

## Mike's Reflection

We planned for our trip to Dublin the minute we sent our application. Not yet accepted, we started to clear our calendars for the possibility. This came in an email from the Centre, one that we feel changed our lives once again. We were blessed with friends and family that encouraged us on our grand journey, but none of them could prepare us for what awaited.

Arriving at the front doors is unique. The front of the building is different from the design of any other business or apartment building in the area. The doors split and spend the day open, beckoning the passerby to come and see. We lost count of those who came to tour, to retreat, to “stay over” or... to experience firsthand what the sisters of their youth recalled to them. “just like I imagined”, “Sister was right”, “every step is a history come alive”. These are some of the adult rememberings of a childhood memory, now brought to reality.

The work was excitingly simple: *Be the hospitality of Catherine in this place.* Period. To be honest, our days were filled with activity supporting the Centre, preparing breakfasts, teas, lunches, and helping the arrivals move into their temporary home (sometimes well after hours), and we were pleasantly tired at the end of the day. Not from physical exhaustion, but from being the face of Mercy all day long. This is the sacrifice of volunteering here. We left our “selves” at the front door and totally gave to the place that is the home, the heart of the order.

We were graced with visits by sisters from all over the world, as well as the governing board, and were blessed with personal time with all of them. Our perspective of the depth and breadth of the ‘Mercy ocean’ grew with each passing day. We laughed and wept with our guests and listened to the stories of their youth and the mission they served.

It all wove together like a quilt, and returning home, we wrapped ourselves in its comforting warmth. We have extended our family, and their spirit lives on Baggot Street.