

Brother CAMILLUS JAMES MCHUGH

(1924-2021)



Bro. Camillus, James McHugh was born on the 1st of June 1924 in Falcarragh, Co. Donegal. He was the youngest child of Dan & Peggy (nee McNulty). His Sisters and Brothers were Grace, Brigid, Owen, Bernard, Sarah & Mary who all predeceased him.

James joined the Order of St Camillus in 1947. He started his nurse training 1948 in England. He began novitiate with four others in September 1952 in Killucan, Co. Westmeath and made his Simple Profession on 29 September 1953. He then went to Newcastle and made his Solemn Profession in 1956.

After his Solemn Profession he was posted to various Camillian Communities located in Hexham, Newcastle, London, Dublin & Perth West Australia. For a number of years Bro. Camillus was Superintendent of St Camillus Nursing Centre, Killucan. He celebrated his 25th anniversary of vows in September 1978 on the day we discovered that the new Pope John Paul I had died suddenly after only 33 days as Pope. I remember him saying to me that if it could happen to the Pope, then he could easily drop dead while getting shaved.

Towards the end of 1979 Bro. Camillus received permission to go to Rome to study for the priesthood but after one year he decided to return to Ireland. In the early 80s Bro. Camillus was assistant Student Master in the Blackrock house, Dublin as well as Vocation Director. Bro. Camillus then returned to Killucan and in the mid-eighties he volunteered to go on the Missions and was posted to Kenya. He spent several years on the staff of St Camillus Seminary Nairobi as well as working in the Camillian Hospital in Tabaka. He is remembered by many in Kenya and further afield for his kindness and his perennial phrase, 'Let's have a lovely cup of tea.'

He returned after several years in Kenya and took up the position of Superior of the House in London as well as spending a year or two Hexham before the closure of that House. He was also a member of the Provincial Council for many years and made frequent trips from London to attend these meetings. He always brought cheer and laughter.

In 2011 the Community in London dwindled down to one person -namely himself - and he was asked to transfer to Ireland which he did in May 2012. He lived in the Phibsborough Community for 5 years. Bro. Camillus then decided it was time for him to take up residence in the St Camillus Nursing Centre Killucan.

He was very happy in Killucan particularly as the chapel was only a few yards from his room. Bro. Camillus was open to everyone and always wanted to know where people were from. People were drawn to him by his kindness, hospitable disposition and happy heart. He reflected to people the love of God in action.

He liked a nice meal and was very traditional in what he ate. He also liked a little drink with others. He was also very funny and within a few seconds would have people laughing, even complete strangers. He was a man of prayer and never missed daily Mass. This was most important to him. He believed in the Lord and practised his faith. The Sacrament of Confession(Reconciliation) was most important to him. Any priest who visited him would be asked to hear his Confession in order that Camillus might experience the healing and mercy of God. Just as he received the mercy of God he wished to show everyone what was important to him. Namely the love of Christ. He had great devotion to our Blessed Mother and it is not without significance that he died on the Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary just a couple of hours before his 97th birthday. He had prayed for Our Lady to intercede for him to be taken to the Lord and his prayer was heard.

He will be greatly missed by his nieces, nephews, relatives, many friends and his Camillian confreres.

Ar dheis De go raibh h-anam dilis (Literally: At right-hand-side of-god may be his soul faithful)

May his gentle soul rest in peace.