Dear Our Lady Immaculate & St Andrew Church

I wanted to write to express my sadness at the death of Fr Michael which I found out about today.

Fr Michael and I met following the tragic death of my two year old son, Oliver, in July 2010, in a drowning incident. Although I'm not a church goer, I am a Catholic by upbringing and I wanted my little boy to have a Catholic funeral service. Shortly after Oliver's death I was introduced to Fr Michael. The day before Oliver's funeral, Fr Michael came to our house to welcome Oliver's body back to our home and perform a blessing for Oliver and our family. The following day, he presided over Oliver's funeral service at St Marys, together with Rev Michael Roden. In the months and years that followed, Fr Michael would frequently call in to me to see how I was. During one of his visits, where we would chat about many things, I respectfully told Fr Michael that I probably would never be a church goer. He responded, 'That's not why I'm here. I'm here to walk a little way with you, a few small steps...'.  I was immensely touched by his humanity and his humility. I will never forget his kindness and support during the most traumatic period of my life. His actions were those of a true man of God.

Lorna Else

We have just heard about the accident, and subsequent death of Father Michael Lambert AA.  We are sorry to hear of the sad news.
Fr Michael was a great help to me and the parishioners of St Thomas More, Knebworth, during a difficult time from mid-2004 to late 2006.  As Dean of the Stevenage Deanery,  Fr Michael provided considerable help, advice and assistance to myself whilst acting as Chairman of the Parish Council, during a time when we had several temporary Priests and a large problem with our Finances to sort out.  Despite the considerable extra work for him during those two years, he was at all times helpful and of good humour.

He was always approachable and helpful.  He went out of his way to assist me and the Parish.  I valued his friendship and advice.
When my wife and I left the UK in 2007 to move to New Zealand, he sent us a personal letter and card wishing us well.

We will ask that a Mass  be said in our Parish here ( Parish of the Holy Name, Warkworth and Ss Peter & Paul, Puhoi)  over this weekend for the repose of his soul.  Our condolences to all at Hitchin Parish and his Relatives and friends.  May he Rest in Peace.
Regards,
Robert and Moira Dye
Warkworth, New Zealand

(formerly of St Thomas More Parish, Knebworth  Herts,)

Dear All

I am so very sad to hear the tragic news of Father Michael’s death.

I had many dealings with Father Michael for arranging services, he was always very helpful and very kind

He will be greatly missed by all

Thinking of you all at this very very sad time

Kind Regards

Jackie (Austin's of Hitchin)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
I would like to tell you how saddened the fellowship at Tilehouse Street is to hear of Father Michael's death. I'm sure you will miss him greatly but also take comfort from knowing that he has gone to his well deserved reward in Glory. Please be assured of our prayers as you mourn and prepare for his funeral.
With love in the Name of our Lord Jesus,
Shila Hallas.

We are very saddened by the news but we are so happy that even though a life has gone, the gift of an organ donor is truly amazing to give life to someone else who needs it.

We will keep him in our prayers.

Fr Michael was very kind to support us with the church at the time we were trying to find someone else to live and stay in Hitchin but sadly we had to relocate from the area.

I myself felt truly grateful and privileged to have been a member of Our Lady’s Church.

I am glad he went peacefully and was looked after by fantastic people in the hospital.

Even though we are not there with you

You are in our prayers

God bless

Mel x

(Mel Hooper)

I'm  very blessed in that I was able to concelebrate with him last week and share an hour afterwards in the sacrament of mutual reconciliation  with both of us giving grateful and joyful thanks to God for our sharing in the priesthood of Jesus and in being loved so much.

Dear Michael Francis Lambert, Francis Joseph Leonard thanks you for your ministry and friendship.

Both my husband and I are truly saddened by the passing of Fr Michael. It is such a shock to everyone and God bless both of you for the time you have given to him and the parish these last few days.

I wanted to share a few photos from our wedding in 2014. Fr Michael was so funny as well as loving and gracious during the ceremony, a memorable figure that my friends and family still talk about.  These photos really capture the service and my fond memories of him.

We also like to remember the afternoons we spent with him at marriage preparation sessions. My husband always says it was the closest he came to joining the faith, sat listening to Fr Michael tell bible stories, giving us his interpretation and analogies to married life. His voice soothing the busy working day away, and transporting us to a time of reflection and peace and togetherness.

I wish you, Fr Tom, Fr Andrew and Fr Euloge peace at this sad time.

God bless and thank you for all the support you provide the parish.

Niki

(Niki Soper)

My dear sister Trish, and my dear brother Tom

Please accept our condolences at the very sad news received this evening. In one sense we have expected it all day, but it is still unwelcome for all that. May it become a comfort and a strength that Father Michael went to be with his Lord and ours on Advent Sunday, even as we welcome our Lord's coming to us.

There is so much to give thanks for in this man's life, faith and ministry, and yet tonight we all feel - and you especially feel - the suddenness of his being taken from us.

Our prayers, thoughts and love to you, and through you to the whole community at Our Lady's Church in these days, and may you know again and again the grace, peace and love of Jesus holding you each and all at this time when bereavement has brought us into an unfamiliar landscape.

Yours in sadness, and yet also in Christ, our light and our salvation, our hope and our eternal home in peace and in glory,

ANDREW

on behalf of all at Walsworth Road Baptist Church

I heard today that Father Michael had died. The congregation at Christchurch prayed for him in our Sunday morning worship, and knew he was close to death.

Our deepest condolences to all those who knew him, especially the congregation at Our Lady’s.
Father Michael was special and hugely respected as a priest. He knew what he stood for and did so with deep commitment, clarity, and gentleness of spirit. His death is a tremendous sad loss.

He’s with our Lord, and with that we trust.

God bless you all at this time,

Love,
Sheralee Devitt

We were saddened to hear the news of Father Michael this morning, but having heard of his condition at Mass on Saturday relieved that he has not suffered and is at peace.

Thank you for the thoughtful and understanding way you have kept the parish informed.

We will never forget the first time we met Father Michael, on a cold Sunday in January the first time we came to the church some 9 years ago. He was so welcoming and asked our names which he  never forgot.

He was, as you all know, a lovely man. It does not surprise us that he would give the gift of life to others through organ donation. We are blessed to have known him. He will be greatly missed.

Our deepest sympathy and love to Father Tom, Father Euloge and Father Andrew, Susanna, and to yourself. You are all in our thoughts and prays.

Susan & Andy

Pauline, myself and Lil are all deeply saddened and shocked by Father Michael’s untimely death. He was a wonderful priest and has been a great support to all of us, at different times over the years, in particular as a Curate, when I was based at St. Mary’s in Hitchin in 2002 at the start of my ministry. Father Michael also attended my first Eucharist in July 2000 and gave me a book of pastoral prayers which he wrote inside and
which I have used ever since.

Yesterday, when Michael was slipping from this world into the next, at about the same time I was using the book he had given me to minister to a member of my own congregation, who died as I prayed with him.
Please feel free to share this with Father Tom.
May Father Michael rest in peace and rise in glory

Andrew
Rector, St. Nicholas Church Barton Le clay

**Eden and Sebastian Sylvester**

Fr Michael was like a member of our family. I liked it when he came to visit us at the weekends. He came once when we were having lunch and he sat with us and drank tea.

I wish I could say thank you to him for praying for my younger brother when he was a baby in hospital. His prayers made Sebastian better and I am blessed to have my little brother today.

He was very kind to us and we shall miss him.

From Michael Roden

I send you and the whole parish my prayers in your huge loss.

It has been a total privilege to have been a friend and ecumenical colleague of Father Michael for the last sixteen years, whilst I was at St Mary’s. His prayerful instincts were always to treat us non catholics with equal warmth, love and respect and in turn we loved him for it. You will remember that it was this openness to different denominations that made him so easy to trust to invite to celebrate the first catholic mass in St Mary’s since the reformation. It was a wonderful occasion. Somehow with his warmth, humour, flexibility and lovely smile we managed to have everyone receiving the Eucharist under one roof, with a great atmosphere and without any breaches of Canon law of either church!
We managed to hold three  of these glorious occasions. On the last occasion we had a Pentecostal preacher and the largest ecumenical gathering in a church for a couple of decades. This, in very large part, was down to his setting an atmosphere of immense kindness.

On a personal note, as you know well Fr Michael was a confidante to so many, including us ministers. He was clearly a man of great depth and prayer. He gave gravitas to meetings and, perhaps unusually for clergy, was always more willing to listen than to talk!
He also coped well with the occasional teasing that happens between clergy. His response to anyone pulling his leg was ‘bless your heart!’

I found myself in instant tears when I heard of his death just as I moved post to Bristol, I know the people of all denominations will miss him but I know your loss at Our Lady with St Andrew is particularly hard. I am sorry not to be with you on Sunday because of responsibilities here but and my heart goes out to you. To borrow a phrase Fr Michael would say Bless your hearts!

From Phil Jackson Zeo Church read by Frank Benucci

The congregation at Zeochurch send their condolences to the congregation at our lady's on your sad loss. On a personal note, I have always appreciated the fellowship that I had with Father Michael- he would have made a good Charismatic if only we had got to him earlier! There was never any thought in him of division between us and always the feeling was that we were brothers together, serving the same Lord. I remember a long conversation with him only a month or so ago when we met over dinner to celebrate Michael Rodin's time in Hitchin and how we shared all sorts of things about our faith journey from its early beginnings to the present day. We shall miss you, Father Michael, for your joy, your sense of service to God and for your sense of humour. I imagine that you aretelling a few stories to the angels even now

**From George Stack**

MICHAEL LAMBERT A.A.

I have been asked to share a memory of Fr. Michael from my time as Area Bishop in Hertfordshire. How to express the inexpressible? Dynamic. Energetic. Mischievous. Exhausting. Full of curiosity. Mischievous smile. Serious minded. Pastorally dedicated. The list goes on.

Two things remain in mind which I have often thought about even before his untimely death. One was a conversation with Fr. Tom O’Brien following a particularly long and demanding Deanery meeting. “Fr. Michael seems energised by these meetings. The more meetings he goes to and the more work he is given to do the better he likes it”. In these days of lethargy and cynicism thank God for his Gospel enthusiasm.

And the second? When he was recovering from a serious operation on his foot nothing was going to stop him celebrating Mass even though he had a super supply priest in yours truly. Eventually persuading him to go and rest in the presbytery, at the end of Mass there he was. Meeting his public. Slung over his shoulder was the linen bag which I called his cornucopia, pulling out books and pictures and newsletters and messages to be given to people. Irrepressible.

I join with the parishioners of the Our Lady Immaculate and St Andrew Church, Hitchin, in giving thanks to God for the unique person and priest who was Michael Lambert. May he rest in peace and rise in glory.

Archbishop George Stack

Tribute from Bishop John Sherrington

I am deeply saddened to hear of Fr Michael tragic death and offer condolences to his confrérès, the parish and his family. I first met Michael at the funeral of an Assumptionist priest in Good Shepherd Church, Nottingham where I was parish priest. Michael had been ordained in the newly built church in 1967 and so a common bond was established. When I was appointed as an Auxiliary Bishop in Westminster, he always remembered this link and welcomed me into Stevenage Deanery with kindness and generosity.

**Tribute from Diane Burleigh**

To me, Fr. Michael de-mystified everything about "the clergy". From my first bumping in to him reading "the Life of Genghis Khan" on a train journey into London - GENGHIS KHAN?!!! - I mean, surely it should have been the life of a saint? - to watching and listening to him at Mass welcoming children and adults on their journey towards God, to his confession to me that he found asking for money unbelievably hard and embarrassing...here was a man and priest firmly routed in the ordinary and the extraordinary.

Reconciliation with God...I remember attending "confession" after many years of not doing so. I began by reciting the stuff we were taught as children - a quiet chuckle - how long since your last confession Diane?... we don't focus on those things now...tell me about the person you'd like to be...that's what our Lord is looking for...

Journey. That's the word. Fr Michael taught me we are all on a journey, and each journey is unique in its detail, but shared and one in its destination.

Bless your heart. I will miss him.

Diane

**Tribute from Liz Tye and family**

 We worked with Father Michael for many years at Our Lady school. Fr Michael was a gentle, kind and cheerful person, who was supportive of us. He led the children thoughtfully in prayer and reflection and welcomed us all joyfully to Mass. He played a full role in the school and parish and will be greatly missed.

