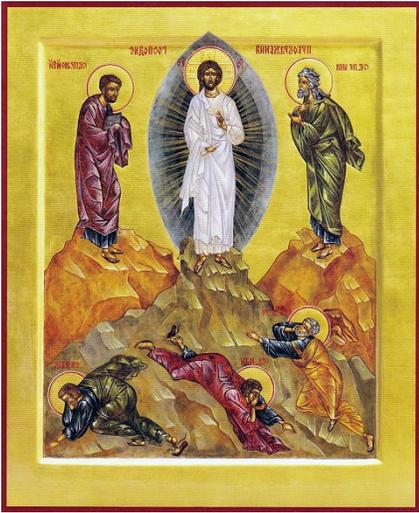


**SR. PAT CURRERI, DW**  
**Sr. Fidelis Mary of the Immaculate**  
**60<sup>th</sup> Jubilee Celebration**

**BEGINNINGS – WHAT’S IN A NAME?**



When Sr. Pat Curreri made her first profession sixty years ago, she was given the name Sr. Fidelis Mary of the Immaculate. Fidelis means ‘faithful’ as in the Marine Corps motto – ‘*semper fidelis*’, which means ‘*ever faithful*’. And that’s how I like to think of Pat – as a faithful technologist in every hospital she ever served in, as a faithful friend, as a faithful family member, as a faithful steward of creation, and above all as a faithful Daughter of Wisdom.

**FAITHFUL TO HER CRAFT**

For two-thirds of her religious life, (40 years out of 60) Pat has been an inspired and gifted radiologist. In 1959, she earned her certification at in radiology while at St. Charles Hospital in Port Jefferson where she then worked until 1966. It was then that she ‘flew the nest’ and began her

ascending flight. At Holy Family Hospital in Brooklyn, she became department head of radiology. The height of her career unfolded at Methodist Hospital where she served as department supervisor not only of X-ray, but also of the newly developing fields of ultrasound and CAT Scan. Then in her mellow years Pat became a quality assurance supervisor at Wyckoff Heights Hospital. In her professional life as in all she does, Pat has striven for excellence in her craft, accountability to both patients and staff, and fidelity to the ideals she believes in.

**JACK OF ALL TRADES**

No collection of photos of Pat would be complete without a few of her in blue jeans, work shoes, and an old shirt with a hammer, screwdriver, or chain saw in her hands. When she lived in Bensonhurst for 17 years, the landlady was, to put it mildly, extremely tight with money and very slow to do repairs. There was nothing Pat could not turn her hand to – she waterproofed the porch wall, she kept the electricity safe and humming, she painted whatever needed painting. You name it, she did it. She and her sister, Julie, turned a derelict Broad Channel House (which her mother referred to as ‘the shack’) into a beautiful stylish home – putting up the sheetrock, hanging the doors, even putting in a staircase.

The superstorm called Sandy destroyed the house where Pat was caring for her sister Alice Rose – that was in fact the only time I ever saw Pat cry – as well she might. Walls were destroyed, appliances were lifted and thrown to the ground, piano keys were swollen and melted together, furniture and belongings were saturated with fuel oil and salt water. In short, it was a mess! But Pat, with the help of others – family, friends, and utter strangers – worked like a Trojan to do all the demolition necessary to prepare the way for the builders.

For years Pat has been working at Star of the Sea, both inside and outside, in lots of hidden ways to make it pleasant for all who come. And even now in 2018, anybody who lives down the road at our Provincial House has ample proof every week of her giftedness and generous service.

## **FAITHFUL TO HER FRIENDS**

If you are a friend of Pat Curreri, you are her friend forever. There is nothing she will not do for you. And you can count on her to be faithful to the end. Starting with Maureen Corrigan and along the years with so many other sisters, most recently Mary Morrow and Marguerite White, Pat has accompanied them all in sickness and in health, to the very last moments of their lives.

In the 1980's my own mother was accepted at Holy Family Hospital, three blocks from the Bensonhurst community. Four times, at intervals of three years, I spent three whole months at Bensonhurst each time I came from Africa on home leave. The house was full and Pat herself had her bedroom on the enclosed front porch, but she set up another bed in her own room, used two filing cabinets to ensure privacy between us, and made me feel warmly welcome and at home. Greater love than this...

## **FAITHFUL FRIEND OF CREATION**

Pat has been a lover of animals since she was a little girl. From her first kitten when she was less than ten years old, to her current cats, Smoky and little Sunshine, a long succession of felines has brightened her life. But her most unusual friends have been the swans. From the time they hatch out of the egg, to the day they die, she knows them and she helps them. Nobody can believe it until they see it, but those swans can be three hundred feet out on the Channel in front of her house, and if she calls them, they come. Pat is in tune with creation. The swans and ducks and cats and even her plants seem to sense this and respond to it.

## **A FAITHFUL DAUGHTER OF WISDOM**

One reliable sign of fidelity in religious life is the confidence that your sisters put in you. Pat was chosen to serve as secretary on the Executive Board of the Sisters' Senate in the Diocese of Brooklyn, New York. Twice we as a province have chosen her to serve as a Councilor on our province leadership team, known in those days as the Provincial Council. These facts speak for themselves.

But they pale in importance before Pat's inner reality. One of the questions the jubilarians were given in preparation for this jubilee was, "What would you like others to know about how you have walked the Way of Wisdom? Pat wrote: "I have always tried to live my name – Fidelis Mary of the Immaculate – in all my undertakings." If that is not a statement of a deep and real spirituality, what is?

The second is this. (This is a spontaneous sentence spoken by one of us D.W.'s just two weeks ago.) "Pat can appear stern and focused at times – and that's O.K. But when Pat smiles, she lights up the room for us."

***Thank you, Pat Curreri!***

