

# Memories of Br. Ambrose Arrowsmith C.Ss.R

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Ambrose was born, grew up and lived in Liverpool, and during the Second World War he was a member of the ambulance service and for most of the time he worked on ambulance trains between Liverpool and London.

After the war he joined the Redemptorists, and went to the Noviciate and after that he spent the better part of his life up to 1981, when he died at Bishop Eton, he spent the better part of his life in Bishop Eton itself answering the door and the phone.

He had quite an apostolate on the door with people who would ring the bell looking for something to eat. So every morning Ambrose would make a big pile of sandwiches and wrap them ready for people who called, and would be making cups of tea or mugs of tea for as many of his callers as wanted tea as well. He was well known in that way for feeding the poor.

But Ambrose on the phone could also be a bit annoying; there was one famous occasion when Fr. Callaghan the Rector was elected to represent the Province at the General Chapter in Rome. And he went to Rome and was away for four to five weeks, so when he came back there was one note on the notice board from Brother Ambrose to him which said simply "A man rang".

Kevin looked at this and looked at Ambrose and said

"What on earth is the use of that – a man rang you don't know who it was?"

"No!"

"Well what the use is that?"

"Well he said at least you know it wasn't a woman don't you!"

On another occasion when Fr. Callaghan was given a dozen pairs of shoes, he gave them to Ambrose and said "the people that call at the front door looking for sandwiches they may like a new pair of shoes, so he said keep these handy and given them out to those in need". After a week or so Kevin said "how are you getting on with the shoes", and Ambrose said "only got one pair left now", and Kevin said "let's have a look at them". When he looked at them Kevin said "do you realise these are two left shoes, what good will they be?" Ambrose just looked at him and said so simply "Well one good shoe is better than none, isn't it?"

When Ambrose died in hospital, I Beverley Ahearn, was the Rector at Bishop Eton and I had to clear his room. I have never come across a room with fewer belongings, he had a little pile of personal letters which he wanted destroyed, and I destroyed those, and he had virtually nothing else personal in the room which was the easiest room I've ever had to tidy in my life as a Redemptorist.