

Funeral Homily at the Requiem Mass of Fr. David Waite, O.Carm.

given by the Prior Provincial, Fr. Wilfrid McGreal, O.Carm.

Aylesford Priory, Monday 13th June 2011



Fr. David Waite, O.Carm.

When John of the Cross was dying he asked the brethren to read *The Song of Songs* to him, that powerful poem that celebrates love. The images are of the joy of human loving and the writer is celebrating the goodness of committed love.

Jesus' command is to love one another; if we do that, then as friends to each other we can find we are close to God. Human unselfish love tells us something of how God is in love with us. That relationship is startling, and to come to it John of the Cross tells us that we have to let go of lesser Gods, or Gods we have imagined. This journey into the light of love is not easy, and it can often seem to be uncharted and dark.

I believe that in the last months of his life David discovered that he was loved and loveable, and he was able to taste in the here and now something of the closeness to God that is our calling.

David was a gifted man. Before becoming a friar he had, after graduating and post-graduate studies, become an economist at the Bank of England. However, at university he felt drawn to priesthood and his chaplain discerned that religious life would be the way forward. David became a Carmelite, making his profession in 1977 at Aylesford. As a friar he studied in Rome and Dublin, and also qualified as a teacher. For a number of years David was involved at Whitefriars and then St. Edward's School, Cheltenham, eventually becoming school chaplain. He gained valuable pastoral experience in Walworth.

During this time David ministered with great gentleness, but over the years and perhaps to a greater degree he could feel that what he was doing was beyond him, or he felt isolated. His unease surfaced during his time in Aberystwyth and would continue in the years ahead. David didn't realize that people valued him for his gentleness, care and

deep interest that he could show, perhaps because he felt needs he could sense where others were hurting.

In recent years David was able to serve the community at Aylesford and the Order at large. He took on the daunting task of preparing the yearly *Carmelite Bibliography*. This work was demanding, painstaking, but an invaluable tool for anyone involved in Carmelite Studies.

Then just a year ago the Prior General asked him to be the Order's Archivist and David agreed. Sadly, as we know, no sooner had David come to Rome last year than illness struck. Along with the illness David experienced a profound change in his being. He became conscious of how much his brethren cared for him, and he realized that he was a worthwhile person. Thanks to Maidstone hospital, Trish our nurse, and the Aylesford Community, David was able to have a good quality of life. Each day he saw as a gift and so many experiences were to be savoured. His creative side, music photography, all flourished along with a great sense of peace. He felt happiest in chapel, at meals and in the community room. He felt ready to respond to whatever God's love and will had in store for him. He knew he was dying, but everyday was a day of his life. The end came quickly, but he left this life praying with Brother Neil and Trish by his bed.

David had found his God, and found he was loveable and was free to love. His transformation began before he left us, but he has left a precious memory and a reminder that our human loving is the gateway to the source of that love, Our Saviour.

Obituary of Fr. David Waite, O.Carm.

The following tribute, written by the Prior Provincial Fr. Wilfrid McGreal, was published on the British Province website following the announcement of Fr. David's death.

Fr. David Waite, O.Carm., died peacefully at Aylesford Priory on the morning of Monday 6th June 2011.

David Waite was born at Caterham in Surry in 1946. The family moved to Fetcham near Leatherhead and it was to be the family home. David had a younger brother Michael. David went to the Catholic primary school at Leatherhead and his secondary education was with the Jesuits at Wimbledon. He enjoyed his time there and is remembered by his contemporaries.

After a short spell in the Civil Service David went to Lancaster University gaining an MA in economics. He went on to work in the Bank of England for five years.

Going on a vocations course at Allington Castle led David to join the Carmelites and he was professed as a friar at Aylesford Priory in 1977.

After studies in Rome, and gaining a Postgraduate Certificate in Education, David taught at Whitefriars Cheltenham (now St. Edwards School).

David completed his theological studies in Dublin and ministered as a deacon at English Martyrs, Walworth.

After his priestly ordination in 1990 David went on to teach and act as Chaplain at St. Edwards.

David was back on the parish team at Walworth for three years before being appointed Parish Priest at Aberystwyth.



Fr. David with Fr. Richard Copsy enjoying a break during the 2002 Provincial Chapter

David left Aberystwyth and spent some time in Rome as librarian at Sant' Alberto (Saint Albert's College) and also became involved in the painstaking task of preparing the annual Carmelite Bibliography for the Order's academic journal *Carmelus*. While enjoying the work David found living in Rome somewhat lonely and he came back to Britain.



David presiding at the Eucharist during a Carmelite Third Order retreat in 2010.

Over the years David helped as community bursar and oversaw the wellbeing of the libraries at Aylesford and East Finchley. He also agreed to take on again the preparation of the Carmelite Bibliography. Over this period he continued to help in the ministry of welcome at Aylesford.

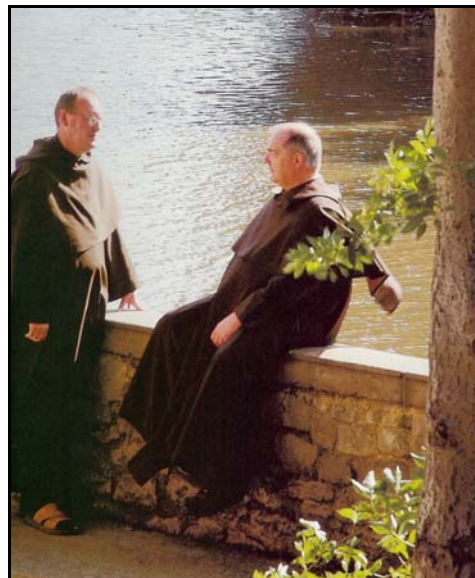


Fr. David distributing Holy Communion to pilgrims at Aylesford Priory



David with the Prior General of the Carmelite Order, Fr. Fernando Millán Romeral, at the Provincial Chapter of the British Province, April 2011

In 2010 the Prior General asked David to become the Order's Archivist. David agreed, and technically remained a member of the Curia community until his death. However, no sooner had he arrived in Rome than illness struck. He was given great loving care by the brethren but despite his illness he asked to return to Britain. In the midst of atrocious weather he came back safely and was given excellent care at Maidstone Hospital. David was able to come back to Aylesford where he felt at home and at peace.



Fr. David with Fr. Francis Kemsley enjoying the peace of Aylesford Priory's grounds

From that time to his death today, June 6th, David was able to live his Carmelite life in a spirit of peace and joy.

He managed to finish off work on the *Carmelite Bibliography* and he was able to join the community for prayer and its daily life.

The Oncology Department at Maidstone Hospital gave him great support and Trish Golledge the Province Nurse was a great help to him.



David preaching the Gospel at the Third Order's National Gathering in May 2011.

What was significant in this time was David's concern for others. He came to the last part of his journey open to God's will and conscious that he was loved by the community.

David died in the early hours of June 6th, and his last words were to offer his death as a reparation for peace.

Fr. David's body will be received into the Relic Chapel at Aylesford Priory at 6pm on Sunday 12th June. A Requiem Mass will be celebrated at 11.30am on Monday 13th June, followed by burial in the Province Cemetery.