

Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Southwark

PRESS RELEASE

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FATHER JOHN O'SHEA RIP

Born on 7th July 1924 in Windgap, Kilkenny, Fr. John O'Shea, was one of seven children with one brother and five sisters. He studied for the priesthood at St. Kieran's College, Kilkenny where he was ordained on 8th June 1958.

His first appointment was to St. Peter's, Woolwich. John had not enjoyed good health during his seminary formation and in his first parish he experienced a bout of bad health. After three years he went as assistant priest to St. Peter and the Guardian Angels, Rotherhithe where he served for seven years.

In 1968 he went on sick leave having had two major stomach operations in 1963 and 1967. He returned to parish work in 1969 and went to Holy Cross, Carshalton. He returned to Ireland in 1970. A year later he took up the position of assistant priest at St. Andrew's, Thornton Heath where he served for seven years.

When the new parish of St. Pius X was created in 1978 John was made the founding parish priest. He ministered at Norbiton for eighteen years and was assiduous in his duty as chaplain to Kingston Hospital. In 1996 he returned to Ireland for a short time. He was appointed parish priest of St. Andrew, Tenterden in November 1997 but his tenure was very short on account of his ill health and the weight of parish duties so he sought permission to retire later in the same year to St. Martha's Convent, Rottingdean, Sussex. In his retirement his health improved and missing pastoral work he asked to return to light pastoral care which he did in the following year, 1998, when he went as chaplain to the Good Shepherd Convent, Staplehurst. It was said on his leaving two years later that his ministry among the elderly residents had been most generous and that he would be missed. In 2000 he retired finally to St. Martha's Convent, Rottingdean, Sussex. Five years later he went to live at the Little Sisters of the Poor, Waterford. He later moved to the Sue Ryder Home, Owing, Piltown, Kilkenny.

John was a great radio ham and through this interest he had friends around the world with whom he had been in contact by radio. One of his sisters is a Cistercian religious at St. Mary's Abbey, Glencairn, Waterford and his nephew is Monsignor Benny O'Shea, Vicar General in Arundel and Brighton diocese and parish priest of The Holy Name, Esher, Surrey.

John suffered with ill health throughout his long service in the diocese of Southwark. He was a man who had the interests of people at heart and whatever his own health difficulties he made the sacrifice for people in need. During his final two years in Ireland his health deteriorated. In October 2007 he was admitted to Ardkeen Hospital, Waterford and before Christmas to St. James's Hospital, Dublin. He eventually went to Strathmore Lodge Nursing Home, Callan, Co. Kilkenny where he died in the fiftieth year of his priesthood aged 83 years on Wednesday 16th January 2008

May He rest in peace.

Press Officer: Mgr. William Saunders
Archbishop's House
150, St. George's Road
London, SE1 6HX
Telephone: 020 7928 2495 Fax: 020 7928 7833