

Sr.Enda has passed away on 16th November, she was aged 93. When someone dies, one of our Korean expressions that we say is that the person has returned to heaven, and returned to God. This is a sad moment for all of us, as we say our goodbyes to Sr.Enda, especially family, friends, Columban sisters and Columban friends around the world. However, this moment is also celebration of remembering how her life was cherished.

Sr.Mary Enda Staunton was born in 29th December 1922 in Westport, County Mayo. She had 7 brothers and 3 sisters. Sr.Enda was close to her family, nieces and nephews throughout all her life. Fr.Jim, who was special and very close to her, was not able to come from Australia and Gerard who is in Britain is represented by his 3 children, but her sister Margaret is here today and her nieces and nephews.

Sr.Enda entered the Missionary Sisters of St. Columban in 1941, trained as a medical doctor at U.C.D (National University of Ireland) and qualified in 1950. Sr.Enda was one of the pioneer members of the Columban Sisters mission to Korea. After five months travelling, Sr.Enda and her companions arrived in their destination in January 1955 and they found out that the country was destroyed after the Korean War. As she said there was nothing! Literally nothing in the country! Sr.Enda recalled that the country and people hadn't got much and poverty was seen everywhere. She resonated herself pretty much with the Korean people: like the Korean people she, a foreign missionary, who came to help with nothing.

She was a wonderful missionary, working hard she was the first up in the morning and last to go to bed at night and very generous. She believed and lived in God's providence. She gave everything, took patients and treated them, and never thought about money as she believed that tomorrow will be taken care of itself. And so, there was a miracle. Just before the opening of the clinic, a foreign army doctor who was returning to his home left medical equipment to her to use. He was a total stranger and she even didn't know who he was.

Sr. Enda was busy with treating patients, and she felt that she was lucky that most of her patients hadn't received medical treatment for a long time, and so they were cured with single injection or single dose of medicine.–Sr.Enda specially loved and cared for the Columban fathers and they were all under her medical care including Archbishop Henry and Bishops Quinlan and Michaels. She was confident in medicine and the Columban fathers really appreciated her.

Sr.Enda worked in Mokpo and Gangwendo, and later on in Jeju Island from 1976. She liked Jeju Island very much. Halim in Jeju where the clinic and the convent were near the seaside which reminded her of her home town in Westport. She also had outreach helping people with disability, Hansen's disease, poverty and even went to visit prisoners. When Sr.Enda was asked about her healing ministry, what did she hope to achieve. She told interviewer the following:

Well, I never had achievement in mind. My dream was that when our Lord was on earth, he looked after the rich and the poor, and I hoped it could be my privilege to do something like this. Even if the day is long and one is tired, well it was the same for Him too. I came to serve and to give what I had to give and I have received 10,000 times more than I have ever given!

Sr.Enda received several awards for her contribution to the people of Korea. To name a few - the "President's Medal" which was for outstanding contribution to Korean life, and "doctor of the year" award from the Korean Women Doctors in 1993. Also, she was recognized by her home County, County Mayo, receiving the overseas people of the year award in 1995. But, most cherished award she felt, was an award from the people with Hansen's disease. Sr.Enda and Sr. Stephanie, who is with us here in Magheramore, used to visit the village for people with Hansen's disease in Naju, once a month, when they had day off on Sundays. Later on government took care of them, but they remembered the Columban sisters. At the time, when the Sisters handed over Mokpo hospital, the people with Hansen's disease heard about this news, they came and presented a special plaque and silver Celtic cross to Sr.Enda and Sr.Stephanie. That was the most memorable award for her.

Sr.Enda was called mother Teresa in Jeju Island. She lived in Korea about 50years longer than her home country as our Missionary call often asks us to live. Korea was her second home. Her mind became similar to Korean people; she hoped the country will end division between north and south. Sr.Enda once expressed that she hoped to serve in North Korea after reunification. She was well aware of people suffering in the North, and she felt for the Korean people.

Sr.Enda returned to Ireland in 2005, and soon after, her illness developed and she gradually drifted away from us. However, from time to time, when she heard Korean, she showed some reaction.

One of our Korean sisters, who is mission in Myanmar, her name is Enda, and she proudly say her name was after Sr.Enda. When she was born, her God mother consulted with Sr.Enda about this child's baptismal name. Sr.Enda suggested her how about naming her 'Enda'. The Godmother and the parents of this child were very happy with this name because Sr.Enda was well known in Jeju Island for her good work and her contribution. Korean, Sr.Enda who is in Myanmar told me that if you don't know the name of Enda in Jeju Island, you were treated as a stranger or even as a spy from North Korea.

Just one other little story I would like to share with you about Sr.Enda. Kim Joseph, about 5 years old who lived in Jeju would phone her in the morning in the convent before the clinic and say "Joseph isn't feeling well today." She would tell him to come to see her and he said "ok, but no injections." He would come and discuss his symptoms with her like two old friends. On Sundays he'd come to Mass and sat beside her-never said a word. One week she was not there and he went home. His mother asked him why he was home and he said "if she's not going neither am I."

Sr.Enda is certainly remembered and loved by many people in Korea, especially in Jeju Island. We will miss her greatly, but we are also happy that Sr.Enda is now with God.

I would like to conclude with sharing of her Moto, this motto reflects what Sr.Enda wanted to live for her life. Her motto is from Mary's reply in the Annunciation.
"Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to your word"

Reflection by: Sr. Josephine Hong, SSC