



Brother Anthony McGreal, O.Carm

By Fr Wilfrid McGreal, Prior of Faversham

Why did I become a Carmelite? The answer to that question was the profound effect my uncle Brother Antony had on me – his warmth, humanity and dedication – plus his great sense of humour.

Anthony was born in Ballyhaunis, County Mayo. He was one of eleven children and he grew up during the Troubles. It was not an easy time for a teenager.

When he grew up, Anthony received a calling, and wanted to join the Augustinians who had a Priory in Ballyhaunis. He was not accepted there as he was deaf. However, a chance meeting with Elias Lynch brought him into the Carmelites as Elias saw his enthusiasm and not his deafness.

After some years ministering in Terenure College, Dublin Anthony came to Faversham, and began working with Elias on his fundraising activities. Soon Anthony took over the administration of the office, leaving Elias time to write and build up the parish.

By the 1940s, the newsletter office employed a number of workers who fundraised for the Order. Talking to ladies in the office from then, they remember Anthony's hard work, but also his humour and practical jokes. At one point, he sent a new member of staff to buy a "short vest". When the Shrine was being built he got local folk to contribute to buying a brick for a shilling. Prior to that, he worked hard with Elias in raising the money to purchase Aylesford. On their return to the Priory, Anthony led the procession carrying the cross.

In the 1960s, Antony lived with cancer but was well enough to be at my Ordination. Even when busy or ill, he kept a caring eye on Elias who did not enjoy good health either, and on low days he would cook him fillet steak to cheer Elias up.

Anthony spent his life in the background, faithful to his prayer and his work. He was close to his family visiting them in Manchester, Ireland, and New York. Being deaf was never a problem as he could lip read and his catch all response was: "Is that so?"

We remember Anthony at the Shrine through prayer, grateful for all his hard work.

The picture below shows Brother Anthony at work on the newsletter.

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