

A memory of Br John Southworth

Bernard Stuart (Assistant Director of Education for the Diocese of Salford) wrote to Br Terence concerning the death of Br John Southworth:

I was saddened not to hear of the death of Brother John Southworth in time to write earlier or, indeed, to be present at the funeral. I read Brother Alban's words with great interest.

I first met John in 1976 and from that day until the end of his life we were friends. Sadly, in the past decade the opportunity to meet was rare – e.g. the funeral of Brother Victor Feehan. Before that it was a brief meeting during the time of turmoil at Pendleton.

Concerning my memory of John, a few things highlight for me his true character:

- His fear of car travel I know only too well. In December 1983 I was driving the car when it was hit head on by a stolen vehicle just off the East Lancs road. We were due to go for a meal with friends in St. Helens. Unfortunately, we only saw the inside of a Police Station and made do with a sandwich in Carr Lane East! The fact that we survived with little personal injury, when I remember the state of the car, is a miracle. For John it was a trauma moment. However, he did get in a car again - and I was driving.

- John and I met at various times in Kintbury between 1976 and 1982. The sessions for the Junior Professed were stimulating. However, all I truly recall are long walks and chats with John in the surrounding countryside – going as far as Hungerford. In the summer/autumn months we also enjoyed the apples from the estate trees!! His wisdom remained with me – it was clear, down to earth and did not suffer 'new fashions'.

- When I met with John during the Pendleton phase, he was still his practical self. He remained generous – even when we discussed the 'issues' that had beset life in the house and wider matters.

- On the occasion of Victor's funeral, he told me all about his new situation in Portsmouth. Its craziness and his line in resolving matters for the good of his brothers and the wider community. When discussing such matters, John would express a clear way forward and laugh out loud when expressing disbelief at how things were at times. In that respect he never changed – it was always clear where John stood, and why. He was always a respecter of persons and a true community person.

I greatly appreciate this chance to put words on the page as I remember a true friend and Brother.