

Devoted son of Erin called home



Fr Tim Norris: "Each parishioner knew they had someone special in their corner"

OBITUARY – Fr Tim Norris

**Born Broadford, Ireland, January 12, 1929
Died Brisbane, March 22, 2013**

FATHER Tim Norris' full and generous 84 years were reflected in the Australian, Irish and papal flags that draped his coffin on the Wednesday of Holy Week.

His funeral was held at St Kevin's Church, Geebung, the parish he built, ran and loved from August 1959 until the last day of his earthly life.

The signs of a busy priest preparing for Holy Week were everywhere in his presbytery.

Alongside the crucifix, Rosary beads and alarm clock on his bedside table was a correspondence between Fr Tim and Dutch White Father Anthony Coolen, who served in Brisbane decades ago.

The cordial, scholarly exchange, written 30 years ago explored the mysteries of the Mass and the Easter Triduum. Father had been re-reading it.

He would have been delighted by the message one of the schoolchildren placed near his coffin: "Dear God, Please look after Father in heaven and wish him a happy Easter."

On his desk were notes about forthcoming baptisms. And there was the sermon he had delivered four days before his own death at the requiem Mass for long-time parishioner Jack Downs.

"Our Lord has gone to prepare a place for us, so that we may be with Him for all time ... For Jack, as for each of us, however old, sick, sore or sorry, that is our ultimate comfort and

hope," Father told the congregation at that funeral.

"Flying back to Australia over the years from Ireland I often looked out at the dark nights and the stars over the English Channel and Germany and marvelled at the bravery of men such as Jack and another of our parishioners, Jack Carr in those tiny, flimsy fighter planes.

"They were heroes indeed."

For thousands of parishioners and school children over the years, Fr Norris was a hero.

Each parishioner knew they had someone special in their corner.

Because they understood the Church teachings he imparted so well they know they now have a staunch advocate in the Communion of Saints.

Like his mentor James Duhig, Fr Tim was born in Broadford, County Limerick.

His home was surrounded by the rich farms of the Golden Vale, a landscape never far from his crystal clear memory.

Gazing over the picturesque fields near Abbeyfeale in Limerick one day, Father's companions lamented a flat camera battery.

He was unconcerned. "I only have to shut my eyes and I can see it."

As someone educated on a scholarship, Archbishop Mark Coleridge's Mary MacKillop Foundation to educate poorer children appealed to him.

In his own school days he excelled at English, Irish and Latin, and loved playing hurling.

He earned holiday pocket money footing turf, binding corn and trapping rabbits – setting the snares as his grandfather, Tady, showed him as they explored the countryside.

Childhood Christmases meant roast goose and decorating the windows with candles in carved-out turnips to welcome the Holy Family if they happened to pass by.

As one of Father's favourite songs, *Limerick You're a Lady* says, the fabric of his dreams was fashioned by days of fun in winter's snow, summer's gold sun and fishing in silver streams.

After 50 years of priestly service he wrote it all down in *Golden Priest Wooden Chalice* (www.connorcourt.com.au)

Father's years at St Patrick's College, Carlow, were a major formative influence as he acquired wisdom as well as knowledge and where his natural compassion, humility and goodness matured before he accepted a place at the Pontifical Urban University in Rome.

There he excelled in sacramental theology and handball, and acquired a love of Rome that was rewarded when a large Italian community worshipped at St Kevin's for 20 years.

A highly talented and intelligent man who was fortunate enough to realise his vocation, Father ministered to four generations of many families.

He spoke with depth and conviction in the pulpit and never tired of pastoral work even when he was tired and unwell in the last months of his life.

Through the decades he was always there. Now his people are there for him in prayer.

Farewelling Fr Norris, one recalls Archbishop Coleridge's comforting perception on the ABC's Q&A recently of heaven as a place "perfectly knowing not only God but everyone who has ever existed and knowing them in a way that is perfect love. Now, if you love one person in life, it is enough to galvanise a whole life. But to perfectly love and be loved by everyone who has ever existed, I mean, who wouldn't want that?"

– Tess Livingstone, senior journalist and leader writer for *The Australian*

Happenings

ALL HALLOWS' CONVENT: celebrating 150yrs. To mark this significant milestone Mercy Heritage Centre will be hosting a series of evening talks revealing the trials and tribulations of Brisbane's extraordinary Sisters of Mercy. Program 1 - Colony, Congregation & Community - the early years. Mon 22 April 5.30 – 6.45. Mercy Heritage Centre (situated in All Hallows' Convent) 547 Ann St. RSVP essential. Ph. 3831 2252 or info@mercyheritage.com

IF YOU HAVE CHILDREN IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS: then you need to attend this Community Event sponsored by the Brisbane Archdiocesan Council of Parents & Friends. Wednesday 24th April 5.30pm at San Sisto College, 97 Mayfield Road Carina. RSVP 3336 9242 or info@pandf.org.au. Father Richard Leonard SJ will speak on the obstacles our Catholic Children and Schools face living the "Christian Way" in society today. How can you help your precious children?

LOURDES HEALING MASS: The Knights and Dames of the Order of St John, The Order of Malta invite all in need of comfort, care, healing and hope to join with us at St Pashcal's Church, 30 Warraba Ave, Wavell Heights 10:00 am 4th May for our annual Mass of Healing. Lourdes Water will be distributed after Mass. Enq. Therese 0419 198 902.

CARING HANDS: is Our Lady of the Way, Petrie Parish Cancer Support Group. We invite cancer sufferers and their families to come together for a talk and a cuppa on the last Friday of each month starting at 7pm in our Community Building, Armstrong Street Petrie. We welcome all persons who wish to join us from our Parish or other interested Parishes. For further info please contact Marie on 3204 4726 or mobile 0410 329 648, or Michele on 0409 811 057.

YEAR OF GRACE EVENT: Tuesday 30th April 7.00pm, Church of the Twelve

Apostles, 111 Yallabee Rd, Jindalee. A special Year of Grace event - a time to listen, a time to contemplate, a time to reflect on God's Grace in our lives. Guest Speakers: General Peter Cosgrove AC MC (former Chief of the Australian Defence Force and Chancellor of the Australian Catholic University), Ms Margaret Vider (Fellow of the Royal College of Nursing and Chair of Brisbane Archdiocese's Centacare Council) and Bishop William Morris (Bishop Emeritus of the Diocese of Toowoomba). Entertainment and supper. Sponsored by Brisbane West Deanery. Contact 3716 0158 or bwdeanery@bne.catholic.net.au or visit www.brisbanewestdeanery.com.au for more info.

FR ROB GALEA: Music and Grace Youth Event Tuesday 7th May 7.00pm, St Joseph's Hall, Clewley St, Corinda. A special Year of Grace event for youth and young adults. Fr Rob is a Catholic priest, singer, musician and youth minister of international note. He has performed at WYD celebrations and has released six music projects. Come along to experience Fr Rob's wonderful 'Ministry of Word and Music'. All youth, young adults and the young at heart are welcome. Gold Coin donation entry fee. Supper provided. Sponsored by Brisbane West Deanery. Contact 3716 0158 or bwdeanery@bne.catholic.net.au or visit www.brisbanewestdeanery.com.au for more info.

CELEBRATION AND EXHIBITION: 'Then! Now! Wow!' Celebrating 50 years of Catholic Religious Australia, Qld (CRAQld). The exhibition will be held at Lourdes Hill College in the Good Samaritan Centre, 86 Hawthorne Road, Hawthorne. Opening hours are 1pm to 5pm on Saturday 25 May and from 10am-5pm on Sunday 26 May. The exhibition will then tour throughout Queensland until August 2013.

Send to: advertising@catholicleader.com.au • Fax: 07 3236 4897

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