

Annie's faith was central to her life. A friend from the same school year remembers seeing her at weekends in the village pub where she was always the life and soul of the crowd. He told me he was always impressed at the deep faith of her special friendship group in their teenage years. Indeed, the group met once a week before school to pray together as well as their regular Sunday evening meeting which she often led.

Annie went to Sheffield University to read American Studies in 1997 and never left the city, apart from a year at UNC Chapel Hill as part of her course where she integrated fully with US students rather than sticking with the ex-pat group. After a year as chaplaincy assistant - where her role involved welcoming and being available for students and leading liturgies - she took a degree in Biblical Studies, learning Hebrew and Greek, and continued her studies to gain an M.Phil. Teaching RE followed at a Sixth Form College in Nottingham travelling every day from Sheffield. She was later asked to teach Philosophy and decided to broaden her knowledge by taking a degree in PPE with the Open University graduating with First Class Honours.

She joined Church Army's Training Team in October 2016. It was the perfect job, combining her Scripture knowledge, easy manner with people from all walks of life and her skill in writing and delivering resources. Being a Catholic added another dimension to the team. Church Army works in some of the most deprived communities in the UK and Ireland, working with children and teenagers, the elderly and everyone in between. It also serves those who are homeless, lonely, those experiencing self-harm, who are at risk of gang or knife crime, the unemployed and those who are struggling to make ends meet.

Annie was also involved in various ecumenical and evangelistic initiatives in Sheffield and beyond including many years as a Samaritans' volunteer, often doing the night shift despite working full time. She was a key member of the Night Fever Mission team in Sheffield - an evening of prayer, music, contemplation and outreach at St Marie's Cathedral which takes place two or three times a year. Many of those who are invited in have no previous experience of church and enjoyed the welcoming atmosphere Annie and others provided.

She loved travelling and visited many countries: USA, Australia, the Far East, North Africa, Kenya and much of Europe. She had friends from all over the world and enjoyed being part of the international community in Sheffield. She was a keen walker, exploring the countryside in the UK. She also made a walking pilgrimage in April 2016 from Sheffield to the shrine in Walsingham in Norfolk, journeying 15 or so miles a day. On one of the days she met some ladies who were running a food bank. She wrote: 'They gave me tea and biscuits and made a fuss of me - after meeting with them briefly word of my pilgrimage seemed to spread in the town, so that people approached me in the street and in the pub of the next town to ask if I was the one walking to Walsingham ...' Each evening she wrote a blog of her reflections, ending on the last day with a quote from Helen Keller: *'Life is either a daring adventure or it is nothing at all.'*

A highlight for her was making the Camino pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. James, Christina and Catherine have signed up to make the pilgrimage on a virtual basis in her memory:

<https://www.facebook.com/608650595820049/posts/3264336950251387/?d=n>

In August 2012 and August 2013, she volunteered in a Children's Home near Nairobi, Kenya. The Home was established in 2005 by a local woman, Teresia, to care for destitute children from the streets of Nairobi. Typically these children have been victims of abuse or neglect. Some of them are orphans; all of them are vulnerable. Teresia went out into the streets to find children and offer them a home. When Annie visited there were over 100 children being cared for. The organisation, Heritage of Faith and Hope, has established a school in the Mlolongo area and its students are doing extremely well. Lives have been transformed and education has enabled these children to lift themselves out of drug addiction, poverty and despair.

Annie wrote: 'Volunteering in the Home is an uplifting and enriching experience. My tasks include playing with the small children (who get very little one-to-one attention), teaching them basic Art, English and Maths, weighing tomatoes and other food, logging donations, helping to set up basic computer systems and helping to sell the Home's produce in the local community. When I visited in 2013, my friends Teresia and Joseph took me to another Home that they have recently set up in Murang'a, which is about three hours away from Nairobi. This new Home has very little - no sanitation, no water, no electricity, very little food, no money for clothes or school fees. So this new Home in Murang'a has become my personal charity project.' Annie continued to raise funds for the project which she sent regularly to Kenya. We plan to keep the charity going in her honour.

Annie was our middle child of five, although only seven minutes older than her twin Joe. She is survived by her brothers James, Matt and Joe and her sister Catherine, James and Christina's children Cormac 13, Maggie 11, Maeve 8, Lorcan 5 and Ambrose 2, Matt and Caroline's daughter Eve 3 and Joe and Laura's twins Rosie and Isabelle 3 as well as many godchildren. Annie was always a very hands-on aunt and godmother. She loved visiting the little ones and playing all sorts of silly games.

Our middle three were only 18 months apart and they were always very close: people were sometimes unsure which two were the twins. Growing up with three brothers Annie often hoped for a sister. There were nearly ten years between her and Catherine but in adulthood the gap diminished and they became close friends.

It was a privilege and a great joy to have known her but sadly for such a short while. Annie truly was a gift from God and now we give her back to God, strengthened in the hope that we will meet again. May she rest in peace and rise in glory.

We plan to play this at her graveside service next week in the open air that she loved so much – friends have said they sung this at the Sheffield Chaplaincy and on Holy Island retreats which Annie helped organise:

*I arise today through the strength of heaven  
Light of sun, radiance of moon  
Splendour of fire, speed of lightning  
Swiftness of wind, depth of the sea  
Stability of earth, firmness of rock*

*I arise today through God's strength to pilot me  
God's eye to look before me  
God's wisdom to guide me  
God's way to lie before me  
God's shield to protect me*

*From all who shall wish me ill  
Afar and a-near  
Alone and in a multitude  
Against every cruel, merciless power  
That may oppose my body and soul*

*Christ with me, Christ before me  
Christ behind me, Christ in me  
Christ beneath me, Christ above me  
Christ on my right, Christ on my left  
Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit down  
Christ when I arise, Christ to shield me*

*Christ in the heart of everyone who thinks of me  
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me*

*I arise today*

**Based on St Patrick's Breastplate**

<https://youtu.be/fqxzBxZooqc>