

## **Ex-Man Utd star was penniless and became a priest in surprise career change.**

<https://www.express.co.uk/sport/football/2155745/Man-Utd-star-penniless-priest-Mulryne>

One former Manchester United player took a different path and has gone on to achieve great things since retiring from professional football. Philip Mulryne became a priest after retiring in 2008.

Philip Mulryne has earned widespread respect within the Catholic Church after facing bankruptcy and transitioning from football to the priesthood. The Northern Irishman spent three years at Manchester United, though he was restricted to just five senior appearances during his time there.

Coming through the youth setup at Old Trafford, Mulryne's versatility as a striker, midfielder, or right-winger made him a handy squad member. Yet cracking into a side featuring the likes of David Beckham and Paul Scholes proved extremely difficult.

He eventually left Sir Alex Ferguson's squad for Norwich in a £500,000 deal, where he made 170 appearances and found the net 20 times from midfield.

Further stints at Cardiff and Leyton Orient completed a notable football career. He also represented Northern Ireland on 27 occasions, scoring three times for his nation.

After hanging up his boots in 2008, Mulryne chose a radical change of direction rather than moving into coaching or punditry like many retired players. The former footballer began preparation for the Catholic priesthood at 31 following a spiritual transformation during his final campaign at Norwich.

Speaking to Norwich's official website in 2018, Mulryne explained: "It's hard to pin down a particular moment. I would say it started in my last year at Norwich, not explicitly and I wasn't thinking about it at that time, but I started to get dissatisfied with the whole lifestyle.

"We have a wonderful life as a footballer and I was very privileged, but I found with all the surrounding stuff that eventually there was a kind of emptiness with it. I was quite shocked - why am I not happy when I have everything that young men want?"

"It started me on a journey towards exploring my faith again, the faith that I had as a young man. I took a decision to come home for a year, and it was really during that year that everything turned upside down.

"I volunteered at a homeless shelter for a while. I started going back to mass and I started praying again on a regular basis. I just found a real sense of fulfilment with it.

"Football was huge highs and lows and here was something that was giving me a steady sense of contentment."

The former midfielder, now known as Reverend Father Philip Mulryne, was ordained as a deacon in 2016 and subsequently became a priest for the Dominican Order in 2017. During this transformative period, the ex-United star faced financial difficulties and was declared insolvent at Belfast's High Court.

The Daily Mail claim that the 47-year-old is believed to have invested in a fund that exploited a legal loophole offering tax benefits to those investing in the film industry. This scheme was reportedly used by numerous other football stars, leading to significant reductions in their tax bills.

Prior to his bankruptcy, Mulryne was a member of Tudor Films LLP and Zeus Films LLP.

The priest described this bankruptcy as a "self-adjudication", suggesting he may have initiated the process himself. Mulryne now leads a congregation at St Mary's Priory Church in Cork and has no second thoughts about his choice to dedicate his life to God.

He added: "My vocation to priesthood and religious life came later in the course of that year - I felt this strong desire for this way of life, and I stayed with it for a few months and then got the courage up to explore it. I took the decision and it's now eight years later."