

Good morning, my name is Bernadette Connolly and I am here representing The Irish Pilgrimage Trust, a charity that has been a central part of Moyna's life for the last 50 years.

Since we heard the news of Moyna's death last Tuesday, there has been a great outpouring of love and sadness throughout the Trust family.

The Irish Pilgrimage Trust or as it was known then IHCPT first started in Ireland in 1971 following the vision of Dr Michael Strode founder of HCPT the English Trust to bring children and young people to Lourdes to stay in hotels and not the hospital and have a pilgrimage that was also a holiday.

Moyna Duffy was 16 years old when her parents suggested she go on pilgrimage to Lourdes. This was met with a predictable teenager response! In fact, she thought that it was the worst possible thing that could happen, and that Lourdes was for "old fobbies" (Moyna's words not mine).

It is wonderful then that she spent much of her life bringing young people to Lourdes.

Sometime later after talking to an English work colleague Moyna's reaction was very different. A friend told her the HCPT (English) trip to Lourdes was fantastic and she immediately asked to go with a group and travelled the following year with group 5 from the English Trust. During her second trip with

HCPT a voice called to her from across the Domaine in Lourdes, “you’re Irish, you should be with IHCPT, the Irish Trust”.

That was Anthea O’Grady who had founded the Irish Trust in 1971 and Moyna Duffy travelled with the Irish trust in group 64 the following year.

She became a Group Leader and led Group 64 on the Trust’s annual children’s Easter pilgrimage to Lourdes for many years.

In 1980 Moyna was now married to Donald and she took on the role of National Secretary of The Irish Pilgrimage Trust. Over the following 20 years she played a central role in the growth and expansion of the Trust, a period when the Trust more than doubled in size and reached the four corners of Ireland.

Moyna’s organisational skills and close relationship with the Board of Trustees and Group Leaders throughout the country were legendary. She knew everyone and everyone knew her. Under Moyna’s stewardship the annual Easter Pilgrimage to Lourdes was meticulously planned and provided a template that has endured. Transporting 500 young people with special needs and the 650 Trust volunteers to and from France was no mean feat at that time and she managed it all magnificently.

Today in the office, we have many advantages that Moyna did not have, mobile phones, internet, email and forms that can now be filled in online. Moyna did it all working from home in the early years. Using a typewriter and handwriting a lot of information, she wrote wonderful letters, never forgot to thank anyone and always remembered to send a letter of condolence if anyone from the Trust family lost a loved one.

Obstacles never deterred Moyna – she always found a way! The children were her focus and she did whatever had to be done to ensure that they got the holiday they deserved. She was a force to be reckoned with and when she said jump the group leaders did jump. But she always did it with kindness and caring and with the good of the Trust and all involved in the Trust at the heart of everything she did.

Moyna fostered a great relationship with the Board of Trustees who are responsible for the overall running of the Trust. She worked successfully with many different Boards of Trustees and Chairpersons over the years.

Group 64 had as its motto “Forever Friends” and when Moyna travelled to Lourdes in later years as a retired Trust volunteer, she joined our wonderful “Forever Friends” group travelling with others who have given huge service to the Trust in the past.

Moyna always stayed in contact with her many Trust friends and there were many, many friends gathered over 50 years with the Trust. She met with her very close friends Annette McDermott and Mary D'Arcy every Thursday for the last 16 years.

The many past Trustees of the Trust get together every 2 years in Kilcuan, our home in Clarinbridge in Galway and Moyna always attended and enjoyed some great reunions. Stories were told, funny times were recalled, and everyone was revived by reconnecting with old friends.

While in Lourdes each Easter she marvelled at the joy, happiness and outpouring that occurs. Moyna's deep faith and belief was that Our Lady was the instrument in it all, blanketing the Trust with love.

Moyna truly was the Trust for many years and all those who knew her will remember her with great fondness and love.