



Fr Desmond McKeever



Rev. Fr. Desmond Patrick (Des) McKeever was born on the 28th of June 1928. His father was Patrick McKeever and his mother was Anne m.s. Lawless of Blackrock, Co Dublin. He received his primary education at Westland Row Christian Brothers School between 1934 and 1945. He travelled to school each day by train.

After completing his secondary education in 1945, Des joined the Civil Service as an Executive Officer and worked there until 1956. His first post was in Drogheda as a clerk in the Great Northern Railway Company. Thereafter all his postings were in Dublin and he lived with his parents at Blackrock. During his time in the Civil Service he studied at Trinity College where he was awarded a Diploma in Public Administration and he studied at UCD by night where he was awarded a BA degree, his subjects were Modern History, English Literature and Irish.

After a period of discernment he joined St Patrick's Missionary Society Kiltegan in September 1956 at the age of 28. He completed the Spiritual Year in June 1957 and went to St Patrick's, Douglas, Cork for a two year course in philosophy. He returned to Kiltegan in September 1959 for a four year course in theology and was ordained by Bishop Patrick Cleary SSC, the retired Bishop of Nancheng, China on the 14th of April 1963 (Easter Sunday) in St Mary's Church, Killamoat.

After his ordination Fr. Des was appointed to the then Prefecture of Minna, Kebbi State Nigeria. He was part of the second class to be sent there. He taught at St Malachy's Secondary School, Minna and at Zuru Government Secondary School. After his first tour in Nigeria he was sent back to Ireland to University College Cork to study for the Higher Diploma in Education and he was also dean at St Patrick's, Douglas.

After a further period in Nigeria, ill health forced his return to Ireland in the early 1970s. After medical treatment he was appointed to the Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh in Scotland where he was stationed in St Mary's Cathedral Edinburgh 1972-3 and in St Patrick's, Kilsyth 1973-4.

In 1975 he returned to Ireland to the Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin. He ministered in the parishes of Rathangan and Allenwood. From 1985 to 1986 he was curate in Glin, Co Limerick. Fr. Des was then appointed to the Mass Office in Kiltegan and he remained in that post until he retired from active ministry towards the end of 2008 having turned 80. Fr. Des was a very able administrator and was meticulous in keeping records and accounts.

He was very open about his struggles with alcohol addiction earlier in his life. He used his experience of coping with that addiction to help others who also struggled with alcohol related problems. He became an active member of Alcoholics Anonymous and was very faithful in attending AA meetings throughout counties Wicklow and Carlow. No journey was too far for him if he thought he could help a person overcome their addiction. For many years he attended nightly meetings of AA. This ministry gave Des great consolation and he found it very rewarding and satisfying.

When he was no longer able to drive he entered a new phase of life and was content to stay at home. He lived a very regular and disciplined life and greatly valued silence, meditation and communion with God in prayer. The long walk from his room to the refectory three times a day became a mini pilgrimage with various stops along the way. His health remained good until late in 2017 after which it deteriorated, necessitating his transfer to the Care Unit in Kiltegan. He adapted to this change with great tranquillity, continuing to take an active part in the daily liturgies.

He died peacefully on 21st February 2018. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dílis.

Place of Rest: Saint Patrick's Missionary Society Cemetery Kiltegan, County Wicklow, Ireland.

St. Patrick's, Kilsyth