

FOREWORD

Daphne Wormell's life was so rich, and her quality contributions in various fields so many, that few who knew her could be aware of the full compass of her activities and her talents. This account will fill in many gaps for most of us, and for others it will call up happy memories of hours spent in the company of this brilliant, loving and versatile woman, who arrived from Canada to study in Trinity College Dublin at the age of twenty-one and remained in Ireland for the rest of her life.

My own memories of Daphne date from her later years, when we worked together on the Women's Ministry Group in the Church of Ireland, which she chaired. Some of these can be found in my book *Embracing Women: Making History in the Church of Ireland*¹.

One thing that was great, though somewhat deceptive, about Daphne was her gentleness, which disguised her strength and determination, as she provided leadership and support for women sensing a vocation. She was an admirable talent scout and networker, always coming up with the right person to help solve a problem, attend a special meeting, or fill a vacancy. In this, her contacts through TCD, where her husband Donald was Professor of Latin, and her committee memberships in the Church of Ireland, were invaluable; and her recruits were always willing, charmed as they were by Daphne's appeal. A major point of

¹ *Embracing Women: Making History in the Church of Ireland*, Ginnie Kennerley, The Columba Press Dublin, 2008

agreement between us was the importance of sweet reasonableness, coupled with serious study, in making women's voices heard and women's vocations accepted in the Church. We agreed that no one would be entitled to speak of us as 'viragoes' or a 'monstrous regiment of women'.

As Daphne said to Patricia Hastings-Hardy as they processed together up the nave of Canterbury Cathedral, we should act with dignity and grace. Of course this required no special effort for Daphne; it was her natural approach to everybody!

Daphne was a remarkable woman who moved from a hard life in the prairie country of Western Canada during her childhood in the 1920s to the challenges of raising a family through the war and post-war years in England and Ireland. From the beginning of our friendship, I was aware of her warm dedication to the causes she believed in, her compassion and her lively mind. It was also clear that she was a devoted mother and grandmother, a loyal wife and an expert homemaker. But only in reading the pages that follow have I become aware of how great a contribution she made in so many areas, both personal and educational, as well as in the Church of Ireland.

I owe her much for her many personal kindnesses. She was the kind of person who could deal with great issues but never forgot the little things which make such a difference to individuals. When I had taken all four Christmas services within fourteen hours in my first year as rector of Narraghmore and Timolin with Castledermot and Kinneagh in South Kildare, and refused all local invitations to Christmas dinner to avoid offending any of my new parishioners, it was typical of Daphne to invite me to share in the festivities at her home in Shankill. She was one of my most loyal friends and encouragers. What a lot I and all the first generation of women clergy owe to her!

So it is a delightful privilege to write this Foreword to the story of Daphne's life and achievements. She came to the task of writing it as she did many others: she started, indicated the way, and then handed over the baton – in this case saying to Julia, her only daughter, 'There, Julia. We got to the Fifties. Now you know all the rest.' Of course, Julia did not know all the rest, and had to do much research to complete her mother's story. The result is a wonderful tribute to a great lady indeed.

Ginnie Kennerley,
Dalkey,
September 2013