

**Homily at the Funeral Mass of Fr. Cyril Baxter, O.Carm.**  
**(9<sup>th</sup> November 1926 – 17<sup>th</sup> September 2011)**

*Fr. Cyril Baxter was buried at Aylesford Priory on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2011. The following homily was preached by the Prior Provincial of the British Province of Carmelites, Fr. Wilfrid McGreal.*



We have come to say farewell to our brother Cyril; Jack to his family. Cyril chose the scripture we have just heard: Isaiah telling us of God's faithfulness with a care as beautiful as a mother's nurturing, while Paul writing to the Corinthians speaks of a longing for fulfilment so that we can come to everlasting life. John's Gospel gives words of reassurance about our home in heaven with the Father, saved by Christ in the power of the Spirit. Cyril comes before God wanting to do God's will.

Cyril was determined, dogged, kind and idiosyncratic, and as we look at his life it was very much shaped by *The Little Way*. He was faithful and focused, and the faith that he came to as a young man grew and flourished over his fifty and more years in Carmel.

Cyril grew up in a solid hard-working Bradford family. His father's sense of social justice led Cyril to Marxism, and then to the Gospel. After school Cyril did his National Service in the Royal Army Service Corps and then became an executive officer in the Ministry of Pensions.

In 1958 Cyril came to Aylesford as a voluntary worker and after that applied to join the Order. He did his postulancy in Llandeilo and entered the novitiate in 1959; fellow novices included Piet Wijngaard and Pat O'Keeffe. For the next decade or more Cyril was part of the Aylesford community using his clerical skills as bookkeeper. He was seconded to Sant'Alberto in Rome for a short while but this was not a happy experience. In 1973 Cyril felt called to priestly ministry and he began a time of study first of all at Aberystwyth and then Rome. Cyril seemed to have a special liking for philosophy, especially metaphysics. After ordination in 1980 Cyril ministered in Aylesford, and then in Hazlewood, and when Hazlewood closed he became part of the York community. While in York Cyril's ministry brought him into contact with the nuns at Thicket where he is remembered as a kind and helpful confessor.

In 2001 Cyril was diagnosed with cancer and the prognosis was not good. Cyril asked to spend his last months at Aylesford. However, the illness was kept at bay and Cyril was to live on for another ten years. He was not to enjoy the best of health but he had a good quality of life. During this time he was helped by Sister Beth and Jackie. In these last years he was faithful to community prayer and maintained an attitude of cheerfulness. In the last year or so he became very fragile and less mobile. In the weeks before his death he felt ready to go to the Lord and he shared these feelings with those who visited him. It was fitting that Jackie could be with him as he died, a presence of friendship, as he was to the One who is Love.

Cyril has left us a way of living the Gospel that was faithful and simple. He had an amazing innocence and also stubbornness. He did not always see the sense of things but he was consistent. There was no malice in him and he was not afraid to be himself. I will remember the smile and the determination with which he would set off walking. Cyril has finished his journey here with us, may he come before the living God and be graced with eternal life.