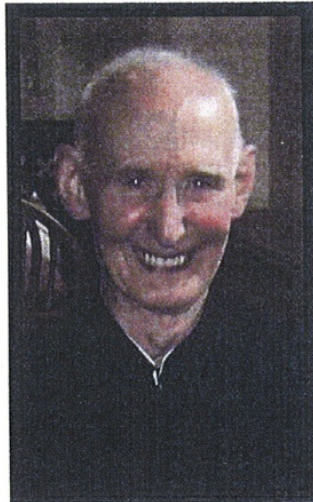


Br Malachy CSsR RIP Requiem

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"With the Lord there is plentiful redemption."



Requiem Mass

Brother Malachy (Patrick) Kelly C.Ss.R.

3rd December 1925 - 9th April 2011



A celebration of
the life, the mission and the ministry
of a Redemptorist Brother

Brother Malachy



Homily Preached by Fr. Provincial, Ronald McAinsh C.Ss.R.

I feel enormously privileged to be preaching today at the Mass to celebrate the life and death of Bro. Malachy – but also at somewhat of a loss as to what I should say about so great a man.

That Brother Malachy was a saint is not in doubt in my mind. I recall the evening before his death Fr. Richard and I coming away from a visit and saying, 'Well why would anyone want to go to Padua or Assisi or our own Materdomini where St Gerard is buried – to venerate the body of a dead saint - when we have just spent half an hour with saint we both know'. Certainly by the huge turn out here today, this view is shared by so many of you.

Brother Malachy lived a comparatively hidden life. But in fact, he was probably the best known and most loved Redemptorist by the people, in any of the communities in which he lived

I mention the **hidden** life of Malachy – mostly spent in the garden or in the sacristy. But this was a man who had seen the world. Although he was born in Leitrim, Ireland, he joined the British Army at a young age and his first foreign posting (after England) was in Austria. After this he was sent to Hong Kong in 1947 where his Unit was involved in the battle against the communists.

From there he moved almost right round the world to Jamaica. However, with the outbreak of the Korean War he was sent back to Germany, and then posted to Korea. I asked him only a week or so ago if it was very hot in Korea. And with perfect clarity he said that in fact he was in the North, and in winter it was colder than Perth. So already he was hardened for the rigours of cold Kinnoull...

On his return to UK, he prayed about his future and decided that he was called to be a Cistercian Brother. However, when he went to the Redemptoristine Convent to tell this to Sr. Patrick – his sister who is here with us today – the Reverend Mother of that time – and remember, Reverend Mothers had power in those days – told

him that he should be a *Redemptorist* Brother. And so he came here to Kinnoull in 1955 to begin his journey in Redemptorist Religious life..... a life he lived faithfully for these past 56 years.

We *could* say today that this is where the journey ends.... ..where it all began. But of course our faith tells us something very different. Because we believe that the journey carries on... it carries on in God, in eternal life... it carries on in the hearts of the many people Malachy touched during his life, it carries on in all the works and kindnesses he performed over the years in the various communities in which he lived and worked.

Because we all know that Brother Malachy had a very rich and full interior life. I remember two years ago he was admitted to PRI after he had a slight blood clot on his leg. And he asked to me go to his room and there I would find a small (and I must say battered) little case in which he kept the few necessities of life which he might need in such an eventuality - His pyjamas, his toiletries and two books. Both books were by the medieval mystic saint, Maister Eckhart – about whom Malachy seems to have been something of an expert. Malachy had a deep knowledge of the interior life – and indeed when he went into hospital a few weeks ago – and little did we know that he would not return home – we took him a new life of Mother Celeste, the mystic and foundress of the Redemptoristines, and he read it within two days – and loved it.

Malachy had extraordinary physical energy. He never pushed a wheelbarrow. He ran with it. He washed dishes and dug gardens at an amazing rate. However, I would suggest that the energy came from **within**. It came from a deep inner freedom and a deep union with God that we cannot even begin to fathom.

I had glimpse of it from time to time when we spoke about his impending death and what lay beyond. When he was first diagnosed with motor neuron disease at the end of February I was in Zimbabwe, and Fr. Mulligan contacted me. My first reaction was one of anger.....'How could you do this God, to a man who has served you so vigorously with so much faithfulness'?

And when I returned the following week, I shared this with Malachy. He just smiled and said "Well perhaps God wants absolutely everything"; - and indeed God did. I then said, I suppose you are a bit like St. Peter to whom Jesus said, "When you were young you would put on your clothes and go where you wished"....And Malachy finished the phrase for me by saying, "But when you are old, another will take you and lead you in a way you would rather not go"..... And again he gave his quiet smile. And no other words were necessary.

His trust in God was complete and utter. And likewise his gratitude for all he received from God's hands – which appears even to have included his illness. He was truly a man with a grateful heart.

And it was this serenity, this gratitude, this graciousness - (Full of grace) that touched the hearts of so many people. I recall when he was in Ninewells hospital Dundee, a nurse telling me that she had asked to be moved from another ward for the weekend to his ward, because when she was nursing Malachy, she felt she was in the presence of something blessed and special that she could not describe.

When he was in Cornhill, the Nurses told him that he did not have to keep on saying 'thank you' for every little service they rendered. They said, "That's why we are here". But Malachy could not change his nature of being a gracious man who always expressed his thankfulness.

I remember many year ago when I was Novice Master asking Fr. Bernard Haring, a famous and holy Redemptorist in Rome, what I should look out for in men who were joining us.

And he said, 'First of all try and see if they have Eucharistic hearts. Eucharist means gratitude, and so I mean hearts that are positive and grateful – and that they are people who are ready and willing to break the bread of their lives for others.' Surely our Malachy fulfilled this description to perfection.

Those of us who have lived with Brother Malachy knew that he was an intensely private person. He worked **alone** in the garden. He prayed for hours **alone** in the Church. He worked **alone** in the sacristy, and he sat in his room for hours reading his spiritual books in solitude.

I often wondered how he would accept illness and the loss of privacy. The reality is that he accepted them with totally equanimity and peace. When he first began to feel feeble, we got him a Zimmer so that he could be

moderately mobile. You would have thought we had brought him a Ferrari – the gratitude and joy on his face was so intense.

And when he totally lost his privacy and had to be fed and bathed, his disposition remained utterly positive and docile. His adaptability from a hidden and independent life in the Monastery, to a public and dependent life in hospital was truly amazing.

So what do we learn from this life? We are not here to canonise Malachy. That is the last thing he would have wanted.

But there are a few lessons that his life can teach us.

The first, I think is to be **grateful** – to be people who can see the half full glass rather than the half empty glass. To be people who remember the blessings we have in life – our health, our families, our friends, and God's love for us.

To be **wholehearted** in what we do. Malachy it seems to me, was single-minded. It did not matter if it was digging a field, welcoming a visitor or lighting the candles. He put his heart in to whatever was needed at that moment.

To be **cheerful in adversity**. Malachy was the same when things worked out well for him, as when things were collapsing around him. He accepted the various moves from community to community without a grumble, although I have no doubt it cost him something within.

To **pray and to trust in God**. This I think was Malachy's greatest legacy to us. He was a man of deep prayer. Often he would sit in this church in silence and pray for the world – for us. And in times of difficulty, he had particular devotion to and trust in our Mother of Perpetual Help, under whose title this church is dedicated. And he often told me he was praying to her for me, and for all our needs.

And finally **to be there for others**. Malachy did so much for others – quietly and humbly, whether it was putting out the dustbins each week or leaving a note to change the host in the tabernacle or to collect the eggs from the hens. He generously prayed for so many intentions. You only had to ask him and he would assure you of his prayers.

Above all, he challenges us to put God before everything else.

I would like to conclude by thanking the members of the Community here at the Monastery, for their love and care for Brother Malachy. It was utterly outstanding. The Redemptorist community **and** the extended community, not only of Srs. Maureen and Monica, but all of these who work here and loved him so much. I cannot mention each one by name. But I know that each one loved him – and was loved by Brother Malachy.

I would like to thank our regular Masses attenders, and all of those who visited Malachy when he was in hospital or Cornhill.

A special word of thank to the doctors, nurses and staff of PRI and Ninewells – and in a very special and focused way to those in Cornhill who made life for him – and for us – so blessed during his final few weeks.

I express our condolences to Srs. Patrick and Colette his blood sisters, and to Brother Malachy's family and friends.

We will shortly lay Malachy to rest in our Monastery cemetery. We will say farewell to his body. But his spirit will remain with us in the years that lie ahead - whenever we come into this Church, or walk in the gardens, or look at the hens, or watch the grass grow, Malachy's spirit will be with us.

We were privileged to have Brother Malachy with us for so long a time. May his soul rest in peace. Amen

