



Wake Stories of Patricia Robinson, BVM (Danella)
Marian Hall Chapel, Aug. 12, 2019

Grace Barney, Sister

I am Pat's baby sister; she would always refer to me as that. My birthday cards always included a little story about when I was born and how happy they were to have another sister. That's hard to believe since I was number five. I thought everything about my sister Pat was covered beautifully in the eulogy. I don't think I could add much other than a great big thank you. Thank you to everyone who is here. Thank you all for being part of her life. Pat thrived on people. I know that she would feel very blessed to know how many lives she touched. I have one quick story about Pat and Catherine Fay when they lived in Indiana at Notre Dame. Pat came home from class on a snowy day to have some lunch. Catherine was counseling a lady. Pat went about her business until it was time to go back to class, but there were no boots for her. She had taken off her boots, but they were not there. She asked Catherine, "Didn't I leave my boots right here?" Catherine said, "Oh, I gave them to the lady because she needed them." The whole family learned after that that you do not say anything to Catherine like "I like this" because it will be put in your bag or your pocket. Pat learned about this with the BVMs. Granted, it started at home, but the BVMs helped her form her life of service to others. That's the way I see Pat. I know she had many different degrees and did very well in many professional things; however, Pat definitely was about service and loving other people.

Robert Montfort, Former Co-Worker

I worked with both Sister Pat and Sister Catherine Fay at St. Joseph's College for decades. I will share two memories that I believe reflect entirely upon Pat. First, they would be there at 8 o'clock in the morning, maybe even earlier. Sometimes, they would go to Mass first and then be in the office building. I would show up about 8:30 a.m. I cannot begin to tell you the number of times I saw these women with football players – huge, huge young men. There was the diminutive BVM sisters trying to teach these young men who had been socially promoted all the way to college to read and to write. Such patience I will take to my grave having observed that. My second story will be just as brief. I was sent overseas as a commanding officer of a Marine Corp helicopter squadron in Desert Storm. I left behind a pregnant wife. It was a difficult pregnancy, but without Sister Catherine, Sister Pat, as well as others, my son would not be alive today. He is a living testament to the good she did for my family for which I can never pay her. I thank Jesus every day for them being in my life.

Sister Margaret Sannasardo, BVM

I lived with Pat in Butte, Mont. We lived in Immaculate Conception Parish. Our mothers traveled together to Butte in the early 1960s. My mother and Mrs. Robinson became great chums and had a great time together. They were on the train and in awe of the beauty in the West. Pat was just a marvel. She was a wonderful history teacher. I always admired that about her. Besides that, we had lots of fun, did many funny things. Many of the stories I can't tell.

Sister Terese Shinnors, BVM

Pat and I were friends close to 69 years. One of my favorite things about Pat was the way she opened her life to others and invited them in to share her life. Back in the day when we had companions, I would go home with Pat from time to time to visit her family. I was always made to feel so welcomed. I still have wonderful stories about the family that I will tell you later. I visited Pat a few times when she was in Rensselaer, Ind. She was equally

welcoming there and I was invited to share in that piece of her life. I will deeply miss this open-hearted friend of mine.

Kitty Sabula Vecchio, Former Student

I was lucky enough to be Sister Pat's student at St. Joe. Mr. Montfort gave a quick, as I used to call them, Sister Cat and Pat Show. Like the football players, I was a couple sandwiches short of a picnic and needed a little bit of guidance. Being a Westsider of Chicago, Sister Pat understood that the youngest of fourteen children might need a little bit of encouragement. Sister Catherine introduced me to Sister Pat. I ditched so much during the first three weeks of school that the sisters thought it would be good to wake me up at 7:00 a.m. with the football players. They wanted to show them that I'm not as cute the next day as when I was out the night before and that maybe I should have gotten up early with them and gone to class. Sister Catherine called me a liar and a thief for stealing my parents' money; she was right. I loved that Sister Pat could reign her in a little and say, "OK, now let's work with her." It's been a friendship since 1982. I am so grateful to the BVMs. All the dedication you have shown to so many impressionable kids. I thank every one of you. Right now, things are very troubling in the Church. No matter what, my faith, my love and my gratitude to all of you and the Sinsinawa Dominicans who raised me. It matters. Please keep in touch with all those people; we really need it. Sister Pat was so proud of all of her families. I could tell you all about your wonderful attributes because she never said a bad word about any one. She was always kind. Thank you and God bless you all.

Ann, Niece

I am Pat's niece. My mother was her sister Mary Ellen Quinn. I wanted to piggyback on Kitty's gratitude for the role that the sisters played in our educations; most of us are products of that education. In fact, some of us are educators because of you. Thank you very much. I also want to speak on behalf of one of my cousins. Mary Lou and I were talking during the visitation. She expressed that Aunt Pat was like a key - she could fit into any one of our homes or lives. There was never distant - neither time nor miles. Aunt Pat showed up when mom and dad were going to get a little respite and laid out on the dining room table with every piece of silverware, dishes, cups, water glasses and teacups that you could imagine. Of course, we had to wash all of those dishes at the end - whether or not they were dirty. I had a special time with Aunt Pat and Sister Catherine as a student at Purdue University. Their home in Rensselaer became a retreat house for me, and my sister Kathleen who followed me some years later. While I walked into Purdue very confident in my abilities as a student, I quickly felt out of my league studying biology there and, in particular, chemistry. Approaching the end of the semester with my very first C ever, I was ready to quit school. I went to the retreat house and Sister Catherine walked me through it. She said, "How many kids actually started with that chemistry class?" "About a thousand." She said, "Well, how many are left?" "They said only five hundred. All of them have dropped." She said, "No, half of them are there. You're getting a C so you're in the top 25 percent. Stick with it." I did stick with it even with the second semester C because of their encouraging me as a woman in a science-minded community of mostly men to stick with my intellectual side and go for it. I thank the dear Lord that we all have had a chance to be part of her life and for her to be part of ours.

Beth Dellagracia, Niece

I am Grace Barney-Robinson's second daughter. I have a story to tell you and something to read from my sister Laura. My story is somewhat humorous. Unfortunately, Laura's will probably make you cry since I cried three times reading it. When Aunt Pat came to Michigan to be with us, there was an electricity outage, which happened on a regular basis. In the middle of the night, my parents left to take care of their home in Elmhurst. I was there with the kids and Aunt Pat. Uncle Bob and Aunt Mary Ellen were supposed to come up but were delayed. I went over to bring Aunt Pat some breakfast. She made coffee, but there was no creamer or milk. Aunt Pat always had a way of improvising. She opened up the freezer and said, "There's plenty of ice cream." We enjoyed our coffee with ice cream. It became our regular tradition. Whenever we had coffee, we put a scoop of ice cream on top. It was a wonderful way to share our lives together.

Laura, Niece (*Read by her sister Beth*)

I think we all looked to Aunt Pat at some point in our lives for her guidance and wisdom, strength and love. She dedicated herself to God, teaching and her family and friends. Because of that, we are all closer to God and each other. I imagine, given the chance, the teacher in Pat may have wanted to leave us with some instructions. This poem by Rev. Arnold Crompton is titled "Instructions."

When I have moved beyond you in the adventure of life,
Gather in some pleasant place and there remember me
With spoken words, old and new.
Let a tear if you will, but let a smile come quickly
For I have loved the laughter of life.

Do not linger too long with your solemnities.
Go eat and talk, and when you can;
Follow a woodland trail, climb a high mountain,
Walk along the wild seashore,
Chew the thoughts of some book
Which challenges your soul.
Use your hands some bright day
To make a thing of beauty
Or to lift someone's heavy load.

Though you mention not my name,
Though no thought of me crosses your mind,
I shall be with you,
For these have been the realities of my life for me.
And when you face some crisis with anguish.
When you walk alone with courage,
When you choose your path of right,
I shall be very close to you.
I have followed the valleys,
I have climbed the heights of life.

To my Aunt Pat, we love you.

Joanna Askwith Porter, Grandniece

I am Jean (Robinson) Payne's granddaughter and Aunt Pat's grandniece. I was able and privileged to live with her for four years when I was a student at St. Joe's. I called her my roommate so that she would accept me a little bit more. I had a lot of fun, but we also fought; let's not sugarcoat it too much. She taught me how to be stubborn with a little more class than I was expressing. I can't tell you how much I used that in the last fifteen years. Aunt Pat had been a faculty member at St. Joe for twenty-five years, a professor for fifteen. She was pretty high up there. Students knew Aunt Pat as "Sister Pat, sociology and criminology professor. Don't mess around in her class. She'll call you out. She'll yell at you." She was *that* lady. This was, unfortunately, after Sister Catherine had died. She really held on to what Sister Catherine taught her.

In living with her, she would offer, very reluctantly at first, if I wanted to have a couple of friends over. I enjoyed studying in college; I thought St. Joe offered a lot. Aunt Pat, was the one, though, who helped me learn how to listen. At that age, for me anyway, those were formative years in which I thought I knew it all and had it all. I was going to learn and make the difference I knew I could make and I didn't need anyone else to tell me. Aunt Pat was very good at teaching me otherwise. She taught me how to shut up long enough to listen. She taught me how to look at something for more than just what I wanted to get out of it. This was something I had never been exposed to

in academia where I was supposed to be invested. It's different in my mind when you are doing a good deed and calling it a good deed. Aunt Pat taught me how to integrate that into every day. She knew that from the beginning, but also learned that from being part of the BVMs. I'll let you know she didn't let up on that once, not once. I have a few very good friends who dared to come over to Aunt Pat's house to be my friend. There was definitely bribery required – a free meal in college (more than mac 'n cheese). She took that opportunity to be part of the group, which was hilarious because she still had her poise and her Aunt Pat-professor way. Her heart was open and looked for any spot to make sure she could help who needed the help. I thank all of you for being part of her and for being here to celebrate her.

Maureen, Niece

I'm one of Aunt Pat's sister Jean's ten children. I see my brother Dan in back there. Come on in, Dan. Don't be shy. When we were little, little kids, she had already entered the convent. We thought they were the BBMs. We were taught by nuns; we all had the benefit and privilege of going to Catholic schools. We didn't know which order taught us, but we knew the BVMs. They were on a pedestal; they were special to us. When we heard about Aunt Pat, where she was, what she was doing, we learned so much about the world and a great deal about being women. I have six sisters and three brothers. When Pat and Catherine would come to our home, my poor mom had to referee between dad and them because Aunt Pat was giving us the green light to be these strong, whole women and we were taking it all in. It was great. For her formation and what the BVMs mean to us (we now know you are the BVMs), thank you. Thank you also to her beautiful family. We have only grown in love, closeness, sharing, peacefulness, joy, giving, and openness. Through her spirit, may we all continue to grow and share our love. We thank her for her love. We miss her.

Sister Theresa McNerney, BVM

I had been living in the Chicago area, but now live here. We've talked a lot about Pat's wonderful family, her wonderful educational background and involvement. I want you to know that Pat was still very involved in the BVM community. When she came back to Chicago, she soon joined our cluster and came to the meetings. Jackie Rice, BVM was very involved in keeping her involved. We would visit her when she was sick. We were very happy to have her in our community and to be her friends.