

OBITUARY

Michael McKenna was born in Liverpool on 18th May 1937, the son of Vincent and Grace McKenna. After the death of his mother, he was largely brought up by Marie McKenna, one of his aunts. He received his early education at St Charles' School, Aigburth, and then at St Francis Xavier's College. On 9th September 1950, he entered St Joseph's College, Upholland, alongside 30 boys of similar age and began his training for the priesthood. Six of these, including Michael, were ordained priest by Archbishop John Carmel Heenan on 8th June 1963, during the period of the Second Vatican Council and began their priestly ministry amidst a period of significant development. Following ordination, Fr McKenna was appointed to the parish of Saints Peter and Paul in Crosby and then after four years in the long-established parish at Crosby, he moved to the new town of Skelmersdale to immerse himself in the establishment of new parishes, communities and in the development of team ministry. During his time as Episcopal Vicar, he was Administrator at St Mary's, Highfield Street, Liverpool, for a short period. Subsequently, he was chaplain to the Redemptorist sisters at Gillmoss, whilst living in Upholland. He returned to parish ministry in 2000, succeeding Canon Richard Firth as parish priest at St Gregory's, Chorley, and relished the contact with parishioners again. Speaking of those to whom he brought Holy Communion at home, he remarked that, 'If I ever get to heaven, it will be because of them.' He had a great capacity for friendship, maintaining many lifelong friendships with his distinctive handwritten cards, even as his eyesight was failing. In 2016, he retired from active ministry, moving just a few yards to the lodge at the end of the drive at Weld Bank. He died on Friday 23rd August 2024, aged 87 years, in the 62nd year of priesthood.