



Australian Province of the Society of Jesus

Please pray for the repose of the soul of
FATHER JOHN DRURY, SJ
who died at Canossa Nursing Home in Oxley, Brisbane
at 8.40pm on 27 May, 2010, aged 90 years.

1919	Born at Hay, NSW
1937	Entered the Society at Loyola, Watsonia
1939	Juniorate at Loyola, Watsonia
1940	Philosophy at Canisius College, Pymble
1941-2	Philosophy at Loyola, Watsonia
1943-4	Studies at Melbourne University
1945-7	Regency at St Ignatius' College, Riverview
1948-51	Theology at Canisius College, Pymble
1951 (Jan 4)	Ordination to the Priesthood
1952	Tertianship at Sevenhill (under John Meagher SJ)
1953-61	Prefect and teacher at St Ignatius' College, Riverview
1962-8	Rector of St Patrick's College, East Melbourne
1969-71	Assistant Rector at Xavier College, Kew
1972	Superior and Parish Priest at St Ignatius, Toowong
1973	Socius to the Provincial
1974-5	Spirituality studies in St Louis, USA
1976-82	Director of Centre of Ignatian Spirituality, Pymble
1983-2000	Retreat director in Queensland (based at St Leo's College)
2001-6	Retreat director in Queensland (based at Toowong)
2006-8	Foundation Member of Faber C.I.S. team, Brisbane
2008-10	Ministry of Prayer, Resident in Canossa Nursing Home, Brisbane

R.I.P.

Vigil Mass

5.30pm, Wednesday, 2 June, at Holy Spirit Church, Auchenflower

Funeral Mass

10.30am, Thursday, 3 June, at St Ignatius' Church, Toowong

Followed by refreshments at 12 noon,
then departure at 12.30pm for the Jesuit burial plot at Catholic Cemetery, Nudgee

HOMILY AT THE REQUIEM MASS FOR FATHER JOHN PHILLIP DRURY, S.J., THURSDAY, JUNE 3, 2010

We farewell John Phillip Drury, 90 years old when he died last Thursday at Canossa, 73 years a Jesuit, in his 60th year as a priest. 28 of those years he spent in Queensland, the longest he had lived in any one place, and most of you here this morning know him only from those years, a one-year appointment as Parish Priest here, then, ten years later, returning as Retreat Director and Spiritual Father for Queensland; but not only Queensland, but all over Australia, back to New Zealand and the Pacific Islands as far as Kiribati, and even to Johannesburg in South Africa, so renowned was he as a Retreat Director and a Spiritual Father.

This Mass booklet, which is dangerously like a photo album, has on P 2 a full page photo of him sitting facing the camera. That is how he was seen over the years by many of you, no doubt, and hundreds, if not thousands of others, religious and lay, who sought him out for guidance in their life's journey, and this man of God touched them all. St John Vianney had his confessional, in which he practically lived; Padre Pio too a century later; but for Fr Drury it was what was called in Jesuit houses "the parlour", a term from more genteel days to designate that front room where a Jesuit could receive and converse with someone coming to talk about matters of the soul. This is a quintessentially Ignatian apostolate. St Francis Xavier on the deck of the ship taking him to India would sit playing cards, yarning with the soldiers, but sooner or later draw them into conversation about the things of God and their own destiny. He learnt the skill from his fellow Basque, Inigo de Loyola in Paris, for Ignatius was a master at this. There is at St Aloysius College in Sydney a superb life-size statue of him just standing in the open on the approach to the school Chapel, bare-headed, without a cloak, his hand outstretched towards one of the multitude of people he drew closer to God - in conversation. It is my favourite depiction of our Founder. One of the first of his conquests was Xavier himself, one of the first to whom he gave the Spiritual Exercises, and who, he said, "was the most difficult clay I ever had to mould".

That was the Ignatian apostolate in which most of you knew Father Drury, the apostolate in which he had no equal. Many approached Fr Drury for confession - or their conversations led them to that point. Friends of mine have singled him out as an outstanding confessor, "thorough," one said, "and he helped you to be thorough" He was firm, no-nonsense, refusing for instance endless revisiting of past sins, which he saw as fruitless, and he was sent to bear fruit - fruit that will last. He showed great understanding in confession, not leaving it on the surface, but helping the penitent to go deeper. His confessions then were no perfunctory absolution, but a true priestly encounter. He had before him a small wooden statue of the Good Shepherd, no doubt a gift from one of his innumerable clients, who were undyingly grateful for what he had meant to

them in their lives. What a Good Shepherd he was. "I know my sheep, and my sheep know me": that was the charism given to Fr Drury.

No wonder then that he was sent to St Louis to specialise in Studies in Spirituality so as to return and establish at Canisius College, Pymble, in Sydney, the Ignatian Spirituality Centre (1976-1982). It was a time of dramatic changes in the apostolate of the Spiritual Exercises, with the rediscovery of the directed retreat for individuals, as opposed to retreats preached to a group, and of the retreat in daily life, which was to become not the 30-day but the 30-week retreat, which so many of you have done. This swept through the Society of Jesus, and John Drury was there to catch the wave. Furthermore, it was ten years after the Second Vatican Council, a time of upheavals in the Church as winds of change swept through its liturgy, theology, and especially religious life. For many this was a huge problem, and the need they had was met by John Drury and his team offering a mini-sabbatical of three months in which they could review their own lives in retreat, explore the riches of Vatican II, and decide accordingly what was the best path to follow. For many it was a life-changing experience. It must be said that Fr Drury here performed an invaluable service to the Church throughout Australia and New Zealand. We will never know how many vocations he saved, or put onto the right path, imparting new hope, and rekindling in them a love of their Lord and Master.

But all this is the John Drury the people of Queensland knew, nearly 30 years here as Spiritual Director. Before that were 21 years as a very different figure doing very different work, though always in strict accord with the obedience to which he vowed his life. He was what we called "a College man", that is a Jesuit schoolmaster, now an endangered species. He taught at his alma mater, St Ignatius, Riverview, then largely a boarding school. He was in charge of discipline, and, himself a sportsman, he was Sportsmaster, coaching the firsts in the all too competitive GPS competition. To say that he was firm in these roles would be an understatement. Lean, spare, erect and direct, he came to be known to the boys as simply "Jack the Man"! Firm, yes, but they always acknowledged that he was fair, just what boys needed; and that's how his old boys remembered him well into his old age.

From St Ignatius he went to St Patrick's College, right next to the Cathedral in Melbourne, the first school conducted by the Irish Jesuits in this country, and famous for its abundant crop of priestly vocations. But there was a great sadness there at the time: St Pat's was scheduled to be closed, and to Fr Drury fell the ungrateful task of heading the school to its very last day, shown in the photo on the back page of the Mass booklet, the worst day of his life, we have been told. He then was to lead the surviving pupils in an exodus to Xavier College, providing for them a link bridge between the two quite different schools. But the change those boys faced was nothing compared with the change that then faced Fr Drury, from a college Man to a Retreat and Spiritual

Director for the remainder of his life. I do not know if that was a problem for him, but I do know that if it had been a problem, his unswerving obedience, to which he had vowed his life, would have overcome any obstacle facing him. For John Drury was a Servant of God, whether in the classroom, the Rector's office, on the playing fields, in the Chapel, or the confessional and directing souls to God. A Servant of God he always was. But Our Lord said to the Apostles at the Last Supper, "I shall not call you servants any more, because a servant does not know his master's business.

I call you friends, because I have made know to you everything I have learnt from my Father". (Jo, XV, 14-5). Can any of us doubt for a moment that Fr Drury was a friend of Our Lord? He certainly did "know his Master's business", and engaged in it all his life. Furthermore, Our Lord told the Apostles "You are my friends if you do what I command you". *Do*, not simply say. St Ignatius said that love ought to show itself in deeds rather than in words. The record is there: John Drury perfectly fulfilled that other ideal of St Ignatius: the *contemplative in action*. He fed with spiritual nourishment those who were hungry. He gave to drink of the Spirit those who were thirsty. At the Wesley Hospital here his ministry to the sick was priceless. Those imprisoned by fears and anxiety, or still nursing suffering from resentment at past hurts, he liberated, setting them free in their turn to serve God. Rejoice, John, for your reward in heaven is very great. "Come, you blessed of my Father: possess the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world by my Father. (Mt: 25).

We wish to thank the quite marvellous staff at Canossa who cared for Fr Drury beyond the call of duty. We also are deeply grateful for the care lovingly shown John by Mercy Sisters Peg Slack and Fay McMenamain over this last stage of John's life. And finally, the Jesuit community is cognisant of the great attentiveness of our Superior, Fr John Reilly, to John during his time in hospital, and especially towards the end. God sees, and God rewards.

Homily for Fr John Drury SJ

Fr Gerry Healy SJ June 2nd and 16th 2010

I am honoured to have been asked to share with you some reflections on the life of Fr John Drury SJ – Jack as he was known to so many.

He touched my life in three different situations - as my Rector at St Pat's East Melbourne in my final year there in 1962, as Vice-Rector of Xavier when I went there as a scholastic for regency in 1971, and then I was his Rector at St Leo's in Brisbane. In Brisbane, as always, Jack was most conscientious in asking for appropriate permissions. I evily reminded him on one occasion when he came in seeking permission for something that he had been my Rector at St Pat's and that he had not made me a prefect!

Fr Jack had a significant influence on me in each of those situations, as he has had on so many. Speaking to a number of his former students, one at Riverview stated that Fr Jack had been by far the most influential teacher in his life.

And that is why we are all gathered here today – Fr Jack touched each of us in some way, and was significant for each of us in different ways over the journeys of our lives – as family – Uncle Jack - as teacher, as spiritual director, as fellow Jesuit, or in myriad other ways.

Jack was born in Hay in NSW in 1919. His primary education was the Presentation Convent in Hay, then early secondary at Marist Brothers, Forbes, and he came to Riverview in 1935 for his last two years schooling. He was an outstanding student – achieving first places and distinctions in several subjects – and a fine sportsman. His speciality – and love – was cricket. Typical of Jack, having been in the 3rd XI in 1935, rather than move up to the firsts, - which he would easily have made – he remained as captain of the 3rd's in 1936.

He entered the Society of Jesus at Watsonia in 1937, and after noviceship, juniorate and philosophy, he completed a degree with honours at the University of Melbourne, and then to Regency at Riverview in 1945 – 47, serving as second division prefect, from which he is remembered with affection by many as being firm but very fair.

He coached his first love in sport, cricket, as a scholastic. Jack saw cricket as the sporting pinnacle at Riverview, and hence looked down somewhat on rowing as over supported and underachieving. A former student recounts that he asked Jack whether he should go into rowing or cricket. Jack replied “You don't want to do rowing!!”, and the boy moved into Jack's cricket team. At a crucial moment in a tight game, the ball came to this boy, where a stumping would seal the game. The batsman ran. Both the bowler and the wicket keeper called for the ball. Confused, the boy threw it midway between them, actually hitting one of the runners as they passed. Jack said to him after the game: “Perhaps you would make a good rower!”. He was right – the boy went on to win a university blue in rowing.

Jack was ordained in Jan 1951, and after completing theology and tertianship returned to Riverview in 1953, serving as first division prefect – in charge of senior boarders, sportsmaster and generally overseeing discipline in the school – from 1954 – 61.

It was in this role that Jack's qualities became obvious. He was firm yet fair; he knew almost all students in the school by name, and something about each. For me, and for

many I have spoken to, two qualities drove Jack's approach. A real personal interest in each person he dealt with, combined with a firm sense of duty and to ensure that what was right was done, but applied fairly and with compassion.

He had a great knowledge of each student, but sometimes got caught out. A former student recalls returning to Riverview some year later, with his wife and three month old baby, well wrapped up. Jack saw him, greeted him warmly by name, remembered his wife's name, and looked at the well wrapped up baby – "He'll make a fine front row one day". "I doubt it, father, he's a girl!"

Jack came to St Patrick's College in East Melbourne as Rector in 1962. I was coming into Matriculation (Year 12). Jack's somewhat fearsome reputation as a firm disciplinarian preceded him. We were concerned. The administration of discipline was much more a co-operative and relaxed affair at St Pat's than it could be at Riverview, with over 400 boarders, and we were concerned about a firm disciplinarian arriving. We need not have worried. One of Jack's strengths was to adjust to the circumstances; to do what he saw as his duty in a situation. He soon knew every student by name; he was, again, appropriately firm but very kind and approachable.

However one story confirms his belief and actions to achieve what he saw as someone's correct duty. Scholastics were expected to arise at 5.25 am each day and be at their prayers by 6.00. Jack felt (rightly) some in his community were not achieving this. He took to knocking on their door at about 5.45 to ask to borrow a bandaid or aspirin!

During his time at St Pat's Jack ran the Professional Men's Sodality – a group of professionals, some St Pat's old boys, whom, like many others, he had a very significant influence on. Some I see are here tonight.

Perhaps the most difficult task of Jack's life, and certainly one that gave him much grief, was the closing of St Pat's at the end of 1968. Apart from the grief of closing an institution that he had worked so hard to build up – especially the renewal of its academic life – the closure was very controversial, and it was Jack's burden to carry much of that. The new archbishop of Melbourne, Archbishop (then) Knox – was persuaded by one of his functionaries to demand the closing of the school and the return of the land to the Archdiocese so that the official's much desired high rise offices could be built on the site. Many Jesuits, and old boys – including very many of the diocese's priests who were former students of the school – vigorously opposed the closure. Jack obviously in his heart opposed it, but was extremely loyal to the archbishop and provincial in all his public statements and actions. This was particularly difficult in his own St Pat's Jesuit community, many of whom were vigorously and outspokenly against the closure and those behind it. Jack's sense of duty, and the loyalty to authorities flowing from it shone forth, but at great personal cost to him.

After the closure of St Pat's at the end of 1968, all the current students were given the opportunity to move to Xavier, which most of them did. Jack accompanied them to help settle in, becoming Vice-Rector of Xavier.

In his last year at St Pats and during his time at Xavier he also headed the first of the Jesuit province planning teams – the Future Works Committee, and the first elected, representational province planning meeting, The Future Works Meeting, in 1968. As

Michel Head has so often pointed out, to be prioritized in a planning activity is like a death threat. Three of its major recommendations were 1. to retain and build up St Pat's (closed at the end of that year), 2 to give priority to running the diocesan seminaries (both gone within a few years) and 3. an emphasis on social action through Institutes of Social Order (Belloc House closed a few years later, the plan for one in Wollongong passed into rapid oblivion) !

This time ended the first phase of Jack's long ministry. It was divided fairly evenly into two parts – about thirty years in schools and about thirty years in spirituality.

Jack undertook spirituality studies in St Louis Missouri in 1974 – 75, and then moved into what was to be his work for the next 30 years – spiritual direction. He set up the Centre of Ignatian Spirituality at Canisius College, Pymble, of which he was director from 1976 to 1982, and then moved to Brisbane in 1982 to carry on that ministry which was his work for the rest of his life.

Many have said that Jack underwent a major transformation during his spirituality studies in St Louis. Knowing him as I did, I don't agree with that interpretation. I think the characteristics that were present in his time in schools – his personal interest in each person, his fairness, coupled with his strong sense of duty and a drive to achieve what was right - fitted perfectly into the person he was in his spirituality role. The observed transformation carried on those characteristics, and reinforced the transition that we saw when he came to St Pat's- namely a holding to principles, but a great readiness to apply them correctly appropriate to the circumstances.

Jack has had an enormous influence as a spiritual director. He came to that role in the aftermath of the Second Vatican Council, when many people, especially religious, were finding the transition difficult. Many left the priesthood and religious life over these times. This hurt Jack, as he saw the vows and ordination commitment strongly in terms of a sense of duty that one had committed oneself too. However he walked with many people and supported them in these difficult transition times, and affirmed them as spiritual director whatever their decision. He has also supported so many lay people and lead them to a deeper relationship with their Lord, as testified by so many parishioners and others here tonight.

Finally, he has been a much loved brother, uncle and cousin to his family over so many years and several generations.

Jack's final illness, his over two years at Canossa, were not easy for him, yet his cheerfulness positive outlook and trust in the Lord never left him. We as his fellow Jesuits are most grateful to the Canossa sisters and staff for their care for him in his last years.

Jack, you have meant so much to so many people. You have walked with so many of us on the journey of our lives, and lead us closer to the Lord. You now are at rest with Him.

Jack, thank you and may you now rest in peace.