

21 January

Br. David Connolly


David was born August 02, 1947. He grew up in Lindsay, ON. David was predeceased by his parents, Gerard Connolly and Frances (nee Hamlyn) Connolly, his sister Paula and brother John Paul. He is survived by his brother James.

His mother died while he was still young. Soon after, his sister Paula died and some years later his brother John Paul died at a young age. He was close to his brother James. David first met the Capuchins as a grade 10 student at Mount Alverno Seminary. On August 12, 1965 he was invested and took the religious name, Brendan. He made Solemn Profession on August 10, 1973. He became a Registered Nurse and graduated in 1971 through Humber College. He graduated from McMaster University in 1973 as Family Nurse Practitioner. For the next ten years he worked in a variety of medical settings in Toronto, Guelph and Winnipeg.

In 1980, after 25 years as a lay brother, he began his theological studies and was ordained to the priesthood by Capuchin Bishop Paul Schmitz on November 11, 1990. He was first appointed as Associate Pastor at St. Philip Neri in Toronto and later Pastor and Guardian at St. Mary's Parish, Blenheim, ON. In 1995, he became Guardian of St. Anthony and Administrator of St. Francis Table. In these early years, he lived in community with a few senior Belgian friars like Fr. Omer and Fr. Anacletus. David enjoyed sharing their stories and foibles in Capuchin life at many fraternal gatherings.

The next ten years were most creative and a great gift to our province and Order. He was co-leader for the Franciscan Internship Program along with Br. Ignatius Feaver. Friars, sisters and lay-people came from around the world to be inspired on Spiritual Direction in the spirit of Francis, Clare, Bonaventure, and other Franciscans.





David would say that his days at Mount Alverno were the best days of his life. Yet he faced the never ending financial task of maintaining an old building on a beautiful property. He inherited large unending insurance bills especially when he had to rebuild the chapel which was accidentally set on fire by a student and remove the underground oil tank and remediate the soil around it.

He established and took care of the local Mount Alverno Secular Franciscan Fraternity and assisted with Masses at St. Cornelius Parish in Caledon and for many years he hosted a Sunday Mass at Mount Alverno with a large group in regular attendance. True to his Irish Newfoundland roots, his quick wit kept everyone smiling. His straight face one-liners made people laugh. Br. Ignatius tells the story that when they lived together and he (Ignatius) was preparing meals, he often cooked too much. David said: "Ignatius did you have a deprived childhood?" David was also very artistic, sewing curtains, vestments, stoles as well as knitting and crocheting. He had a hobby of collecting all sorts of bags made of leather, or cloth.

He loved cooking and collecting boxes for giving gifts of chocolate and cookies for Christmas or birthdays. He also established three hermitages at Mount Alverno living in one for many years, the others he made available for guests and retreatants to rest in nature. He was elected Councilor and, later, Minister Provincial from 2010-2016. He chose to remain at Alverno and drive to work in Toronto three to four days a week. One day he fell asleep at the wheel and ran into a ditch along the county road. He totaled the car and suffered some broken ribs and sore-back. He looked upon his work as Provincial as putting out one fire after another. In 2016, after the Mount Alverno Retreat Centre was sold, he was sent to St. Philip Neri Friary and later to St. Crispin Friary in London, Ontario where he served as Spiritual Director for Brescia College.

He was also appointed to St. Clare's Friary as its local Guardian and served as temporary Administrator to St. Andrew the Apostle Parish. It was during this time, he found out that he had cancer, and only a few months to live. He asked his nurse who cared for him daily: "I know what suffering is about but I have never died before. What is that like?" She answered: "You fall asleep and then Jesus comes to meet you!" He said: "I can handle that!"

His brothers cared for him until he was close to the end when he asked to spend his last days at St. Joseph Hospice London, where he died in the presence of James his brother and a friar praying beside him. He had prepared his Resurrection liturgy but because of the Covid lock-down the services held in Toronto, London and Blenheim were followed by live stream. Br. Ignatius, Br. Henry Alva, and Br. John Corriveau lead the prayers and the Mass including a piper who played his bagpipes at each celebration. Br David was interred alongside his brothers at Evergreen Cemetery in Blenheim Ontario.