



Obituary

Sr Maura Kelly OP

11.05.1930 – 19.01.2021



"I thank my God
every time I remember you in prayer.
I constantly pray for all of you with joy
because you have shared
in the preaching of the Gospel ..."

Phil 1:3-5

Mary Cathleen's life began in Redhills, County Cavan in Northern Ireland, where she was born on 11 May 1930 to John and Ellen Kelly. She was the fifth of the six children in the family, and the youngest at the time her Dad went to war. Her Mum had to take over the responsibility of the family and the family business. A child minder took care of the younger children, and Mary Cathleen's brothers, and an assistant in their shop teased her terribly. The Kelly's neighbour, whom Sr Maura, then in her 90's, still referred to affectionately as "Old Mrs Minnie", was always on 'standby' with a hug and lovingly called to little Mary Cathleen: "Come here, my poor, wee pet lamb". Mary Cathleen loved her home and her large family and was particularly proud of her brother Tom who had become a Priest of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, and who had been transferred to Natal, South Africa and of her sister Bernadette who became a Carmelite nun.

She herself felt the call to religious life, like her brother Tom and older sister Bernadette, but followed her own calling to the Oakford Dominican Congregation and entered in Chingford, England on 7 March 1949. At reception she was given the religious name Sr Albert, which she requested to change to her baptismal name again later in her life. (The name Maura is an Irish derivative of Mary.)

Sr Maura was sent for her novitiate training to the Motherhouse in Oakford, South Africa, where she made her First Profession on 2 February 1951. Sr Maura had a gift for teaching (doing training in both South Africa and England) and spent many a long year in educating children in our own schools in South Africa. She also taught in England in Chingford and in Tottenham; and at the Newcastle Dominican Sisters' School at Rosary Priory, Bushey. Sr Maura was invited to teach English to Arab

children in the Holy Land at the Holy Rosary Middle School in Jerusalem, for two years from 1979-1981. This was a unique opportunity which gave her a whole new perspective on the history, life and faith of the peoples (Jews, Christians and Muslims) of Israel.

Sr Maura was one of the founding members of the Pinner community and then in 1988 she was transferred to Preston where she took up parish ministry: teaching catechism to the children; visiting the sick and housebound and taking a special interest in the elderly. Visiting people in their homes was a priority for her, and she listened to their stories with great patience. She welcomed visitors into the community home with a heart-warming smile and gracious hospitality. Sr Maura knew how to love and reached out to the poor and needy, and nothing was ever too much for her.

Community life always remained important for Sr Maura, with her being punctual for prayers and meals together with community members. She developed bookkeeping skills and served the community well in the stewardship of community resources. Sr Maura had a great sense of humour and knew how to laugh. She was not afraid to speak her truth and said what needed to be said!

In her later years, she returned to Pinner. Every afternoon she told the Sisters she was going to the library. The Sisters could not believe Sr Maura would walk all that distance, so one day one of the Sisters decided to follow her. Sr Maura went into a local Charity Shop, sat down and read their books. Those who ran the shop just smiled, and said it was a delight for them and they were grateful she visited them daily! Sr Maura had always been an avid reader and she loved watching the 'soapies' on TV.

Sr Maura kept a close and loving relationship with her family throughout her life. Even as the years passed, she remained connected to her siblings and later to her nieces and their families.

Just a week before she died, Sr Maura had said to the St Vincent's Nursing Home Manager, Mrs Jacquie Scott, that she was feeling tired and was ready to "go home". And exactly two weeks before the 70th Anniversary of her Profession as an Oakford Dominican Sister, the Lord called this faithful servant home. May she rest in peace.

RIP