

Richard Bradley, O. Carm.
1932-1999

As with many Carmelites of the PCM Province, Richard Bradley spent much of his apostolic life in parish work serving the needs of many people in a basically spiritual way. He enjoyed serving people, and found fulfillment as both a priest and a Carmelite in the various parishes to which he was assigned, whether as a pastor or associate pastor.

Richard Bradley was born in Boston, Massachusetts on 8 February 1932, in the depths of the Great Depression. His parents were Raymond and Mary (Kerrigan) Bradley; he grew up with his sisters Jane and Anne Marie.

The Bradley family moved several times in his youth, and he attended Theodore Roosevelt Public School in Revere, Massachusetts, and William Carter Public School in Needham, before graduating from Our Lady Help of Christians School in Newton. He also attended Acton High School one year before enrolling at the Carmelite Junior Seminary at Hamilton to begin studies for the priesthood in 1947. Here he was well accepted by his new-found classmates, and fitted into seminary life with ease with the class of 1951. A Carmelite vocation director, Fr. Christopher McElroy, visited Our Lady's School in Newton when Richard Bradley was in the 8th grade. This was his initial contact with the Carmelites.

After completing his studies at Hamilton, Richard Bradley and his classmates, along with the section of the group from Mt. Carmel Prep Seminary in Niagara Falls, Ontario, went to the Carmelite Novitiate in New Baltimore, Pennsylvania. During their novitiate year, the group was introduced to the fundamentals of spirituality and community life.

On 3 September 1952, the novices professed their simple vows and soon left to begin undergraduate studies at Mt. Carmel College in Niagara Falls, with a major focus on the subject of Philosophy. Of course, other college studies were included in the overall program.

In those years, Mt. Carmel had become affiliated with St. Bonaventure University conducted by the Franciscans at Olean, New York. Carmelite students could usually attend two or three summer school sessions at St. Bonaventure to obtain what were referred to as "residence" credits. After completing his studies, Richard Bradley was granted a B.A. degree in Philosophy by St. Bonaventure University. And according to his personal records, he also received an M.A. degree in Religious Education from the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. He would later engage in theology update studies at Conception Abbey Seminary College in Conception, Missouri, and at the Weston (Massachusetts) School of Theology.

After completing his theology studies, at least the first three years, Richard Bradley was ordained with his classmates at the Carmelite Junior Seminary in Hamilton, Massachusetts. It was a joyful day for him and the Bradley family when he became a

priest on 23 May 1959. He then returned to Whitefriars Hall to complete his final year of theology and to work as a "simplex" priest. He also made his solemn profession of vows there on 1 September 1956.

Following the completion of his studies in Washington, Richard Bradley, who had taken the religious name of "Eric," was assigned to St. Patrick's parish in Niagara Falls, Ontario, from 1960-62, as an associate pastor. His other parish assignments included St. Clara's in Chicago, Illinois (1962-64); St. Jane de Chantal in North Hollywood, California (1964-66); St. Joseph's in Demarest, New Jersey (1966-69); Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Louisville, Kentucky (1969-75); and St. Leo's parish in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (1975-79).

In 1979, Richard Bradley was appointed dual pastor of St. Boniface parish in Scipio, Kansas, and St. Therese parish in nearby Richmond. He served in this post until 1985 when he was granted a sabbatical year to study at the Weston School of Theology.

From 1986-88, he returned to his original assignment at St. Patrick's parish in Niagara Falls, Ontario. He then became a staff member of the St. Therese Chapel in the Bergan Mall Shopping Center in Paramus, New Jersey. He served there until his retirement, due to health reasons, and went to live with his family in York, Maine in 1996.

In a letter dated 30 November 1999, Jane Bradley, his sister, recounted the final hours of Richard Bradley's life:

"Richard woke at 2:00 AM on 18 November with chest pain. He did not alert my sister at that time. Around 7:00 AM my sister, Anne Marie, found him seated in his p.j.'s at the kitchen table. She then called for an ambulance and Richard was taken to the York hospital. My sister called me and I met her at the hospital.

"After a wait of 40 minutes or so we were allowed to see him. He was alert but most uncomfortable. We were given 2-3 minutes and then the medical team requested we leave so they could do a chest x-ray.

"A doctor came out and told us Richard was having a major heart attack and it did not look good. About five minutes later, Richard's heart doctor came out to tell us Richard had died. We sat with the body until the priest from the nearby town arrived, as the local priest was away. Prayers were said and we next went to the funeral home. As you know, Richard lived with my sister. We, therefore, wished to make things as easy as possible.

"The Lucas-Eaton Funeral Home provided the Wake. The Wake was private, for family only, and this was followed by a concelebrated Mass at St. Christopher's by the Sea Catholic Church here in York. The pastor, Father Colpitts, and the former pastor, Father Morrison, whom Richard liked, and the priest who came to anoint and pray at the hospital was the third celebrant. A beautiful eulogy was given by Father Colpitts. I have asked for a copy, but do not have it at this time.

"The burial was private in the First Parish Cemetery here in York. It was attended by the above-mentioned priests, family members and funeral directors.

"My brother loved the small town of York. He had happy years here. He also liked the hospital here and the same medical team had helped to save Richard's life from a former heart attack.

"Richard loved serving God as a Carmelite priest and, in my opinion, did it well. He was a wonderful example to me in many ways. I am saddened, but grateful he is at peace.

"The yellow roses sent by the Carmelites were very beautiful and much appreciated by my family. They rest now on the grave.

"I would like to convey my family's condolences to all of the Carmelites who were brother priests to Richard. I would also like to express deep appreciation for allowing us to do as we did, in regard to the wake, funeral and burial. (Jane Bradley)

Kevin Shanley, O. Carm.
St. Simon Stock Priory
Darien, Illinois