

## **Eulogy Anne Manning 19.7.1944 – 17.4.2016**

Anne Sheena Manning joined the Sisters of the Good Shepherd in Johannesburg South Africa in 1963. Knowing the woman she became, we can imagine the hope of a better world which energized the 19 year old Anne. Her keen and searching intellect, her capacity to absorb and synthesize information could have led her to contribute in other fields. But when she recognized discrimination and disadvantage, she was impelled to seek solutions – practical solutions to improve the lives of people, particularly women and children. Anne found her natural home in Good Shepherd.

Since Anne's death we have been flooded with messages of support from sisters and lay mission partners all over the world. Many acknowledge her clear insight that working to change structures of society which keep people disadvantaged, is integral to Good Shepherd mission. It is not an optional extra. Anne is described as a woman of vision, a deeply insightful leader for justice, committed to finding systems solutions to issues of global inequality.

Many experienced Anne as deeply reflective, with her passion for justice fuelled by compassion. She could lead with generosity and grace and she was a good team player. Many people mentioned her dry humour. Anne was greatly loved.

Anne's world view was forged in the maelstrom of South Africa during the apartheid era. It was formed within her own family. Like many others, the Mannings did not accept their status as members of the privileged minority in South Africa and each in their own way did all they could to challenge unjust national and social structures. This led to each leaving the country they loved. One painful consequence for an emotionally close family was limited opportunity to spend time together as a group of sisters and brothers.

They were always there for each other. When Anne was felled by illness during the Congregational Chapter in Angers, France in June 2015 Peter Barbara and Tony came to Angers and stayed at the Mother House. Their daily visits to Anne in hospital strengthened her for the long journey back to Australia where Kathy Chris and Timothy waited to provide ongoing family support through months of medical treatment. In February Peter Barbara and Tony came to Melbourne for a long visit. They knew that these weeks were precious and made the most of every moment.

In 1980 Anne transferred to Australia. As social worker, she was involved in various ministries supporting women and families: Collingwood, Carnegie, Springvale, Rosebud in Melbourne; Nerang and Goodna near Brisbane. Anne lived for 5 years in the small country town of Dareton NSW as a way to connect with and develop her understanding of indigenous Australians.

When living in Brisbane in the early 90s, an idea that had germinated in Anne's mind in Dareton began to take shape. With the strong support of the province leadership team of the time, Anne made connections with a number of provinces overseas. Over time, The Trading Circle was born – a Good Shepherd fair trade company marketing products made in income generating projects for economically poor women in Asia, Africa and South America, sold in Australia and New Zealand. The Trading Circle took over Anne's life. Her co-worker Sister Helen Swiggs built the project in Sydney, setting a very high standard, and the initiative spread through the hard work of many others to Melbourne, Perth and Auckland. The good achieved by the project over 20 years is hard to measure. From the Hands of Hope project in Thailand: 'We will be forever grateful to Anne for starting the Trading Circle and through it, helping thousands of women live with dignity and build new lives for themselves and their families.' This was the main aim of the project. But it also raised consciousness of important global issues here in Australia and New Zealand.

Anne grew to love Australia and was delighted when Kathy, Chris, Tamara and Timothy moved here in 1983. She could have found our politics banal by comparison with South Africa, but became avidly interested. Anne enjoyed bushwalking a lot. She loved her Hawks. She looked hard at them at the beginning of this season before expressing herself impressed by the calibre of the current line-up of new younger players.

Anne read widely and deeply. Always she read the Scriptures and biblical commentary, and was nourished by the writings of Thich Nhat Hanh Buddhist monk, poet, scholar and human rights activist. For pleasure she read large tomes which most would read as duty in areas of history (modern and ancient), politics, social planning, theology, spirituality. She also read crime fiction.

Over many years Anne was constantly member of province leadership teams, regional and international planning teams and working parties. Her participation in teams was always significant and influential in terms of creating capacity and achieving useful outcomes.

Early in 2011, the time was right for her to take a period of sabbatical leave, and she fulfilled a long held dream - to walk the Camino de Santiago. Over a period of 6 weeks, Anne walked from St Jean Pied de Port in western France to Santiago in northern Spain, a distance of 800 kilometres. She loved the rhythm of the daily hours of walking, the variety of landscape, the tiny villages, the towns, the simplicity of shelter and food, the freedom to connect with others sometimes, the space to be alone at others. Most of all she loved the experience of being at one with the earth, connected with the people who had trod that same path over centuries, all of them with their longings and hopes.

Anne faced squarely the global injustices and tragedies of the human community. Her deep and grounded spirituality enabled her to hold on to hope. This passage nourished her:

Though the fig tree does not blossom  
Nor fruit grow on the vines,  
Though the olive crop fail  
And fields produce no harvest  
Though the flocks vanish from the fold  
And the stalls stand empty of cattle  
Yet I will rejoice in the Lord  
I will exult in God my saviour.  
God, the Lord, is my strength;  
He makes my feet as light as a doe,  
He sets my steps on the heights.  
*Habakkak 3:17-19*

Anne chose to be a woman of hope. I believe that this lifetime practice of hopefulness sustained Anne through the months of her illness. We thank Dr Allan Zimet and the medical teams at Epworth Hospital. Anne gained strength from the skilled, personal and constant care she received. Anne faced her illness squarely, believed she would not survive it, but hoped that it would not destroy her. It did not. She has died to this world and her energy endures through the good she enabled. The imprint she has left behind is forever.

*Pamela Molony*