

Remembering Sister Moira Donnelly, RSCJ

In the mid-90s, Sister Moira warmly welcomed me for the first time to The House of Prayer in Edinburgh. I had read 'God of Surprises' by Gerard Hughes and was strongly drawn to finding out more about the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises. Little did I know that Moira was opening a door onto a whole new world and that she and others at 'Nile Grove' would gently lead me onto one of the most significant pathways of my life.

For two years I met Moira for regular wonderful conversations, having no idea that they could be called Spiritual Direction/Accompaniment! Inspired by 'tasters' in ways of praying and reflection which she gave me, I enrolled onto the GPRL course. Like so many others, this led to undertaking The Spiritual Exercises, followed by training in Faith Accompaniment (as it was called then) and Spiritual Direction. Moira was a member of the tutoring team on all three courses. I was simply blown away by the breadth of course content; the enthusiastic and skilful teaching; and the generous hospitality we received at Nile Grove.

Moira had an outstanding gift for teaching. Underlying everything she taught was a desire to draw us closer to God, but with an emphasis on each person's freedom to discover their own unique spiritual personality. For Moira it was important, and a delight, that the groups were as widely ecumenical as possible. In her teaching, she was at home in the landscapes of theology, a variety of Christian traditions, world wisdom, the natural world, poetry, music, art, movement, philosophy and more. I remember her sharing gems from spending time with First Nation Americans and on another occasion telling us about a 'Clowning and Spirituality' summer workshop she had thoroughly enjoyed. Moira taught from heartfelt experience, from her creative imagination and from her active and incisive intellect. She could be very humorous too. Moira quoted spontaneously and meaningfully whilst teaching; and she could quickly select a book to lend to me which I would usually find was just perfect for that particular time.

Moira kindly continued to encourage me beyond the training, both personally and at varied events hosted at Nile Grove. She was always very interested in my family too. After moving to Aberdeen then Dalkeith, she wrote me lovely letters each Christmas, for as long as she was well enough.

I am just one person, amongst so many, whom Sister Moira has deeply touched, through her loving encouragement and exceptional teaching.

From the bottom of my heart, Thank You Moira.

Jane Davidson