

OBITUARY FOR FATHER MICHAEL COLE R.I.P. 05.05.1936 - 08.04.2024

Michael Cole was born in Saltash, Cornwall on the 5th of May 1936 to Dermott and Mary Cole. He was one of 7 children (4 sons and three daughters) of whom only three now survive, Anne, Frankie, and brother Dermott. They moved to Plymouth in 1946 and resided at 45 Beresford Street, where Michael was to return when he retired in July 2013. He attended St. Boniface College where his love of sport came to the forefront, especially when he became champion "Sprinter." His glowing reputation caused him to be known as "Nipper Cole" a nickname given to him because of his speed and achievements in winning medals. He also played Rugby and his sister remarked that in all sport he was always very competitive and had to win!!! When he decided to become a priest, this was not received well by his sports master who wanted him to become a sports coach.

The Cathedral was the family's parish, in fact the Cole family have been in the parish since 1877. Michael became an altar server like his father before him, interestingly his father was the altar server at the last Mass celebrated by Bishop Vaughan at the Cathedral in 1902.

A candidate for the priesthood at the same time as Michael was the late Fr Terry Flemming, and they went together to see Bishop Grimshaw. Michael first went to St. Thomas's Seminary at Grove Park for one year before going onto the Seminary at Oscott. He did join a choir whilst there and was told that he had the perfect pitch when singing, and his love of music remained throughout his life enjoying a wide range of music including classical, country & western.

He was ordained with Terry Fleming by Bishop Restieaux on the 25th of February 1961 at Plymouth Cathedral where he was to celebrate his first Mass. Both parents attended the Ordination. His first parish was in St. Marychurch, Torquay, from there he went to Poole in 1963, Weymouth 1966, Keyham 1971, Lulworth 1975, Barnstaple 1980, Marnhull 1989, and finally at Yelverton 2002 where he remained for 11 yrs. before resigning from ecclesiastical office.

Fr Michael enjoyed being with people, a social person who possessed a cheerful disposition, a sense of humour with many funny stories to tell. From the early years of his priesthood, he would join fellow priests and close friends Fr Phelan, Fr Bolland, and Fr Walsh in playing golf and going on holidays, Fatima was often on the itinerary. For twenty years he would also go as Chaplain with group "45" with the HCPT children to Lourdes and always looked forward to this event.

On retirement he then returned to the family home at Beresford Street where he remained for 10 yrs. enjoying hobbies of walking and family gatherings or playing golf with fellow priests. He became a keen and knowledgeable Ornithologist. His deteriorating

health eventually caused him having to leave Beresford Street and be admitted to a Care Home in Stoke not far from the family home at the end of March 2023. The staff there were kind and looked after him well and for a time he was able to attend Sunday Mass at the Cathedral with his sisters and brother. As time passed this proved difficult for him, but he continued to receive visitors, and the support of his family was exemplary and proved how their close relationship continued to the end.

His final visit to the Cathedral was to be when he would have his Requiem Mass on the 15th of May 2024.

He will be sadly missed by his family and friends.

May his soul rest in the peace and love of the Lord.