

Victory Noll  
Huntington, In.  
June 15, 1989

PATRICIA MARIE O'REILLY  
June 13, 1989

Dear Sisters and Associates,

"Those who trust in him shall understand truth, and the faithful shall abide with him in love."  
Wisdom 3:9.

Sister Patricia Marie O'Reilly died quietly in the Lord on the feast of St. Anthony, June 13, 1989 at 11:29 a.m. in Huntington Memorial Hospital. Sister Mary Ellen Dooley had visited her in the morning and she seemed to be doing as well as could be expected. When the call came later in the morning that she was dying, Sister Virginia Schmitt went over immediately, but when she arrived, Sister

had just died.

Sister Patricia Marie suffered from a seizure disorder and a heart condition, but both were controlled with medication. In June of 1986 she was taken to Holy Family Health Care Center after she fell in Sacred Heart dining room and suffered severe bruises. In 1987, she was moved permanently to Holy Family building on the second floor.

Sister was taken to the emergency room of Huntington Memorial Hospital at 2:30 a.m. June 7, 1989 with severe abdominal pain and vomiting. The following morning surgery was performed for a bowel obstruction. Complications from the surgery resulted in her death. Sister was conscious and very alert to those around her. When Sister Marie Celine visited her the evening before she died, she was concerned about Sister Mary Beatrice's health. Later, that evening, Sisters Alma and Camilla arrived, bringing her relic of St. Patrick. After Camilla blessed her with it, she insisted that it be taken home. Some time before, she had told Sr. Camilla that the relic would be hers if something happened to her. Now it rests in the "holy corner" of the pharmacy with all the statues.

Sister Patricia Marie was the daughter of the late William P. and Florence nee Drake Buchanan and was born January 28, 1907 in Brooklyn, New York. She was one of four children. Her parents were killed in an auto accident when she was four years of age. At the age of eight, she was taken by Edward and Margaret Lee O'Reilly and legally adopted by them in 1917 when she was ten years of age. She received her education in the schools of Saints Cosmas and Damian in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania and worked for seven years as a dental nurse. Prior to her entrance, she lived with her brother William and entered the Community from Holy Redeemer Parish in Freeport, L.I., New York August 28, 1936 and made first profession of vows August 5, 1939. She celebrated her Golden Jubilee August 5, 1986. Her brother and two sisters preceded her in death. She is survived by two cousins through adoption: Rev. Jack Grinnen, Franciscan Friars, T.O.R. of Winchester, Va. and Rev. John J. Kelly, O.S.A. of Miami, Florida. Father Kelly is presently in Peru.

Sister Patricia Marie spent sixteen years in the missions of California, Michigan, Nevada, Utah, Indiana and Texas before returning to Victory Noll. Sister will be remembered for her tours of VN, her great interest in politics and the cause of Dr. Tom Dooley. We will miss her reminders of voting registration dates especially for those persons newly assigned to VN.

The wake service was held in Memorial Chapel Wednesday evening, June 14th at 7:00 p.m. with Father Leopold officiating at the Night Prayer of the Church. Sister Anna Marie Richter did the reading. The service ended with the Salve Regina.

The Liturgy of Christian Burial was celebrated by Father Leopold, OFM, Cap. Sisters Frances K., Mary Cecilia and Gertrude were cross and candle bearers; Camilla and Madeline placed the pall on the casket; Mary Rose and Barbara Mc. did the readings; Germaine sang the Responsorial and the Alleluia verse; Callista offered the intercessions; Susanna and Kathleen L. brought up the gifts. Father's homily began with the continuation of the Gospel reading - Jesus' question to the Apostles - Will you also leave me? He stressed the word leave with all its variations. Peter's answer was in two parts - To whom shall we go? You alone have the words of eternal life! We say this often and we likewise believe it or we wouldn't be here. He concluded his homily noting the consolation we have in death to the question, To whom shall we go? Yes, we have come to believe and are convinced that you, Jesus, have the words of eternal life!



Before praying the commendation prayers, Sister Mary Louise gave us her reflections of Sister Patricia Marie: "In both life and death, each of us, upon reflection, can learn from our sisters. Though we spend many months and often many years with one another, there are, sometimes, circumstances or experiences in the life of another sister that are unknown to us, although these events may have had profound influence on our sister. I believe this is the case for most of us in regard to Sister Patricia Marie."

"It was only in going to Sister's file after her death that we learned that when Sister was born in Brooklyn in 1907, her parents were not Edward and Margaret O'Reilly, but William and Florence Buchanan. And, that when Patricia was about four years old, her parents were killed in an automobile accident leaving her, a brother and two sisters orphans. We can only imagine the impact that such a tragedy had on a little girl of four, too young to completely grasp what was happening, yet old enough to remember. We do not know much about the circumstances after the death of Patricia's parents except that at the age of eight, she was taken by Edward and Margaret Lee O'Reilly and legally adopted by them in 1917 when she was ten years of age, but once again, tragically, she would lose in death, the woman she had come to know and love as Mother."

"We will probably never know why Sister Patricia Marie chose never to refer to these events that must have made a profound impact not only on her young life but over her adult years as well. Perhaps, it was all too painful. But as I reflect on this and on Sister's life in community and mission, I am drawn to a passage in Scripture and a poem I would like to share with you."

The Scripture is from Mark 16:2-4: And very early in the morning on the first day of the week they went to the tomb, just as the sun was rising. They had been saying to one another, 'Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?' But when they looked they could see that the stone--which was very big--had already been rolled back.

POEM ON ROLLING STONES AWAY by MACRINA WIEDERKEHR, O.S.B.

What are our stones? What are their names? Would we know them if we met them face-to-face? And if the empty tomb we stood in front of was us would we call it death?

Or would we call it resurrection?

My hearts beats out the answer much clearer than I live it.

Oh happy emptiness! It's what we need a lot of to be full.

Rolling stones is what it's all about, but resurrection is another name.

The call continues. We are called to help others experience resurrection

to help them break open their tombs.

They may be waiting for us. Of course, you understand that might mean

we'll have to break forth from our own tombs first.

We'd look kind of silly preaching from the inside of our tombs, wouldn't we?

"Often we are reticent to share with one another aspects of our life, even when in the sharing it is altogether possible that a stone will be rolled away, a tomb will be broken open, resurrection will happen. Perhaps we long to do this, but our trust in others is too weak, or our love of self is too fragile to believe that in knowing the truth about us, others will still love and respect us. Or perhaps, we simply need another person to trust us enough that they are able to roll back a stone from their tomb in our presence, sharing with us on a deeper level, an area of their life that has ordinarily been closed off."

"So, through these reflections, Sister Patricia Marie, in her life and in her death, invites me to consider the importance of rolling stones away; the importance of helping one another break open our tombs and experience resurrection. I invite you, too, to reflect on this and I am profoundly grateful to our Sister Patricia Marie for this learning. I believe for her, the last stone has been rolled away. Now, she experiences resurrection and this is what we celebrate."

Again, we have experienced death here at the Noll and are edified at the quiet and peaceful death of Sister Patricia Marie. Certainly, the cross was firmly planted in her life. May she now experience true joy and everlasting peace in Christ Jesus!

Sincerely in Jesus and Mary,  
*Sister Germaine Stadler, O.S.B.*  
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