



## SISTER HILDA KENNY

27-03-1930 – 19.02- 2024

Hilda Mary was born to Michael and Juliana Kenny on 27<sup>th</sup> March 1930 at Kilglass House, Legan, Mostrim, Co. Longford, Ireland. She received her Early Years Education in her local Primary School in Mostrim, County Longford and her secondary education at the Marist Convent School in Carrick - on - Shannon. She was received into St. Brigid's Novitiate, Carrick-on-Shannon on 6<sup>th</sup> August 1951. She made her first profession on the 7<sup>th</sup> August 1952 when she was given the name Celsus and was henceforth known as Sister Celsus until she returned to her baptismal name.

Having completed her professional training at University College Dublin where she graduated with a B.SC in Chemistry, Mathematics and Zoo-ology, Hilda commenced her teaching career at the Marist Senior School in Fulham in 1957. Her skill and prowess as a science teacher were widely recognised and appreciated and later as Headteacher, her leadership and total fidelity to her role was embraced by staff and students alike. Other localities where she taught included Sunninghill, Birmingham and Doncaster. Her interest in each student was holistic, embracing the human, spiritual, academic and psychological – sound preparation for life after the classroom. To quote from a letter received from a group of her past pupils less than two years ago *'Sister Celsus, you are the strong, caring, compassionate, generous, independent and intelligent woman, who inspired all of us during our school days, helping us to become the strong women we are today'*.

An academically adventurous person, Hilda kept herself updated as new initiatives in education were introduced and a wider and more comprehensive curriculum put in place. The 'new' technology in its many guises appealed to Hilda and at a time when computer studies was being introduced in schools and parishes, she was a much sought after 'resource person'. Later, as a member of the team at the London University Chaplaincy in Gower Street, Hilda reached out to students and staff alike, providing a listening ear and sound practical advice to all who called on her.

Having joined the White City Community in 2002, Hilda became a valued volunteer at the 'Kalayaan Centre' in Notting Hill, a registered charity, set up as a support and advocacy resource for Filipino migrant domestic workers, many of whom were trafficked into modern day slavery. Her service here was widely appreciated as she gained the confidence of the clients, assisting them with visa applications, passport problems etc. She spread joy and hope among the most vulnerable and changed lives for the better on many occasions.

Her compassionate and caring nature saw her involved in supporting sick and disabled pilgrims on many visits to Lourdes, Lisieux and Knock. Hers was a joyful, optimistic presence which lightened the burdens of those who carried much suffering.

With true Marist tenacity, Hilda's passion for people and for giving her selfless energy and spirit in whatever ministry she was called upon to embrace, was tangible. She loved the Scriptures and she endeavoured to follow Jesus and to live the Gospel after the example of Mary, our good mother. However, as Hilda's health began to fail she was obliged to lessen her involvement and then to withdraw completely from the areas of 'active' service which she loved.

In 2012, she joined the Villa Maria Community. Here she proved to be a patient and grateful receiver of the loving care of the staff. She was uncomplaining and constant in her praise and gratitude for all. Her final years were lived out largely in silence ... yet on her good days, she would join in prayers with the community members who were faithful to 'dropping in' on her each day.

Hilda slipped away peacefully in the early hours of 19<sup>th</sup> February. No one expected her to leave us so suddenly but then – Hilda was one who loved to surprise people!

May her great and generous soul rest now in God's eternal peace.

