

Memories of Peace in Christ

Sister Mary Agatha and Sister Joan Roddy were well settled in Peace in Christ, when I arrived in early August, 1967. They had been working hard, to furnish and equip the house, since their arrival in May.

It was a totally new venture for all three of us and our first Ministry apart from the Novitiate, in Ireland. Sister Mary Agatha had retired from teaching, after more than forty years in the classroom; Joan has just made her first vows and was due to start her professional studies in University College Cork the following year. I was seconded from teaching in Forest Hill. That mandate was supposed to be for two years but it continued for fourteen!



From the outset Bishop Peter Birch was most supportive. It was at his invitation that this new venture began. He was moving into the newly built Sion House, and he offered his previous residence as a centre for retreats. On viewing the property, Sister Mary Peter and her assistant Mary Columba, from the English Province, decided that the property was not suitable so plans were drawn up to build a simple structure on the grounds of the old residence.

This modest building was financed and furnished by the Congregation and the Convent was built, financed and furnished by the Diocese. We were very well supported by the Priests, Sisters and people of the Diocese. Quite quickly a very demanding programme of retreats and vigils was formulated. Week-end retreats for the laity started on Friday evening and concluded at whatever time suited the group on Monday morning. I must admit that this was hard going and was often resisted! Mid-week retreats started on Tuesdays and finished on Friday mornings. Some midweek retreats facilitated retired people, schools, professional groups and occasionally invalids

Vigils were held on Monday nights, starting at 8.00 pm and often going on until 3 or 4 in the morning. People came from all corners of the Diocese for the vigils and they were organised from the various parishes.

Weekend retreats were difficult to promote; as time went on we set up Promoters in each of the Parishes and they were very supportive and ensured that retreats were promoted in the parishes. In between retreats we did visit the parishes and indeed individual homes and places of employment to promote particular retreats.

During the summer term we had retreats for the Priests and Sisters.

Over the years different sisters came to work in Peace in Christ and so there were generally four sisters in Community. Were it not for their hard work and dedication the ministry could not have continued.

The strong foundation of hospitality and friendship which was laid in the early year continued for almost 50 years.

I was sad to leave Peace in Christ after fourteen years!

They were very happy and sometimes demanding times

However, seeing people who were often disheartened and burdened on arrival, leave energised and renewed in mind and spirit made it all worth while.

Deo Gratias

Margaret Mary Fox

