

Father James Francis Maxwell

James Francis Maxwell was born in Ireland on 16th December 1902 at Ballynahinch County Down. He was educated at St Malachy's College Belfast and St Peter's College Wexford before attending Oscott Seminary College in Birmingham. He was ordained a priest on 16th June 1927 in St Colman's Cathedral in Newry by Bishop Edward Mulhern of Dromore specifically for missionary work in Scotland for the Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh.

His first posting in Scotland was, unusually, not a metropolitan parish as was customarily the case with new priests coming to a new country. Instead Fr. Maxwell's first posting in Scotland was to St Alexander's in Denny where he served from 1927 to 1928. He was then transferred here to St Patrick's Kilsyth for the period between 1928 and 1931 as assistant Priest to Patrick Canon Macnamara (later Monsignor Macnamara) who was the Parish Priest in Kilsyth at that time.

Fr Maxwell was promoted to Parish Priest and given the parish of The Sacred Heart in Penicuk, Midlothian where he served for only 2 years from 1931 to 1933. He was then transferred to Our Lady Star of the Sea at North Berwick in East Lothian from 1933 to 1935. It is apparent from the Catholic archive in Edinburgh that Fr Maxwell was in poor health for much of his life as he was given sick leave for several years on a couple of occasions. His first extended period of ill health came in 1935 and he was given sick leave for 4 years! On his return to priestly duties he was obviously still in fragile health as he took the unusual step of returning as an assistant Priest in the Parish of the Immaculate Conception in Bathgate for a year, 1939 to 1940.

Fr Maxwell then became the Chaplin of the Oratory of St Anne's in Randolph Place Edinburgh for another year 1940-41 before taking 10 years of sick leave from duties as a Priest from 1941 to 1951. Fr Maxwell returned into Priestly life in the Glasgow Archdiocese as the assistant Priest at St Charles' Paisley from 1951 to 1954. His final posting was as the Chaplin to the Convent of The Sisters of Mary Reparatrix at Elie in Fife where he served the sisters from 1956 until his retirement in 1965. It may be that after so long in ill health Fr Maxwell found too demanding the life of a parish priest, however he seemed able as a Chaplin the more gentle and prayerful surrounding of convent life.

Fr. Maxwell died in 1979 at the age of 77 after having spent 52 years as a Priest. May he rest in Peace.

Rev James Francis Maxwell – 17th October 1979

Father James Francis Maxwell was born in the Parish of Drumaroad, County Down, Ireland on the 16th December 1902. He went to school at St Malachy's Belfast, after which he spent a short time with the Salesians before going to Wexford and later to Oscott College in England to study for the priesthood. He was ordained priest in the Cathedral at Newry on 16th June 1927.

His first appointment after coming to the Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh was as

curate at St Alexander's Denny. He was at Denny for two years before being transferred to St Patrick's Kilsyth as curate. Here he remained until his first appointment as Parish Priest to the Sacred Heart in Penicuik in 1932. In the following year he went as Parish Priest to Our Lady Star of the Sea at North Berwick. In 1935 it was necessary for him to be given sick leave from which he did not return until 1939, when he went as curate to St Mary's Bathgate. After two years it became necessary for him to go on sick leave once again, from which he did not return until 1955. He was then appointed as chaplain to the Convent of Marie Réparatrice, Elie where he served until his retiral to Ireland.

The last two years of his life, when he became a complete invalid, were spent in the care of the Little Sisters of the Poor at their Holy Family Home in Roebuck in Dublin. It was there that he died on Wednesday, 17th October. The burial took place on Friday, 19th October, in the cemetery of the parish church in his native Drumaroad.

At the Requiem Mass that preceded the burial, Bishop Monaghan recalled some of the qualities of this talented priest. He had the gift of eloquence both in and out of the pulpit. The faithful who had benefited from his preaching, long remembered with gratitude, the help they had received from him in this way. During his chaplaincy at Elie, he was a great help to the sisters in their retreat work. He did much to further and support the apostolic work of the sisters.

His charming manner ensured a happy relationship with others. He was interested in people and prepared to give them his time. This meant that he had many friends, who did not easily forget the warmth and sincerity of his friendship.

The Little Sisters who attended him in his last years were very edified by his patient acceptance of his illness, the happiness of his spirit that shone through his bedridden condition and his constant spirit of prayer.

The requiem Mass was attended by a considerable number of priests from the Parishes in that area, together with a full church of parishioners. May he rest in Peace.

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**The Church yard of St John The Baptist Drumaroad Ireland
Fr Maxwell's final resting place.**

