



## Sister Clare Goodman CJ

1924-2016

by Sister Gertrude McManus CJ

In the evening of Sr Clare's death on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> June, we in our Cambridge Community gathered in our chapel to pray the Prayer of the Church for our departed sister. I was very struck by some of the prayers of intercession on her behalf. Several of us prayed in thanksgiving for the love we experienced from her, and one mentioned how her compassion went out to the poor men in York whenever she sat with them and entered into their conversation. This, I think, sums up her whole life, her sharing and giving of kindness and love to all those she lived with and met.

Sr Clare was born in April 1924 at Bexhill on Sea and her family name was Margaret Emily Goodman. Both her parents were Catholics, and her father's work in the Anglo Indian Company often took him away to India. The family lived in a large house called Fairacre. There were six children: George, Arthur (who was to become Cecilia's father), Agnes, Beatrice, Margaret and Joan. It was a very happy family. Margaret began her education at the local village school and was then sent to Ascot where she was very happy. She had an Irish nanny who used to take her home to Ireland in the summer holidays where she enjoyed playing with all the animals. Sr Clare often spoke to me about the fun she enjoyed on her nanny's family farm.

At the end of her Ascot schooling and a final year at Errollston, the young Margaret Emily decided to enter the Order's novitiate at Ascot in September 1942, having been attracted by how happy

all the nuns seemed and because she felt drawn towards a full relationship with God within the life of a convent. She had done well in her all her studies much to the joy of her parents, I guess. She was perfectly happy, willingly exchanging all the lovely memories of her home for new life with God. In 1943 she was clothed as a nun, taking the name of Sr Clare. In 1945 she began her studies at Reading University, reading History, Latin and Maths for a general degree in preparation for teaching. She would make use of all her studies, including a Certificate in Religious Education, to the great advantage of her many pupils down the years. After university Sr Clare began teaching at our school in Shaftesbury, where in subsequent years she was Head Mistress for six years.

Then there came a big change in her life, when she was sent to our house and school in Zimbabwe, a change which she eagerly embraced. She taught there for some time in the United College of Education in Bulawayo followed by 3 years in Chishawasha. These years working with children in Africa were always very special to her.

On her return to England Sr Clare was sent to Cambridge, then subsequently to York where she was in charge of St Joseph's, then on to Hampstead, and finally again to St Joseph's after a most amazing life of dedicated service to youth. Sr Clare was so loved in all the schools where she taught, holding also at different stages the big responsibilities of Head Mistress and Superior. On her pathway through life she took an interest in so many people, including some who were disabled, and delighted to keep up whenever possible. In our Cambridge Community we keep contact with one of that large number. Sr Clare's life in God glowed.

At St Joseph's she was very happy, surrounded by wonderful kind caring nurses. It is a marvellous place with Sr Agatha at the helm, cherishing all her charges. Sr Clare loved singing, and tucked into her Zimmer she had written out all her favourite hymns. One of those is "*Peace flowing like a river*". I am sure many of us felt the flow of that peace which she showed in various ways. She said that she thanked God for the joy in people's faces, and also especially for "my niece Sr Cecilia".

May Sr. Clare now enjoy singing all her favourite hymns with the angelic choir in heaven. I am so sure that her love for God supported her all her life. She has run the race and finished her work here earth. We will miss you dear Sr Clare, and your radiant smile. Eternal rest grant to her, O Lord, and let your perpetual light shine upon her. May she rest in peace. Amen.