

*Monsignor O' Grady... A Reflection by Sr. Dymphna Doran, FBM*

Our beloved Monsignor O' Grady finished his earthly journey on July 13. We, the sisters, got the word at 6:00 a.m. that morning that Monsignor had died in his sleep.

Monsignor O' Grady was Rector of Ss. Simon and Jude Cathedral from July 1990 to June 2005. He was a person who made a big impact on the lives of many, many people. In these days, since we got the news, people keep telling us, "O he baptized me" or, "He married us," or, "He was the priest who anointed my dad," or, "he was the priest who gave me my First Communion," or, "He was the priest I always liked to go to for Confession," or, "I sure loved Mass with Fr. O' Grady and, also, all his homilies."

All of these people are just giving voice to the memory of the loving pastoral care that was given by Monsignor O' Grady as he served here at Ss Simon and Jude and, of course, at the other parishes to which he was assigned. But, somehow, the 'rider' to most of these comments would be: "Fr. O' Grady was so close to our family." There was that 'something' about Monsignor that made people feel close to him and he to people--- in their joys, their sorrows, their good times and their bad times. Above all, he was a man of 'accompaniment; accompanying us in the ups and downs of our lives, and, yes, very definitely, in our celebrations of all of life's milestones! In celebrations, Monsignor would be the life of the party with jokes and stories--- told in his unique style, and you wouldn't know if it was the actual joke or the way it was told that was making you laugh so hard! Yes, we will treasure all the memories, but remember the lessons too--- when Monsignor would base his homily on a little gem of Scripture and would ask us to repeat a mantra, such as, "Teach me Your ways, O Lord", or, "Come, holy Spirit," or, he would tell us to read and absorb Psalm 103. He, himself, lived in the spirit of this Psalm. He pointed out to us, that we should always see ourselves as "God's children redeemed in grace." He gave this message in his homilies, in retreats, in Cursillos, to young and old alike, and wanted us always to know that God's mercy and forgiveness are always close at hand.

One piece of advice he always gave was: "Just show up!" He meant by that that we should show up to accompany people in good times and in bad times --- for weddings, Baptisms, birthdays, hospital visits, funerals, or other significant times in people's lives, and he surely gave us the example himself!

Family of Ss. Simon and Jude, we have been blessed by the love of a gracious, humble and holy man of God, and for that we must give praise and thanks to God!