

Farewell to Fr Ciaran McGuinness by Fr Robbie Low

10 September 2023

Fr Ciaran, what can I say? (Nothing. You've said too much already)

We know that, left to yourself, you would prefer to have given 24hrs notice and quietly slipped out the back door while no-one was looking. No fuss.

Mercifully this was not your 'call' and we all wanted an opportunity to say 'Thank you' before you escaped.

We know that you have worked in some of the most dangerous and desperate areas of the world and then you end up in Bodmin! You exchanged the freezing velvet black of the desert night sky bejewelled by diamond sharp stars for the rain and mist of this little moor-side shrine and her several outposts and mission stations and we have much to be grateful for in that sacrifice.

Anyone who has come to know you here will testify to your unfailing dedication to duty, your extraordinary and compassionate pastoring and your seemingly tireless work for the Gospel. As a someone who has been privileged to work alongside you I can say that it has been, for me, a joyful and enriching companionship. Your light touch, your ready humour, your extraordinary learning and profound humility have all been great gifts to the parish.

Wherever I go I can hear you singing. A good voice but one that you humbly and mistakenly don't think is good enough for the liturgy. And talking of voices- You don't need a microphone....years of addressing great gatherings in remote places have meant we can always hear you coming.

You are remarkably perceptive and will often sum up a situation in a simple sentence which indicates a thorough understanding.

No distance is too far to travel if someone is in need. No hour too late to set

out to the needy or the lost or the desperate.

You have been kindness itself to this old Anglican retreat and I have hugely appreciated your generous and sensitive use of my little offering.

You have been, for me and for so many of us, an exemplary steward of the mysteries of God.

Fr Ciaran,

We love you. We will miss you. We thank God for you. We will continue to pray for you and, if you are ever tempted to come back this way – if only to remind yourself of why you went back to Ireland – our doors and our hearts will always be open to welcome you back.

May God continue to bless you and, through you, pour out his blessing on His people and upon the years still to come.