



Sister Amadeus Bulger CJ

1934-2016

“I shall be filled, when I awake, with the sight of your glory, O Lord.” (Psalm 16)

Bishop John Crowley said Mass here the other day and it was those words which were in the Responsorial Psalm for that day. He came and shared them with Sister Amadeus and for those of us who had the privilege of seeing her after she had died had no doubt that the gentle smile on her face showed that indeed when she awoke she had been filled with the sight of God’s glory.

Amadeus’ going to God was very much a family affair. Both her C.J family and her natural family. There would be the weekly letter from her sister Bernie who reminded her that she always said she did not fear death as she would see her father again. The letters always included photos and news of nieces and nephews. Her sister Gabrielle was a frequent visitor with her husband as was her doctor brother, Gerard, who took the train from Kings X to York, just to come and sit with her. Her sister Josie spanned the two families. She was there daily at her side. Her other sister Lizzie was a frequent visitor from Carmel. Her community of St. Joseph’s meant she was in a religious house with the joy of almost daily Mass. Holy Communion was brought to her if she was too ill to come to the chapel. The Bar Convent Community visited daily not to mention the almost daily visits of Clergy, which included Cardinal Murphy O’Connor, Archbishop Arthur Roche, our own bishop and many of those with whom she had had Pastoral care. It is always invidious to pick out one friend, but Father John Berry, knew her right at the beginning of her ministry when

she was assistant Chaplain at Cambridge University. We always include the nurses, carers and helpers at St. Joseph's as part of our community and Amadeus was unfailing in her gratitude, thanking each one who cared for her and she never ceased telling me how grateful she was for everything.

Many of you here will remember she had a particular ensemble which she wore when she was going to an Ordination or visiting an Embassy or some smart occasion. You would say to her, "Where are you off to today?" I think you would be pleased to know that she was dressed in that for her final journey to heaven! It had been a faithful companion on her many journeys. I was there when she bought it some 30 years ago.

Now it is her sister Josie who takes up the story. Sister Amadeus, born Catherine Mary Bulger, on 25th of September 1934 in London. She was the eldest of 7 children, 5 girls followed by 2 boys. Her father worked in Cargo Shipping in an office in the City of London. They were not an overtly pious family but Catholicism was the air they breathed. Their efforts at saying the rosary as a family nearly always ended in giggles and the practice was soon abandoned!

Catherine with her sisters went to our school at St. Mary's, Shaftesbury. It was there when aged 12, she first began to think of Religious Life. Before she left the school she was made Head Girl. Naturally her parents on hearing that she wanted to become a nun insisted that she wait a year after leaving school before entering the Provincial House of the then I.B.V.M. at St. Mary's, Ascot. In that year she managed to get a job at the local stables and helping learner riders. She also had some experience as a hotel receptionist and an auxiliary nurse.

Catherine entered the Convent in 1954 and took the name of Amadeus (love of God.) After the Noviciate she went to Maria Assumpta College for the two years teacher training for Secondary Schools. After this she taught for many years, first in York at the Bar Convent Grammar School until 1974 being made Deputy Head for the last five years. She then taught at St. Mary's Ascot at the same time working every Wednesday as Religious Advisor for the Diocese of Portsmouth. She loved this outreach ministry. From 1977- 1988 she was teaching in St. Mary's School in Bateman Street in Cambridge and became a part time chaplain at the University. In both York and Cambridge schools she was key in getting started the girls going to Lourdes as helpers in the Diocesan Pilgrimages. She did this work for years and inspired many to continue going to Lourdes long after their school days were over. It was this kind of ministry that energised her. In her second time in York she was the Director of the Youth Centre founded after the closure of the Bar Convent Grammar School, a post she held until she was appointed chaplain to the University of York. This was really the spring board that brought her to the Venerable in Rome where she was Pastoral Director for 9 years. She loved this work and felt it a great privilege to be with the students visiting them on their pastoral placements in England during their holidays. After their Ordinations she kept in touch with the young priests writing letters of encouragement to them. After her years in Rome she was based in London for 11 years. First in Tufnell Park, then Hampstead and finally in Willesden Lane. working on a daily basis in Westminster Diocesan Pastoral Outreach Team known as "At Your Word Lord". She also became one of the Vicars for

Religious in the Arch Diocese of Westminster. She was tireless in this work and it was recognised when she was nominated Catholic Woman of the Year. She gave 100% to the various church ministries she was appointed to and was much loved by the seminarians, bishops, priests and religious with whom she worked. This included not only her work in Rome but then in the Royal College of Valladolid in Spain, where she went for some time within each year. Archbishop Bernard Longley gave a moving talk at a Mass of Thanksgiving for Sister Amadeus in May 2015 saying that she had influenced more than 187 seminarians in the College in Valladolid alone.

On this happy note when we go on our separate ways let us keep in our hearts for when our time comes that we too may be filled, when we awake, with the sight of your glory, O Lord. Amen.