

In Pat Thuiller's case, it seems the Dublin priest, Father Michael Cleary, who himself fathered two children, was deeply involved in arranging the adoption of her son. Michael Cleary's role in the whole affair remains somewhat shadowy, but Pat is convinced he played an important part at every turn. Pat got to know Father Cleary when she was training as a children's nurse with the Sisters of Charity at the Temple Hill children's home in Blackrock, Co Dublin. It was not a career she had chosen for herself, but then Pat Eyres as she was then, had few choices in her life.

I was actually born in a home myself, Sean Ross Abbey in Tipperary, which was also run by the Sacred Heart Sisters. My mother wasn't married. When she got pregnant a second time I was sent to a foster mother. I had a very difficult childhood. My real mother kept my younger sister after rejecting me, and she seemed to have everything. There was always a preference for someone else over me and I wondered why I was the one who was always rejected. I wasn't a happy child.

In 1958, at the age of 16, Pat was sent off to Temple Hill to train as a nurse under the direction of the Sisters of Charity who ran the children's home there. I wasn't given any choice, but as it happened I liked it. I was just glad to be away. We went to Mass every morning at 6.50 am. I wasn't late once in two years. We worked 12 hour shifts for £2 a week, which was a lot of money to me in those days. I loved the children in Temple Hill, I got very attached to them. Many of them were sent to America to be adopted, but it never occurred to me to ask why or what became of them. I just accepted it as something that happened. Temple Hill was attached to St Patrick's Guild, also run by the Sisters of Charity, who over a period of 20 years sent almost 600 children to America for adoption. Unlike Sean Ross Abbey where Pat was born, or Castlepollard where she had her own baby, Temple Hill had no maternity

hospital attached to it. It took in 'illegitimate' babies from other hospitals without their mothers.

It was during her training at Temple Hill that Pat first met Father Michael Cleary who was involved in making arrangements for many unmarried mothers. In 1960 - after seeing scores of children sent to America for adoption - Pat finished her training and was sent to work as a children's nanny with a wealthy family in Dalkey. From there she moved to another post at Carysfort Avenue. She takes up the story.

I had a boyfriend, and I became pregnant. We had arranged to meet this particular night, but it never happened, we never got to see each other. They just came to the house where I was working and took me away. It was a social worker and some other people. Even though I was over 18 years old I just assumed they could do this because I had been in foster care before. This, Pat thinks, was the first critical intervention by Michael Cleary. I think it must have been him who told the social worker. He knew I was pregnant. I'd told him I was, even though I wasn't looking for his help. The child's father, Austin, was still talking about getting married. I can't see any other way the social worker would have known but for Mick Cleary telling her.

It was April 1962 and the beginning of 34 years of anguish for Pat. The first night I spent in the Magdalen Home on Sean MacDermott Street. That was terrible. Girls were screaming and fighting. I had no idea what was going to happen to me. The next morning the social worker reappeared and took me off to Castlepollard. That journey was the last I saw of the outside world for two years. On arrival at Castlepollard, Pat, like all the girls, was given a new identity, of sorts. She was no longer allowed to use her own name but would be known as Augusta. Her own clothes were taken from her and replaced by a sort of overall. You couldn't be identified or talk about your home to anyone, but there was one girl from my home town who

2838

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