

Appreciation for Fr Andrew O'Dell a.a: 60 years a priest!

My appreciation for Fr Andrew is that he remembers things and events about my life that I cannot remember. He has been more than a guardian angel to me and has steered me through many a hazardous situation. Although I have the best, most patient, infinitely forgiving and lovable Guardian Angel, Fr Andrew has been even better. He has showed me understanding and forgiveness despite all the errors, missteps and wrongful decisions I've made. But, more than that, he has taught me the true spirit of the Assumption and of our founder Fr Emmanuel d'Alzon in a way that has made me both proud and honoured to have been called to become an Assumptionist. From him I learned the importance and value of service and, like our founder, not see priesthood as having power over people but rather the opposite.

Not wanting to embarrass him more than I am already doing, I will conclude this section by saying he is one of the best images of God there is.

When he came back to the parish in 2016, Fr Andrew found a new lease of life among you, meeting countless old friends, involving himself in the activities and meetings of the parish, the food bank, the tea and biscuits Tuesday morning gatherings and the ability to be able to offer mass in several care-homes as well as celebrate mass on a weekend and during the week. For this he is truly thankful. He greatly appreciates the way you have looked after and cared for him on his return here for this is concrete evidence of the true rewards that come from a life of service and sacrifice for you and for many, many, many others in the various parishes for which we have had responsibility.

Having spoken far too much this evening therefore, I will end by singing: For he's a jolly good fellow. . . .