Windows of Faith and Hope

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Evie Hone (1894–1955) was born in Donnybrook, Dublin and had a difficult start to life. Not long after Evie was born her mother died and then, at 11 years of age, Evie contracted polio, which caused her a lot of pain throughout her life. At age 14 her father died, leaving her orphaned. Her suffering was added to when her three sisters were all widowed during the First World War because they had been married to British army officers.

Evie is one of the most significant figures in Irish art in the twentieth century. She blazed a trail in that she both embraced and combined modernism and cubism. She spent some time studying in London and Paris with cubists, such as André Lhote and Albert Gleizes.

In the 1930s, she was more drawn to stained glass, for which she became internationally renowned, working in the studio An Túr Gloine. Her work consists of powerful abstract religious and spiritual imagery, and, in this sense, she could be controversial, shocking but also transformative.

She brought this new trend into Irish art alongside her lifelong artistic companion, Mainie Jellet. Some of her more famous works are *My Four Green Fields* (Government Buildings, Dublin) and the east window of Eton College Chapel, but one of her personal favourites was the window depciting the Sermon on the Mount, found in the Manresa Jesuit Centre of Spirituality, Dublin. This sits alongside windows depicting the Nativity, the Last Supper, Pentecost and the Sacred Heart and Jesuit saints in the Evie Hone Prayer Room, which was built specifically to house the windows.

Perhaps Evie's life could be described as a mixture of joy and sorrow, and these twin themes are apparent in these windows: the shepherd's joy at seeing the star, the comfort offered to those who mourn, the betrayal of Jesus and the healing of the sick after Pentecost. Having reflected on these scenes, we are drawn into a deep union of peace and love with the Sacred Heart, which like Evie's life and work is transformative.

The windows in the Manresa Jesuit Centre of Spirituality prayer room were Evie Hone's first independent commission, executed in 1945 and 1946. The first windows she worked on depict the Nativity and the Sacred Heart (the windows on the left and right respectively in the current arrangement) and, in 1946, the Sermon on the Mount/Beatitudes, the Last Supper and Pentecost.

The windows were made for the chapel of the Jesuit College, Rahan,





Tullamore, County Offaly, and, when that building was sold in 1991, they were removed and installed in the purpose-built room in Manresa in 1992.

As we begin a new year, perhaps Evie Hone's windows can offer us something to reflect on: that joy and sorrow, suffering and hope, are woven together in every human life, and that even in times of darkness there can be light. The Evie Hone Prayer Room at Manresa offers a quiet space to pause and contemplate these beautiful works. Why not make some time for yourself in the year ahead and experience them during a retreat at Manresa?

Manresa offers a variety of retreats throughout the year, including our monthly Oasis Day retreats on selected Saturdays, as well as residential directed retreats of 4, 6 or 8 days. Take some time away from the demands of everyday life and allow space for prayer, reflection and renewal, while discovering Evie Hone's beautiful stained-glass windows for yourself.

Find out more: www.manresa.ie / contact us: reception@manresa.ie or +353 1 5529 448.