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St Margaret Mary's Letter:

Dear Children, Parents and Carers,

I write to you all today, with the sad news that Sr Alphonsus of the Presentation Sisters, passed away peacefully yesterday at home in the convent. This was following a long illness over the last few years.

I am going to share a little information about Sr Alphonsus & her life, devotion & time spent in North Manchester & particularly the St Margaret Mary's Community. Sr Alphonsus was born in 1937, in Cork, Ireland. She entered the Presentation & Convent in Livesey Street, Collyhurst at the age of 18. She officially 'entered' the order three years later & last Sunday, marked sixty-two years since she had taken her religious vows.

She enjoyed her teaching career & was a patient & dedicated teacher. She became Headteacher at St Margaret Mary's in 1980. In the words of her fellow Sisters; **Sr Alphonsus 'never wasted words'. 'She was a straight-forward character, who loved children & found pleasure in their enthusiasm & sense of humour.'**

Due to ill-health Sr Alphonsus retired early, & when she recovered she became a Hospital Chaplain at North Manchester Hospital. As well as taking-up this role with devotion, she would visit the sick & housebound of the parish & other surrounding areas, bringing comfort & company. Sr Alphonsus had a great love of St Margaret Mary's School & the children & families who are a part of this, taking delight in the many successes & achievements of all. Her final work with the Divine Mercy Movement, filled her with great joy & many parishioners benefitted spiritually from this devotion, alongside the charitable monies raised for those living in poorer countries.

So, at this sad time I ask that we spend a short while focusing our prayers & thoughts on the Presentation Sisters & the convent that sits at the heart of St Margaret Mary's Community.

We are very blessed & unique to have them living amongst us & so closely woven into the fabric of St Margaret Mary's. We can take inspiration from Sr Alphonsus, the Sisters who live at the convent & their Mission, example & devotion.



I have provided a brief overview of the Sisters of the Presentation & the founding of their order, as this is at the heart of what forms them & sustains[ed] our dear friends Srs. Cecilia, Gabriel, Dolores, Rosaria & Sr Alphonsus.

Founding: Nano Nagle founded the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary in 1718. She was a founder & pioneer of Catholic education in Ireland during the 18th Century & as such declared **venerable** by Pope Francis in 2013. Born Honoria [Nano] Nagle, into a wealthy family she devoted her life to the poor, fighting for education & promoting social inclusion. At this time education for Catholics in Ireland was forbidden, unless by strict conformity & attending the Church of Ireland.

Her parents sent her to France at a young age to receive a Catholic education. From here a series of life changing events inspired her to devote her life to the service of the poor & in particular the young.

Her devotion & mission developed into serving the young & ensuring that they received an education. Under secret, Nano established a number of schools across the city of Cork, providing education & instruction. By day she would educate the poor girls & boys of Cork & by night she would visit the alm-houses & streets of Cork to serve & comfort the poor & the homeless. In doing so she travelled the streets at night with a lantern & became known as the 'Lady of the Lantern' who tended to the poor & vulnerable. Upon inheriting money from a wealthy uncle, Nano founded a convent for a teaching order that went on to become the Presentation Sisters. The Presentation Sisters would go on to found convents & schools around the world, including the ones based in Livesey Street Manchester, founded in the 1830s & later the convent adjacent to our St Margaret Mary's School.

Sr Alphonsus & the Sisters who are part of the fabric & history of our school & parish can trace their history back to Nano & her faith, devotion & Mission. Their Mission being to bring the Gospel message to everyone, particularly those on the margins of society.

We remind ourselves that Jesus works through us; in our actions, in our decisions & our ambitions for the children & families that we work with. As a school; staff, children & families we will miss her dearly.

We remember Sr Alphonsus, her family & the Presentation Sisters in our prayers & thoughts over the coming days & weeks.

Take care & God Bless!

Mr Sutton

Headteacher



"May Love Be Our Lantern Flame" Nano Nagle

