20/02/2020

Funeral held of pioneering Irish Romanian Orthodox priest Fr Godfrey O’Donnell



The funeral Mass of Fr Godfrey O’Donnell (80) the only Irishman to be ordained a priest of the Romanian Orthodox Church in Ireland, took place on Monday at St Columba’s Church, Blakestown Way, in West Dublin.

A total of 28 Romanian Orthodox priests from Europe and Ireland took part in the Mass, The Iris Time reports.

From Derry, Fr O’Donnell died peacefully at his home in Swords last Friday.

A Jesuit priest for 28 years, Fr Godfrey left the Catholic priesthood to marry Ruth in 1985, but had grown increasingly drawn to the Orthodox Church.

He was ordained a Romanian Orthodox priest in February 2004 by His Eminence Metropolitan Iosif at the chapel in Dublin’s Belvedere College.

The ceremony was attended by representatives of the other Orthodox churches, in Ireland, the Catholic Church, the Church of Ireland, the Lutheran Church, the

Presbyterian Church, and from the Romanian Embassy in Ireland.

As he explained at the 2004 ordination, “I had to make a choice to let go of my Catholic heritage and to embrace Orthodoxy. It has been a great gift this last four years. I have met so many extraordinary people, very gifted people, great Christians who have also had to give up a lot to come to a strange country like Ireland.”

In 2000, he was instrumental in establishing the first Romanian Orthodox parish in Dublin, based at Leeson Park. It followed contact in 1999 with Paris-based Metropolitan Iosif of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolitanate of Western and Southern Europe.

In November 2013 he was awarded the accolade of ‘Stavrophore’ by the Romanian Orthodox Church. ‘Stavrophore’ is derived from the Greek stavrophoros, meaning ‘cross–bearer’. It is the highest award bestowed upon married priests in the Romanian Orthodox tradition.

It conferred on Fr O’Donnell the the right to wear a cross in recognition of his work to firmly establish the Romanian Orthodox Church in Ireland and of his long service to the Romanian Orthodox community.

Survived by Ruth, burial took place on Monday afternoon at Dardistown cemetery in north Co Dublin.

Currently it is estimated there are 80,000 Romanians in Ireland.

English article by The Irish Times

— Source: basilica.ro