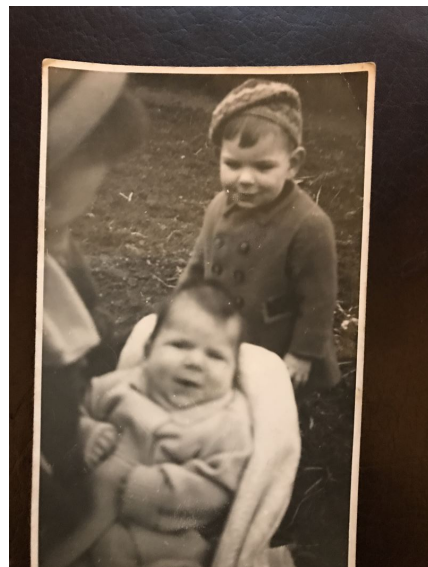


FATHER JIM ALLEN - BIOGRAPHY

1947 - 1958:

James Leon Mees Allen was born in Springfield Rd, Wigan on the 26th October 1947, and was baptised in Sacred Heart Church. At a tender age of twelve months my Mum (Mary) and Dad (Joseph) moved down to Bude in Cornwall, so that Dad could further his career as a Special Needs Teacher. We lived in the priest's house next to the Church of St Peter's, Bude. I think it is here that the little seed of a vocation to the priesthood started because of the influence of Father Brown!

My brother, Paul, was born just over a year later in Looe, Cornwall. Paul and I would spend hours on the presbytery wall watching the steam engines shunting the wagons up and down. Five years later Mark was born in Plymouth, Devon.



Soon after Mark was born it was decided by my parents to go North, because they were concerned for our education. So we moved up to Blackpool and I went to St Cuthbert's Lytham Rd Infants, before going on to St John Vianney Primary School. Dad was deputy head at St John Vianney's and taught me and my brothers as we passed through year 6.



My youngest brother Adrian was born a few years later in Blackpool.

The parish priest of St Cuthbert's at that time was Bishop T Pearson, Bishop of Sinda, and it was he and Father Tony Foulkes who encouraged me to go to a priestly vocations panel in Preston to see if I had a vocation to the priesthood. From this interview I was accepted to go to the Junior Seminary of Thistleton Lodge, just outside of Blackpool.

1958 - 1972:

At the tender age of eleven (1959) Father Jim went to the Junior Seminary at St Michael's, Thistleton Lodge for one term, before the whole college moved to Underley Hall at Kirkby Lonsdale. By moving the seminary to Underley Hall, its capacity was increased to between 130 and 140 students. 50 boys moved there in the spring of 1960 including Father Jim.

My class eventually stayed at Underley until we had completed our G.C.E. at Advanced Level. This relieved overcrowding in the 2 senior seminaries, Upholland near Wigan, and Ushaw College in County Durham. The new St. Michael's College was put under the charge of Canon B. Kershaw who was rector at Thistleton Lodge, with a staff of 6 priests.

By 1963, the college had 5 classes; first year (Underlow), second year (Low Figures), third year (High Figures), fourth year (Grammar), fifth year (Syntax); and in June of that year the fifth year students passed on to the two major seminaries. Two years later the first Lower VI form (Poetry) was introduced, followed in September 1965 by the first Upper VI. This was my class. The staff was now doubled and there were 120 students. Extensive alterations and modernization work has been done to cater for this expansion, but this will be seen in detail in the "Tour of the House". At its peak the college had a staff of 15 priests, (though the bursar is nonteaching) and 129 students. The number of students fluctuated between 100 and 170 in those years.



At eighteen and after "A" levels Father Jim moved to the Senior Seminary at Upholland and studied Philosophy and Theology for six years. This wasn't an easy time because I was at Upholland as all the changes were taking place after the momentous Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). So our academic system was radically changed, but our freedoms like going to the cinema, the pub etc was still very restricted. In all my time at seminary (junior and senior) I never found it easy with homesickness etc.



This is the site that would greet us as we returned from vacation. Rather daunting!!! The saving grace at Junior Seminary was the sporting activities and hiking and swimming. And as the term progressed the thoughts of home regressed!



Sunday - May 28th 1972:

I was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Foley in St Cuthbert's Church the day after my class mate, Bob Dewhurst, was ordained by the same Diocesan Bishop in St Mary's Fernyhalgh.



September 1972 - September 1978:

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Here is a young Bob Dewhurst

Father Jim's first appointment as Assistant priest was with Father Michael Taylor at St Benedict's, Mirehouse, Whitehaven. While he was there he served as hospital chaplain to the West Cumberland hospital.

Also in the four years he was there a new Church was built, and he founded the "St Benedict's Rugby Union Club", which is still flourishing to this day. After four years he was moved to St Augustine's in Preston and served there for two years, before entering the Royal Navy as a naval chaplain.



September 1978 - 1990: Time in the Royal Navy & Royal Marines:

I entered Dartmouth College in September 1978 for my two month initial training, and it was aa lot of square bashing and learning the intricacies of being a Naval Officer. The great thing about the RN Chaplaincy is that we carry no rank; and so are the rank of the person we are talking too!



First Appointment: HMS Lindisfarne:

Father Jim joined the ship at Rosyth, near Edinburgh and was with her over till March 1979. In that time the Lindisfarne worked as a fishery protection vessel in the North Sea and visited ports such as Newcastle, Amsterdam, Hartlepool and Sunderland.

On leaving the Lindisfarne Fr Jim joined the Royal Marines at Plymouth and Lympstone (just outside of Exeter). The Commando Training Centre, also known as CTCRM, is the principal training centre for the Royal Marines. Based at Lympstone in Devon CTCRM selects and trains all Royal Marines Officers, recruits and reserves.



The initial training is very rigorous and extreme. Unfortunately Father Jim was progressing reasonably well but two weeks before the end of the all arms commando course he fell off the “tarsan course” and badly bruised his kidneys and busted a couple of ribs. Although he did not complete the course he continued to work with the Royal Marines through 1979 until the November of that year.

During 1979 Father Jim worked with 41 Commando in Cyprus, on UN duty, keeping the peace between the Greeks and the Turks. 42 in Hong Kong, in the new territories stopping illegal immigrants crossing the boarder.

Last of all with Logistics in Northern Ireland at Bally Kelly and (London) Derry, during the height of the troubles. Some of the photographs portray that busy time in 1979. In November I left the Royal Marines and joined the new entry establishments of HMS Raleigh, and Fisgard (now closed).



HMS Raleigh & Fisgard: Nov 1997 - July 1981



All new recruits, except officers came through these gates to do their six weeks initial training and at the end of it the sailors went on to their part two training at HMS Collingwood, Sultan or Daedalus. There were three chaplains at this establishment, RC, CofE and Free Church and we worked together to give the recruits RE classes.

While Father Jim was at HMD Raleigh he started taking some of the recruits with some of the staff to Lourdes on the Handicapped Children Pilgrimage Trust (HCPT).

They helped to be the muscle and helped to transport luggage and the children from the train at Dover to the ship and then from the ship on to the trains at Calais that travelled through the night to Lourdes in Southern France.



Autumn 1981 - Summer 1983: Sea time with Flag Officer 2 (FOF2):

This was my first ship I served in with FOF2 and her name was HMS Brilliant. And her ship's company were brilliant. While I was with her we gained the freedom of the Borough of Dover area. During the [Falklands War](#), *Brilliant* took part in the only ship to ship engagement of the war, when she and [HMS Yarmouth](#) chased the Argentine coaster *Monsunen*, in the [Battle of Seal Cove](#). She was also successful in destroying two Argentinian aircraft.

In the Autumn of 1981 I joined HMS Active (Type 21) and HMS Sheffield (Type 42) for the Gulf Patrol. HMS Active was the fifth Type 21 frigate of the Royal Navy and entered service in June 1977. She was built by Vosper Thornycroft Shipbuilders. She was sold to Pakistan in 1993 and is still in service as the PNS Shah Jahan. **HMS Sheffield** was laid down by [Vickers Shipbuilding and Engineering](#) at [Barrow-in-Furness](#) on 15 January 1970. She was launched by [Queen Elizabeth II](#) on 10 June 1971^[1] and commissioned on 16 February 1975.



HMS Active flight deck on the Gulf Patrol with the power house of the ship.



The Gulf Patrol -Autumn 1981:

We visited Muscat and had Christmas there. In between patrolling the Gulf we had R & R at Mombasa (2 weeks), five days in Reunion Island, Singapore and Jacata (Indonesia) and on our return to Gibraltar in the Spring of 1982 the Argentinians were flexing their muscles by invading the South Georgia, and looking like invading the Falklands.

Both ships were dispatched off to the Falklands at once, but Father Jim missed out on going with them because he was ordered to return to the UK so as to take navy personnel to Lourdes with the HCPT. As you know Sheffield was the first ship to be hit by an Exocet missile and the Exocet entered the ship amidships over the galley - and where was Father Jim's cabin? Over the galley!! Obviously the Lord had other things arranged for Father Jim!



HMS Active



HMS Sheffield



Here we see a procedure called “RASING” Replenishing at Sea.

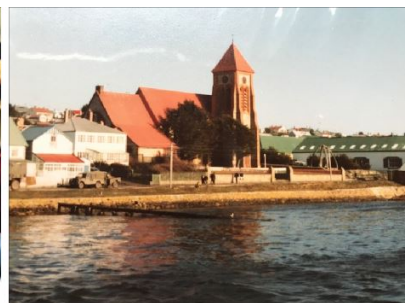
This is the way we chaplains got about the various ships. Either by helicopter -being dropped off on the flight deck or by being winched down on to the flight deck of a ship.

Or the other way was by being winched over from ship to ship as the ships are RASING!!!



April 1982: HMS Southampton: Falklands:

As Pope John Paul II was visiting the UK, and the Falkland’s conflict was brewing, Father Jim was appointed to HMS Southampton and Birmingham (Type 42s) and a group of other ships as their chaplain. These two were new ships and they were being rushed into readiness for the relief force for the Falklands. In double time we were ready to be deployed South.



While Father Jim was in HMS Liverpool we had the freedom of the city and there are some photos of this - see below - and my Mum and Dad, and Uncle John and Aunty Veronica attended.

In January of 1983 I went off to the Caribbean with HMS Rhyl.



January 1983: HMS Rhyl deployed to the Caribbean and Charleston USA:

HMS Rhyl was a Rothesay or Type 12I class anti-submarine frigate of the British Royal Navy, launched by Lady Macmillan on 23 February 1959 and commissioned in October 1960. Following Royal Navy service she was sunk as a target in 1985.

She was home for Father Jim through till late spring of 1983 and with a deployment of other ships we visited Charleston in the USA (this is where the Civil War started) and then on to Dominique in the Caribbean plus other visits.



1983 - 1985: HMS Sultan, Collingwood and Daedalus:

On Father Jim's return from the USA/Caribbean deployment he was sent to be chaplain to the above establishments; and he was based at the Fleet Air Arm Establishment of HMS Daedalus on Lee on Solent. For nearly two years Father Jim was involved in RE Classes, Parades etc at the three establishments. He lived in a little cottage opposite the Wardroom of HMS Daedalus.



May 1985 - October 1986 HMS Rooke Gibraltar:

Father Jim thoroughly enjoyed his time in Gibraltar looking after the three Services: Royal Navy, Army and the Royal Airforce. The social life was excellent and the boarder was open...

While he served in Gibraltar Father Jim managed to learn to ski. I can hear you say "ski in Gibraltar"? Father Jim went with a party of army lads to Sierra Navada at the back of Granada for R&R. "It was one of the best things I ever said yes too and I am pleased to have learned to ski!" says Father Jim.



January 1987- 1989 HMS Faslane:

Father Jim's next to last appointment in the Navy, was at HMS Faslane on the west coast of Scotland the home of the Trident submarines. Although when he served there it was the Polaris subs that were the deterrent against the Soviet block.

On a couple of occasions my family came up and as you can see Loch Lomond is on the doorstep!

While in Scotland Father Jim joined a Neo Catechumenal community at St Thomas's, Ridrey, Glasgow. This was a moment that changed his life and it was the Neo Catechumenate that helped to renew his priesthood.



1989 - 1990: Royal Marines & HMS Drake:

His final few months after Faslane were spent with the Royal Marines and then demobbing at HMS Drake in Plymouth. In 1990 He left the forces EARLY to go as an Itinerant priest in the USA for a year with the blessing of Bishop Brewer.

While he was with the Royal Marines he :

First went on exercise up the Mull of Kintyre.

Second a tour in Northern Ireland - being lifted into Ops on the boarder by helicopter

And finally he did the warfare training in Narvik in Norway from January till March 1989, and also did a tour in Northern Ireland at Newry.

The following photographs portray Father Jim's exploits in the above order.

A couple of photos of deployment with the Royal Marines in Northern Ireland:



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September 1990 - September 1992:

On leaving the Forces Father Jim went to live in Guardian Angels, Mile End, until he was sent to America to join a couple called Josef and Joyce and their five children, who were from Queens, New York. In his year's itinerancy Father Jim worked in deprived areas in New Orleans, Washington DC, New York (Queens) and Boston.





September 1991 - July 2004 Parish Priest of St Patrick's Barrow Island:

A year later he was appointed Parish Priest of St. Patrick's on Barrow Island in Barrow-in-Furness.

St Patrick's was situated between Walney and Barrow-in-Furness mainland. In fact nearly the whole of B I was made up of the shipyard and tenaments. I. Father Jim was appointed the chaplain to the shipyard known then as "Vickers" Later it became BAE Systems and the work force reduced from about 15000 to less than 5000. Later he also became chaplain to Furness General Hospital. In these years he bought a 32 foot yacht called "Impala" Over the years Father Jim sail with his family in the Irish Sea and sailed as far as Oban to the North; and Plymouth to the South West; and Fastnet rocks to the South East. These trips were done usually through his months summer vacation. Look at the photos!!



March 2001:

I was privileged to preside at an "Automatic Launch" of a naval ship. HMS Albion. She is an [amphibious transport dock](#) of the [Royal Navy](#), the first of the two-ship [Albion class](#). Built by [BAE Systems Marine](#) in [Barrow-in-Furness](#), Albion was launched in March 2001 by [the Princess Royal](#).

Before the millennium Father Jim was given permission from Bishop Jack Brewer to renovate and renew the Church of St Patrick's, and this was done under the expert eye of our grand forman Derek Cockin. There are photographs of the reordering in the gallery.

Father Jim's nephew spent hours and hours writing the main icon on the specially made wall which was the back drop for the whole of the reordering.

Sadly now (2018) St Patrick's is closed and deconsecrated but the icons are still there and make the place beautiful.





In May 1997 Father Jim celebrated his Silver Jubilee to the Priesthood, and it was a wonderful night with all his family around him.





July 2004 - October 2018 continuing:

In July 2004 Bishop Patrick asked me to move from Barrow to Carlisle - to St Bede's Church and I arrived in my new parish on the last day of Summer term 2004. Soon after arriving I had to do major work in the Church because the whole wiring was very dangerous and so that was done and also the Church was painted and a Ukrainian Icon writer did all the icons in the Lady Chapel and on the sanctuary wall.



June 2009 - St Bede's Church Golden Jubilee:

One of the highlights in the history of the parish of St Bede's is the celebrations marking the Golden Jubilee of the building of St Bede's Church. See the photographs of this occasion in the galleries.







May 2012 Father Jim celebrates his Forty Years of the Priesthood:

Another memorable night, with all his family around him. A great achievement with God's mercy. This is what Father Jim wrote on the occasion of his 40th Jubilee:

FORTY YEARS!!!

I was ordained forty years ago on the 28th May 1972 in St Cuthbert's, Blackpool, by Bishop Foley. It is a miracle that I am still here, and proof that this is God's wish for me – to be his presbyter. More importantly it is proof of His great love for me! A lot of water has gone under the bridge in these last forty years, sometime a flood, and some time a trickle!

My first appointment was with Father Michael Taylor in St Benedict's, Whitehaven as a new assistant priest with lots of energy and enthusiasm. In these four years we built the church, and I started a rugby union club, that I am proud to say, is still flourishing today!

After four years I was posted to St Augustine's, Preston, for two years; and from there I joined the Royal Navy/Marines as a chaplain. Working in the forces was certainly exciting and very varied. In one appointment I would be serving personnel at sea, and the next working with new recruits at Torpoint for example. Of course it was good to get around and visit many countries.

A defining moment in my life was when I was introduced to the Neo Catechumenate in Glasgow, while serving as a chaplain in the Navy Base of Faslane in the year 1987. The Neo Catechumenate has saved and renewed my priesthood. It sounds a little dramatic but it is true that up to 1987 I was just going through the motions as a priest, and at the same time being greatly influenced by all the temptations around me.

Since joining the Neo Catechumenal Way I have come to see that God has a great love and mercy for me, a sinner, and that he is very patient with my weakness and shortcomings. This realisation has helped me to respond to His love.

The Lord moved me to leave the Forces early, and for a year Bishop Brewer allowed me to go as an itinerant priest to the USA with the Neo Catechumenate. On my recall I spent a year as assistant in the Blessed Sacrament, Preston. In 1992 I was appointed Parish Priest of St Patrick's, Barrow in Furness, and besides being PP I was chaplain to the Shipyard and the Hospital. Twelve years later I was moved to my present position of Parish Priest of St Bede's, Carlisle.

After forty plus years I can honestly say that I am in the right vocation, and I do recommend the priesthood to any of you single young, or not so single men. There are times when life is hard, and a slog from one day to another, with lots of failure! But there are many times when I get a great kick from proclaiming Christ, and experiencing, people's joy at hearing the "Good News" that they are greatly loved by the Lord. The joy and fulfilment in my priestly life is knowing God's patience to me, and his continual presence in my life. The Psalmist words come to mind: "They go out, they go out, full of tears, carrying seeds for the sowing; they come back, they come back, full of song, carrying their sheaves". (Psalm 125)

"WOW" "FORTY YEARS"!

Father Jim Allen

Thursday, 08 November 2012





16th July 2017: Merging St Bede's & St Edmund's into a new parish of Cumbrian Martyrs':

After wide consultation St Bede's and St Edmund's merged into a new parish of "The Cumbrian Martyrs" . The name was chosen after short listing some names and this was the

favourite which Bishop Campbell chose. Below is the decree issued by the Bishop of Lancaster.



DECREE OF EXTINCTIVE UNION & MERGER

So as to strengthen the pastoral care of souls and make possible the strengthening of the pastoral area given the constraints of the smaller numbers of people at Mass and fewer priests to serve them, it is hereby decreed that, **as from the first Celebration of Mass on Sunday 16 July 2017**, the Parish of St Edmund's, Carlisle and the Parish of St Bede's Carlisle, are to be merged and from the merger a new parish, to be called and named the **Parish of the Cumbrian Martyrs**, is to be created and erected (c.515 s2)

The reasons for this decree (c.51) are given in the attached Schedule 1. Recourse may be had against this decree in accordance with the terms of the law of the Catholic Church. The conditions for recourse are set out in the attached Schedule 2.

This decree is to be executed by the priest responsible.

This decree of extinctive union and merger must be accompanied by both Schedules. It must be made available to the priest of the parishes, and to the Vicar Forane, whose duty it is to provide this decree to all interested persons in the locality.

Signed:

+ Michael G. Campbell OSA.

+Michael G Campbell OSA,
Bishop of Lancaster

Date: *23rd June 2017.*

Seal:



Signed:

Robert P Billing (for)

Robert P Billing,
Bishop's Secretary

Cc: The Rev Jim Allen VF