

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

It is with much sadness that we let you know of the death of Fr. Fintan Crotty, ss.cc. after a very short but valiant battle with the coronavirus. His brother, Fr. Columban Crotty, ss.cc. shares the following beautiful tribute from a friend of Fintan's in Holy Cross Parish in Bedford, Bedfordshire, England where Fintan served as assistant and pastor for several years. Fr. Columban remembers his brother as one who was "blessed by God with so many wonderful gifts which he used to make this world a better place". Rest in peace Fr. Fintan.

Fr. Fintan Crotty, SS.CC.

Bedford, England, Parishoner: A legend, a cornerstone, a friend to all.

Fr Fintan had a way with people. If anyone could embody the phrase 'the man, the myth, the legend', it would be him. He had that rare and beautiful capacity to communicate with anyone and everyone, whether you were 9 or 99. His appeal was radically intergenerational and this came, I think, out of a kindness, a humour and a warmth of heart that made you feel understood, assured and at ease whenever you talked. In Bedford, his gentle reputation didn't just precede him — it did the opposite too, echoing and reverberating in the hearts of so many well after he left. He was, in so many eyes, the gold standard.

He was a friend to my grandma and to my mum, but he was also a friend to me. When I needed help at work reaching out to faith communities near HMP Wormwood Scrubs, Fr Fintan invited my colleague and I over so we could speak to his parishioners in Acton (in London). But not before giving us a full tour of the parish and a three course lunch! What was meant to be an hour out of the working day turned into an afternoon of laughter and stories. I will never forget his kindness and hospitality.

On the tour of the house he showed us a noticeboard on which he kept photos of his family and friends. It warmed my heart to see so many pictures of people I knew from Holy Cross, despite him having left Bedford years ago, alongside one of him and my family at a hotel restaurant somewhere in Dún Laoghaire, when our journeys to and from Dublin had serendipitously coincided. There was another one of us in Rome in 2009 when we went to the canonisation of St Damien.

A few months after that afternoon, I invited him to a fundraising event and he trekked half way across London to offer his full support not only to Pact, the charity I worked for, but of course to me too. That is where the photo below was taken. I was so grateful and surprised he made the trip, and he was content enough talking to everyone he met there. He didn't need to come all that way, but he did anyway. It was one of many small, encouraging gestures.

So many memories keep on cropping up in my mind since hearing the news of his passing, funny ones too... like when I accidentally took him and my mum to a Protestant church service in London, or when I did my first reconciliation with him aged 8 and he laughed at the picture I drew of me calling my family a 'bunch of eejits' (more on that another day...). Perhaps, though, what I will miss most is putting my key in the front door after work on a Monday evening and hearing the sound of his voice and laughter emanating from the kitchen. I'm sad he won't be over for dinner or a cup of tea after golf ever again, but what a blessing it is to remember.

RIP Fr Fintan Crotty, you will be dearly missed.