



**I would be true for there are those who trust me,
I would be pure for there are those who care.
I would be strong for there is much to suffer,
I would be brave for there is much to dare.
I would be friend of all, the foe, the friendless,
I would be giving and forget the gift.
I would be humble for I know my weakness
I would look up, and laugh, and love and live.**



**Of your charity, please pray for
the Repose of the Soul of**

Rev Fr Thomas Edward Williams

**Priest of the Archdiocese of Birmingham
13.1. 1927 – 29.10. 2020**

O. 6.1.1957, Balsall Heath 1957-59, Coventry 1959-66,
Wednesbury 1966-67, Warwick 1968-72, Watlington 1972-83,
Goring on Thames 1983-2014

Dear (former) parishioners, friends and family members of Fr Tom.

I apologize for being late in writing and informing you about the departure of our dear Fr Tom, the delay made me time it just for Christmas. To justify this concurrence, I dare to express hope that both these occasions, Death and Christmas, are joyful events for those who are truly awaiting His coming.

Fr Tom died quite unexpectedly. It happened at a very difficult time of a high tide of Covid-19 pandemic in our country. The churches were opened only for private prayer. We were daily visitors at the local church and shared very happy times in prayer and the hymns singing, apart from the last three days, when Fr Tom developed mild flu-like symptoms, which made him very weak. He died in the morning of Oct 29 in his armchair. I was there by his side together with my mother, my sister and my niece. I believe the cause was the Covid-19, as all of us in the family shortly after that developed the symptoms and consequently tested positive. Many times I ruminated on how it could have happened that I failed to guard Fr Tom from this virus. On one hand, to be a GP helped me keep Fr Tom in a reasonable health and comfort, on the other hand that role comprises a risk of a frontline worker bringing the infection home.

I trust it was God's providence that Fr Tom died right before the Feast of All Saints. I grasped that as a message as I believed that Fr Tom already was a saint. The local church where Fr Tom was a daily visitor for years is, by the way, dedicated to All Saints. His body was received in this church on the Eve of the All Saints Feast and the Requiem Mass was celebrated at the time of the usual Sunday Mass and was conjugated with the Feast of All Saints. Due to Covid-19 restrictions the Mass was not public, and we had to keep the number of attendees down. The Mass was officiated by the diocesan bishop Pavel (Paul) and our parish priest Fr Vaclav in both solemn and joyful manner, giving to Fr Tom a good send-off. We believe he was well received in his "new community".

According to his Will the body of Fr Tom was cremated, and his ashes were interred at our family tomb at the Kamenice graveyard on Sunday the 29th of November.

Fr Tom will be greatly missed, not only in his home country England where he lived and actively served most of his life but also by the Kamenice community. He was a true priest and shepherd until the very end. In spite of the language barrier he was a friend to everybody, always smiling, reaching out his hands to greet, giving blessings when asked, unceasingly praying for us all, he was frequently joining me for house calls and backing me up with prayers while waiting in the car. We were blessed to have him here and we are grateful for being given this opportunity.

I personally knew Fr Tom for over 28 years, and I witnessed and learned a lot from him. First of all, he was a very devoted priest, a man of prayer and service. If I were asked to name the most significant feature of his character I would go for humbleness. It still touches me and brings tears to my eyes when I remember different occasions demonstrating that. Remarkable was his perseverance and faithfulness in his activities, he was like a fixed star at Friday shifts at CIRDIC Drop In, Youth Club sessions in Goring, monthly A.A. open meetings at Pangbourne, he was relentlessly visiting the old and fragile parishioners in their homes, hospital or hospice, and provided them with the Holy Communion. Many times I accompanied him on his visits of the old people in local nursing homes or mentally handicapped friends at the Borocourt hospital and later at the community home at Richmond Rd, Reading.

Recently I found his notes with resolutions for Lent 1987 of which I pick: *"At least 5 visits a day"*. Gosh, it was hard work. I think about it when I am planning, sometimes reluctantly, my house or phone calls. I cannot resist mentioning at least two more resolutions, so characteristic of him: *"No Criticism. - Compliments."* and *"Smile at everyone."* Fr Tom never missed an opportunity to greet a handicapped person in the street or have a short chat with a lonely old man on the bench. He was touchingly gentle and understanding to all those who were not perfect in the eyes of this world. I remember stories about his work as a chaplain in prison and taking Borstal boys out for hikes, which sometime meant tough climbing in the mountains in order to show them a different facet of life. Fr Tom also made a good ecumenical liaison with the local Anglican vicars and the ministers of the Free Church, whose services he actively attended and made himself known to their congregations. Thanks to his good sense of humour and his humbleness he was well recognised in the community, by young and old, believers and unbelievers.

Yes, and he loved hiking and walking pilgrimages and admired all the beauty of the world so much.

I am sure I was not the only one who appreciated his gentle leadership without any force, given by his own example.

Only a few days before his death Fr Tom was planning to start writing Christmas greetings to his numerous friends, so that they would be delivered in a due time.

So please, allow me to wish you a Blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year on his behalf and instead of him.

May the joy and peace of Christmas be with you all through the Year.

With love
Jarka

I included some photos below.



October 31,2020, All Saints' Church



Sunday 1st November, Requiem Mass



Bishop Pavel Posad (left) and Parish Priest Fr Vaclav Sika





In front of the church



The family tomb, from the left: niece Theresa, brother in law Luboš, nephew Vojtěch, Jarka (me), my sister Jana, niece Barbora and my mother.

Inscription to be added: **Rev Fr Thomas Edward WILLIAMS** 13.1.1927-29.10.2020,
Catholic priest of the Archdiocese of Birmingham, England



On the way home with friends after Sunday Mass











Visitors from Goring

