



SISTER PATRICIA KNAPP, OLVM

Sister Patricia slipped quietly into the hands of God at 5:44 PM on Thursday, June 13, 2019. Just four months short of her 100th birthday. She was born in South Haven, Michigan, on October 15, 1919, the fifth of 10 children born to William Henry Knapp and Emma Christina Schildgen Knapp. She was baptized Patricia Grace at St. Basil Catholic Church in South Haven on October 21, 1919.

She is preceded in death by her parents and her four brothers, William Jr., Keith, Francis and Father Joseph Knapp, OCSO, and her four sisters, Teresa Locey, Ruth Kerbawy, Mary Louise Cunningham, and Emma Locey. Sister Patricia is survived by one brother, Ivo Leon Knapp, who still resides in South Haven, Michigan.

Sister Patricia entered the Congregation of Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters on October 30, 1940, and made first vows on August 5, 1943. Her first mission was Redlands, before being moved to Michigan, Colorado and Missouri. Once asked why she entered the congregation she replied, “I had always wanted to have a Sister for a teacher (in school) and the Catechists worked and taught among the poor who didn’t have the opportunity to attend Catholic School and if I joined them (Victory Noll), public school boys and girls could have a Sister — ME — as their teacher.”

She spent two years in Beattyville, Kentucky, where she earned her Bachelor’s degree from Brescia College in Owensburg, Kentucky, in 1970. She continued to learn throughout her life, earning a certificate Religious Studies from Calumet College in Calumet, Indiana, in 1977. She later served as a Spiritual Companion. Religious Education was her focus no matter where she was living, until she moved into hospital chaplaincy and pastoral care of the elderly and infirmed. She moved to Coral Springs, Florida, in 1987 and worked at St. Andrew’s Tower, a retirement community sponsored by the Archdiocese of Miami, as the Co-Director of Health and Social Services, until she retired and moved into St. Andrew’s Tower as a resident in 1992. Even as a resident, she continued to serve the people, most notably taking daily communion to those living at St. Andrew’s Tower who were unable to attend liturgy. Being active and a part of the parish of St. Andrew as well as St. Andrew’s Tower kept Sister Pat engaged in the life of the community until 2008 when she returned to Victory Noll.

Sister Pat grew up during the Roaring 20s and then through the Depression. She shared a story about delivering milk. One of her brothers would drive the truck and she would jump off, take the milk bottles to the doorstep, and take empty bottles back to the truck. She said, “We had a wholesome family life, helping each other. That carried over into my religious life.” The idea of helping out was always seen in her life as she worked in

Religious Education for many years and then in a different, yet generous way during her retirement years.

She also said in the same interview, “I did everything, from making believe I could play the organ and singing, to doing social services.” No matter what Sister Pat was involved in she showed enthusiasm, believed she could do anything she set her mind to, and loved her work, no matter what that work might be. She was also intense in her ministry. She once saw that the parish organist was not very reliable, so she said, ‘I think I could do that,’ and she did.

Sister Pat made the comparison between retirement and creation — it comes quickly and quietly happens. She felt she had so much more to give for the love of God and her neighbors. She prayed and searched and before she realized it, the word retirement became volunteerism. She did volunteer, in unusual places like the police station, the Habitat for Humanity Office. Her most treasured volunteer work was as a team member for the Adult RCIA program at St. Andrew parish, making the journey of faith with men and women want to join the Catholic Church. No matter where she was, her goal was always to share her faith, whether in Religious Education, adult formation, or with the people she would meet during her day.

Sister Pat said, “It happens. Retirement is inevitable in one’s lifetime, but giving of ourselves in new, creative ways continues. Volunteering is one way to respond to God’s call in our lives. What a joy it has brought to mine!”

We gathered on Saturday morning, June 22, 2019, at Archbishop Noll Memorial Chapel at Victory Noll for the funeral liturgy. Father Mike Lobo was the celebrant and homilist.

We lovingly carried Sister Pat to our beautiful cemetery, burying her beside and among her Victory Noll Sisters.

Yes, Sister Pat, God does call us in many ways throughout our lives and you answered those calls bringing joy to many people by your smile, enthusiasm and your love of life. Rejoice, loving and faithful servant and accept your reward, a place at God’s table.

With gratitude and blessings,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sr. Ginger Downey OLMV". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Sr. Ginger Downey, OLMV

