

Canon Charles John Hollywood

31st May 1934 - 2nd April 2003

Canon Charles John Hollywood died peacefully on Wednesday 2nd April at St. Joseph's Home (Little Sisters of the Poor). He was 68 years old

On Wednesday evening, the 9th of April, at 7.30 pm, the body of Canon Charles John Hollywood was received into St. Patrick's Church by Bishop Terence Brain. Rev Mark Davis, Vicar General of the Diocese of Salford, preached (see copy on page 6). There were about 500 people who attended the Reception Mass.



The next morning, the Requiem Mass was celebrated by Archbishop Kelly, Bishop Terence Brain and Bishop John Rawsthorne, and about 100 priests. About 750 people came from all over England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland and Holland. Archbishop Kelly preached in sign language (see page 7). Then before the body of Canon Charles Hollywood was solemnly taken to Moston cemetery, Fr. Terence O'Meara gave the tribute (see page 8). It was one of the most amazing funerals many people have ever seen.

Charles John Hollywood was born on 31st May 1934 in Northern Ireland. He was educated at the Irish Christian Brothers' School in Newry, St. Patrick's College, Armagh and St. Patrick's College, Maynooth. He was accepted as a student for the diocese of Salford in November 1956 and continued his studies at St. Patrick's, Maynooth. On 19th June 1960 he was ordained priest for Salford diocese.

In July 1960 Father Hollywood was appointed to serve with what was then St. Joseph's Mission to Catholic Deaf and Dumb, to assist Canon William Hayward. When Canon Hayward died in 1963, Fr. Hollywood was appointed his successor in charge of St. Joseph's Mission. He was appointed an Honorary Canon in November 1983 and later installed as a full Canon by Bishop Kelly.

Canon Hollywood spent the whole of his priestly life here in the diocese of Salford working with Deaf people. He also assisted in the service of the parishes of St. Patrick's, Collyhurst, St. Malachy's, Collyhurst, St. Edmund's, Miles Platting and St. Michael's, Ancoats.

Tribute to Canon Hollywood from Archbishop Patrick Kelly

I have been invited to write these words for Outreach. I am a hearing person; I have been invited to write these words for the eye-people. How has this happened? Because God sent to me Canon Charles Hollywood (Charlie). God has blest me through eye-people from many countries. And this blessing came to me because Charlie taught me to appreciate the

gifts of eye-people; he showed me how they pray; he made me see how God comes close to them. I know: thousands of people from across the world have been blessed by this same priest. And we see that God has been working among us. How can we explain: a priest who could not use aeroplanes, who could not travel very far, touched the lives of so many people? The answer: God had chosen him; chosen a deaf person; chosen a gentle, humble person, to do God's work. In Charlie we saw the presence of Jesus, the Son of God. In his service among us we watched Jesus choosing, blessing, sending eye-people to bless other people and how to be across the world one family and one fellowship. We thank God for him: we promise: we will be faithful to what he handed on to us. And we pray: God our Father, send your Son to welcome him home; there, through the Holy Spirit, all signing will be perfect, beautiful, joyful, peaceful and so he will be at peace.

Homily preached by the Rev. Mark Davies, Vicar General of the Diocese of Salford, at the Mass for the Reception of the Body of Rev. Charles Hollywood

We feel the loss of a priest very deeply - because a priest belongs to all of us - and so a gap is left in the lives of so many here in St. Patrick's tonight, in the Salford Diocese and in the Deaf community world-wide. And yet the gap is left by a man. who delighted in telling us he was simply "the fourth curate" at St. Patrick's; who'd say to us on his Jubilee night that he couldn't understand why he'd been passed over for many important positions and would shamelessly tell the tale of how he left Henesy house one weekend as its Director and came back to find Terence O'Meara, in his office. None of us, of course, believed him, because this was a man who knew how to stand aside; knew how to encourage others and push them forwards; and who'd readily forgo every title and position - except the one which mattered: Charles Hollywood was first and last a priest. And if you failed understand that - you didn't understand him at all. Yet he very nearly didn't become a priest - a medical report sent him packing from his seminary at Maynooth and he found himself in Liverpool (of all places) where a chance meeting with a Sister Anthony brought him to the Salford Diocese where the Bishop, with happy foresight, agreed this young man from the North of Ireland - could "help" with the mission to Deaf People. Almost half a century later - we know how much 'he did help' not only in this Diocese and country - but across the world. Yet, couldn't a man as gifted as Charles Hollywood have done much the same as a manager, an administrator? Well a week ago tonight when I drove across to St Joseph's Home in Longsight - the Sisters, who'd only known the Canon a matter of days, spoke of the remarkable unity and prayerfulness by seeing the people that had gathered round him. For the secret is Charlie didn't aim to gather anyone round himself - he was a priest -he wanted to gather people round Christ and quietly disappear. His aim was always the communion of the Church - not the Charles Hollywood foundation. So daily Mass was always the heart-beat of Henesy House; he attributed it's unity, not to his own tact and wisdom, but to the hour spent in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. He saw the crowning of his work as the Eucharistic Prayer for Deaf People, prepared in collaboration with the Holy See and a Monsignor Patrick Kelly down in Birmingham, who he'd been told was quite a reliable theologian. So it shouldn't surprise us that Maundy Thursday (from which the readings were drawn this evening, the fifth 'Mystery of Light' the Deanery had set out to contemplate together) held such meaning for him: the Lord on the floor washing the feet of His disciples; handing over His own Body and Blood; the command to love "as I have loved you."



Another Hollywood might produce the drama of 'Jurassic Park' - a story which Timothy Radcliffe strikingly compared with the Last Supper - the Darwinian Jungle revived or the celebration of the Mass - two, very different visions of the world and what we are. And if on a bad day - Henesy House ever resembled 'Jurassic Park' - we know to which world Canon Hollywood always aspired. For I don't think Abbot Vonier was exaggerating when he wrote that human beings are 'Eucharistic beings'. For in the love, Sacrifice, Communion, Presence - we find who and what we really are. And tonight the chalice and paten rest silently on Canon Hollywood's coffin pointing to the place where he learnt the lessons which shaped his life - the school of the Eucharist - which Christ call us all to attend. And it's now "for him" we offer the Mass, share this Communion - that he may rest in peace - For we know that such rest isn't our inevitable state after death; we know that Christians in their earliest liturgies prayed earnestly that their loved ones would rest at peace, share the victory of Christ; and we know Charles Hollywood shared the same humanity as you and I - so he needs our prayers. But he also needs our faithfulness - for it's an awesome thought that despite his many disclaimers - so much really did depend on him. And not so much on his skills and talents, which might have been found elsewhere, but on his faithfulness to his vocation as a Priest. How easily he might have given up in the face of difficulties and obstacles and what incalculable loss there'd have been for so many - how much good would have been left un-done. "How great is the priest" St. John Vianney used to say, in a way that never lifted the priest off the floor washing the feet by the disfigurement of clericalism. "How great is the priest" he used to insist - "if we saw for an instant what a priest really is, what the Sacrament of the Altar really is - we'd die - not out of fear - but out of love." Charlie. thank you for helping us glimpse that love by your faithfulness - we will pray for you!

Homily preached by the Most Reverend Patrick Kelly, Archbishop of Liverpool, at the Funeral Mass of Rev Charles Hollywood

Why are we here? Because the Holy Spirit has blest all of us through Charles Hollywood. The Holy Spirit has gathered us here. We will remember the gifts God our Father has given us through Charles Hollywood. But he was a good man: so we will give all glory and worship to God. And he taught us: we all pray for mercy. We will pray for him: mercy, light, peace. Charles Hollywood taught us: Receive as your sisters and brothers deaf people: no eye-people. Let the eye people bless you. So now let us be changed in eye people. First, look at the Lectern: It is broad. Here two people can stand together because: God comes close to us in reading words: God also comes close to us in giving signs. Next: we look again at signs we have received today. We see two sisters: Martha and Mary: Two sisters, but very different. Martha: busy; hasty; rushing; quick signs. Mary: quiet; still: slow signs. Different: but sisters: one family. Charles Hollywood taught us: the Holy Spirit brings us together into one family: One fellowship. Eye-people : hearing people; signing people: speaking people. The Holy Spirit, through Charles Hollywood has brought us together from all over the world as friends and helped us to grow together in love. We are a sign of peace for the world. Now we watch again: Jesus weeps: We see his tears. Today Jesus watches us: Jesus sees our tears: and Jesus rejoices: because tears are love. Today our love is coloured purple: but the water of our tears will be changed into red wine and the wine will be changed into the red blood of Jesus: perfect love: perfect peace: perfect joy. Charles Hollywood was chosen by God to give the eye-people a signed prayer.



Charles wanted all eye-people to come to the table, here Jesus feeds us with his word, his sign and his best sign and best word: 'This is my body' ... 'This is the cup of my blood.' And now: look at the candle: the candle proclaims: Jesus is risen from the dead. But look: it is a small light; not a dazzling light. It is a gentle light; not a powerful light. Because Jesus is: merciful, Jesus is humble, Jesus is love. And Charles Hollywood was merciful, he was humble, he was love. He leaves us, but he goes to Jesus. They meet as friends. They will sit together in the evening and enjoy a little drink: the most perfect whisky. Because you gave us Charles Hollywood: Father we praise you for ever with Jesus, your Son, in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Father, we praise you, we thank you, we adore you, for ever and ever. Amen.

Tribute given by Fr Terry O'Meara

I feel at this moment I need to say something. Well, I have to say something, because you can just see that finger!

I know Charlie would say to me just say a few words and thank everyone for coming. He was always putting me forward to do that, can't understand why. I will try and do that but first I would like to say something about Charlie. He was an extremely modest man who wanted nothing but the best for everyone at the expense of himself. He would be very humbled by the turn out of all of you today and especially grateful for the presence of the three bishops. He had a great loving respect for his bishops and they will know that more than anyone He also had that respect for anyone in authority. In his prime there were not too many bishops who escaped his contact and who escaped his persuasive approach which in most cases usually brought good results.



His life was one devoted to Deaf people and for making sure they took their rightful place in the Church and society. He was prepared always to go that extra mile and further for Deaf people and their families. They say the Lord works in mysterious ways, and thankfully, in Charlie's case, this was true. He went to Maynooth in Ireland originally to study for the priesthood for a diocese in the north of Ireland but he was not long there before it was discovered he had a hearing loss; he was told he was no longer required for the priesthood. He returned to his family in Liverpool, and came in contact with a Sr. Anthony who told him of the priest in Manchester who was Deaf and working with Deaf people, Canon Hayward. Charlie's subsequent meeting and all that led to Canon Hayward getting Bishop Marshall to accept Charlie, is another long story, one which Charlie could get great mileage out of. It was one of Charlie's many stories, and boy could he tell a story - I don't think he ever let the whole truth get in the way of a good story. But back to Maynooth he went and was ordained in 1960. He always enjoyed the old story of the fact that it was said the cream of Ireland went to Maynooth, and we know that cream always rises to the top, but as you know cream is also rich and thick. Well, one thing Charlie was not and that was thick, and I know for a fact he was not rich.

And so began his work with Deaf people under Canon Hayward. The work begun by Canon Hayward will be 75 years old next year. Canon Hayward died after only two years of life with Charlie. But Charlie took on the baton handed over to him and continued the work. There is no way in these short few words that I can do justice to what he achieved and to the many lives both Deaf and hearing that he touched. Each of you who had contact with him will have to privately acknowledge the debt you owe him, and me more than most. Let me just draw attention to a few things, they are not exhaustive they couldn't be, that may or may not have happened without him but he certainly was a very major force in them. The first I would have to remember is the establishment of Henesy House. It has been through a few transitions from its birth in Sale, to the Hostel in Deansgate to the combining of the Hostel and Home in Moss Side, and to its present location here in Collyhurst. The story of its birth, the involvement of the Sisters of Evron, the carrying of a bath through Deansgate with the present Financial Secretary, to getting his priest friends to put up partitions, and to do house to house collecting money on their day off are all worthy of another story. The next one I would want to mention is the establishment of the Association for the Catholic Deaf of Great Britain and Ireland. Many here were involved in its establishment, and they can tell the stories. They can tell the stories of the meetings, to arguments, to the Kitchen Cabinets, but all of them so that Deaf people could play their proper role in the life of the Church, and thank God that is beginning to happen. I think one of his crowning moments, and one I know he was immensely proud of, was the ordination of Fr. Peter McDonough by His Holiness, Pope John Paul, at Heaton Park.

Another story was the creation of the International Catholic Foundation for the Service of Deaf People, of which Archbishop Kelly is President. He was so happy that the lack of resource material for the Religious Education of Deaf people was being addressed. Communication, sign language, was also a must for everyone - the courses, the classes, the one to one tuition – all to better and improve the service. I have only skirted around one or two things but there was so much more. He took a very keen interest in Social Service provision and was one of the founding members of Catholic Welfare Societies in the diocese. He was also very keen on further education and qualification and qualified in his early days as a Social Worker and made sure a few more of us did the same. He was a prolific reader, you cannot move in his room for books and he made copious notes on everything. He had a great command of the English language and would try many ways of saying something till he got it right. He had a great communication skill both with Deaf and hearing people and could be very forceful in his arguments. He might break your leg in convincing you of his point of view, but then he would take you to the hospital and he would then take you for a meal. He never to my knowledge, ever bore a grudge. He was also a very good host who made everyone feel welcome and important. He was a great encourager and always sought to make sure that the people who needed to, were not without someone to talk to. He was very concerned especially about his support for his brother priests and for those thinking about the priesthood, and for those training, and especially his recent concern for Alan, Nathan and Sean who he wanted to support in their training. But all of you especially priest colleagues who have talked with him will know what I mean. Yes he used to jokingly say, “If I'm so great, how come I never got a parish?” But when we did accept some 11 years ago the parish work along with the work with Deaf people, he was very at home with it. He enjoyed telling everyone that he was the fourth curate in the parish but in reality all of us in the parish knew where he stood. Really up until recently, he was very involved and would want to say the funeral Mass for people or visit the sick or have a

friendly word with someone. Of course I know you knew him as the best of time-keepers and he was never, never late! Well, maybe once or twice, but as he would always say, 'I won't tell if you won't tell' and 'I forgive you all for keeping me waiting!' I know our Altar servers here were always glad to see the Canon on Mass because they tell me he holds the record for the fastest mass in the parish. I know also he would want me to acknowledge the support he received from the Presentation Sisters in his work here. I know I have not said anything yet about his family and life before seminary. I was often treated to story after story about his childhood, his seafaring family and he being nearly the one that didn't go to sea. So many stories, not sure if all of them were completely accurate but I'm sure some of them were close enough. Well maybe the time he swam around the Gunaway rock might be a bit of an exaggeration. It was just over twelve months ago that we managed to go him to Ireland to see his brother Leonard before he died. Sadly Leonard died but he counted it a great blessing to be there with Leonard's wife, Patsy, and their family and to be able to share in Leonard's funeral. Here I must say a word about the Parish priest there, Fr McCartan, a great friend of Charlie's, who concelebrated the mass at Leonard's funeral and spoke at the funeral and I know he had intended coming to Charlie's funeral this morning, was tragically killed on Sunday last. We pray that he will rest in peace. I know Charlie would want me to mention his family this morning, especially his step-mother, Dolly, his sister-in-law Patsy, who can't be here as she is recovering from an operation, his six nieces. I think he made a game out of remembering their names and the order but he would want me to mention them: Noelle, Elaine, Clare, Gillian, Geraldine, and Emma, and their families, and especially to mention their children, Caoimhe, Megan, Hannah, Kate, Tess, Liam, Jack, Tom, Molly and just recently the new baby here Charlie Leonard. There are also very many cousins and relations here today, please forgive me if I do not mention you all by name. But you all know the affection he held you all in.

Let me mention also here now how grateful he would be to all his brother priests. It would be invidious to mention all the names of all the priests who have been involved in his life, but he would want to thank you for been present at his funeral and for those who have shared his life but maybe just one group - the Wednesday group of priests! He was someone who was very ecumenically minded and did much to create good relationships between the Churches especially in the Deaf World. Finally, I must mention the community in which he has lived for over thirty years. The Community of the Sisters of Our Lady of Evron – all the Sisters including the present community of Sr. Angela, Sr. Maria, Sr. Pauline, Sr. Anne Marie, Sr. Bernadette, Sr. Teresa, Sr. Irene, Sr Monica. And all the priests which whom he has lived including Fr. Peter McDonough and myself.

Just on one personal note, he and I have been together for over twenty-seven years, longer I suppose than I spent with my parents. It will not be easy to fill that void. In fact, I guess impossible, all will feel it in different ways. Charlie once said to me, "When I die, do two things for me. One: throw a match into my room and run; the second was to ask those who knew him to pray for him and to forgive him if he had ever wronged or hurt anyone." I can't do the first but I can certainly can do the second. His legacy will live on in our hearts and minds, and all of us will have benefited by the gift of his life. Charlie wrote sometime ago in an appreciation of Canon Hayward, he wrote 'that he was a remarkable man, an Apostle to Deaf people in England.' Perhaps now it is time to apply the same words to Charlie. He told me once about a young Teacher of the Deaf who came to see Canon Hayward and give him his views on sign language. Charlie said he met the young teacher on the way out of the

Club shouting, “That man is a little Hitler, he is a megalomaniac!” Charlie used to say he understood what he meant as he was on the receiving end of this a few times. He said he was there with Canon Hayward just about a month when he got a dressing down of a lifetime and was told ‘Get on your bike and get on with the job!’ He said this ignited a motor in him that spluttered a few times but never stopped. Charlie said of Canon Hayward, ‘At the end of his life, he had more commitment to his faith, to his priesthood and to his Apostolate than many of us had on the day of ordination.’ He said he was a deep man of prayer and was someone who impressed without trying.’ When he wrote those words about Canon Hayward, I don’t think he ever thought that they could apply to him. But they certainly can. Something the Little Sisters of the Poor commented on in his last week with them; here I must say a word of appreciation to the Sisters for their care of Charlie during his last week.

He wrote of Canon Hayward – ‘He left his mark on all who met him.’ He said he left him with a sense of privilege which has grown in the past years in being involved with the Deaf Apostolate and what commitment I have to the Apostolate is from him. He used to say for years after the Canon Hayward’s death, whenever I had to make a decision of any kind the question I would ask was “What would he do?” So Charlie has given us the words again: ‘Charlie, you have left your mark on all you met. You have left us with a sense of privilege which will grow over the years in being involved with the Deaf Apostolate. And what commitment we have to our Apostolate comes from you. And I am equally sure for the future whenever we come to a decision we will ask “What would Charlie do?”’ So to fulfil what I started out to do, thank you all for coming. Coming and celebrating his life and giving thanks to God for such a gift. And all that is left to do now is to say ‘thank you’ to Charlie. So thank you Charlie may you enjoy the fruits of your labours and now we know that there is a good communicator in heaven acting on our behalf.

*Eternal rest grant to Charlie, and let perpetual light shine upon you.
May he rest in peace. Amen.*