

Parishioners mourn peaceful death of Bentham farmer who became a popular Catholic Priest

Last Sunday morning, parishioners across Skipton and the Dales heard the sad news of the death of Fr Peter Dawber. Only eighteen months earlier he had been the Catholic Priest at St Stephen's, Skipton. Fr Dawber, 67, was diagnosed with motor neurone disease in the summer of 2010. Although he tried bravely to continue, in January 2011 he retired and returned to his roots in High Bentham, where the Catholic Diocese of Leeds adapted the priest's house on Robin Lane for him. He lived there until his death, cared for by Fr Carlos Carvalho a priest of the Diocese, along with family, parishioners and friends from former parishes.



Peter Dawber had been a farmer before hearing the call to the Catholic Priesthood. He trained at Ushaw College in Durham and was ordained at the age of 33 in his home parish of St Boniface, High Bentham in June 1978. His work as a priest took him to Halifax and Huddersfield. Then in 1988 he was made Catholic Chaplain to Bradford University. In 1993 he became the Parish priest of Dewsbury before returning to home territory and Skipton in 2001.



Fr Dawber was a popular and familiar figure in the town and in the Dales. He was an enthusiastic patron of the Grassington Festival and irrepressibly cheerful and generous to anyone who sought his help. Archbishop Arthur Roche, the Bishop of Leeds recently appointed as a senior aide to Pope Benedict XVI, today described Fr Dawber as a "thoroughly good man". The Archbishop will lead the funeral service at the Catholic Cathedral in Leeds on Wednesday 25 July 2012. A memorial Mass will be held at St Stephen's at 7-00pm on Tuesday 24 July 2012.