**Fr PHIL BARRY FUNERAL HOMILY NEW YEARS DAY 2025 THURLES CATHEDRAL**

On the occasion of his Baptism in this Cathedral, as he often recalled, on October 14th 1935, two days after his birth the parents would have been asked what name they had chosen to give to their new born child: The answer was:

PHIL BARRY.

Now 89 years later we return here to present Fr Phil back to God; a God whom he faithfully served, followed and loved throughout his life.

Born on October 12th 1935- the same day as Luciano Pavarotti- Phil led a full and active life. In 2019 he wrote: ‘I am no longer Rector here, but I still carry out various functions.’ Indeed, during our Provincial Assembly in 2023 he stated that “no-one has ever told me that I am retired.”

Born the third of eleven to his parents Jim & Anne Phil was educated locally before entering the Pallottine Novitiate and after a period of years of work in Ireland, England & the USA, he returned to Thurles and was ordained in 1969. Working in Ely, Nevada and Stephenville in Texas, Phil was appointed to Promotion work in Ireland in 1978. There he helped organise various fund- raising events such as whist drives, flag days, sales of work, sponsored cycles from Dublin to Thurles and the annual draw which continues.

In the midst of all the organising and activity Phil made great connections and friendships with people. It is a characteristic of his life. Appointed to England in September 1984 Phil served in Greenford, Barking, Cheddar and Halstead. He was appointed Rector in the Pallottine College in Thurles in October 2005. It was as if he had never been away- immediately linking up with friends and acquaintances and able to attend club and county matches throughout Tipperary.

Sport was an important aspect of Phil’s life. His ability on the sports field is well known- Harty Cup winner in 1951, All-Ireland Minor winner in 1952 & 53 along with Rice Cup, Croke Cup and Dean Ryan in school. He delighted in continuing to play for his club Upperchurch/Drombane- indeed he played his last game in Borrisoleigh at a Festival in 1979. He stated he had pains in his legs- he was 43!

Phil played golf regularly and took part in the annual Clergy Golf Outings in England. He was part of the Brentwood Diocese team when he was in Barking & Halstead. Another Pallottine was part of the Westminster team at these events. A third Pallottine becoming aware of a possible encounter told Phil: “do not play golf against him, he does not like to lose.” He then told the other Pallottine not to play against Phil as “he likes to win.” Needless to say, they never met in competition. Phil treated sport, like life, seriously. He always gave and tried his best. Sport for Phil was not fun- this was serious business; it was for competing and hopefully winning. But, ultimately it was about the game, your teammates, the friendships and memories created, retained and thankfully retold.

The last few days for Phil in hospital were difficult for family, companions and friends to witness. Those who visited him in those days were in many ways silenced by what they were witnessing. In those three days after Christmas, and the Feast days of St Stephen, St John and the Holy Innocents we were reminded of ‘the Companions of Christ’- the cortege accompanying the Christ-child.

The date of death is December 29th but for Phil it was the Feast of the Holy Family. I can hear him say that former US President Jimmy Carter died on the same day. It is a Feast day significant to Phil throughout his life- his love for and pride in his family of every generation.

Today is the Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God and World day of peace. Phil served in the US where one was known by their number not their name. Phil as Chaplain’s Assistant was Number US 51473782. Maybe it was the impersonality of this which made Phil determined to get to know people, to be interested in them, to remember them.

Phil in many ways lived out the Rosary Mystery of the Visitation. There is many a room in our *Father’s house* where Phil will be warmly welcomed for a return visit, a rekindling of friendship and connection. For many years here, he sought to show gratitude to our many Pallottine benefactors by trying to celebrate Requiem Masses for the many people who supported us so generously. He has expressed in writing “they support us in life and we Pallottines must not forget them in death.” It is good advice for all of us today, to remember Phil and not only today.

The first reading from Wisdom refers to the visitation at the end of time. It is not the most common reference taken from this reading but we can take reassurance that Phil ‘*will shine out’* as *‘grace and mercy await those he has chosen.’*

I would often wonder why none of our Eucharistic acclamations are Christmas themed, if I can use that expression for example: ‘O, come let us adore him, Christ the Lord’. But on Monday & yesterday I paid extra attention to the Acclamation of Faith: ‘Save us Saviour of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection, you have set us free.’

This is Phil’s professed and publicly lived Faith. Yes, Jesus is our saviour born for us so that He could partake in the Easter mysteries. Not only are they interlinked, they cannot in actual fact be separated. Phil fully accepted Jesus, the Son of God, the Word made flesh, the apostle of the Eternal Father as his Saviour.

In his 89 years of life Fr Phil has been active. That activity was driven by a love of God and of neighbour, lived out in family, neighbour and further afield. There have been numerous messages of sympathy received since Sunday- they speak warmly of a human being who touched people’s lives in a positive affirmative way. These messages have arrived not just from this locality which he treasured and was so proud of but also from differing countries where he has served as a Pallottine, and from those countries where his Mission Promotion work has been and continues to be so beneficial and gratefully received. He has lived out the start of our second reading at this Mass:

*The life and death of each of us has its influence on others; if we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die we die for the Lord, so that alive or dead, we belong to the Lord.*

Phil always spoke up for us as students and as young priests; he wanted to see us continue to be enthusiastic about our Pallottine way of life within and for the Church. He has worked out and developed our Charism, involving laity, Diocesan clergy and Religious to work together in building up the Kingdom of god in his own unique way.

It is important that we give thanks today to Phil, and for Phil, in his total dedication to God.

May he rest in peace and may he be rewarded for his good deeds, seen and unseen throughout his life.