

IN MEMORIAM



Sr. Patricia Will

BORN: December 1937

ENTERED CONGREGATION: January 21, 1955

DIED: August 2, 2019

“God is a surprise!” This is a recurring theme that Sister Pat Will has used numerous times to describe her journey in this life.

Well, I believe that if she were to write this eulogy she would perhaps once again proclaim that “God is a surprise!” No one can predict what our God has in store for us, but I think Pat would join in the surprise shared by many of us as we come together today to celebrate a life lived in joy that now rests securely in the eternal embrace of her God.

Lawrence and Theresa (Jacobs) Will welcomed Patricia Mary Louise Will, their eighth daughter and youngest of 10 children, into their family on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, December 8, 1937. Pat, being the youngest, may very well have been spoiled as her older siblings liked to point out. She, however, liked to explain this away by proclaiming that actually she was just “much affirmed.” Sister Pat grew up on a farm in Fort Recovery, Ohio. Her early education took place in a one-room schoolhouse; by grade seven she went to St. Peter School, a larger facility with two classrooms.

Religious life and the Sisters of the Precious Blood were no strangers to Pat as she had two aunts, two cousins and two sisters who were all Sisters of the Precious Blood. As she entered her teen years, she began to feel the tugs on her heart to follow the call to be a Sister. At the age of 13, she left home and attended high school at Fatima Hall aspirancy in Dayton.

Pat officially entered the Sisters of the Precious Blood on January 21, 1955. As a novice she became known as Sister Mary Terence. On August 15, 1957, she made her first profession of vows and received her very first “obedience” informing her that she would be heading west. At age 19, this young woman

from rural Ohio was heading west to Manteca, California, to begin her teaching career at St. Anthony School, where she remained for five years. In 1962, Pat returned to Ohio to teach at Our Lady of Good Hope School in Miamisburg where she also served as principal for two years before heading north to Botkins, Ohio, for two final years in the classroom. In each of these places, Sister Pat was able to express her love of music and share her talents as a musician by playing the organ and singing in or directing the parish choir.

As was the case with many Sisters, Pat spent many summers in the classroom as a student. Pat earned a B.S. in education from the University of Dayton and a master’s degree from Xavier University in Cincinnati. God clearly had more surprises in store for Sister Pat, as in 1970 she was asked to join the retreat team at Maria Stein Retreat Center in Maria Stein, Ohio. Here she ministered for the next 10 years, working with youth retreats and once again sharing her musical gifts at the liturgies. During these years, Pat’s life would continue to evolve as she began working more and more with adult spirituality. This would take her to Creighton University where she would earn a Master of Arts in Christian Spirituality, which would lead her into parish ministry as she accepted a position at Corpus Christi Parish in Dayton, where she remained for the next 10 years.

In 1991, refreshed and renewed, following a nine-month sabbatical program at Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington, Sister Pat accepted a position in parish evangelization at Our Lady of the Lake Parish in Holland, Michigan, a ministry and a place that became very dear to her heart. After 13 “challenging and rewarding years,” Pat made the very difficult decision to leave her beloved parish on the lake and accept the invitation from the Congregation to serve as the initial formation director and coordinator of liturgy at Salem Heights here

in Dayton. Dayton is where Pat would remain. She gave up the formation work, but she continued to hold onto the beloved thread that had remained tied to her heart throughout all her years in ministry: liturgical ministry.

Last Thursday, as I sat reflecting on Sister Pat and mentally retracing the past two months of her life, my thoughts went much wider than these past 60 days. I thought about the days when I lived with her at Corpus Christi, seeing her carefree, heading out for a tennis match or coming to the rescue of two of her screaming housemates as she took aim with her tennis racket at a bat flying around inside the house. The bat never saw it coming! I thought about her as she danced a polka around the dining room downstairs in this building. I thought about seeing this head bobbing in the water at the local YMCA pool and recognizing Pat’s face with its ever-present smile. I thought about the lovely flowers that were always present on the windowsills on the third floor D wing hallway, lovingly placed and tended to by Sisters Pat and Laura. The tears running down my cheeks slowly turned into a smile as I recounted the many memories of Sister Pat Will. The only word that came to mind was JOY! Sister Pat gave meaning to the word “joy” with the way she lived her life. She loved a party and she loved to organize parties. She kept herself active, loved to be outside, to take walks and invite others to walk with her.

Pat loved to go to concerts and the theater. She loved her family and her CPPS Sisters. Pat loved the Eucharist and celebrating liturgy, especially here at Salem, wanting everything to be perfect for the Lord. Having known Pat, I would confidently speculate that as she peacefully slipped from this life, she seamlessly slipped into her place among the sopranos in the heavenly choir.

— Sister Patty Kremer