

Memories

Peg Rahilly.

Beginnings

I entered the Ladies of Mary on 15th August 1951 at 18 years old. My contact was through Maureen Crowley who was a Junior. I took the train from Abbeyfeale to Athlone in the company of Maura O'Connor (the sister of Chrissie), Louis Marie Hanrahan and Bridie Nolan. It was my first time travelling on a train. We were met in Athlone by Mr Nattan from Ballymahon and we headed to Castlecor. There we were greeted by Srs Mary Kevin and Ma Francis. Sr Joachim was also in the community but she had gone to bed. Una McGlynn RIP was also there to welcome us. Nora Agnes Murphy joined us a few days later. We got a nice welcome and were given something to eat and shown to the dormitory where we would sleep.

Next morning we were dressed in black dresses and cardigans and introduced to the house-taken on the tour. After breakfast there was a gathering and we were each given an office book which was in Latin. We spent six months as postulants. The spirituality revolved around a book called Treasure in Heaven, some of the books of Dom Marmion and the prayerful aspirations of Fr Willie Doyle. I had a bible which had been given to me but this was taken away and I never saw it again. Reading the Bible was not allowed. Even the priests of the time did not seem to read the bible- certainly didn't seem too familiar with the scriptures. Ma Francis and Kevin were great women of faith. Kevin had a love of the Founder which she tried to impart to us. She taught us singing and etiquette. Ma Francis gave us talks based on Treasure in Heaven. Our spiritual reading was usually from the writings of Dom Marmion. We started the day with the Divine Office, followed by Meditation and then Mass. The Office and the Mass were in Latin. When I was a Postulant the Novices were Catherine O'Sullivan, Mary Elizabeth Rudden and Kathleen Brady. Mary Elizabeth and Kathleen left some time later because of ill-health. Mother Joachim was the Superior and she was aloof. She was originally from Kerry but had spent most of her life in England. She was a bit posh- a cut above butter milk! We were kept busy with the domestic chores. We did our own washing/laundry, cooking and sewing. I was good at sewing so that work fell to me. My Mother had had a sewing machine (a hand machine) and so I was used to stitching before I arrived in Castlecor. I was never good at cooking so others did more of that. I remember making habits for the Novices and embroidering the Ave Maria on them.

The diet was basic. We had milk from the farm. We made our own butter. We had eggs and potatoes. The orchard provide us with apples and raspberries and strawberries when in season.

Ma had a great devotion to The Blessed Sacrament. We regularly had a Holy Hour. The emphasis was on keeping the rules, the traditions. We were free to go out and I loved to walk in the grounds and enjoy the beauty of nature. That was a great outlet for me. We used to walk in pairs to the river Inny. We had no telephone in those days. We received

and sent letters. Sometimes we would see a letter from home on Ma's desk but it could be three/four days before it would be passed on. You didn't question things. The letters we wrote home had to be left unsealed and they were read before being sent. Neither Ma nor Kevin had any preparation for the roles they were undertaking. They were deeply spiritual women but they lacked practical skills. The house was very cold. There was a furnace down the back corridor and our job was to shovel coal into it. There was a huge range in the kitchen and again we spent time feeding it with coal. As I explained earlier I was fairly good at sewing so I was exempted from a lot of the cooking in order to be free for the sewing tasks.

Novitiate

A reception ceremony marked our entry into the Novitiate. As novices we wore black habits, white veils, a half-scapular and black aprons. This was the time when we got a new name. We were allowed to put forward three names out of which the final name would be chosen. Ma usually had the last say in which name you would end up with. So I was given the name De Fatima by Ma. (Later in Africa someone said to me: Don't ever change the name De Fatima; the FAT bit suits you.) We were dressed in white dresses and veils for the reception- like Brides of Christ. The Bishop came for that ceremony. At some point we



were hustled to the dorms where our hair was cut to the skin. Ma and the older sisters would have been the hair-cutters. Then the veil was put on and we went back to the Chapel with our veils on and all that paraphernalia around our faces.

Our families had come for the Reception. My parents hired a hackney car and a driver to bring them to Ballymahon- a very long

journey in those days. It was an expensive outing. We weren't allowed to greet them until after the ceremony. My parents came and Noreen, Dan, Mickey and Kit. It was an emotional reunion. Noreen (my sister) entered a year after me. She wanted to go to Africa. In the Novitiate we were expected to be more mature, more responsible but the routine of the day was pretty much the same as in the Postulancy. Office, Meditation, Mass, Breakfast. Grand silence at night and until after breakfast. We used to gather in the front hall at night and sing the Salve Regine around the statue of Our Lady. We would then disperse in silence. The good nun was the one who kept the rules and spent her time washing and ironing and mending. At sewing time we prayed the Rosary as we stitched. No chit-chat during the sewing. You couldn't mend your own stuff...We often had laughs too.

Something would happen or someone would say something in a low voice and would set us off.

On the first Sunday of the month visitors were welcomed. Those who came from the local area were able to see their families then but as my family lived at the other side of the country, they were unable to visit.

The Novitiate lasted for one year and was followed by a 9-month period in Belgium. Bernadette Marie was the Novice Mistress in Belgium. She read out talks to us in English. There were no French classes for us so we just tried to pick up whatever French we could. I found that the Sisters in Belgium were keen to learn English – keener than we were to learn French so conversations with them tended to be in English. Confessions, Mass, Office were all in French. We made tartines for the boarders and did the cleaning for them. At that time 139 was multi-faceted. It contained a boarding school for about 100 boarders; it was the Generalate and it was also the Novitiate. I think there was also a primary School attached to it.

I was quite happy in Belgium. I could understand more French than I could speak. Listening to talks in French was a challenge. My jumelles from England were Lucille/Joan O'Donoghue, Mary Matthew, Louis Marie, Ann Daplanta. (Sp?) My Belgian jumelles were Marie Claire and Etienne. Etienne's English was very fluent. She had taught in Scotland.

We made First Vows in Belgium- in French. After 1st profession we wore black habits with a full length blue scapular. We were then told where we were assigned for the next phase of our lives. It was taken for granted that the Irish would go to California. However, I was informed that I was to return to Castlecor and stay in Ireland. I had a fear of living with Ma Francis. By this time Joachim had returned to England and Mary Columba had come to Castlecor as bursar. Those who were going to California usually got a visit home before leaving; however, it was a further two years before I had my first visit home. When it eventually happened I could not enter my home and had to stay with the Presentation sisters in Castleisland. My parents had to pay for taxis to travel back and forth to see me.

Some place along the line Ma decided to buy a car. It was a red Austin.. wooden type.. and named Rosario.. (Rosary Convent!). It was bought from Winters in Carrig-on-Shannon. A woman from the car sales business taught Eileen Hanrahan and myself to drive in 2 lessons. I was scared stiff that I would knock someone down. Ma dismissed those very real fears. I knew nothing of parallel parking, hill starts, three-point turns.. no notion about any such sophistications. God was good to us that we were kept safe and other road users too.

College Years

I was in Castlecor for three years at that time and my job was to teach the Juniors. In 1957 I went to Dublin to attend UCD and I lived at Muckross Park, the Dominican Hotel that hosted many of the Student Nuns. In its way the student days were a freeing time. The Prioress in Muckross Park was a Dominican sister called Genevieve. She had been to Scarborough and she kept a strict eye on me to ensure I had done my meditation!! The nuns had their own

dining room in the University - did not mingle with lay students. There was no going out in the evenings – so availing of evening lectures/ extra talks was not a runner. For any nun out in the evening during those years there was the risk that Archbishop John Charles McQuaid could come cruising by (as was his wont) and you would be put into the car and taken back in disgrace to wherever you lived. Sarah and Liz McCarthy joined me in UCD a year later. I studied Irish, Maths and English but if I were studying all over again I would choose science. I think that was more my bent than Arts. My college years were 1957-60.

I made my final vows in Belgium in 1959. It was my first time on an aeroplane. We had the full regalia- crowns etc- for this ceremony. I remember the kindness of Bernadette Lecluyse who took us to many of the places associated with our Founder. Prior to the Final Vows I made a retreat in French. Then I returned to Dublin and finished my course.

For some time after qualifying I was back in Castlecor and preparing Juniors for the Matric exam. In 1962 Judith was in Ireland and she asked me to go to Africa. I wept at the thought of Africa and one of the others brought a relic of St Teresa to comfort me. Little did she realise at that moment that St Teresa was patroness of the missions and that I was destined for Uganda and that the cause of my tears was leaving Rosary Convent and Ballymahon for an unknown and faraway place.

Uganda.

In January 1963 I headed for Uganda.. with chill-blains from the cold of Ireland still on my hands and feet. I have memories of Entebbe with the red earth. Brigid Stokes met and we went to Nsambya for accommodation. I still recall the strangeness of being under a mosquito net and feeling claustrophobic. On we went to Mbarara and on arrival a meal was put on the table- a hard-boiled egg. Those who know me will know that isn't my favourite food. Kathleen Rathe was the superior. Cathleen McCarthy, Francesca, Maureen Nugent and Teresa Clements (Ignatius), Hazel Ingold were there. As a community we also enjoyed the company of the nurses_ Brigid Stokes, Mary Fintan and Silvia Probst. We loved to hear their stories of the work in the dispensary or villages. We were quite a big community by that time. The Convent had been built and was occupied. We had our own rooms with wash basins. Eight classrooms of the school had been built (Red Brick)- they were used as dorms, dining room and classrooms. There were 96 students in the school when I arrived. (1st and 2nd years). Some of them were as old as myself. They were a mix of faiths from the beginning- Catholics, Church of Uganda, Muslims, Hindus. There were as yet no Africans on the teaching staff. There were two priests- Fr Nielson and Fr Abbott on the staff. Fr Neilson was chaplain and they both did some teaching. They were a great support. They were both Diocesan priests one from England and the other from Scotland.

In asking me to come to Uganda Judith presented it as a two-year stint to teach Maths. However, when I arrived I was given Health Science to teach. I had to read and educate myself and keep a page ahead of the students! The system of education was based on the British model and different from what I grew up with. We were still in habits at that stage, maintained silence and lived that kind of monastic life. Yet there was a great openness to visitors- male and female- and a sense of freedom that went with that. We had a great

rapport with the White Father Brothers- Karl, Dan, Brother Black etc. Bishop Ogez (also a White Father) was very kind to us.

The building of the main block was starting at that stage. Mary Hilda (Kathleen Rathe) got a lot of funding for it and also had a lot of creative ideas about the design of the building. She was Superior and Cathleen the headmistress and the lack of clarity around boundaries made life difficult for both of them. When I had been there for 6 months Cathleen went on a sabbatical and I found myself Acting Headmistress of the school. We were coming up to 1966 and the first O level exams so there was exam pressure in the air. However the students did very well, thank God and many got openings in the bank or admission to schools and colleges for further studies. Jen was a lay teacher then along with Doreen Drake. After the exams Mary Hilda decided that the girls would be taken to Nairobi for an outing. We were blessed in those years to have had Brothers Barsabas and Bonventure, White Father Brothers, who were skilled in construction. That was a big help as the work of building went on. I find it hard to imagine that from those small beginnings Maryhill has expanded as it did.



Postulants in England including Sr. Josephine Beebwa.

On outstanding memory that I have is of the excitement among us when we came to know that our first Ugandan woman was about to enter with us. Josephine Beebwa was about to give up her teaching job in Kabale and take the risk of joining us. As yet we had no novitiate in Uganda so Josephine went to our English novitiate. She settled in very well and made lots of friends

and went through the novitiate programme with courage and confidence- lighting a way that others would follow.

Another outstanding memory from those years was the occasion in 1964 when the Church in Uganda experienced the Canonisation of the Uganda Martyrs- - martyrs from both the Anglican and Catholic traditions. There were great celebrations at both national, local levels especially at Namugongo, the Shrine of the Martyrs. Mary Goretti Busharizi, Headgirl of Maryhill, travelled to Rome with many other pilgrims for the Canonisation ceremony. I still remember the overflow of enthusiasm that filled her on her return. It was contagious. She spoke with pride and wonder that 'our brothers' were now saints. While in Rome she also visited some of the slums/ poorer parts of the city where she saw poverty and homelessness first hand. In her sharing with her fellow students later she described all of this and told them that they didn't know what hunger and poverty were. They all had something to eat and someplace to lay their heads. This was not the case for some poor people in Rome. It was an eye-opener.

My first visit home was in '67. I remember Cathleen returning in that same year. It was post-Vatican 2. I remember her being on fire with the vision of Vatican 2. There was a contagious buzz about her. Her sister Elizabeth had attended Corpus Christi which was fermenting with this new theology. That marked the beginning of our community sharing. Others who were a big part of community life were Mary Moran, Agnes O'Shea, Kathleen Foy, Mini Day, Katie, Liz McCarthy, Sarah,, Eileen and Mona. The new school dining room was built and Katie was appointed Matron. I taught Katie to drive. I had a devotion to the Breastplate of St Patrick and would say it as we set out. On one occasion as we entered the area in front of the Post Office Katie lost control and pinned a man to the wall. Fortunately he was unhurt and fearing that he had been at fault, he ran away. Katie turned to me and said : 'So much for your prayers!'

I have an abiding memory of some time in the early 60s when many refugees arrived from Rwanda. There were nuns who arrived on our doorstep, tired and exhausted with dirty white habits- having escaped through the bush. We tried to clothe them while their white habits were being washed, dried and ironed. They were the lucky ones being able to take a plane from Entebbe to Belgium the next day. Not so lucky the large numbers of Rwandaise who also had trekked through the bush and arrived in Uganda. Whole families arrived and some had their herds of cattle. They had no place to lay their heads till the Ugandan government found camp sites for them -not always in the best locations. Many of the younger generation of these refugees attended our schools and did extremely well in their studies even though English was their third language.

The Advent of the Jerusalem Bible: change in the air.

I have very happy memories of each of us receiving and cherishing a personal copy of the Jerusalem Bible. This was also the time when the documents of Vatican 2 became available. I remember us as a community avidly reading the Document on Religious Life, on Divine Revelation, on the Church etc. We were thirsty for these new insights and they greatly influenced our lives. I remember Judith's phrase that we should have the Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other. It was a radical shift from the devotional spirituality with which we were formed.

The Chapters of '69 and '70 were a challenging time for us as a congregation. Ruth who had spent some years in Brazil was elected Superior General and she chose Barbara Batten as her assistant. Both were imbued with the spirit of South American Liberation Theology and very enthusiastic about the renewal of religious life. It was contagious. As a congregation we set about studying our Founder's writings; identifying and naming our own charism and writing our Constitutions. For the first time in the history of the congregation everyone was invited to be involved. Ruth had great vision and organised Plenaries which, at times, were very painful events. We hadn't arrived at the stage when we knew how to use facilitators for meetings. Neither did we realise the benefits of counselling which some certainly needed. Often the tensions between the old and the new- the traditional ways and the new models of religious life were played out painfully at these meetings. Perhaps we were too

close to it all to stand back and see what was happening. At this time many sisters left our congregation and other congregations. It was a time of turmoil. However, happily bonds of friendship have remained and many of those who left have continued their spiritual quests and make a wonderful contributions to Parishes and to the lives of others in different ways. There is also a very strong network of friendship and support among former DMJs.

It was also around that time that we changed from being Ladies of Mary to being Daughters of Mary and Joseph as we were known in California. We slowly changed from the wearing of habits to a more contemporary style of dress. We also moved to structure ourselves into Provinces. The lot fell on me to be Provincial of Uganda from 1970-1974.

Fort Portal.

In 1969 at the request of Bishop Magambo (and with a heavy heart) I bade farewell to our DMJ community and to Maryhill Community and went to Kinyamasika TTC in Fort Portal where I took over from Philomena who had been Principal there for many years. Teacher training was entirely new to me but I must admit that I thoroughly enjoyed the experience and loved working with the students in being creative and using local materials wherever possible. One student in her enthusiasm arrived back from holidays with a collection of porcupine feathers/needles to use instead of drawing pins. She didn't see any health and safety problems!!

We enjoyed our community life in Fort Portal; we welcomed Ruth on her first ever visitation to the congregation. Visits from our sisters in Burundi were a joy and enhanced the spirit of internationality which received such emphasis at that time.

Coup

An experience I would rather forget is that of the first ever coup that took place in Uganda in the early 70s when Obote was overthrown and Idi Amin took power. From then on the whole country went downhill, people suffered, many of our good friends were murdered and chaos reigned. We had a mini-famine. We didn't know the hour when we might be expelled from the country.

In the midst of the chaos and uncertainty we decided to stay and remain with the people in their suffering. This act of solidarity was greatly appreciated by many Ugandans especially the Bishops of Mbarara and Fort Portal.

In 1974 we opened our novitiate in Mbarara. It was an act of faith and a sign of hope for all around. Bishop Kakubi often said that at the very worst of times when people were disappearing, leaving the country, being expelled the decision that we made to start a Novitiate was a sign of hope and lifted his spirits. Sarah Durkan was the first novice mistress and the novitiate was located in a school staff house. Mary Moran formed community with Sarah and Anna Mary, Donatilla and Mary Kizito were the first entrants.

Ghana and changed plans.

That same year Kinyamasika TTC was handed over to Ugandan leadership. There was a strong emphasis on 'Africanisation' in those years. I was invited to Peace in Christ to work in the Retreat House. However, that was not to be. Hardly had I arrived in Peace in Christ when there was a phone call from Ruth. Sr Barbara Batten had died suddenly and I was asked to change my plans and go to work in Ghana. My ministry was to be that of formation with a Diocesan Congregation, The Infant Jesus Sisters, founded by a Holy Child Sister and Archbishop Amissah. The community in Peace in Christ were so kind and supportive as I struggled to grapple with the request of Ruth and discern which direction I should take. Like Saints Paul and Patrick I seemed to hear a small inner voice asking me to come and help and so started my ministry in Ghana, West Africa. I remember arriving in Accra and the heat rising from the tarmac was almost overpowering. While waiting for the Archbishop and June Bell whom I had never met, I spent a few hours in a convent of the Spiritan sisters. I still remember the banner/poster on the wall of my room saying: 'The best in life is still to come.'

And it did. I was the only European in the community of the Infant Jesus sisters and so was inserted into Ghanaian life, culture and customs. I am most grateful to the Infant Jesus sisters for welcoming me and making me one of them. In Uganda our ministries were in a more institutional context and so there was more of a sense of separateness between expatriates and Ugandans. Our early years in Uganda were close to the colonial experience and still in the shadow of it. Ghana had been the first African country to get independence in 1957 so perhaps it had shed the shackles of colonialism more. There was also a sense in which there had been more inter-racial relationships in Ghana and so less distinct and separate groups. It was not for nothing that Ghana was called the Gold Coast. The gold mines were/are in the centre of the country and it was deplorable how little the miners were paid by comparison with the prices that the gold fetched. Small wonder that some of the miners tried to conceal finds of gold in whatever way they could.

There were just three sisters in formation and at prayer one day I found myself asking myself 'What are you doing here with such a small number after leaving a busy classroom life in Uganda?' It slowly dawned on me that as a congregation we, too, started off small. The formation ministry was a hard one as this little group was still in its infancy and hadn't yet defined their charism. It was a time when they were in the lead-up to their first ever Chapter. We also had the experience that the Archbishop would send for the sisters/ 'the girls' to prepare for his guests etc... it was hard to have



Peg, Eucharua (Margaret Cussen)
and 2 Infant Jesus Sisters.

boundaries and insist on a stable programme when they were at his beck and call...I think I fell out of favour with him over taking a stand on some of these issues.

Soon many more DMJs joined me in Ghana with various ministries- including ministry to Drug Addicts, Street Children, to Leprosy Patients, in education, health care, dispensary work, primary health care, social work, librarianship etc. We had ups and downs and survived famines and coups. Regine was in Nigeria during those years and I recall visits from her and in turn visiting her in Port Harcourt. In '81 I went to Ofoase to be with Catherine Marron, Sheila Barrett and Monica Smyth. Agnes Cujo took over the formation ministry to the Infant Jesus Sisters. After Ofoase I attended the Loreto House programme in Dublin. It was a time of re-insertion in my own culture and that year was a very good experience for me. God was surely with us through it all.

Ghana holds many happy memories for me and many friendships were formed (as in Uganda); some of the most precious friendships were among the leprosy survivors. This ministry which has started like a mustard seed has blossomed and grown, thanks to the hard work of committed and hard-working DMJs and Ghanaian co-workers. What a joy that we now have three Ghanaian sisters- Olivia, Lydia and Theresa. May there be many more who will join them.

Back to Uganda.

Another unforeseen call to me was to return to Uganda and work in formation with our own sisters. From 1987-1993 I found myself in Ibanda with another wonderful community which included Agnes Charles who had been expelled from Burundi. We arrived in Uganda close together and found ourselves together in Ibanda so from the beginning a bond was forged. We did our best in the formation programme. At that time Christine and Renee Butoyi were preparing for First Vows; Anastazia and Salome (RIP) were first year novices. There were three postulants- Hedwig, Concilie and Rose Birungi. This was surely a very challenging time for me but a time for which I will always be eternally grateful. I look back with gratitude and pride on the fruits and of those years and previous years. I marvel when I think that Hedwig and Marie Claire are now members of the CLT; Anastazia is Headmistress of Maryhill; Teresa Bateta (a student from the Kinyamasika days) is Headmistress of Coloma and Christine is in charge of the St Francis project. I am grateful for all of those who formed part of that formation community –the professed members and those in formation- those who stayed as well as those who left. They all left an imprint on my mind and heart. I am aware too that I've only been an instrument (hopefully of Mercy) in the Lord's Hands in all that delicate work of formation.

During those years- in 1988 - we experienced the violent and tragic death of Monica Beebwa, an event that left a lasting mark on all of us. Monica was much loved and full of life and vibrancy and humour- as well as wise judgement. Her death was a huge loss to our small Province.

I have memories of the General Chapter of '93 in Gaba, Kampala. The novices worked so hard in cleaning and scrubbing to have the place ready for Chapter. Maggy O headed to Kampala to get the ingredients for the Mandazi/ cakes to banish the cockroaches- boric acid mainly, if I remember.



Anna Mary Mukamwezi and Peg

Back to Ireland

Having spent 6 years in formation I was replaced by a very capable Anna Mary Mukamwezi and returned to Ireland- having been invited for the second time to work in Peace in Christ. Again, this was a challenging ministry. Margaret Moloney brought a very creative and Scriptural approach which was appreciated by all. Kathleen

Clancy and Margaret Maguire also formed part of that retreat team. Confirmation retreats were one of my favourite events as we tried to mould some of our future leaders of Church and State. I was in Kilkenny for almost 20 years- the longest stretch of any of my ministries. Old age caught up with me and so I retired to Tallaght where I continue to just BE.

I have had a very gifted life. So many opportunities came my way to serve in different ministries- none of which I was prepared for. It was a journey of faith and each experience left a stamp on me. When I think of Uganda I see the huge strides that the country has taken and the witness of women of faith, vision and perseverance. We lived through wars, coups and famine, not knowing from day to day when we might be thrown out of the country. I feel so grateful that we chose to stay and open a novitiate. It was decision taken in solidarity with the people. It has borne fruit in many ways. When I think of Ghana it is the Mustard seed that comes to mind. I have a memory of a funeral of a leprosy sufferer in Ghana. Friends gathered wild flowers and placed them in the crevices of the coffin. There was a small bucket beside the coffin which held all his possessions. It was so poignant, simple and beautiful. It taught me something about life. Every decade I seemed to be in a new ministry and that helped me to stay flexible and not get stuck in any one mould. Being with young people for so much of my life kept me young at heart.

Over my 83 years I thank God that I enjoyed very good health being in hospital only once in my 30 years in Africa and that was for Malaria. However, I have been visited with many different maladies since retiring. Through it all I am grateful for my community, my sisters nearby, everybody in the Region and beyond who support me with their prayer and solidarity and phone calls, emails and Skypes.

I must admit that I am very excited and grateful that we as a congregation are celebrating our 200th anniversary since Foundation. I love our monthly reflections and of course I look

forward to welcoming Teresa Groth from California and all the sisters from Africa who are coming on pilgrimage.

May those who are working hard on obtaining visas etc be blessed as I say with CVC :
Courage and confidence.

As Joan Chittister would say: From where I stand NOW I can look back over a long and fruitful life, enriched by so many nationalities, peoples, cultures, customs and languages

I am grateful to the Triune God for calling me to the DMJs, for gifting me in so many ways throughout my almost 84 years.

I have been blessed by God

By family

By DMJs

By friends.

Blessed with good health until recent times and even if I have to have some chemo, the Lord continues to touch me in so many ways.

- Blessed to be in community where my every need is met.
- Blessed to be in a Region where everyone is so caring, kind and thoughtful.
- Blessed to be in a congregation where there are always surprises around the corner
- Blessed to have Region and CLT with such vision and long-term planning.
- I can say too (because I can't sing!) MAGNIFICAT because He that is Mighty has done great things for me too.

Uganda has blossomed and grown beyond all imagination. Great is the faith of those who have taken the long journey of building from scratch and continuing to give young girls a chance to be educated.

Lovely too to see Kabale extend and venture into new ministries.

I am so conscious that in all the phases of my life I journeyed with great DMJs and colleagues.

I am touched these days by Mary Oliver's poem PRAYING.

It ends with a crucial invitation: **There exists a silence in which another word may speak.** We have to be reflective and attentive to the silence in order to hear that other word.

Peg Rahilly

February 2017.

