

# Southport Scout News – No. 250. 3rd March 2015

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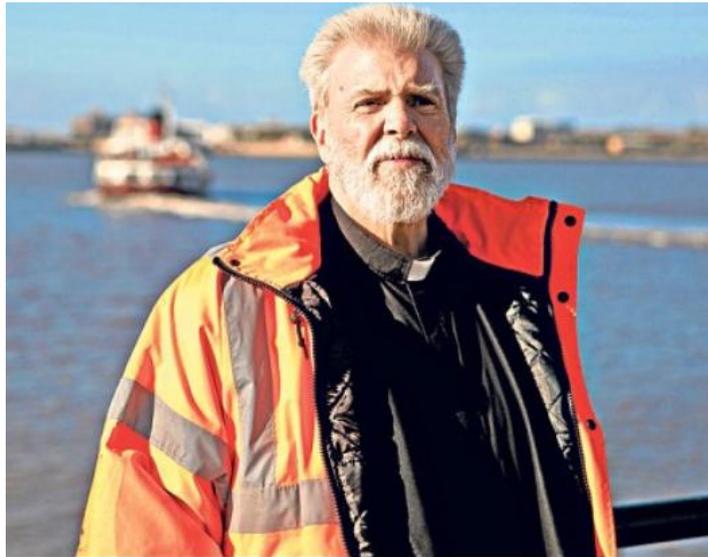


## FATHER John Seddon



**Father John Seddon died on Friday 27th February 2015 after a period of illness.**

John was ordained in Thornton in 1985 and as well as serving in parishes was the Youth Chaplain, Apostleship of the Sea Chaplain and **National Scout Chaplain**, living in Ss. Peter & Paul since 1998.



Liverpool-born Fr John worked for the Inland Revenue, as a police officer and for the Royal Navy Reserve before joining the priesthood. “When I was at school I always wanted to go to sea,” he recalls. “I just didn’t know how I’d get there.”

The route he took after being ordained in 1985, aged 33, was to become port chaplain for Apostleship of the Sea at the Port of Liverpool in 1989, ministering to the crews coming and going on ships, and working in the ecumenical seafarers’ centre at the port. He still did this on a weekly basis as well as serving as National Chaplain for Catholic Scouts.

He worked frequently as Chaplain on cruise liners. But most lines nowadays limit the presence of a priest to Christmas and Easter. “We’re actually classified by the cruise lines as an entertainer,” explained Father John Seddon, a priest working for the Catholic seafarers’ charity Apostleship of the Sea.

This in-between status means the on-board priest is neither crew member nor guest but nonetheless quickly attains minor celebrity status, simply by being out and about, escorting excursions and dining with passengers.

# Funeral Arrangements for Fr John Seddon MA

Fr John's body will be received at the Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King on Thursday 5th March at 7pm. This will be followed by a short service led by the Bishop.

As there are extremely large numbers expected, the Thursday night service has been arranged so that those unable to attend the Friday mass can pay their respects.

The funeral mass will take place on Friday 6th March at 11am at the Cathedral, led by the Archbishop, followed by internment at SS Peter and Paul RC Church cemetery in Crosby.

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"Fr. John Seddon was a devoted and fun loving Scout. His contribution to World, National, County, District and Group Scouting was inspiring to all those he worked with and led. Fr. John was able to provide an open approach to Scouting that was founded upon his own personal faith. A fun loving member of the Merseyside Team, Fr. John always had time to share and provide friendship to all.

"A true Scout who in the Founder's words 'Left this world a little better than he found it'"

*Alan Seeley*  
County Commissioner

## Rev Fr John Seddon 1952 to 2015

It was with great sadness that the Rev Fr John Seddon MA passed away on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2015, aged just 62. John had been suffering from his condition for a number of years and died of liver failure whilst waiting (and hoping) for a transplant.

There were three things that John held particularly dear to him – his Scouting, the sea and a love of folk music. For him Scouting was 'the best form of youth work' and was the one that gave young people the opportunities to become the people they had the potential to be. His love of the sea was ever evident in his activities – from cruise chaplaincy to being Port Chaplain to authoring books of prayers reflecting on the sea and oceans.

Throughout his time in Scouting he held many posts including local, national and international. These included being a Scout Leader, an Asst District Commissioner, Religious Adviser to the Scout Association and European RC Scout Chaplain. He will be remembered by many for his involvement with World Scout Jamborees – having been the UK Contingent Chaplain on numerous occasions and also the World Scout Bureau Adviser on Catholic matters.

John's mother was of Irish descent and he maintained links with his family in Southern Ireland throughout his life, visiting there every year with his sister Betty.

Fr John was without doubt no ordinary priest and no ordinary human being. He held the unique ability to be of God, but also to be accessible to all. His simple and often humorous messages in acts of worship were



legendary, having the ability to help people understand God that little bit better. He brought people to God in a way that few people could.

John was never judgemental. He wanted people to know the compassionate and loving God that he had come to serve. He understood that as human beings we were often misled and often made the wrong choices. But he wanted us to know that God also understood and would forgive as he was not a judgemental God but a loving and caring one.



Before going to seminary in Durham, John had two careers – one as a Police Constable in Bootle and one working for the Ministry of Defence (although he was responsible for the stationary stock and not the nuclear codes as he often suggested). His calling to the priesthood came in his late 20's. He once told of a girlfriend he had at the time: he met with her to tell her that he was going to become a priest and for some reason she never spoke to him again !

John was known for his love of the sea and all things nautical. He was an avid Cruise Chaplain and through this he met many celebrities, many of whom became good friends. One example of this was the comedian and TV host Tom O'Connor. Through their friendship Fr John baptised his grandchildren and performed a number of wedding ceremonies.

John could always be counted on to provide a unique perspective on many things. At my own wedding, he announced to the assembled throng that he was the only person to have slept with both the bride and groom! This was not the sordid encounter many imagined, but simply that he had shared a bedroom with us on a Scouting event in Canada !

One of the things people did not know about John was that he suffered from a huge lack of self-confidence. John loved to get a response to his comments and his thoughts – he loved the laughter that followed. He saw this as a way to get approval from people and therefore milked it for all it was worth!

It didn't matter what people told him or the response that he got, he always doubted his own abilities. And yet, he was one of the most loved and adored people I know. Wherever he went he created memories that people will cherish.

I will miss him – not just because of his Scouting or his spiritual direction and support – but because he was a friend like no other. I – and many, many others – will miss him because of the unique and special person he was.

But John wouldn't want his passing to be a sad affair – he would love all the attention! His most loved quote was from Baden-Powell was that "...the real way to get happiness is by giving out happiness to other people ...". The most effective way to remember and honour him is to do exactly that – bring happiness to others.

May God grant him eternal peace.

He may have 'gone home' but he will never be forgotten and his legacy will last for ever.

***Colin Coleman*** – his friend.