

## **Fr. Joseph Portelli**

Joseph Portelli was born on the small island of Gozo, off the north coast of Malta, in 1949. He was educated at the Sacred Heart Seminary in Gozo where he was ordained for Parish work in the Gozo Diocese in 1974. Fr Portelli, together with his compatriot Fr Loreto Tabone were then loaned to the Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh in Scotland.

Immediately upon his arrival Fr Portelli was posted to St Joseph's Sighthill Edinburgh suffered a period of severe ill health requiring hospitalisation for a long time relating to kidney failure. This period of ill health lasted until 1981 when he was still frail, but at last able to enter Parish work in Scotland.

Fr Portelli's first parish once he was healthy here in Scotland was at St Patrick's Kilsyth where he arrived in 1981 as assistant Priest to Fr Denis O'Connell who was Parish Priest in Kilsyth at that time. During this period, he made many friends and was assiduous in visiting the sick of the parish with whom he had much empathy and much in common, as he remained quite frail himself and was still attending hospital regularly.

It was during this time that Fr Portelli befriended Bernard Gordon who was a parishioner who had suffered repeated brain surgery and who had a litany of medical complications to which Fr Portelli could relate. They often travelled to hospital appointments together. This was a friendship which was to last until Bernard's eventual death some years later.

In 1982 Fr Portelli was transferred as assistant Priest to St Ninian's Edinburgh where he was to stay for 2 years, 1982 and 1983. A further period as assistant Priest came after this for 3 years at St Francis Xavier's Falkirk from 1983 to 1985.

In 1985 Fr Portelli was incardinated into the Archdiocese of St Andrew's and Edinburgh, thus ending his period of loan from Gozo and making him a permanent Priest of the Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh here in Scotland.

Fr Portelli then spent 1985 to 1988 as assistant Priest at Our Lady of the Waves at Dunbar in East Lothian followed by a number of years at the Parish of St Pius X in Kirkcaldy and St Ninian's Bowhill also in Fife. After short periods in Kelso and Bathgate, Fr Portelli was for many years the Parish Priest of St Agatha's Methil, whilst also having responsibility for two other parishes nearby, St Peter's Leven and St Giles in Kennoway. In 2016 he retired early back to his home island of Gozo near Malta due to his continuing ill health.

Fr Portelli died in March 2018 at the age of 68. Faithful servant of God may he rest in peace!

## Some memories of Fr Portelli in Kilsyth



Fr Portelli in St Patrick's Kilsyth



Fr Portelli in 1982 at the First Communion



Fr Portelli at a Christmas Fayre



Fr Portelli with the McGovern Family at their daughter Colette's First Communion 1982



With Cardinal Gray

### Taken from the Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh Facebook page:

REQUIESCAT IN PACE: The Archdiocese of St Andrews & Edinburgh is very saddened to learn of the death of the Reverend Joseph Portelli, a gentle and long serving member of the clergy of this diocese. He was 68 years old. May he rest in peace.

Joe Portelli was born on the isle of Gozo, Malta, in 1949. He trained for the priesthood at Sacred Heart Seminary on the island and was ordained at Gozo's Cathedral of the Assumption in 1974.

In 1976 he was seconded to the Archdiocese of St Andrews & Edinburgh and posted to St Joseph's in Sighthill, Edinburgh. Very soon after his arrival, however, he suffered kidney failure. Father Portelli was subsequently hospitalised for a lengthy period and it wasn't until 1981 that, although frail, he commenced full-time priestly duties at St Patrick's in Kilsyth. In 1985 he was incardinated into his adopted Archdiocese.

Father Portelli went on to serve parishes in Stirlingshire, Edinburgh, East Lothian, Roxburghshire, West Lothian and Fife. He retired in 2014 and returned to his native Malta. May he rest in peace.

**The Reverend Joseph Portelli (1949-2018)**

Ordained 1974

1974 – 1976: Archdiocese of Malta

1976 – 1976: St Joseph, Sighthill, Edinburgh

1976 – 1981: a period of sick leave

1981 – 1982: St Patrick, Kilsyth, Stirlingshire

1982 – 1983: Ss Ninian & Triduana, Restalrig, Edinburgh

1983 – 1985: St Francis Xavier, Falkirk, Stirlingshire

1985 – 1988: Our Lady of the Waves, Dunbar, East Lothian

1988 – 1998: St Pius X, Kirkcaldy, Fife

1995 – 1998: St Ninian, Bowhill, Fife

1998 – 2000: Immaculate Conception, Kelso, Roxburghshire

2000 – 2000: St Mary & St Columba, Bathgate, West Lothian

2000 – 2014: St Agatha, Methil, Fife

2005 – 2014: St Peter, Leven, Fife

2005 – 2014: St Giles, Kennoway, Fife.