

SISTER MARGARET NAUGHTON

19/9/1928 - 19/7/2024



Sister Margaret was the fourth of nine children born to her parents, Peter and Hannah Naughton, in Clonbegane, Ballydangan, Athlone, Co. Roscommon on 19th September 1928. Born into a family where the living out of the faith and the practice of religion was of utmost importance, Margaret often spoke of how her father would gather the children to pray the Rosary every evening. He had a great devotion to Our Lady and he shared it with his family. This was to prove instrumental in Margaret's choice of vocation

and God's choice of her, as she experienced a call to religious life; Marist Religious life where her love and devotion to Mary was nurtured.

She entered Saint Brigid's Novitiate in Carrick-on-Shannon on the 20th February 1947 and made her first profession of vows on 23rd February 1948. Five years later on 8th August 1953, she made perpetual profession in Paignton.

Professional training followed and Margaret attended Digby Stuart College of Education in London where she qualified as a teacher. Over the next twenty years Margaret was involved in education in a variety of schools taking up the roles of class teacher, Deputy Headteacher and Headteacher. She loved her ministry in these schools and gave of her best to all her students with particular regard for those who needed extra support. To be able to serve the Lord quietly and unobtrusively was her joy.

In 1970 Margaret was asked to go to America to join the relatively newly inserted community of Marist Sisters. With some trepidation but faith filled as ever, Margaret set out, ready to devote her energies to serving the Lord in pastures new and to meet whatever challenges might come her way with courage and trust. She often spoke of her thirty years 'on mission' in America as grace-filled times when, with the loving support of the sisters she 'found her feet'. At the Universities of Detroit and Duquesne, she achieved the additional academic qualifications she needed in order to teach in the schools and once more she took up her teaching ministry giving generously of her talents to the young people in her care. Other roles undertaken by Margaret during her years in America, were that of Provincial Bursar and Community Leader.

Wherever Margaret went, she worked with all her might for the glory of God and in the name of Mary – be it helping with housekeeping chores, hospitality or teaching – she responded readily to whatever was asked of her. She always looked 'outside the box' and kept herself up to date on world news with particular reference to areas of war and poverty and the suffering of children. She firmly believed in the importance of the 'witness we give' as Marist Sisters; endeavouring always to live the Gospel in Mary's way.

Margaret returned to England in 2000 – a country and Province very different to the one she had left all those years ago. A sabbatical break during which she participated in the Spirituality and Theology programme at Hawkstone Hall helped facilitate her re-entry and shortly afterwards she was missioned to the Marist Retreat Centre in Nympsfield, Gloucestershire. Here she quietly engaged in a multiplicity of tasks from re-organising the library, interacting with the groups who frequented the Centre; always available to help out as needed and preferably behind the scenes!

The garden and nature in general, always held a great love and interest for Margaret and in Nympsfield and during her later years in Villa Maria, she had ample scope to indulge these interests. She had great knowledge of flowers and plants and she readily shared this with gardeners and aspiring gardeners alike. Her joy was to spend time in the garden shed, potting plants and then seeing them transplanted and flourishing in the gardens.

In 2015, Margaret retired to Villa Maria in Hythe. She soon settled and embraced her new setting with ease; the community and the Care Home and was always a peaceful presence in the midst of much activity. From the time of her arrival, she had nothing but praise for Villa Maria, the staff and the facilities. She continued to read extensively and to keep abreast of home and world situations. She never forgot her years in America and followed with interest the ‘political unfolding’ there as well as news of our sisters.

During her years in the Villa, Margaret actively and enthusiastically joined the ‘Knit for Peace UK’ project, an initiative of the Charities Advisory Trust. Boxes of her completed creations were regularly mailed to the project Offices. Her contribution was widely recognised and greatly appreciated.

In her final years Margaret was never without pain and never complained. In her own words *‘I learned how to manage it and when the medicine didn’t work, I was prepared!’* Up to two days before she was admitted to hospital in early July, she engaged in the day-to-day community routine – always present in Chapel, Dining Room etc. Throughout her stay in hospital, sisters visited her each day and the expectation was that she would soon be discharged and return home. Sadly, on the 18th July the news arrived that Margaret’s condition was deteriorating and the following day she just slipped away, quietly and peacefully, just as she had lived.

May her great soul rest now in God’s everlasting peace.

