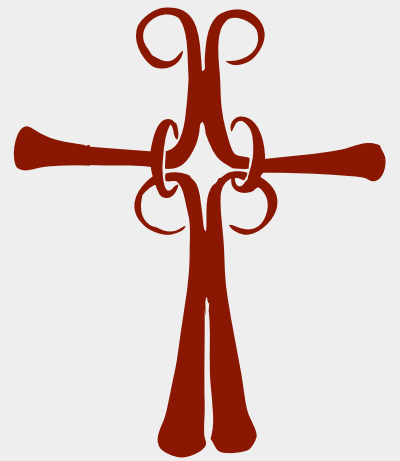


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Newsletter of the Society of the Sacred Mission Australian Province

SPECIAL EDITION

June 2016



Born 28 July 1934 • Deacon 1957 • Professed 1958 • Priest 1958
SSM Provincial 1969–1972 • SSM Director 1972–1982
Died 24 May 2016

The Requiem Mass for Douglas John (Dunstan) McKee SSM was held at St John's Church in Adelaide on 1 June 2016. Father Christopher Myers, SSM Provincial and Priest-in-Charge at St John's celebrated the liturgy for family, friends and members, who gathered in the hall after the service to share their memories of Dunstan over light refreshments. The Rev'd Dr Howard Munro gave the eulogy, not so much giving a chronology of Father Dunstan's life, but to speak more about the soul of the man and reflect on his inner life.

A Memorial Eucharist of Thanksgiving for Father Dunstan McKee is to follow at
St Peter's Church, Eastern Hill, Melbourne on 9 July 2016 at 11 am.

Fine company

The Rev'd Dr Howard Munro, Archbishop's Chaplain
Anglican Diocese of Brisbane

My friendship with Dunstan goes back to the year 1993 when Dunstan moved to Queensland as a postgraduate candidate for a Master of Arts in Studies in Religion, which he was awarded in 1995.

He became a resident of St John's College, within the University of Queensland. (For those who don't know, St John's College is an Anglican College affiliated with the University of Queensland, much like St Mark's College is affiliated with the University of Adelaide).

Dunstan's St John's College days began during my first innings on the college staff. I came to know him well and have stayed in contact with him ever since.

However, before getting to these later years of his life, let me paint in broad strokes what many will know, but maybe not all, about the early life of Father Dunstan McKee.

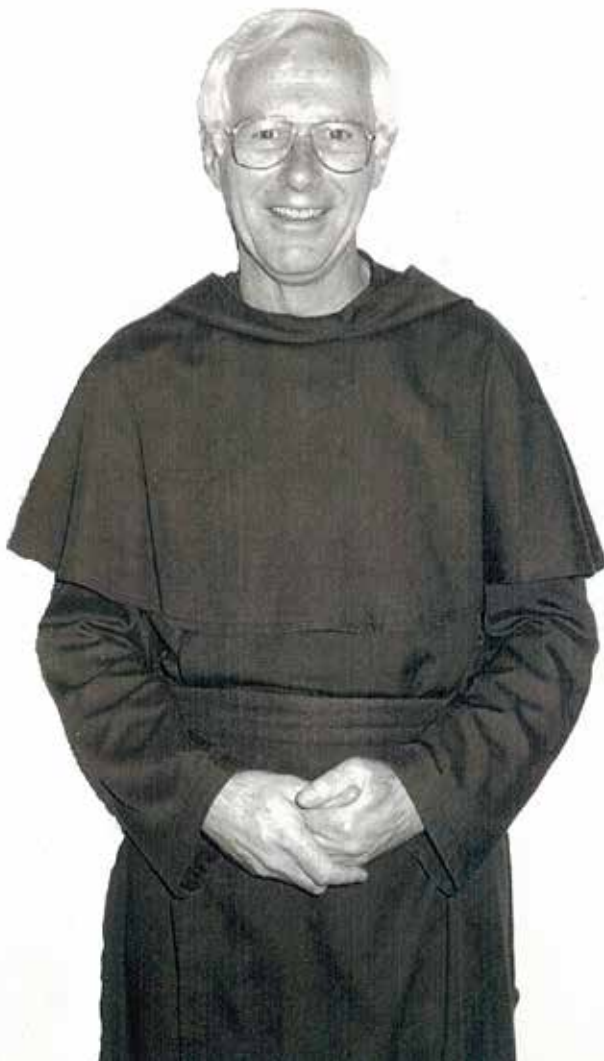
Dunstan was born in Adelaide, the second child of Kenneth and Ella McKee, and younger brother of Judy. Dunstan's niece Sue is present with us today, and has for many years looked after his welfare.

Dunstan grew up in Adelaide and attended Unley Primary School then Unley High.

According to his CV, Dunstan went to the University of Adelaide in 1952 and began studying chemical engineering. It seems that this venture was short-lived because in 1954 he joined SSM and went to Crafers to study theology and to prepare for ordination. In 1958 he was awarded his Diploma of Theology by the Australian College of Theology and ordained priest.



*'a gentle soul
who was very
fine company'*



Dunstan then moved to Perth, and studied philosophy and history at the University of Western Australia (UWA), graduating with first class honours in philosophy in 1965. (Significantly, he was Captain of the UWA Boat Club from 1963-64, and the relevance of this I will come back to a little later.)

After graduating Dunstan moved back to Crafers and lectured in philosophy.

It wasn't long before Dunstan was appointed Provincial of the Australian Province of SSM, a leadership post he held from 1969-72.

However, leadership at a higher level came his way and he became Director of SSM from 1972-82, responsible for coordinating the Society's work in England, Southern Africa, Australia and Japan. He held various other posts during this time, including a few years as Associate Priest of the Ecumenical Parish in Milton Keynes.

Upon returning from England, Dunstan took up the post of Priest-in-Charge, here in this church of St John's, Adelaide, a post he held from 1982-89. Whilst here he lectured at the Adelaide College of Divinity, serving as President for a time, and he was also a Member of the Board of Theological Studies at Flinders University.



After concluding his appointment as Priest-in-Charge at St John's, Dunstan became Director of Post-Ordination Training in the Diocese of Adelaide from 1990–92.



It is at this point in his life that I came to know Dunstan, when he decided to come to study at the University of Queensland in 1993, and to start out on a new journey in his life.

I was at this time Dean and Chaplain of St John's College and Dunstan was a post-graduate student who hung around the Senior Common Room and made amiable conversation with fellow students. For Dunstan these were idyllic days. He had come into a residential academic

community, had no responsibilities other than to study, and had a strong college leadership team to support him and a chapel congregation that understood and respected religious vows, even if we were, in contrast to Dunstan, very worldly Christians!

Dunstan was an instant hit with the students, postgraduate and undergraduate, which is where the significance of his past rowing exploits becomes relevant. He was very knowledgeable about rowing and could easily engage with young college students, pursuing their quest for victory in the seemingly endless rowing regattas held at weekends along the Brisbane River.

When I left St John's in 1994 to pursue doctoral studies, Dunstan took on my role, beginning as Chaplain and then later being appointed Dean of College, positions that he variously held between 1994–99. He was also employed as a part-time lecturer in studies in religion at the University of Queensland, teaching courses on Mysticism, Philosophy and 'Jesus Christ in Modern Thought'.

If there was one theologian Dunstan admired most, it was probably Hans Küng, whose autobiography I gave Dunstan in his later years, and despite its length he managed to read it from cover to cover.

Dunstan was not only interested in intellectual topics, but also had a lifelong interest in the relationship between Christian faith and social justice, and in his early days was active in opposing the Vietnam War. However, in my experience his views on controversial topics were always fair and considered, never shrill and opinionated.



It is interesting to have one's own observations of Dunstan backed up by the expressions of love and respect from other people who knew him at a similar stage in his life.

A lovely man, a role model, a man of deep but questioning faith, a lover of music, kind and good, respected, a gentle soul who was very fine company.

These are the impressions I and others had of Dunstan in his idyllic days at St John's College.

Dr Munro's full eulogy is enclosed.



AT ST MICHAEL'S

Father Don Cowan

Dunstan McKee SSM was Chaplain to our Class of '65. Gently, sometimes provocatively, he helped us examine and deepen our faith. He helped draw us into the spirit of SSM, especially through regular class discussions (pi-bashes) on very applied spirituality. We started with the terse Principles of the Society. I often refer to them.



'generous host, friendly companion and brother priest'

Dunstan revelled in philosophy and taught it to us. Though we were less enthusiastic, he remained indefatigably positive anyway. He carefully stretched our minds, and eventually introduced us to Teilhard de Chardin's writing. Mostly we didn't 'get' it, no fault of Dunstan. Regrettable that, because Teilhard now fascinates me.

Sometimes fierce in basketball, Dunstan had also a wry sense of humour, occasionally hearty. He led us in a retreat at the Community of the Holy Name

Retreat House. We took an evening off, with dinner elsewhere. Arriving back late, we found ourselves locked out, baffled and embarrassed. Agile, canny Dunstan knew a way in. With a chuckle he disappeared up a downpipe behind the building, scrambled over the roof, through a window and, lo, the front door was opened unto us. We entered silently, and still we laugh.

For everything, dear Dunstan, generous host, friendly companion and brother priest, sincerest thanks.

Thomas Brown

In November 1968 Dunstan was appointed Australian Provincial and prior of St Michael's and I was appointed Warden of the college. For the next four years we worked very closely together. This was not an easy time for either of us, for a number of reasons.

In Australia until then the same brother had always been Provincial, Prior and Warden, and this new arrangement of separating the Warden's role took some getting used to. Another reason was our ages: Dunstan was 34; I was 33 when we were appointed. Both of us were by far the youngest brothers nominated for either position. Also a very large intake of new students had been accepted for 1969, which had quite a destabilising effect on the life of the house. It was a time when many changes were in the air, and this inevitably began to affect us increasingly. I was and am still very grateful for the personal support and understanding I received from Dunstan during these years.



I remember Dunstan as a person of exceptional intelligence and clarity of thought (though perhaps not always able to express his ideas as clearly as some would have wished). He impressed me as one who had a better grasp than most brothers of what SSM was about. We could always look to him for a clear understanding of the complex and difficult issues and situations that we encountered in the life of St Michael's and of the Province.

After the end of 1972, Dunstan and I never lived in the same SSM house again. Our relationship changed, but I have always had a great respect and fondness for him. It has been a privilege to have known him, and especially to have worked so closely with him in those years at St Michael's.