



### **Sophie Scholl (1921-1943)**

This year we celebrate the 100th anniversary of Sophie Scholl's birth on 9 May 1921. Sophie Scholl was part of the White Rose resistance circle (*Die Weiße Rose*) - a group that secretly wrote, printed, and distributed leaflets calling on the German people to resist Hitler. Sophie was a central member of the group, helping to obtain resources and distributing the leaflets at great personal risk.

Sophie had been active in the Hitler Youth as a teenager, but she came to reject Nazism as she understood more about its ideology and saw how it marginalized and persecuted people. She finished secondary school in 1940 and, after compulsory labour service, began studying Biology and Philosophy at the Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich.

Sophie loved literature, music, art, philosophy, and religion. In her letters she is sometimes serious and thoughtful, and at other times very funny and even quite silly.

On Thursday 18 February 1943, Sophie and her brother Hans deposited copies of a resistance leaflet around the atrium at the entrance of the main university building in Munich. Sophie, in what she later described in her Gestapo interrogation as the result of either 'high spirits' or 'foolishness', pushed one of the piles of leaflets over the balustrade and the sheets of paper cascaded down into the empty hall below. This caught the attention of the university caretaker, the Gestapo were called, and the two students were arrested.

Just four days later, on Monday 22 February, Sophie was executed by guillotine. She was 21 years old. Along with the other members of the group, she is an inspiring example of how 'ordinary' people can do extraordinary things, and how conscience and moral courage can challenge injustice.