

FR AELRED BURROWS OSB 1939-2016

FR ALBAN CROSSLEY OSB

Vincent Joseph Burrows born 26 July 1939 in Warrington; educated Xaverian College, Manchester and Manchester University; clothed 21 September 1961; ordained 7 July 1968; 1964-68 studied Theology at Ampleforth and St Benet's Hall, Oxford; 1968-96 History Master; 1968-73 Senior RS Master; 1976-84 Housemaster St. Hugh's; 1984-89 Novice Master; 1989-96 Warden of the Grange and Vocations Director; 1996-99 St Austin's Parish, Grassendale; 1999-2008 St Joseph's Parish, Brindle; 2008 returned to Monastery Infirmary at Ampleforth; died 18 February 2016.



VINCENT JOSEPH BURROWS was born in Warrington on 26th July 1939. He was baptised and grew up in the Ampleforth parish of St Oswald, Padgate, Warrington and, after his education at the Xaverian College, Manchester, came to Ampleforth as a novice in September 1957. He left the novitiate in the course of the first year and went in 1958 to read History at Manchester University, graduating in 1961, when he returned to the novitiate at Ampleforth as Br Aelred.

He made his simple profession in 1962 and his solemn profession in 1965. He did theological studies at Ampleforth, leading up to his priestly ordination in July 1968. He then went to St Benet's Hall, Oxford for a further year of theological study.

A well-read teacher who had a gift for shaping the ideas he had read and transmitting them in a form which was easily assimilated, Fr Aelred taught History and Religious Studies in the College for 28 years and was Head of Religious Studies for five of those years. From 1976-84 he was the respected Housemaster of St Hugh's House.

As a Housemaster, he was temperamentally inclined to be something of a disciplinarian, and demanded a high standard of personal conduct, which some members of the House found difficult to meet. However, those in his care had no doubt that he was dedicated to their welfare. He was a shrewd observer of human nature and his intelligent affability and high sense of priorities often drew the best out of boys who might have preferred to travel in the slow lane. He also had wide intellectual and theological interests which went way beyond the classroom and

which he was always willing to share in the informal context of his role as a Housemaster. His teaching skills came into play in the monastery, too, where he taught church history, scripture and liturgy at various times. He was a historian by training and had a great love of the scriptures and the liturgy. His liturgical interest and the serious reading which fed it started in his first novitiate in 1957 and developed through the years of the Second Vatican Council.

Aelred was a musician, too: a competent violinist and pianist and a valued cantor in the Abbey and later at St Benedict's Monastery, Bamber Bridge.

In 1984 he was made Novice Master. As was the way in those days, he had had no training or special preparation for this and the transition from looking after schoolboys to dealing with more mature young men was not a smooth one for him: he did not fit the role comfortably. However, he did it for five years and nine of his novices are still monks of the community.

In 1989 he became Warden of the Grange and Vocations Director. He stopped teaching in the school, but his seven years of service in the Grange gave him opportunity for a different mode of teaching, this time giving retreats to lay people, priests and religious.

In 1996 he was sent to be Assistant Priest at St Austin's, Grassendale, Liverpool, becoming Parish Priest in 1997. In 1999 he moved to St Benedict's Monastery, Bamber Bridge, from which he served St Joseph's, Brindle, as Parish Priest, where parishioners remember him especially for the quality of his homilies.

In 1995 he made contact with the Church in Romania and subsequently made many visits during his holidays, helping parishes and seminarians with gifts (partly from parishioners). For many years he had a special relationship with the Benedictine nuns at Tyburn – he would visit them during his holidays, he gave their retreat on more than one occasion and he wrote extensively for them on the Eucharist.

In July 2008, Fr Aelred suffered a stroke and was treated as an emergency patient at Chorley Hospital, before returning to the Monastery Infirmary at Ampleforth, where he lived with great patience for eight years the life of an invalid until his death on 18th February 2016. He suffered more than most of us: a gifted speaker and teacher, he was robbed of the ability to read, to write and to speak freely and easily of what he knew and had experienced. Instead, he humbly allowed people to minister to his needs, usually smiling, usually placid, usually grateful for the fact that someone was there, for what they said and what they did. His funeral Mass was at Ampleforth Abbey on 29th February 2016, followed by burial in the monks' wood.