



In Gratitude: The Story of a Gift-Filled Life

Catherine McCann

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‘A valuable window into a recent past – courageous, poignant, enriching and honest.’

Margaret MacCurtain

Born into a well-to-do family living in Simmonscourt Castle, Dublin in 1934, Catherine McCann lived a rarefied life, playing tennis and attending parties as part of Dublin’s upper social circle. Yet at the young age of 20 she left this lifestyle for one devoted to the service of others, joining the Religious Sisters of Charity.

Her life as a religious opened her eyes and soul to the world, through her work in healthcare and her study of theology. In her late thirties Catherine met a priest named Charlie O’Connor, and a deep bond developed. They worked together on many projects, including leading a large number of pilgrimages to the Holy Land.

When Catherine received a ‘call within a call’ to ‘come out’ she left religious life, but continued to lead a life of service as a physiotherapist, counsellor and spiritual director. Her departure was not a rejection of her religion but simply a change in her expression of faith, which would continue to grow throughout her life. In 1979 she bought a cottage in County Wicklow and created Shekina Sculpture Garden, a place for reflective days and celebrations.

In Gratitude is the story of an ordinary life, lived to the full. It is rich in social history, from growing up in one of Dublin’s grandest houses, to religious life in Ireland and abroad, to developing a more holistic life of service. This book will appeal to all those interested in the pursuit of creativity and friendship, service and faith, set across a background of national, religious and social change.

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