

Newsletter

THE PASSIONIST OF THE HOLY SPIRIT PROVINCE

FRIDAY, 09/09/2022



CONGRATULATIONS!!! 50 YEARS OF ORDINATION!!

Dear Tom,

On this occasion of the 50th anniversary of your Ordination, and on behalf of all your brothers and sisters in our Province Family, I wanted to add a note of affirmation to you – to accompany the more biographical tribute that is also being prepared by Brian.

Unfortunately, we are not able to congratulate you more formally over an evening meal and celebration of the Eucharist at a Province Assembly, perhaps that is for a future time, but at this moment it does seem very important that some more formal words are shared with you.



We want to express our congratulations for a life of ministry that has ranged across service in parishes, formation settings, mission, education, and administration roles which are outlined more significantly below. We want to express our gratitude for your brotherly service in our Councils, as a leader in our local communities and Formation houses, and now as our Provincial. We also want to acknowledge with pride how you have represented us in wider church bodies such as CRA, Bishops' and Professional Standards committees and more widely as President of Paspac.

Thank you for all this leadership and dedication. There are other voices too who cannot add to this note, but who we can speak for – they too form a part of the tapestry of these fifty years. Those voices of victims who received consoling words from you, those of countless lay members of the Passionist Family, parishioners, penitents who were affirmed and encouraged by you and the many ill and troubled who have turned to you in moments of need for support and care. Their voices echo today too.

In your ministry as a priest, you have striven to lead the faithful and us your brothers and sisters, into greater communion with Jesus and his Passion and this is our treasure and greatest gift. Thank you for sharing the Charism with us in all your words, deeds, in community life and in your example to us. We thank you for your response to the call first offered to you by the Lord; and just as Jesus once took bread, blessed it, broke it and gave it to those in need – we thank God that he once took your generous response to the Call, blessed it, broke it for us and gave it to us in the form of your Passionist priesthood. We are so much richer for it.

Once again Tom, our sincere congratulations – ad multos annos.

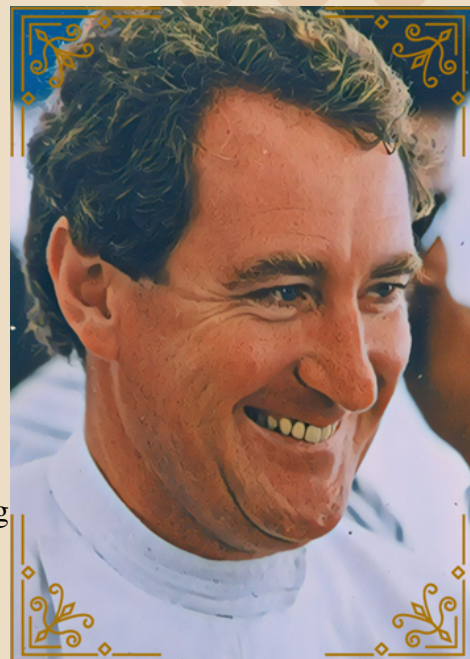
On behalf of all your Brothers and the Passionist familys
Denis Travers CP

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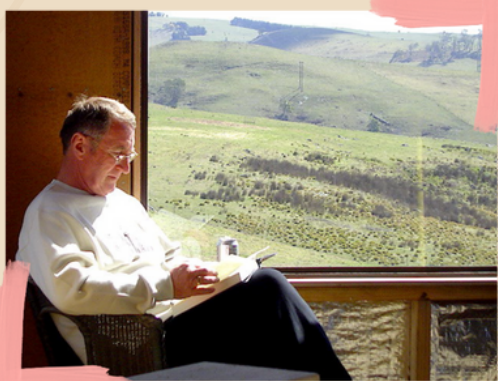
Tom McDonough CP was educated by the Marist Brothers at North Sydney and with his family, Tom worshipped at the Jesuit parish at St Mary's Ridge Street, North Sydney, where he was also an altar boy with the Traynors. His family lived in Cammeray, 2 kilometres from the church. The opposite was North Sydney oval, home to the North Sydney Bears who his father represented.

How did Tom come to join the Passionists given his Marist and Jesuit connections? His simple answer is that he wrote to a few Congregations. Some never replied. One replied more than a week later, but two days after he wrote, Fr Bernard turned up at the front door!

As was customary for many teenage boys, Tom left home after completing Intermediate (Year 10) and spent his last two years of schooling at the Passionist juniorate at St Ives. There were a sizable number in his class, which gradually the numbers reduced as was typical of that era.



Following the completion of the 'Leaving Certificate' (today known as Year 12) in 1965, Tom and his classmates travelled to Goulburn, NSW for their twelve months novitiate. During the second half of that year, Chris Mithen was appointed novice master. Tom was professed on February 5th, 1967. From there it was to Glen Osmond, Adelaide to undertake philosophy studies. The decision had already been taken by the Province to build a seminary in Templestowe to house philosophers and theologians. In early 1968, a year that many social commentators have identified as one of those most significant in modern history, Tom and his classmates moved to Holy Cross. There was already a small cohort of theologians in residence and a newly professed group came directly from Goulburn to join them which swelled the community numbers to seventy!



Not surprisingly, Tom excelled as a student, always scoring very high marks and indicating that he had a future in theological education. Having completed his studies and served as a deacon, Tom was ordained in Sydney at age 23, on September 9th 1972, four months after Tom O'Connor (now deceased) David O'Brien (now retired in Wollongong diocese) 1972 and Denis Addicoat. Tom needed dispensation to be ordained at such a young age.

We have all sat through eulogies at funerals where the speaker begins by announcing the deceased person's date of birth and continues for a very lengthy period of time to document the person's life year by year. That can lead to a deep groan. In Tom's case, I think it is better to highlight the different areas of ministry that he has exercised over these fifty years.



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He has worked in parishes and particularly as the parish pastor in St Brigid's Marrickville, St Anthony in the Fields, Terrey Hills and St Joseph's Boroko, PNG. He has been engaged in formation and especially as the community leader in our principal house of formation, Holy Cross.

Tom undertook theological studies in Louvain, Belgium and in England, and returned to be a lecturer in theology and liturgy at YTU. His qualifications and ongoing study have enabled him to contribute his theological expertise in each of his ministerial appointments.



While engaged in his pastoral or theological ministry, Tom has continually exercised leadership roles in the Province as well, both as a community leader and Provincial Consultor, and by the time he completes his current term next year, he will have spent 20% of his fifty years as Provincial. His longest terms of community life have been at St Brigid's, Marrickville and Holy Cross, Templestowe. Tom very generously volunteered to work in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea and continued that ministry as a parish priest and community leader despite extensive cancer treatment.

During his nine years as Provincial, Tom has served for a number of years on the executive committee of Catholic Religious Australia including a term as Vice-President. He has served as a member of the Australian Bishop's Professional Standards Committee. Tom has also served as Vice-President and then President of the Passionist Asian Pacific Configuration (PASPAC) since 2017.



Perhaps one of the most significant contributions Tom has made was his willing acceptance of the recommendation that Vietnam be merged with Holy Spirit Province in 2015 and the incredible time and energy he has devoted to bringing this about since that time, despite the challenges COVID 19 and visas have thrown up.



In acknowledging fifty years as a priest, Tom would want to include the adjective Passionist, as the defining aspect of his ministry and his first vocation. What sort of lecturer and educator, formator, pastor, leader, advisor and Provincial, has Tom been? He has proclaimed in every possible way, the comforting message of God's great love. He has been the sort of person he has preached about, and if the love of God is not only ingenious but outrageous, then Tom has had no problem at times in being that! Who else could ask of the Congregation at a wedding, "Do you think I look better than the bride?"



Tom brought to all of these roles, his family experience. Ordinary, but very talented, loud, extroverted and humorous; wounded and filled with compassion; open and able to think differently; warm, generous and devoted. He has been a very hard worker, yet devoted to prayer and to ongoing learning. As we know so well, Tom's years as a priest have been filled with incredible change in the church and in the world. He has adapted and been able to lead and comfort people in the most painful of times, and bring so much laughter and joy into people's lives at the best of times.



The more detailed listing of where he has been, includes a lot of overseas travel related in the first place to his study and in subsequent years to his roles. Perhaps it is appropriate therefore that on the day of his anniversary, he is heading to Rome for a meeting of the Congregation's Synod.





Salutations Tom. It is not only congratulations we extend, but sincere thanks for how you have modelled the vocational mission of your priestly vocation as well as community life and service to your brothers that is reflective of your Passionist vocation, mission of your priestly vocation as well as community life and service to your brothers that is reflective of your Passionist vocation.

With our prayer and best wishes

Congratulations

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