



## Obituary for

### The Reverend Kevin Nicholas St Aubyn

**16<sup>th</sup> June 1934 – 9<sup>th</sup> September 2023**



Kevin Nicholas St Aubyn was born in Walworth on 16<sup>th</sup> June 1934. He was the third of seven children born to Harry and Margaret St Aubyn. His childhood was spent in Worcestershire. His father worked as an engineer and Kevin attended the Sacred Heart College, Droitwich, a school run by the Fathers of the Sacred Heart of Betharram. Kevin from an early age felt a strong calling to serve God and so upon completing his education he entered the Junior Seminary of the Sacred Heart Fathers at Farchynis, Merioneth and made his simple profession. He was there from August 1950 until 1951.

In 1952 Kevin underwent two years of National Service, joining the Royal Air Force and serving in their flying and administration department. Kevin had a love of flying which was to remain with him for the rest of his life.

At the end of his two years, Kevin applied to the Diocese of Southwark as a student for the priesthood and was accepted in October 1954 by Bishop Cyril Cowderoy as a student for the diocese. He commenced his studies at St John's Seminary, Womersley.

Kevin was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Cowderoy on 11<sup>th</sup> June 1960 at the Chapel of St. John's Seminary, Womersley. His first appointment was to the parish of St Peter, Hove in June 1960 where he served for two years. In January 1962, Kevin was appointed as an assistant priest at the parish of St. Anselm, Tooting Bec, where he was to serve for another seven years. During this time, he served as chaplain to Springfield Hospital.

In November 1969, Archbishop Cowderoy asked Father Kevin to move from St Anselm's Tooting Bec to St Matthias, Worcester Park as an assistant priest to Canon Cornelius Beausang. Father Kevin served for a further six years until January 1974 when Archbishop Cowderoy appointed him as an assistant priest in the parish of Our Lady of Pity and St. Simon Stock, Putney where he served with Father O'Kelly the parish priest. Father Kevin is still remembered with fondness by the older parishioners in Putney.

His time at Putney was short as in December 1975 he was asked to move to the parish of Our Lady and St Benedict, Birchington as an assistant priest. He served here for just over four years when in January 1979 he was appointed by Archbishop Michael Bowen as parish priest of Our Lady Immaculate, Whitstable. He arrived in the parish on 21<sup>st</sup> February and was inducted as parish priest on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1979 by Bishop Charles Henderson. This marked the beginning of what would be 41 years of dedicated service as parish priest of Our Lady Immaculate.

In a report from the Dean of the Canterbury Deanery, written in June 1979, it was noted that "Father Kevin seems to have settled in well to his new parish and is happy. He gets on well with his assistant".

As parish priest he was admired for his pastoral zeal, his devotion to the celebration of the Mass and the sacraments for his parishioners, and his devotion to Our Lady, especially Our Lady of Lourdes.

In his long ministry in the parish he did much to build up the parish community, encouraging lay participation and involvement in many areas of parish life. In many of the visitation reports written during his time as parish priest the Area Bishop refers to the excellent and devotional celebration of the liturgy and that Father Kevin prepares his parish well for the celebration of the Mass and the Sacraments.

Father Kevin was well respected in the parish school, and again in a visitation report of 1999, Bishop Jukes wrote that "There is a good relationship between the parish priest and the school and the school is a hive of

industry and, at the same time a place where Christian values are very much promoted". Father Kevin had a great zeal for visiting the sick and the housebound and also serving as chaplain in the local hospital where he was well respected and his services greatly appreciated.

In a visitation report of 2008, Bishop John Hine wrote that, "Father Kevin St Aubyn, despite advancing years maintains a vigorous and energetic ministry. Father Kevin and the parishioners are to be congratulated on the very positive and cheerfully practical approach they bring to their mission. Our Lady Immaculate is a very welcoming parish with a good liturgical and devotional life".

In a letter written to Father Kevin, following the parish confirmations in November 1997, Archbishop Michael Bowen wrote "I was very encouraged by everything I saw in the parish and in the good spirit among the people there. You are clearly doing an excellent job and I am most grateful to you for that"

During his time in Whitstable Father Kevin was also a very active and highly respected member of the deanery clergy. At the time of his Diamond Jubilee of Ordination, the then Dean of Canterbury, Father Mark White CP wrote, "It has been a pleasure to have Father Kevin as my neighbour for the last 12 years. As I was new to the diocese it was a great bonus to have such a courteous and friendly neighbouring parish priest. He has a great love for the Archdiocese of Southwark and for his priesthood. Here in the Canterbury Deanery we have enjoyed his presence at our regular deanery meetings where he was always willing to share his views on the matter in hand and to listen graciously to the views of his fellow clergy. But it was at our deanery socials, which were held at his instigation three times a year that he came particularly into his own. We have happy memories of good food, good conversation and a fund of amusing stories of which he was most often the source".

He also worked with a number of assistant priests and then with a permanent deacon whose vocation he helped to encourage and foster.

Father Kevin had a great love for his priesthood and was a great supporter of the Ministry to Priests Programme. He was faithful to his support group, the WEALD group (Walking, Eating, Laughing and Drinking Group) and many Friendships were made over the years. The group met monthly and had a bi-annual holiday together, with Father Kevin usually responsible for all the arrangements and the itinerary. Priests who were part of this group always commented on how caring he was, a great listener.

His other great love was his family and he was close to his extended family in Canada and beyond. They recall his sense of adventure, his kindness and his willingness to "roll up his sleeves and muck in" on family holidays and of course his great love of flying and all things aeronautical. He was the priest who not only flew planes, but built one of his own as well.

During his time in Whitstable Father Kevin celebrated his Silver, his Ruby, his Golden and his Diamond Jubilee of Ordination to the priesthood.

A word that has been used to describe Father Kevin St Aubyn is loyal. Father Kevin lived his priestly life in true and faithful allegiance both to God and God's people. He was a good and faithful steward of the Gospel, and his long and faithful service as a priest were an inspiration to generations of parishioners and priests in the places where he served.

In his letter to Archbishop John Wilson in April 2020 Father Kevin wrote indicating his intentions to retire but his desire to remain living in Whitstable. The Archbishop replied saying that he hoped that "your retirement will enable you to enjoy the beautiful surrounds of Whitstable, a town which has been richly blessed these many past years to have you as its pastor... I am very grateful for all that you have done, are doing, and plan to continue doing in retirement, in the service of the Lord Jesus and this Church of Southwark".

Father Kevin, was able to celebrate a Mass of Thanksgiving for his ministry in the parish on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2021. He was joined on this occasion by the Episcopal Vicar for Kent, Monsignor Canon John O'Toole and clergy from the Canterbury Deanery, as well as Ecumenical guests and parishioners and friends.

Sadly, his health began to deteriorate and he eventually moved into Coloma Court Nursing Home, West Wickham. He continued to celebrate Mass with the clergy resident there. He was admitted to The Royal Hospital, Orpington and sadly died on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

Father Kevin St Aubyn, a great pastor, a faithful and loyal servant of the Lord Jesus, a priest of the Archdiocese of Southwark who died aged 89, in the 64<sup>th</sup> year of his priesthood.

May he rest in peace and rise in glory.