

A Poem - In Memory of Sr. Malachy O'Brien

~ written by Mannix O'Brien, Sister's brother ~

*The fledgling lark
swooped and soared
And chirped cheerfully in
youthful abandon
Carefree over its' Leitrim hills –
Rossinver hills.*



*And then, when feathers grew and wings grew strong
She soared on Christ's strong back across
The Western Sea and landed on the Holy Mountain.*

*Cheerful as ever, singing her songs of inspiration
And then, Christ her bearer, called her home
To nestle with her friends on a little hill in Graymoor*

She is silent now, but her songs live on forever.

Excerpts from the “Homily at the funeral Mass” for Sr. Malachy O’Brien – by Fr. Jim Gardiner, SA

February 20, 2012

“**Malachy** was one of those rare types who, once you met her, you got the feeling that you knew her all along. I was trying to remember when I first met her, and I’m pretty sure it was in Washington – when she was at the Retreat House and we were putting on the first Paul Wattson Lectures with Catholic University. Despite what I had been told in advance, she was more than accommodating

“We consistently fared much better, as you may have already heard, than that bevy of bishops from Poland who showed up on the doorstep of the Retreat House, unannounced, only to be told – politely, of course – that there was no room for them to stay there. It was August, and in August – announced or unannounced as the case may be – the Retreat House was closed. So, you can imagine her surprise some time later when the white smoke cleared over the Sistine Chapel and the announcement “habemus papam” was made and who should step out onto the balcony above St. Peter’s – none other than Karol Wotywa, leader of the group who had unsuccessfully sought accommodations at the Retreat House! “O, God!” is what she reportedly said.

“Of course, this isn’t what Malachy would like to be remembered by. The readings that she selected would have us focus attention on the implications & ramifications of the spiritual life which starts for us at baptism; but there’s a bit of a problem here as well and maybe Mannix and Malachy, her brothers, can set the record straight for us once and for all! One evening some years ago, Sr. Susan Boyle, Sr. Julia Coyle, Sr. Malachy and I were driving from the Dublin airport to Leitrim. I think it was for the 50th anniversary of the convent at Rossinver; when we got to Killargue, Malachy announced that she had been baptized there. So, we decided to make a stop at the parish church; but there was no font to be found in the place! – which gave rise to the story (which she denied but obviously couldn’t prove) that she may have been baptized either in the holy well that wasn’t too far off or maybe even the village pub. If Killargue weren’t so rural, this would be the makings of an urban legend!

“...I don’t know this for a fact, I don’t think Malachy was ever physically robust, but that doesn’t mean that she wasn’t strong; just ask anyone who may have had the experience of going toe-to-toe with her (JP II comes to mind); but hers was a quiet strength, well suited for the ministry of hospitality; hopefully, however, the last few years of her life weren’t as hard on her as it was for those who loved and cared for her; thinking of her final years someone said the other day, “there just seems to be so much of it these days” *it* being frailty of mind & body; part of it, I think, is that, as the rest of us get older, we notice it more and become more than disinterested bystanders; and rather than being frightened by such prospects, I’m beginning to wonder if it may be one of God’s ways of vividly reminding us that we have not here a lasting city; mental & emotional disengagement from the things that at one time we thought we absolutely needed in order to live might be the first step in transitioning to the next life....”

