



Sister Patricia Jane Walsh, OSF Professed 1986

Study always to have Joy. St. Francis of Assisi



Sister Patricia Jane Walsh died on August 12, 2021, in Assisi House, where she had lived since 2016. She was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and was the fifth of Irene and Thomas Walsh's eight children. Patricia Jane attended the Minneapolis schools and went on to a 20-year career with Northwest Airlines in Seattle, Washington, working in reservations. Sister Pat later shared that even as a small child, she wanted to be a sister. The calling never deserted her. Eventually, after leaving the airline, she visited with Sister Carol Ann Warnke, who would become her sponsor when Sister Pat entered the congregation. As Sister Pat said, "I found the Spirit I had been looking for."

Adding to her associate degree in social work, Sister Pat earned a BA from Pacific Lutheran University in 1992. She explained that "In being a 'sister student,' I had some wonderful experiences. I found I could witness to the Church and the people of God in a very different way." Her broad experiences were also a part of her ministry as a sister of St. Francis: "In my work as a social worker and counselor, I found I had a wealth of knowledge because of my life experiences before I entered community. I could relate to my clients from two worlds." Although Sister Pat had assumed her traveling days were over when she left Northwest Airlines, her ministry would take her even to Ireland, a place she had always wanted to visit. Wherever she was, she shared her wisdom, faith, and love for people and all creation.

Sister Carol Ann Warnke speaks of Sister Pat's great generosity and care for the poor, her love for the Eucharist, and her determined spirit: "She was endearing; anyone who knew her will never forget her." Her ministry at Franciscan Hospice House, near Tacoma, Washington, reflected the gifts she gave to others everywhere she served. As the wife of one patient said, "Sister Pat was extraordinary. She sensed whether we wanted to talk or just be. She was a comforting and reassuring presence." A physician in the hospice added, "She never declined an opportunity for joy. She brought that to her patients." Examples of her other work in social-service ministries include serving as a social worker at the St. Vincent de Paul-Joan Kroc Center in San Diego, California; a counselor at the Martin Luther King Center in Tacoma, Washington; and an alcohol counselor in County Kildare and County Westmeath, Ireland.

More than 20 years ago, Sister Pat wrote, "I would like others to remember me as a woman who loved fun, loved people, and was curious about many things. My greatest delight was in the diversity of God's creation. I was the one who captured the bees, butterflies, and bugs and set them free outside. My hobby of photography allowed me to capture pictures of the beauty of creation to see another day." Sister Patricia Jane Walsh's joy, love of God, and love and caring for everyone around her were reflected throughout her 35 years as a sister of St. Francis and her entire life.

*Services will be held at Assisi House on Wednesday, August 18. A prayer service
will begin at 9:30 A.M., followed by Mass of Christian Burial at 11 A.M.
Burial will be in Our Lady of Angels Cemetery.*

