

Peter William Cannings TSSF 1948-2017

'He was a burning and shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light.' *John 5.35*

On Monday October 2nd, nearly 400 people, representing various churches, attended the parish church in Uppingham, where he had lived for 40 years, to celebrate the faith and life of Peter Cannings. I had known this gifted, outgoing man, so courageous and faithful in his last illness, quite well for nine years but I had only until then a restrictive notion of the sheer breadth of his activity and commitment. Devoutly, generously Christian, Peter and his wife, Jill, both Anglican Licensed Readers, ministered in churches across a wide area. In his last year, typically, he had scripted a play to commemorate the bicentenary of Uppingham Methodist Church and this was performed in the town, a few weeks after his funeral.

Peter was admired and loved as a schoolmaster/housemaster and latterly as a 'self-starter' businessman. He was a practical man of action on a variety of fronts and, much travelled, he had a passion for social justice and a heart for the relief of the world's poorest people, notably in South Africa and Palestine. Not long after his TSSF Profession, Peter joined the charity, Franciscan Aid and soon became a highly active chairman and energetic country-wide advocate of its work.

Long ago Peter had been inspired by meeting First Order brothers at Hilfield in his youth. When, some 35 years later, a professed Tertiary introduced him to TSSF, Peter engaged immediately, as if meeting a long-lost relation. In his ensuing, explicitly Franciscan life, relatively brief as it was, he was inspirational. He was no stranger to life-threatening illness but never defeated in spirit and the cancer which struck in his final years was in retreat until its sudden, virulent, incurable return in his last weeks. Peter died peacefully with Jill at his side on 11 September 2017. They had just begun a quiet sharing of Evening Prayer.

The life that is freely given is eternal. He was a burning and shining lamp.

Andrew Rayment, TSSF Northampton Area Minister.