

## **Obituary**

Sister Patricia Cassidy, IHM, 93, died Monday, Aug. 5, 2019 at IHM Senior Living Community.

Sister Patricia was born in Detroit on March 15, 1926, to Daniel and Evelyn (Carlin) Cassidy. Baptized "Patricia Ann" at St. Theresa of Avila, Detroit, she later attended the parish grade school. She attended St. Mary Academy, Monroe, a boarding high school led by the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. One month after graduation, she entered the IHM community and received the religious name Sister Rosaire. This year, she celebrated her 75<sup>th</sup> Jubilee as an IHM Sister.



Sister Patricia earned a bachelor's degree from Marygrove College and later earned a master's degree in education from Wayne State University. Her teaching ministry was largely in the Detroit area at Our Lady of Help, Holy Trinity, Holy Redeemer, Christ the King and Gesu; and then to Ann Arbor at St. Thomas for many years, as well as Sacred Heart in Dearborn. She thoroughly enjoyed her ministry with young students. In 1975, she was assigned to St. Felicitas in Chicago where she taught for seven years. Favorite class-endavors included art education and creative writing, which led to monitoring many class newspapers. In later years, she worked in the registrar's office of Marygrove College and the business office at Gesu School.

Sister Patricia retired to the IHM Motherhouse in 2002 and lived independently until moving into the community's health care center (now known as IHM Senior Living Community) in 2007. She strove to be a blessing to those she met and often engaged friends and staff with stories and thoughtful correspondence.

## **Remembering**

This morning, we have come together to celebrate the life of Sister Patricia Ann Cassidy, a kind, thoughtful and generous member of our IHM congregation. We honor her today.

Patricia was the seventh and last child of Daniel Patrick and Evelyn Mary (Carlin) Cassidy. She was born prematurely on March 15, 1926, in Detroit, and weighed only three pounds. Her Dad described her as being “frail on arrival, but rapidly gaining in strength.” He once told Pat that she had been so small that he could have carried her in his pocket! Although three of the Cassidy children died in infancy, six others - Joe, Loretta, Betty, Ed, Dick and Pat lived into their adult years.

Patricia’s father, Daniel Cassidy, was born in Wyandotte, Mich., and her mother, Evelyn Carlin, was from St. Columban, a small farming area in Ontario, Canada. Ancestors on both sides of the family were from Ireland. Daniel and Evelyn were married in Most Holy Redeemer Church in Detroit on Sept. 26, 1907. They remained in the parish for many years before moving to St. Theresa Parish in Detroit.

In 1932, when Pat was only 6 years old, her mother died following a period of illness. Much later, looking back on this event, Pat wrote, “It’s amazing how Dad managed during this trying time. He was a peaceful man with a kindly nature and a fantastic sense of humor which helped him cope with the rough times. He lived to be 102! At the time of his death, he was honored as the oldest and longest practicing attorney in Michigan – and possibly in the country.”

Betty, who was 10 years older than Pat became the “heart” of the family after their mother died. “I came to realize how wonderful sisters and brothers are,” Pat reflected. “I have great memories of growing up with them. Our home life was very happy and fun-filled. Friends were always welcome in our home.” Pat attended St. Theresa School, Detroit, for her elementary education. She did well in school and appreciated her Dominican teachers.

In 1939, Mr. Cassidy married Estelle Ameis, and the family moved to her home in Gesu Parish in Detroit after Pat finished eighth grade at St. Theresa School that June.

Since there was, at the time, no Catholic high school in the area, Pat was enrolled at St. Mary Academy High School in Monroe, Mich., as a boarder to begin her high school education. Separation from family, adjusting to boarding school living and developing new relationships with her IHM Sister-teachers proved difficult at the beginning. However, Pat was appreciative of the fine

education that she was receiving, and in June of 1943, she graduated from the Academy.

Thoughts of a religious vocation surfaced during Pat's senior year. She was especially inspired by Sister Ann Pierre Schulte who encouraged her and prayed for her decision. Her aunt, Sister Margaret Alice Cassidy, her father's sister, was a positive role model by her prayerful, joy-filled life.

When Pat broached the topic of religious vocation to her father, she found whole-hearted support of her choice to enter religious life. The very next day after gaining her father's consent, Pat, unaccompanied, took the bus to Monroe to get measured.

Soon after graduation, together with three of her classmates, Antoinette Ruedisueli, Jan Soleau, and Edith Deswysen (our former Sister Jerellen), Pat entered the IHM Postulate. At reception, Jan. 2, 1944, she asked for and received the name of Sister Rosaire, in memory of a dearly loved teacher who had died during Pat's senior year, Sister Rosaire Sarbinowski.

Pat earned her Bachelor of Arts degree from Marygrove College and later a master's degree from Wayne State University.

After Profession in January of 1946, Pat was assigned to teach fourth grade at Our Lady of Help School in Detroit. In 1952, when Pat was just 26 years old, she suffered a total loss of hearing in one ear. Because of the type of loss, a hearing aid was not recommended. This was a source of many challenges for her throughout the rest of her life. Nevertheless, Pat taught successfully for many years in both Michigan and Chicago.

From 1946 to 1995, she taught in the elementary grades in several Michigan schools and at St. Felicitas School in Chicago. Her final teaching experience was at Gesu School from 1988-1996. When she decided after almost 50 years of teaching to leave the classroom, Pat worked as an office assistant at Gesu until she retired to the renovated Motherhouse building in 2003.

Pat had come from a long line of teachers within her family. Sister Margaret Alice Cassidy was one of three aunts, several nephews, nieces and extended family members who were professional educators. According to Sister Cecilia

Campbell, assistant principal at Gesu, Pat was an excellent teacher. She expected the best from her students and had a good rapport with them. "Pat always had a wonderful, artistic, attractive class-room," Cecilia stated.

While at Sacred Heart School in Dearborn, Mich., Pat involved her sixth-grade students in the project she had chosen to earn her Master's of Art Education from Wayne State University. The project: "Exploring Religious Symbols" involved her students in creating their own original religious symbols, which they did with marvelous results.

Pat particularly enjoyed her work with the underprivileged. She wrote, "I especially loved working with the Mexican and Maltese students at Holy Trinity, the students at Holy Redeemer Elementary School in Detroit, and with the African-Americans at St. Felicitas School in Chicago." She was greatly influenced by Sister Margaret McKoan (Sister Josine), her superior at Most Holy Trinity. "Sister Margaret instilled in me a deep compassion for the poor and a love for the missions. She also gave me a sense of freedom," Pat stated. Margaret remained a long-time friend and mentor for her.

Friends have agreed that Pat was a prayerful person. Among her most cherished times were those that she spent in retreat at Manresa, the Jesuit Retreat House in Bloomfield Hills, Mich. She came to realize that each moment is a precious gift to be treasured and aimed to live a day at a time, trusting in God's Providence. Having missed a close association with her mother, because of her mother's early death, Pat felt comfortable with a "Father" image of God. "Whoever our 'Gracious Mystery' is," she wrote, "that One is both Father and Mother – lover of us all."

Throughout her lifetime, relationships were important to her. She dearly loved her family, the IHM Sisters with whom she lived and her students. She related well with faculty members and parents in her years of ministry.

There was a playful side to Pat, too. She enjoyed playing cards, doing cross-word puzzles and passing along a good joke to others. She was a great letter-writer and said that this was her "ministry of the pen;" a vital part of who she was.

Traveling with family and friends to many places in the United States and Canada provided restful, relaxing times and occasions. Her Jubilee celebrations, many get-togethers at Watervliet and Crawfton, and her father's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration in the Detroit City County Building were occasions that she remembered and spoke of as she reflected with friends in her later years.

"God has been so lavish in blessings!" she wrote. "The promised 'hundredfold' has surely grown to a 'million-fold.' Life – Faith – Family – Vocation – IHM Community – Friends – and Students – these are the precious treasures for which I thank God with all my heart!"

Dear Pat, with your lively spirit and quick wit, you have kept us uplifted! We sense your smiling Irish eyes upon us now as we send you off with an Irish prayer of welcome and blessing.

***The welcome of the Father's arms be yours.  
The welcome of the Savior's heart be yours.  
The welcome of the Spirit's call be yours.  
We bless the day you were born.  
We bless you growing up.  
We bless you even in your dark days.  
And we bless you, especially, Pat, at your end.  
May the kindly eye of the Three be on you  
To aid and to guard you  
To cherish and enrich you  
And may you be taken into the clasp of God's own hands.  
Amen.***

Written by Patricia A. O'Donnell, IHM, (deceased); updated by Marie Gatza, IHM  
Delivered by Roberta Richmond, IHM, Aug. 7, 2019