



Above: Angela with blue poncho, Llanwrtyd Wells, in 2012. photo: Zelda Jeffries

Angela Broome - faithful disciple

Fr. Martin Newell cp

We said goodbye, or more accurately 'au revoir' - see you again - to a faithful, founding member of the London Catholic Worker on the 1st of November. It was fitting that Angela's funeral should be on All Saints' Day. All of us at her funeral, held at the beautiful South Downs Natural Burial Site in Hampshire, perhaps learnt that there was more to this remarkable woman than all that we already knew.

My favourite memory of being with Angela was going for a meal in an Eritrean restaurant on Essex Road. We had just signed the lease for what became Dorothy Day House, the first Catholic Worker house to open in London since the 1960s.

I first met her as we were preparing to mark the walls of the Ministry of Defence on Ash Wednesday in the late 90's, and we were arrested together a number of times over the years, whether with Catholic Peace Action, Trident Ploughshares, or the Catholic Worker. She was a veteran already by then. I only found out exactly how much of a veteran at her funeral.

Angela was on the first anti-nuclear Aldermaston March in 1958 and was a member of the Committee of 100 direct action organisation in the 60's, although first she had joined the Christian peace group, Fellowship of Reconciliation, in the early 50's, and remained a member all her life.

Angela's Anglican Christian faith was a quiet, ever-present rock in her life, as were her family; that is to say, her sisters, nephews and nieces, because Angela remained single throughout her life. She lived in a tiny flat in the east end of London and devoted herself to social work with families and children, in what is now Tower Hamlets. She combined this employment with all kinds of good works in the rest of her time. Angela was an active member of her local Labour Party, local CND branch and the Muriel Lesters affinity group of Trident Ploughshares.

In her latter years she was on the committee of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, all the while a key member of the London Catholic Worker. Not only that, but Angela was for many years involved with the Christian Socialist Jubilee Group started by the well known Anglo-Catholic priest and author, Kenneth Leech, until it folded in the early years of this century. In the midst of all this, Angela was a faithful member of her local parish church, and kept up strong relations with her family - sisters, nieces, nephews and more, taking the younger ones especially out to plays and concerts.

Angela was steadfast, determined, kind, gentle, thoughtful, patient, quiet without lacking confidence, and inspiring to many. Her only flaw appeared to be her hoarding, embarrassment about which meant that for years she never allowed anyone to visit her at home. It has, however, given her family a treasure trove of material from her younger years, including letters from her

father who lived and worked in India for a few years, during part of which time in Angela's childhood the family had moved there. When I did manage to visit her in her flat after her terminal diagnosis, she remained as dignified, non-self-pitying, and interested in others and what was going on in the world as she had always been.

A few years after we had started Dorothy Day House, then Giuseppe Conlon House, and Scott Albrecht and Maria (then Albrecht) the Catholic Worker Farm, Angela told me she saw these communities as some kind of miracle, 'They shouldn't be possible, but they seem to be'.

Later, since her illness, Angela told me that seeing the Catholic Worker in operation had restored her faith in what was possible: a real living out of God's Kingdom. Well, that's what she meant, although Angela was probably a bit briefer than me. For these things too, I am deeply grateful. I look forward to seeing her again when we meet again in the fullness of time and eternity in the love and presence of the Creator of all. Deo gratias.

Eternal rest grant unto her, O Lord. May perpetual light shine upon her. May her soul, with all the faithful departed, rest in peace. Amen.

Fr. Martin Newell cp is a founder of the London Catholic Worker. He lives in a house of refugees in Birmingham.

Below: Angela Broome protesting with the Muriel Lesters outside the offices of Lockheed Martin offices in Regent Street in 2012. photo: Zelda Jeffries

