.

Frank loved Zambia and its people. So much so that Joe and Bernard questioned whether Frank was Zambian or English.

*Frank was a 'A gentle Giant.' Always ready to take on a job ... the bigger the better!!

*Sometimes Frank was not so well organized as he might be!!!

Returning to Zambia and leaving his most expensive dental plate and Zambian driving licence on the floor of his room and down behind the radiator pipe in his room in London.

* On another trip to his beloved Zambia left his wallet and credit cards on the newspaper table in the community room in London.

A brother is dead,... - a friend's death; the death of a much loved one makes us realise how important human life is.

Today we come together to pray for one whose life ... has come to an end. Uncle Fran, ... Father Frank.

To ponder someone's life - even our own life - is to expose ourselves to uncertainty. We are suddenly, very conscious how little we know about anyone; ... how little we understand even of ourselves.

Frank, Father Frank is dead! - The end of a person's life always comes as a shock to us. The very fact that life has come to an end, and someone we knew is now - no longer with us, introduces a void, an emptiness, which nothing - no other person - can ever fill.

We can't help but feel that to be human is to be something very great, and this greatness contrasts with our ordinary everyday needs, concerns and pastimes which for much of the time occupy our minds, and fill our thoughts and senses. A life has come to an end. We recognise its greatness, and we ponder. We are perhaps shocked for a moment, and, unable to see ... what it all means.

We reflect now, and we pray. We also listen to the scriptures, the word of God. Perhaps here we can find a thought, a sentence, an idea which would reflect the ordinariness of life and yet, somehow also shed light on the greatness, - and let us see the mystery beneath the surfaces of things.

Frank was a man of many talents. Yet he took as his model a simple person - he took - Jesus Christ. He was not so impressed by anyone else.

In the beatitudes Jesus extols ordinary human goodness.

We have chosen to read today the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount where Jesus teaches us the beatitudes. The beatitudes are particularly important and helpful because - they throw a great light on everything. Listening to the Sermon on the Mount can make us aware that God is on our side; that in the end everything will be all right. Good will triumph. Good will triumph in the world and in ourselves.

At the time when Jesus preached this sermon hundreds of people followed him wherever he went. They were simple people, poor people, people who had to - struggle to survive. These people wanted to be near him and hear him speak. Obviously they wanted Jesus to speak directly to them.

You can't help but wonder, what Jesus could possibly say to these people... They knew so little. ... What could he say that would really comfort and console them?

What Jesus did was this. In the beatitudes he lists ways people are seen to be good, and then he says that if people are good like that they will enjoy eternal happiness. The pure in heart shall see God, the meek shall inherit the earth, the merciful shall have mercy shown them, those who search for justice shall be satisfied, the peacemakers shall be called sons of God. Our Frank was a Son a Child of God.

In these simple promises Jesus is singling out the good which is in people; the qualities in people which, despite all their faults and failings and limitations, would have us — in the end — say of them 'he or she is a good person'. And then after each form of human goodness Jesus adds that the kingdom of heaven is made up of such people as these.

We trust in the love and mercy of God for the teaching of Jesus is given to us. At times like these, times of sadness and bereavement, we realize we aren't very different from those people who were listening to Jesus so long ago.

Like them we too want him to say something to us that will help, enlighten and console us. In the beatitudes Jesus does speak to us, and he does help us to think about life and death. He helps us to find confidence and hope. In these words of Jesus we too can find our consolation.

It is a wonderful thing to be told that those very things which inspired affection in us, for the people we have known, and loved, and who have died - those same things make them lovable to Christ, make them dear to him. We know Frank is much loved by Christ Jesus.

Today we pray for Frank who has died, someone we knew very well. We knew their good qualities, and we also knew their failings.

So does God. And God sent his only Son to us to tell us not to be afraid, not to be anxious.

He sent his Son to tell us God will forgive every one of our sins. And this is good news for us because no one is without need of God's forgiveness; no one is so good, so virtuous, that they can do without God's pardon.

We entrust Our Fr. Frank's life to God; to God who values everyone's goodness. At times the goodness of someone may not matter much to other people, but it matters - it always matters - much to God.

Father Frank's thoughtfulness was to be admired, especially for the feelings of others. And his genuine sorrow when he realised he had caused hurt and made amends.

God always forgives those who will admit they aren't perfect. So with these thoughts - God's thoughts that we share in Jesus — we pray with confidence at this Memorial Service for our friend - our brother in Christ. Amena.

Joseph Cummins M.Afr.