

*The Bishop of Chichester writes:*

CANON Beaumont Lauder Brandie, Fr Beau for short, who died on 19 May, aged 79, was an Anglo-Catholic priest, loved by many, feared by some, and uniformly respected. Those who got to know him discovered his sense of humour and the generosity of his human qualities. He was an outstanding pastor and friend, but his exuberant exterior also hid a personal reserve and sensitivity.

Beau's defining passion was his commitment to the Christian faith as the Church of England had received it in its Catholic fullness. This passion also made him an engaging teacher. He not only gave the clear impression that he knew what he was talking about: he obviously believed it.

The strength of Beau's conviction could, at times, be a bit overwhelming. Worship and the sacramental system was unquestionably an epiphany of the truth about our origin and our destiny. It had to convey both mystery and certainty. Beau loved worship. His approach to it was as theatrical as his name. He masterminded numerous big events. They included the annual National Pilgrimage to Walsingham, and landmark eucharistic celebrations at Wembley and in the London Arena and the Albert Hall.

The preparation and delivery of these events demanded stamina and attention to detail. Beau was as tough on himself as he was on his loyal team. But only he got to wear the succession of uniforms that marked him as a priestly Master of Ceremonies, the recipient of various decorations, from both Church and State, for distinguished service, and as the Captain directing operations through his walkie-talkie.

The sort of instructions we overheard were direct and memorable. %Beau to altar, Beau to altar: stop faffing. Cense and go! Now! Over.+

For generations of Sea Cadets from Brighton, Fr Brandie was most certainly their captain. He was also a father figure who understood the fragility and complexity of life for young people who lived in unglamorous neighbourhoods.

As a young Priest Administrator at Walsingham, I had to step up to working with Beau each year at the National Pilgrimage. I also became familiar with receiving his regular requests for prayers to be said at the Shrine.

These requests revealed the desperate circumstances that are so often faced by young people in areas of multiple deprivation.

Any request from Beau indicated how well he knew the people involved. He had a merciful heart for %idiots+ who got into trouble, not always of their own making. He was certain that Mary, Our Lady of Walsingham, would understand broken-hearted youngsters, their siblings, biological and non-biological parents and carers, and that she would intercede for them, as a mother, with Jesus.

Beaumont Brandie, as his own mother always called him, was an only child, born in London in 1940. His father, a quiet man, was a senior officer in the London Fire Brigade. Beau's mother was the powerful figure in the household, once described as a bit of a Hyacinth Bucket.

Beau gained a place at Haberdashers Aske's School, and then read theology at King's College, London, under the suave tutelage of Sydney Evans. He spent a year at St Boniface's, Warminster, preparing for ordination.

Beau was ordained in 1965, serving his title at St Augustine's, Whitton, in the diocese of London. A second curacy followed, at St Wilfrid's, Portsea. In 1977, the then Bishop of Chichester, Eric Kemp, appointed him as Team Rector of the Resurrection, Brighton. It comprised six churches and a church primary school. Beau resisted later plans for pastoral reorganisation and remained there until retirement in 2010.

In this demanding parish, Beau established a rigorous discipline of prayer, in the daily Office and mass. Curates were drilled in the priestly duties. Baptisms, weddings, and funerals were conducted. God was worshipped with gusto and splendour.

Within the diocese, Beau was well known as a person of strong convictions. Bishop Kemp valued him as a competent, hard-working priest and as an ally in withstanding the ordination of women.

Beau made an important contribution to the administrative Chapter of the cathedral. He was also an outstanding supporter of his own parochial school and of the part that the Church has to play in education, serving for many years on the Diocesan Board of Education.

Beau exemplified confidence in the priestly vocation and ministry of his time. What constitutes best pastoral practice today is dramatically different from 50 years ago. As a realist, he understood that. He also urged that change should not be an excuse for neglect of attention to the primary demands of prayer, worship, and professional priestly skill.

The consultant who told Beau that he only had months to live was amazed by his calm response. But as a priest, he explained to his doctor, %I can't cope with that after all this time, something's gone wrong with the system.+

But nothing had gone wrong. Beau prepared to die as he had lived: with disciplined faith in the triune God he had long served, and with a deep love for the Mother of God incarnate, Jesus Christ.