

TEXT OF THE INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS delivered by **DR ART COSGROVE**, Vice-Chancellor, President, University College Dublin – National University of Ireland, Dublin, on 13 June 2003 in University College Dublin – National University of Ireland, Dublin, on the occasion of the conferring of the Degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris cause*, on **SISTER ANNE MACENEANEY** and **SISTER MARGHERITA ROCK**

Chancellor and Members of the University:

I am privileged and honoured to present Sister Anne MacEneaney and Sister Margherita Rock to you for the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws.

They represent two religious congregations and two hospitals which have a long association with this university. St. Vincent's was established in 1834 by Mother Mary Aikenhead of the newly-formed Irish Sisters of Charity. It was the first hospital founded and run by women in these islands and the first teaching hospital of Newman's Medical School.

The Mater Misericordiae Hospital was opened in September 1861 by the Sisters of Mercy. Their mission, under the inspiration of Catherine McAuley was to heal, to offer hope and to bring peace of mind to the sick poor of Dublin. On the day following the official opening, the Mater was established as a centre of clinical education and training for medical students at Newman's University at Cecilia Street. The Catholic University School of Medicine and its successor, the Faculty of Medicine at University College Dublin, has had a relationship with these two great orders and hospitals for almost a century and a half. Such has been their impact that even to-day medical graduates of the University will identify themselves by the appellation 'Mater' or 'Vincent's', and the rivalry between the two sides is a product of the pride each takes in its own institution.

Anne MacEneaney (better known to many as Sister Marie Peter or simply Sister Marie – P) was born in Naas, Co Kildare, the second eldest of eight children. The family moved to Kilkenny and Anne was educated at the Loreto Convent gaining her Leaving Certificate in 1957. Anne worked in the pharmacy opened by her mother after her father's death until she was accepted by St Vincent's Hospital (St Stephen's Green) for General Nurse Training. During her time at St Vincent's she met the Sisters of Charity and was greatly impressed by their selfless love and care for the poor and sick of society. After qualifying she entered the Religious Sisters of Charity and has worked in many aspects of the Health Care Ministry with the congregation ever since.

Following her Religious Profession, she had nursing experience at Clydebank in Scotland, at the Cappagh Orthopaedic Hospital and at Kilcreene Orthopaedic Hospital in Kilkenny. While awaiting the opening of St Vincent's Hospital at Elm Park, she spent six months at St Bartholomew's Hospital, London updating her experience in general nurse practice.

When the new hospital opened in November 1970, Sister Anne was appointed to a Ward Sister post which she held for eight years. This position engaged her in many aspects of nursing care including General Medicine and Surgery, Gynaecology, Orthopaedic and Plastic Surgery, and Oncology.

In 1979 she was appointed as Community Leader to Cappagh Orthopaedic Hospital and there began her involvement in Hospital Administration. From 1985 until 1987 she held the post of Director of Nursing at St Vincent's Hospital, Elm Park, a time of severe cutbacks in the health service. While heavily engaged in managing equitable Ward Closures and reducing staff numbers, she tried to keep the best service possible available to patients.

Her appointment as Congregational Provincial Leader in the period 1987 to 1993 took her out of the health service administration and into congregational administration. This she followed with a sabbatical year while she took a course in Biblical Formation at Ecce Homo, Jerusalem. She returned to Cappagh Orthopaedic Hospital as Community Leader and became a member of the Board of Management as well as serving on the Hospital Executive Council. In 1998 she moved to St Vincent's University Hospital, Elm Park as Community Leader.

As part of the on-going review of the Sisters of Charity healthcare services worldwide, the Sisters of Charity determined in late 2001 that St Vincent's Private Hospital and St Vincent's University Hospital (incorporating St Michael's Hospital, Dun Laoghaire) should operate under a joint governance structure. The decision was based on non-financial objectives – namely *'the development of the hospitals in a manner that accords with the charism and ethos of the Congregation, and enables the staff of both hospitals to continue to deliver their ministry of healthcare with a focus on the values of human dignity, quality, advocacy, justice and equity'*, as communicated by Sister Una O'Neill, Superior General, on 19 November 2002.

The process was completed last January and Sister Anne is currently a member of the newly established Board of Directors of St Vincent's Healthcare Group Ltd. In grappling with the many problems facing the healthcare system, the Board will be able to draw upon Sister Anne's vast knowledge and experience.

Born and educated in Galway, Sister Margherita Rock entered the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy at Carysfort, Blackrock, Co Dublin. Having completed Teacher Training in Carysfort College of Education, at the request of the Congregation she undertook undergraduate and postgraduate training in Social Studies at University College Dublin and the Catholic University of America in Washington DC, where she obtained a Master's degree in Social Work.

In the 1960s and 70s, she was involved in numerous institutions to advance the cause of child care. These included the Mater Child Guidance Clinic, the Mater Child and Family Centre in Ballymun and the Special School for Children with Dyslexia at Baggot Street.

As a member of the multi-disciplinary team of the Mater Department of Child and Family Psychiatry for more than twenty years, she participated in providing a specialist service to a population which was in excess of three hundred thousand people and which included approximately fifty primary schools in North Dublin.

In 1987, Sister Margherita was appointed Executive Chairperson of the Board of Management of the Mater Misericordiae Hospital. During her term of office, the hospital experienced unprecedented financial constraints. Of necessity consolidation of existing services became a priority. Despite these difficulties, however, a number of new services were introduced, including the Infectious Diseases Unit, the Acute Adult Psychiatry Unit, the Catherine McAuley Day Centre for the Elderly in Leo Street, the Breast Screen Programme and the newly refurbished Diabetic Day Centre. During her period as Chairperson, several other projects were undertaken which improved facilities for both staff and patients, notably the commissioning of the first phase of the new Mater Hospital Development, the Alton Centre for Clinical Sciences, and, more recently, the Catherine McAuley Centre for Medical Education and Research in partnership with University College Dublin.

With the introduction of a new governance structure in 2002, Sister Margherita's role as Executive Chairperson of the Board of Management ended. Fortunately this did not mean that the hospital was deprived of her expertise. She continues as a member of the Board of Governors of the Mater and the Children's Hospitals Ltd, the board of Directors of the Mater University Hospital, the Mater and Children's Hospitals Development Company, in addition to carrying the Mission Effectiveness brief for the Mater Hospital. She also works with a number of internal and inter-agency committees including the North Inner City Partnership in Primary Care and the University College Dublin / Mater Liaison Committee.

In a sense we are at the end of an era.

In acknowledging the huge contribution made by both of these women whose work has touched the lives of so many, we also honour the long tradition of service to the city and the country which their orders have made in the field of healthcare. The advent of new structures should not allow us to forget the selfless dedication of the two congregations and the hospitals they ran for the sick, the suffering, the needy and the disturbed at times when little alternative provision was available.

PRAEHONORABILIS CANCELLARIE, TOTAQUE UNIVERSITAS:

Praesento vobis, hasce meas filias quas omnes scio tam moribus quam doctrina habiles et idoneas esse quae admittantur, honoris causa, ad gradum Doctoratus in utroque Jure, tam Civili quam Canonico, idque tibi fide mea testur ac spondeo totique Academiae.