

Sister Patricia Mary Crane, CSC

December 1, 1946–June 20, 2020

These memories were lovingly prepared and written by Sister Helene Sharp, CSC, who read them at the memorial Mass on February 9, 2021.

Patricia Mary Crane, born December 1, 1946, lived fully until June 20, 2020, when she made her final voyage on Earth.

Pat didn't want a list of her accomplishments and missions read out. So, from conversations with and reflections from many sisters, friends, family members, priests and brothers, one theme of Sister Pat's life was clear: relationship.

Pat's entire life WAS relationship—with God, with many and very varied people around the world. Those relationships reflected four categories: family and friends, community, ministry and spirituality.

Pat's interest in Native American spirituality began when she studied the impact of European diseases on the Algonquin tribes that had inhabited Long Island, New York. Through the years her understanding of that spirituality deepened. During a sabbatical retreat she made a large drum that she hung on her wall. When we toured the Pokagon-Potawatomi exhibit at The History Museum in South Bend, Indiana, she reveled in finding the Crane totem with the description: "Members of the Crane Clan are known for their strong voices. They are seen as good representatives for the community and may be part of tribal leadership, such as serving on the tribal council. They are strong educators, and singers of the drum societies." Pat had all those characteristics. She served on the councils of two Areas.

Family and friends were the foundation of Pat's life. Pat absolutely loved her family: her late parents Harold and Edythe Crane, her brothers, Robert (Bob) and Kevin, their wives, her nephews, and the grand nieces and nephews about whom she regaled us with stories after a visit.

She developed lifelong friendships from earliest childhood days that continued to deepen throughout her life. We think especially of her friends Peg and Betty Ann.

Pat's relationship with God was nurtured with her family as they practiced and lived the Catholic faith. In her nursing training (following in her mother's footsteps), she studied and pursued systemic causes of diseases and poor health. She studied international health and was active in social justice issues.

Blessed Basil Anthony Moreau's call to "see the needs of the people and meet them" began long before she ever heard of Father Moreau. In 1979, Pat responded to a call for nurses in Yucatán, Mexico. In 1984, she went to El Salvador, where she credited her meeting and living with Sister Maryanne O'Neill, CSC, as the inspiration for her vocation to religious life. She cherished all the ordinary things they shared—laughing, arguing, playing and praying together. It was "the focus on the font of prayer," from which Maryanne drew strength, that impressed Pat the most. "We have to live the ordinary as extraordinarily as we can." We are always seeking the face of God.

Pat had the ability to respond to whatever was presented, from stitching machete wounds in El Salvador, to teaching mothers how to care for children (Pat loved babies and children), to teaching novices and taking them shopping.

Maryanne said, "Nothing medical seemed to phase her as long as she could nurse her can of Coke ... she could make that

Coke last all morning. A trait she never lost!” She also noted that Pat’s frequent reaction to life’s vicissitudes was a swear word. “Pat knew more than one, and her quick temper could spark these!” These qualities served her for all her life.

After the El Salvador years, Pat entered the Sisters of the Holy Cross in 1988 and her love of community and dependence on God led her to serve in Peru, California, Utah, Uganda, Mexico and Indiana, where she continued to give herself untiringly, meeting whatever needs presented themselves.

During her illness she organized the Holy Cross Family Rosary Ministry in Monterey, Nuevo León, Mexico, and she leaves behind many friends there. Her ministry that began in Yucatán looped around the globe and her final activity in Mexico was a return to Yucatán for a Family Rosary rally. She went back to where she had started.

It was during her illness that she accepted the call to be on the Area of North America Council. She said, “If elected, I will do and be my best as long as I can. I have something to give to my sisters in ANA.” One day she commented on those questioning why she continued as councilor. Her response to me was, “What are the letters on my car registration?” The car assigned to her had the registration tag 192-RBG ... Ruth Bader Ginsburg was one of her heroes!

Pat leaves so many good friends in Holy Cross, sisters, brothers, priests and associates, people she cherished and who were crucial to her life and growth. And she left friends in every place she ministered. Pat would also “draw a line in the sand” when she found injustices being done to those who could not respond. She had definite ideas of what should be done, and

she liked things to go her way. Though she could be difficult to live with at times, she was willing to listen and change her mind if needed.

Pat was a social, fun-loving woman! She loved going out to eat, and these were celebrations to enjoy her friends, to help her sort through discouraging news or rejoice in the positive, or just to talk and share. She eagerly baked cookies at Christmas and gave them to others. When Pat gave a gift she chose it very carefully to reflect the relationship with the recipient. She loved to play games and played to win! She was a voracious reader!

She was always ready, and often instigated excursions to movies, museums, parks, anything of beauty, including to go see Christmas lights. She eagerly taught the novices and was usually available to take them shopping.

Pat gave her all to “be a voice for the voiceless,” to solve problems, and to find God in the ordinary. She was enthusiastic and entered wholeheartedly into whatever she did.

One of Pat’s inspirations came from the ocean. She asked her friend Sister Patricia Gantz, CSC, to “give me a picture of sailboats.”

That picture was an icon of her life. As in life, it included movement in sails, the pliability of the water. We can’t direct the wind, but we can adjust the sails. Pat’s life was learning to adjust the sails. Though the ocean is at times wild and dangerous, deserving respect, attention and skill, so too does life. It is an experience to be cherished, lived and enjoyed.

God, the wind in Pat’s sails, led her to places she never dreamed she would go. And as she trusted God throughout the voyage, accepting the changing winds, she is now at peace.

I can just hear her saying the words of author Hunter S. Thompson, “Life should not be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty and well-preserved body, but rather to skid in broadside in a cloud of smoke, thoroughly used up, worn out, and loudly proclaiming, ‘WOW! What a ride!’”

Rest in peace, Pat, we miss you and love you.