



Our Lady Help of Christians

Parish House:
24 Clinton Street, Fitzroy
Box 3092
New Plymouth, NEW ZEALAND

Telephone 064 06.758-2463
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The Reverend Monsignor Michael James Carroll

Born Dublin, Ireland, 20 April 1926.

Educated Christian Brothers School, Marino, Dublin
Christian Brothers School, O'Connell's, North Dublin.
Mt. Melleray Seminary, Co. Waterford, Ireland
Oscott College, Birmingham, England
St. Patrick's College, Thurles, Ireland.

Ordained: 11 June, 1950, St. Patrick's College Thurles for the Archdiocese of Wellington, New Zealand.

Appointments:	St. Patrick's Palmerston North	1951 - 1962
	Parish Priest, Foxton	1963 - 1964
	Parish Priest, Paraparaumu	1965 - 1970
	Parish Priest, New Plymouth	1971 -

Appointed a Prelate of Honour, August 1978

Died in Ashford Hospital, Middlesex, England, 28 July 1984.



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A Brief insight into the person of Michael Carroll.

Gift of Faith: Born into a family of two wonderful and loving parents, Michael was baptized as an infant even though he was not conscious of it till later. As he grew older he learned more about Jesus, heard stories about what he did for him and his plan for him. It seemed almost too good to be true. A gift of eternal life could indeed be called a surprise. After examining this gift for himself, he still wasn't quite sure why - but he believed it could be true, that he could trust Jesus and his Father, and Michael, who always liked to be a winner, responded thankfully to this assurance with Christian love of God, neighbours and self, while he awaited the final gift of this eternal life.

He also became aware and believed in the value of his uniqueness, - the owner of his thoughts, he cultivated a sense of good humour, a lively imagination, the ability to love, to understand and to persevere.

As Michael's ministry progressed he appreciated himself as a pilgrim graced with intelligence, with good speech and knowledge for saving life, yet still searching, vulnerable and incomplete, almost broken at times, and, experiencing his own brokenness, the Cross of Jesus, helped him to understand his mission of what it meant to be Christ in the world of his day. He let the mercy of Jesus shine through him to heal those he met who needed forgiveness. When he counselled, you felt he was for you, giving you a source of life, of hope, of healing, for he understood the Father's healing power in himself, and likewise, he wanted to pass the same on to others.

As far as self-possession was concerned, he was more interested in coming before God as a beggar in everything, clinging to nothing so that he could give everything of himself in service. However, he did prize three possessions which he exercised most profoundly. The first possession, that of Reconciler, when he walked together side by side with all people. The second possession, that of Preacher, both in word and deed, was his way of helping others discover the goodness in and around them. The third possession was that of being a Celebrant of the Eucharist, the quintessence of his life, where, together with his parishioners in the renewal of the mystery of God's love for His people, Michael constantly asked for an understanding heart and wisdom to live out his daily life in his Church.

He knew he lived in an imperfect world but he also understood Our Lord's message that the Kingdom could even grow out of this imperfection. Michael saw the Church as imperfect in so far as the human element was concerned, but he was conscious that we owned both the problem and the future. If he became impatient with members of the family (priests, religious, parishioners) be certain it was only through love, for he saw the flaws in his own life more clearly and he continually learned patience was not so much a virtue he cultivated but rather it was in the manner in which God loved him.

Michael always liked to be a winner and this gift of hope (eternal life) was realized by the people in his life who loved him, the people who needed him and the many opportunities he experienced in the Lord's invitation to grow close to Him.

Winning the Kingdom was everything, nothing else mattered. That's what made him a disciple. Once he had accepted the offer as Gift, his whole life changed. He left everything behind and felt happy about it, just so he could be a winner.



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Father Carroll continued:

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As far as I can tell, Michael never traded his life for anything else. He was a grateful receiver of his life from God and his response was to lay down his life for his friends. As far as he was concerned everyone was his friend.

The kind of friend: Michael was a person with whom you dared to be yourself. Your soul could be naked with him. He seemed to ask of you to put on nothing only to be what you were. He did not want you to be better or worse and when you were with him you felt as a prisoner feels who has been declared innocent. You did not have to be on your guard, you could say what you thought so long as it was genuinely you. He understood those contradictions in your nature that led others to misjudge you. With him you could breathe freely. You could allow your little vanities and envies and hates and vicious sparks, your meannesses and absurdities and, in opening them up to him they were lost because of his loyalty. He understood. You did not have to be careful, you could abuse him, neglect him, tolerate him, best of all, you could keep still with him, for he saw, he knew and he loved you.

This was the man Msgr. Michael Carroll and the Kingdom was his business.

A few weeks before Michael left New Zealand for the last time he came to stay with me at Te Kuiti. Every year at ordination time we would come together to celebrate our anniversaries, usually with a game of golf and dinner in the evening, reliving our lives in College and the ensuing years, with our stories, laughter and thankfulness.

It was clear Michael was unwell and even though we played golf at Waitomo Golf Course, we really had to take it easy because of his condition. During his visit he had at last settled on an area where we would retire to, Foxton Beach. We were to purchase a section and I was to build the house. At the same time Michael still had a longing to die in Ireland, in his beloved city, Dublin.. Two weeks after he visited me, I drove down to New Plymouth to pick him up to drive him to Auckland. We had to stay the night at Te Kuiti, the next day driving slowly to Auckland Airport for Michael to catch a plane for Dublin, via London. The rest is history, The final decision, though tragic and sad for many, yet happy for Michael, was the Lord's, in granting him his wish, a) that his last work as a priest would be to his beloved parishioners of St. Joseph's Parish, New Plymouth and b) that his body would rest in Dublin, a City of so many cherished memories, where his life began.