

I was privileged to know, and be enriched by knowing, Rosemary, through a variety of activities: in Abingdon Ladies choir, town twinning, but mainly through the CiA, the Churches Together in Abingdon.

When I joined the Abingdon **Christian Aid** team way back in the '90s, I first met Rosemary in the publicity and education sub-group - she was so well informed on global social justice issues, and brimming with ideas for engaging the wider public. We spent enjoyable hours preparing fun interactive games to run in the market square, alongside the fundraising stalls, to put across the theme of each Christian Aid week.

Then later, in helping out with the **Experience Easter** project of Trinity Learning, which Maurice has so well described - and in her **Prayer Spaces** programme too, - I was very much aware of her openness, and sensitivity to the issue of sharing the Christian story of Easter with children and teachers of different Christian traditions, of different faiths, and of no faith. Starting with that peaceful moment when she calmed the children to begin the storytelling, - at the same time calming the nerves of the team of helpers of all denominations whom she had gathered around her -, or sharing peace in song at the end of the session, she succeeded in opening up the universal themes of love and service, death and loss, hope and commitment, for reflection by such young children, without proselytising, reaching people wherever they were at on their spiritual journey.

It was a deep commitment to **ecumenism** that informed Rosemary's participation in Abingdon's very active **town twinning** scene. For those who don't know Abingdon well, our town is twinned with not one but five towns in Europe: in Germany, Belgium, Italy and two in France. Her first experience of twinning was with a joint CiA choir visiting Argentan in Normandy, and she was hooked. With her cheerful empathetic nature, and desire to engage with our hosts on a deeper level than polite expressions of hospitality and sightseeing, she quickly made friends there and in Belgium and Alsace.

She obviously felt a deep desire to bridge divisions between people of different traditions, and was keen that we Abingdonians in the Church Twinning group should get to know each other's religious practices, so as better to share our British ecumenism with people in our twin towns, for whom this may be a new experience. To mention a few of my good memories of her: going up to read the intercessions together, and sharing eucharist, in the magnificent church of S Germain in Argentan, hearing her bubbly account of communicating with no common language with the priests at the clergy house in Sint Niklaas where she stayed, and, in Abingdon, preparing worship for our exchanges, and planting crocus bulbs of friendship for our visitors to take away, as she explained Trinity Learning to them.

The last project shared with Rosemary was in the church twinning team preparing the next exchange – this time, an invitation to Abingdon rather than a visit by us to one of our twin towns. This was to have an **eco-church theme**, which was dear to her heart, as she was a great believer in the **stewardship of the environment** being an integral part of faith, rather than an optional extra. With her creativity, energy and organisation, it meant that there was a very original programme ready to invite churchgoers from all our five twin towns, to share good practice in environmental stewardship. Sadly this was prevented by the pandemic from being realised, but would be a good tribute to her should it be possible at a future date.

But maybe that *wasn't* the last project, because even in lockdown as her health problems threatened, she used her skills to gather photographs and reflections from us, to make the prayer walk we'd planned for the exchange, into a *virtual* reflective walk around our town in lockdown, which could be shared online by Abingdonians and twin-town citizens alike.

It seems that when thinking about Rosemary, one holds not just her in one's thoughts, but one has the impression of being connected to those hundreds of children and adults whose lives have been influenced for the good by contact with her.