

R.I.P

Sr Genevieve Bergin

13.3.1931 – 25.10.2025

Sr Genevieve, Mary Agnes Bergin, was one of four children born to Patrick and Josephine Bergin in Dublin, Ireland on 13th March 1931 into a devout Catholic family. Inspired by the apparition of The Virgin Mary at Knock and at Fatima, Genevieve desired to give her life totally to God, in service of the sick and the poor. At 17 years of age in 1948 she joined The Daughters of Charity in Stillorgan in Dublin, and later was sent to London in England to The Orthopaedic Hospital in Pinner, Middlesex, where she lived for about fifteen years before she became the Matron. She was a very caring, gifted sister with a strong desire for prayer. This desire for prayer lead her to ask to be received into the Cistercian Order at Holy Cross Abbey in Stapehill Dorset, England in 1973.

After her transfer Sr Genevieve was soon caring for the sick and elderly sisters and became the Infirmarian. She was a very dedicated prayerful sister and had a great energy and enthusiasm for living the Cistercian life to the full. She combined being Infirmarian and Prioress to M. Catherine.

When the Community had to move from Stapehill Sisters Catherine, Elizabeth and Genevieve were instrumental in the whole process of relocation to Whitland in Wales, U.K. in 1991. When M. Catherine was re-elected Abbess, Genevieve was appointed Prioress and was a tireless worker in helping to set up the monastic life at Whitland.

Unfortunately in the late 90's she had an accident and was severely concussed leaving her with a brain injury. Afterwards she was diagnosed with the Bi-Polar syndrome, which she probably had undiagnosed for many years, managing her own symptoms. Sr Genevieve still contributed to the Community life, especially in the altar bread sorting, which she loved; and had not lost her gift for friendship. Guests noticed her prayerful manner in Church and drew inspiration from her. Later Sr Genevieve had problems with memory loss and was diagnosed with Alzheimer's; the one thing she had dreaded. In the early years it caused her great suffering and was hard to accept; but later she found peace through her deep faith and love of God which sustained her to the end.

In 2010 it became increasingly clear that she needed 24hr nursing care which the community could no longer manage to give her. Sr Genevieve moved to St Vincent's Nursing home in Pinner, Middlesex on the Feast of St Vincent de Paul, the site of the former St Vincent's Hospital. When she arrived there she was greeted by many of the Daughters of Charity who had worked with her in the past. She lived there with superb care for 15 years. After a couple of years she said she found great peace and was happy.

On the afternoon of 25th October 2025 as she was dying, Fr Brian anointed her, M. Jo and Sr Usia visited her, and she had a video call with her niece Lisa and then Sr Edith. That evening she died very peacefully. It is a mystery how she lived so long, so peacefully, gradually becoming totally dependent on others. She had a charism for bringing joy and peace even in her helplessness.