



Fr. Michael Nicholas OFM

I was born in Derry City in 1956, the eldest of 11 children: six sisters and four brothers. I lived in the Creggan area of the City for most of my life until I entered the Franciscan Order in 1976 at the ripe old age of 20.

I attended three schools growing up, St. Francis primary school, Long Tower school and finally my secondary school of St. Josephs. I finished my exams at the age of 16 and became an apprentice engineer finishing my time when I was 20 just one week before I entered the Order.

I grew up in a City that was going through many hard times through unemployment and what has been labelled by the media and others of the time as 'The Troubles'. This was a very difficult and troublesome time for all concerned.

It was into this situation that most of my brothers and sisters grew up in, and I have to admit I was no saint during those times; some may even say that I'm still no saint! It was from this background that I was considering becoming a priest which didn't go down to well with some of my friends, not that they were anti priest or anti church far from it; we always went to Mass on Sundays of our own accord. They just felt that our group was breaking up and going our own ways. And as I said we were no saints.

I entered the Franciscan Order in 1976 in Killarney, Co. Kerry, went to Galway University where I studied Philosophy and then to the Dominican Angelicum University in Rome where I studied Theology. In 1981 I took Solemn vows in Galway and was ordained to the priesthood in 1984 in my local parish church of St. Mary's in Derry City.

My first appointment was in Cork to help give school retreats and it was during one of those retreats that I was given the title 'the priest with the tattoos' and he is 'one of our own'. Since my ordination I have been in different friaries, working in different situations with people from all different backgrounds.

My favourite sport is football (soccer). I played for Galway university and an International student team in Rome. The teams that I follow are Derry City (my local team), Manchester United and Celtic.

So here I am among you at St. Anthony's. My wish is to continue and be part of the great community spirit that exists among you all.

Michael.