



OBITUARY

SR. KIERAN DELAHUNTY OP

29.02.1924 – 11.10.2021



"A new-born baby
is God's opinion
that the world should go on. "

Carl Sandburg



Anne Delahunty, the second of ten children, was born on 29 February 1924 in Raheenleigh, in the Diocese of Ossory, in Ireland to James and Sarah Delahunty.

She was educated at the Cullohill National School, and at the Presentation Convent in Durrow. After completing high school, she assisted her mother in the running of the home and farm.

One day she plucked up the courage to talk to her mother of the call she felt to be a missionary Sister, having drawn inspiration from a great aunt who was a Dominican Sister in New York.

The parish priest arranged for her to meet the Prioress General of the Cabra Dominican Sisters. Cabra would have taken her as a lay Sister, but that was not what Anne had in mind. So instead, she met Sr Gerard Twomey of the Oakford Dominicans who happened to be in Ireland recruiting young women interested in religious life. Sr Gerard contacted Anne's parents, and in no time Anne was on a boat to England.

At the age of twenty-three, she entered the Oakford Congregation at Chingford in London in July 1947. After her novitiate, Sr Kieran was professed in February 1949, making final vows as an Oakford Dominican in February 1952. She trained as a general nurse, a theatre nurse and a midwife in London before being sent to South Africa, arriving in Durban on the *Carnarvon Castle*.

She completed an additional year of study in general nursing and midwifery at the Brenthurst Clinic in Johannesburg. For about 45 years, Sr Kieran nursed at Marymount and Marifont Maternity Homes, and at Villa Assumpta home for the

elderly. For many years, she was matron at Marifont, and at Marymount. She also held the position of sub-prioress and prioress of her community at different times.

Sr Kieran enjoyed her work, and valued God's ongoing creation in the cry of a newborn baby. What she found difficult was witnessing the death of a mother or a new baby. She valued friendships and family and maintained contact with many people.

There were breaks for a sabbatical at the Casa di Studio in Rome, at Veritas 3 in Germiston, South Africa, and at Hawkstone Hall in England.

Sr Kieran's dream of becoming a missionary took a different shape from what she had expected. She was struck on her arrival in South Africa by the strict Apartheid laws in place, which kept people, segregated from one another.

The newly opened Marymount did not, at the time, admit black women. She welcomed the changes brought about at the end of Apartheid as a blessing for the country, and as something she could rejoice in personally. An historical event that brought her great joy was the release of Nelson Mandela who went on to become the first democratically elected president of South Africa.

South Africa became home for Sr Kieran, but she also held on to her love for Ireland, recognizing that the Ireland of today is not the Ireland in which she grew up.

She noted the struggles with which South Africa is contending today: racism, crime, violence, unemployment, and the widening gap between the rich and the poor. Her particular hope was that God's blessing would flourish and grow in South Africa.

In her years of retirement at Villa Assumpta, Sr Kieran continued to minister to the Sisters and residents. She loved the Earth and spent time gardening and caring for flowers and plants, especially orchids.

"God has been very good to me," she said, "and I praise and thank him."

May she be an advocate for all of us from her new life.

RIP