

Bro. Desmond P Kelly, fms



Received the Breath of Life
6 December 1934
County Sligo, Ireland

Called to Accept the Marist Brotherhood
26 July 1953
Tyngsboro, MA

Was Commended to God
15 January 2009
Bronxville NY

Mass of Christian Burial
19 January 2009
Mount St Michael Academy Chapel

Interred
20 January 2009
Marist Brothers Cemetery
Esopus, New York

Bro. Desmond Kelly, F.M.S.

Brother Kelly, affectionately known as 'Des' used several names during his lifetime. He was christened Desmond Kelly, and assumed the name Brother Thomas Aidan when he took the Marist Habit in 1953. When the practice changed to not assign names at the time the candidate took the Marist Habit, those with both names often moved to a combination of family and religious name. So Des was known as Bro Desmond Kelly, Brother Thomas Desmond Kelly, and Brother Thomas P Kelly.

Vitae

1941-1949	elementary education	Good Shepherd School, NY NY
1949-1951	secondary education	Power Memorial HS, NY NY
1951-1953	secondary education	Marist Preparatory, Esopus NY
Jan 1953-Aug 1954	Marist Novitiate,	Tyngsboro, MA
26 July 1953	Reception of Marist Habit,	Tyngsboro, MA
26 July 1954	Profession of First Vows,	Tyngsboro, MA
1954 - 1957	College student, Marian College,	Poughkeepsie NY
1957	BA Marian College	
1957-1959	teacher - Holy Trinity Elementary School,	Poughkeepsie NY
15 Aug 1959	professed final vows, Marian College,	Poughkeepsie NY
1959 - 1963	teacher — Bishop Dubois HS,	NY NY
1963 - 1964	teacher — Mount St Michael Academy,	Bronx NY
1964 - 1965	student — Catholic University,	Washington DC

1965 - 1967 teacher — Marist HS Chicago IL
1966 M.T.S — Physics/Chemistry, Catholic University, Washington DC
1967-1976 teacher — Mount St Michael Academy, Bronx NY
1969 M.N.S. — Geology, Univ of Oklahoma, Norman OK
Jan-Jun 1973 Second Novitiate, Fribourg, Switzerland
1976-1979 principal — Mount St Michael Academy, Bronx NY
1979 - 1981 teacher — Marcellin College, Auckland, New Zealand
1982 teacher — American Samoa
1982 - 1987 teacher - St Elizabeth HS, Oakland CA
1987 - 1992 founder/headmaster/teacher Sargodha Catholic School, Pakistan
1992 honorary doctorate — Marist College, Poughkeepsie NY
1995 - 1993 teacher — St Martin de Porres HS, Chicago IL
1993 - 1997 teacher — Marist HS, Chicago IL
1997 - 2000 teacher/principal — Bishop Donahue HS, West VA
2000 - 2002 teacher — Mount St Michael Academy, Bronx NY
2002 - 2009 retired — Champagnat Hall, Bronx NY
15 Jan 2009 died — Lawrence Hospital, Bronxville NY
19 Jan 2009 Mass of Christian Burial — Mount St Michael Chapel, Bronx NY
20 Jan 2009 Interment — Marist Brothers Cemetery, Esopus NY

Letter read by Brother John McDonnell at the burial ceremony.
It was emailed 18 Jan 2009 by Brother Richard Dunleavy, of the New Zealand Province.
[Click here](#) for background information of Brother Dunleavy

Dear Brothers, Bro Des's family and friends

I was very saddened by the news that Des - or Tom as we knew him here in New Zealand - has finally moved on to his final homeland, although I feel that Tom would not want us to be sorry. He will want us to share his joy in this new adventure, a culmination of the many exciting and challenging adventures he has undertaken in his life as a Marist: in such places as Oakland and Auckland (pronounced differently here, as he learned!), Pago Pago and Pakistan. I have passed on the news of Tom's passing to Brothers and friends who remember him with such affection and appreciation.

I myself have so many very happy memories of Tom, and my admiration for his dynamism, courage, and all-embracing ability to relate to everyone and to every situation, mastering all in his straightforward but engaging style. He was a "Big Man" in every way: body, intelligence, work output, generosity, New York Irish wit, and finally his courage and patience during his last years of health setbacks.

But most of all, for me, he was big in the Marcellin spirit of "get-up and go" in the cause of Marist education. That was demonstrated dramatically when I phoned him from Rome - in 1986, I think it was - just as he was rushing off to class at St Elizabeth's in Oakland one morning, to ask him if he would be open to taking on the leadership of the new school in Sargodha, Pakistan, and whether he would come to a preliminary meeting there in ten days' time. His response was immediate and positive. And that initial reaction characterized his wholehearted gift of himself to the pioneering of that project which the Bishop of Rawalpindi/Islamabad later described to me as perhaps the most important step the tiny Catholic Church community in Pakistan had ever taken.

The immeasurable value of that fine school now is a testimony to Tom and the other monks who worked with him in those early years. His first companion was actually a Kiwi, Campion McMahon. I was fortunate to be able to recall some of those memories when I visited Tom late in 2007 when passing through New York en route for Manziana.

So I join you now in prayer and spirit at this time when you farewell a great man and a truly great Marist and brother, giving thanks to God for Tom's love for life — both for himself and for others, especially young people in dire need of that love. May our prayers of thanksgiving accompany him in his final homecoming and adventure into the overwhelming eternal love and life his faith and fidelity deserve.

With warm greetings from across the vast seas to all the monks.

Very sincerely

— Brother Richard Dunleavy

The following is excerpted from emails sent to Brother Gerry Brereton and John McDonnell by **Norman Rick**, a student of Brother Desmond at Marist High School in Chicago IL.

Norman was in the first graduating class (1967) of Marist High School.

Hi Bro John!

Bro Gerry (I used to call him Brother Gerard, back in the day) [ed note Bro Gerry Brereton] shared your email response with me. My wife Pat, and I, are honored that you will use some of my Brother Thomas Kelly anecdotes/memoirs at his Funeral Mass. He was an awesome Honors Chemistry and Honors Physics Teacher at Marist---I wasn't such an awesome Chemistry/Physics student, however. I did excel in Bro Gerry's Honors Spanish classes for four years, though---guess everybody's got to be good at something.

I'll never forget how surprised (and honored) I was at graduation (6/67) in that hot, sweaty Marist gym, when (Chicago) Cardinal Cody called me up on the stage, to present me with the coveted Marist Gold Medal for General Excellence in Spanish from Brother Gerard. I still look at it every day, and shall cherish it until I die.

As a member of the Charter Class (Marist c/o '67) I really appreciated my teachers there---and I taught HS Mathematics myself, for 34 years in CPS inner city schools---retired at age 55 in 2004. Graduated with Bros Brice Byczinski & John Murray (God rest his soul---he was way too young to die!) My faves (besides Gerard/Gerry & Thomas/Des, of course) were: Paul Wilfred; Ernest Beland; Augustine Pinard; Patrick Tobin/Alban; George Fontana; Ronald "Pasquerelli"? (or something close---in those days, there was no "Mulholland confusion"---Ronald Mulholland came after "Pasq" left); Gilbert Levesque; my two fave Bros who I never had for classroom teachers---Ronald Mulholland & Arthur Levigne (Bro Gerry calls him "Artie".)

I am so very glad that Br Thomas' sufferings are over---he left me with great memories---truly a Gentle Giant, and an awesome HUMAN BEING!!!

Sincerely,

Norm Rick (c/o '67---Chicago Marist)

Hi Bro Gerry

I am very sorry to hear of the passing of your dear friend Des. I always thought of Brother Thomas Kelly as a Gentle Giant. While I wasn't very smart in his Honors Chemistry and Honors physics classes (Junior & Senior years at Marist, 1966 & 19567) I shall always remember what a 'cool' teacher he was. Like you, he didn't settle for too much 'foolishness' in class — was all business for the first month or so then for the rest of the two years, once everyone understood that concept, Brother Thomas displayed the most awesome (in a 'mad scientist' sort of way) sense of humor.

I'll relate to you three of my most cherished memories of his classes

1.) He snuck a piece of dry ice into his mouth while we weren't looking, and the next thing you know, here's this giant "mad scientist" with tons of smoke emanating from his mouth. We didn't know whether to laugh, or find a fire extinguisher. i never saw anyone do that before or after that day!

2.) He's up at his 'giant' lab desk, demonstrating a "Vandergraph" Generator We don't know what the heck a Vandergraph is — never saw one before — never heard of one before. Next thing there's Brother Thomas, left hand resting on the ball part, with a "lit" green light bulb sticking pit pf his right ear. Next thing hyou know, now he's also got a blue bulb sticking out of his mouth, and it lights up. The guy was a riot!!! We were all rolling on the floor — what a HAM !!

3.) This is the "biggy" that I'll never forget. Right in the middle of one of his Chemistry lectures, Brother Thomas picks up a meter stick, and whacks it down on a teeny little pile of some kind of powder — KA BOOM !!!!! FLASH !!!!! I swear, Bro G, I almost soiled my pants.

Like I've told you before, Jim G was the only student who ever got Brother Thomas' "goat". I always said, Jim must have been either a "masochist" or just plain stupid to be messin' with that "Big Guy"

Well, we both know that Bro Tom is up with Jesus now — no more cancer — no more diabetes — just eternal happiness!!

Background information about **Brother Richard Dunleavy**
from an email to Richard Foy

Dear Rich

First of all, congratulations to you and all your fellow-citizens on the remarkable events of today's inauguration which offer so much hope to the whole world. Let's pray that Obama can continue to provide the vision and practical judgment which he has shown so far. I have just finished reading his memoirs, a copy of which was given me at Christmas. He certainly can write and demonstrates a unique insight into so many aspects of the human and political landscape.

I remember you well. In 1965 you invited me at the end of my Lumen Vitae course, after you own time at Fribourg with Lawrie from Sydney who came on to study with me in Brussels, to give a course in Catechetics at the Marist Institute in the summer of 1965, which was a tremendous experience for me. I have often quoted it to people: encountering a group of Brothers (and some others) who were being exposed – bowled over, you might say - to the new dreams of the Church post-Vatican II, especially in the area of morality. I won't go on about it now but it was an opportunity that you gave me which greatly enriched my life after that.

You asked for details of my life. After some years as Director of RE in Marist high schools I was appointed to our formation team, and with that experience was then named as assistant director to the first Champagnat centre course in Rome in 1973 which was attended by several US Brothers. On my return I became founding director of the combined Marist Pastoral centre for the NZ Church, and after that became Provincial of NZ and the South Pacific Islands. Then at the 1985 General Chapter I was elected with Philip Ouellette to be a General Councillor. It was during those years that I was asked to negotiate with the Bishop of Rawalpindi/Islamabad for the launching of the new high school for Catholic boys in Sargodha, Pakistan, where the highest number of poor Catholic families in then country are to be found. The school that Tom built up with such energy and vision has become a bastion of evangelization and educational opportunity for the Catholic young men in the region, giving them chances to rise out of their poverty that they would never otherwise have had. It imitates the traces of what happened for the Catholic communities in the US and so many other Protestant nations in the 19th century and after.

After 8 years on the Council I returned to NZ where I became Pastoral Assistant to the Bishop of Auckland. Then in 1999 I was asked to go back to Rome to be Secretary General, a role I had for four years. After a heart bypass up there, I came back to Auckland where I continue to assist the Brothers and the local Bishop in various capacities. How's that for a thumbnail summary?

I leave it at that for now. But do not hesitate to get back to me if there is anything else you wish.

My congratulations too for all you did to lay such excellent foundations at Poughkeepsie. I visited there with Phil at the end of 2007. What an outstanding project it is now. You must rightly be very proud of it. And thanks for the fine work you and others do to maintain relationships and records for the Brothers and their former colleagues

Ciao and God bless

Richard Dunleavy

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Obituary published in Catholic New York
Archdiocese of New York paper, January 29, 2009

Brother Desmond, 74, Taught in Manhattan

Brother Desmond Kelly, EM.S., a high school principal and teacher who served in the archdiocese, died Jan. 15 at Lawrence Hospital in Bronxville. He was 74 and had resided at Champagnat Hall at Mount St. Michael Academy in the Bronx.

He was principal of Mount St. Michael, 1976-1979, and taught there, 2000-2002, 1967-1976 and 1963-1964. He also taught at Bishop Dubois High School in Manhattan, 1959-1963; Holy Trinity School, Poughkeepsie, 1957 - 1959; in Illinois and California; and in West Virginia, where he also was a principal. He was the founding headmaster and a teacher at Sargodha Catholic School in Pakistan, 1987-1992; the school is thriving, a Marist vice provincial said. He also taught previously in American Samoa and New Zealand.

Born in County Sligo, Ireland, he came to the United States with his family as a child. He entered the Marist Novitiate in Tyngsboro, Mass. in 1953 and professed final vows in 1959.

He held a bachelor's degree in mathematics from Marist College and master's degrees in physics and chemistry from The Catholic University of America and in geology from the University of Oklahoma.

He is survived by a sister, Maureen, and two brothers, John and Michael. A Funeral Mass was offered Jan. 19 at Mount St. Michael. Burial was at the Marist Brothers Cemetery in Esopus.

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