


# The passing of John Airey - Vivat in aeternum

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Some of you will know by this stage of the death of our brother, John Airey, rector of St Clement's Retreat & Conference Centre. His passing has brought both shock and sadness, particularly to all who were close to John, not least the confreres in New Zealand and Pat O'Neill, Sue Rolfe and the staff at Galong.

John was in leadership much of his life and was the last superior of the Region of Aotearoa New Zealand. He was energetic and generous participating in the journey to us becoming the new Province of Oceania. A symbol of his awareness and sensitivity in a new but fragile province was his volunteering to lead the community and mission in Galong. From the beginning of his appointment it was always his and the council's understanding that he could return to New Zealand at any time. In his short time at Galong he grabbed the place with both hands and with the Manager, Sue Rolfe, did much to further its life.

John loved Galong and was looking forward to celebrating with us all Galong's centenary in 2018. In a sense his return to Galong brought his CSsR life full circle. Those that knew John would no doubt have enjoyed his humour, take on life, and dedication to the Congregation. Many of you will have witnessed similar. With John what you saw was what you got. He was transparent and in that sense was grace among us. Vivat in aeternum.



***Eulogy for John Airey, CSsR at his Funeral Mass, OMPH, Glendowie***

*by*

***Fr. Denis Whelan, CSsR***

John Franklin Airey was born in South Dunedin - the Ponsonby of that Scotch city, the only child of Stan and Noel Airey. Along with Br. Kevin Gibb of our Mangere community and Fr. Stewart Sellers, he was educated by the Sisters of Mercy and the Irish Christian Brothers

He began working at 4YA with the New Zealand Broadcasting Service and started at the Otago University for an Arts degree.

John went to St. Clement's College, Galong, in 1961 spending several years there and completing his BA Arts degree in Australia.

He was ordained in Dunedin on December 22, 1969. He was parish priest of St Alphonsus, Waverley, Dunedin, and built a church-hall for the local area of the Otago Peninsula.

He studied at Fordham University in New York City and returned to be part of the Christchurch community from where he was involved with missions and retreats. In that time he was University Chaplain at Canterbury University and the Christchurch Teachers Training College. He also had three trips to the Antarctic as chaplain to the United States Naval Deep freeze Base after passing the strict Medical requirements of the US Navy.

In the 1990s John was transferred north to Auckland and cared for the aspirants to the Congregation at Hurley House near St. Benedict's church in the city.

In 1997 John was appointed superior of the Redemptorists in New Zealand. He served three terms in this capacity. John also helped greatly in administration as Bursar for fifteen years. He generously offered to lead the mission at the Galong Retreat and Conference Centre two years ago.

John was chaplain to the family Life Centre in Auckland City for some years. He helped the Auckland Catholic Deaf Society with their Masses and we thank them for their presence here today.

John enjoyed his rugby and looked back with pleasure to his youth when he supported the Vic Cavanagh coached Otago team in the 1950s.

He liked good films and he was well read. His therapy and recreation was taking the railway unit to Papakura and Pukekohe.

We commend John to the Lord.

Well done, good and faithful servant.

Your many good deeds go with you.

Enter into the Kingdom of the Lord.