



Obituary for

Father Robert Kenneth Ellis

13th November 1955 – 29th October 2021

Father Robert Ellis was born on 13th November 1955 at the South London Hospital, Nightingale Lane. He had one older sister. His mother was a State Registered Nurse and his father was an Inspector with the Metropolitan Police Force. Robert's first home was in Streatham but soon after the family moved to Tooting and then eventually to Norbury where he grew up. He attended St Anselm's primary school in Tooting, and then moved to St. Bede's boy's school in Clapham Park before moving to Bishop Thomas Grant School in Streatham where he completed his O and A levels. During this time, the family attended the parish of Norbury.

After secondary school Robert applied to the seminary and was accepted as a student for the priesthood by Archbishop Michael Bowen. He completed his studies and having served a diaconate placement at St Michael's Chatham he was given the call to ordination and ordained to the priesthood on 10th July 1982 by Bishop Charles Henderson at his home parish of Norbury.

Following ordination Robert's first appointment was to the parish of St Edmund's Beckenham as an assistant priest to Monsignor Peter Strand. During this time, Robert proved to be an effective assistant priest and in 1987, Archbishop Michael appointed him as a team member of the Ministry of Priests programme which had recently been launched in the diocese. He served there from 1982 until 1988 when Archbishop Michael asked Robert to take up a new appointment as an assistant priest at the parish of English Martyrs, Streatham. In his letter of appointment to Streatham, the Archbishop thanked Robert for "the good pastoral work you have done at Beckenham over the last six years. Things have not always been easy for you with several changes of parish priest, but I have particularly appreciated the help you have offered them and I know this has been appreciated all round".

Robert served as assistant priest in Streatham from July 1988 until July 1990 when he moved to St Gertrude's South Croydon as an also resident priest whilst he completed further studies

In May 1991, Robert was appointed as an assistant priest at St Teresa's Morden where he proved to be an effective assistant priest. This was to be Robert's final appointment as an assistant as in January 1995, Archbishop Michael wrote appointing him as parish priest of Our Lady Immaculate, Surrey Docks. In his letter to Robert, Archbishop Michael wrote, "It remains for me to say a very warm word of thanks for the work you have done in Morden as an assistant priest. I know you will be very much missed, but I hope you will settle happily in Surrey Docks.

Robert was inducted as the second parish priest on 12th March 1995 and served as parish priest until 2008. During this time, he was instrumental in building on the firm foundations laid by Father John Clark. In his report following the visitation of 1999, Bishop Howard Tripp wrote that "Father Ellis is happy and doing well. The RCIA numbers indicate this. He takes a lot of care over the Mass preparation, sermons and the parish newsletter" In a letter to Robert following the visitation report Archbishop Michael wrote "I am very encouraged to see that there is a continuing rise in the Mass attendance and to know that things are doing well in the parish. I am most grateful for the work you are doing there.

In 2007 Robert celebrated his Silver Jubilee of Ordination and shortly afterwards he wrote to Archbishop Kevin McDonald to request permission to take a sabbatical before taking on a new appointment. This was granted and from 2008-2009. During this time Fr Robert spent some time in Boston at the Boston College School of Theology and then he went to the Archdiocese of Sydney to spend a semester in a parish there.

At the end of the sabbatical year Robert returned to the Archdiocese. Archbishop Kevin appointed him as parish priest of Our Lady of the Assumption, Northfleet to succeed Monsignor Matthew Dickens who had been appointed as the new Vicar General.

Father Robert served as parish priest in Northfleet for 7 years. In March 2016, Archbishop Peter Smith wrote to Robert to appoint him as parish priest of St Thomas Aquinas, Ham, and Robert was inducted as parish priest on 13th December 2016 by Bishop Paul Hendricks.

This was to be Robert's final appointment as parish priest and he served in the parish until his death on 29th October 2021

Father Robert Ellis, a priest of the Archdiocese of Southwark who died on 29th October 2021 aged 66 years and in the 39th year of his priesthood.

May he Rest in Peace and Rise in Glory