



Remembering

Sister Patricia Krommer, CSJ
April 3, 1932—July 2, 2019

In the early morning of April 3, 1932, Oscar Krommer and Mary Francesca, greeted their first-born child whom they named Patricia. Besides being the first born, Pat was born in Berkeley, CA, a city synonymous with social change. Within a year, Pat's parents welcomed their second child, Barbara. Shortly thereafter, the family moved to Fresno, CA. In Fresno, Pat first encountered the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet who taught at St. Therese's Elementary School. After elementary school graduation, both Pat and Barbara went to San Joaquin Memorial High School. There, Pat was a diligent and well-rounded student, active in Sodality, social life, as well as sports. Pat's mother was a devout Catholic; her father was a Lutheran, but he promised to raise his family as Catholic. After 14 years of marriage, he converted to the Catholic faith.

Four years after Barbara's birth, another girl, Carol, was born to the Krommers. She was often the brunt of teasing. But when it came to others' teasing, the girls really stood together! When Pat was 9, her sister Judy was born. In adult years, Judy and Pat became very close, with Pat considering Judy a trusted confidante. Family life for the Krommers was blessed with delicious Basque meals lovingly prepared by her mother, prayer before meals, family

Lenten practices, and nightly bed-time prayers. A big influence was regular exposure to national and world politics. Pat's Dad, Oscar, had a deep respect for FDR especially during the depression years. A dark cloud fell over Pat's life when just one week after High School Graduation her father died unexpectedly. Pat describes going into her Dad's closet, finding his suit jacket, reaching into the pocket and retrieving her Graduation program. In the privacy and darkness, tears were a welcome release from such a loss. Pat's call to religious life surfaced in High School. Pat's mother, Mary Francesca, approved, and accompanied Pat to the Postulate at St. Mary's Academy. Pat had a deep desire to become a member of the Congregation of the Great Love of God, the CSJ's. So, Pat entered in 1950, received the habit and her own name, Sister Patricia, on March 19, 1951. She pronounced 1st vows in 1953, and her final vows in 1958. Pat was initially missioned to a variety of CSJ schools, both in the inner city, and in more affluent areas. In 1963, Pat's leadership skills were recognized, and she was appointed Principal of St. Catherine of Siena school in Laguna Beach where she served 6 years, ending in 1969. The mid-sixties and early 70's were a period of great change in the Catholic Church following Vatican II. There emerged a quest among

many religious to return to the original charism of their community. For the CSJ's this meant reading the signs of the times and an emphasis on the varied needs of the dear neighbor. In this period, Pat was sent to St. Bernard's High School while also serving as Parish Minister at St. Anne's Parish. The latter was considered an alternative ministry. This parish had a sizeable Hispanic membership. Because of this exposure, Pat requested of Sr. Louise Bernstein, Director of Special Ministries, and approval to attend a Texas training program geared for ministers to the Hispanic Community. THE MEXICAN AMERICAN CULTURAL CENTER (MACC) was recognized as the pre-eminent center for preparing anyone engaged in ministry to Hispanics. There, Pat digested all the lectures, books, and presentations by world class liberation theologians such as Gustavo Gutierrez, and others. She also mingled with and made friends with other religious committed to working with Hispanics and advancing social justice. After a year's training, Pat began work at The Franciscan Peace and Justice Office of the Diocese of Reno at Las Vegas. There, a significant contribution was the organization of a state coalition to provide Medicaid for the poor in Nevada. This was a victory of community organizing by herself and the other team members.

Following that, Pat was asked by a group of Salvadorans to direct the Archbishop Oscar Romero Relief Fund. Pat was a key force in attracting volunteers to help raise consciousness, and to collect medicines for Nicaragua and El Salvador. She frequently travelled to Central America. There she met Karen Parker at a Human Rights Conference. Karen, a lawyer, and Pat eventually collaborated to found the Humanitarian Law Center. Karen wrote briefs supporting claims for political asylum. Pat sent sample briefs to every Law school in the United States. This initial project led to the building of a Law Commission. Pat realized that to be truly effective, the Law Project needed to be attached to an NGO with consultative status at the UN. Pat persuaded the Jesuit Missionaries effectiveness to use their Ngo. This move bolstered the credibility of the project. Pat's life boldly demonstrated her embrace of the biblical call to: act justly, love tenderly, and walk humbly with God. She was committed to so many movements which required persuading people action must be taken. One such cause was the abolition of the Death penalty for which Pat worked diligently. There were so many other causes for which Pat used her community organizing skills, including taking a group of politicians to a site of a horrific massacre of Indigenous people.

Much of Pat's ministry was geared to community organizing. That is: empowering others to consciously act to resolve unjust social injustices. Pat's first involvement was sparked by Fred Ross, the legendary community organizer who spearheaded the work with Cesar Chavez. She gained further experience with Sister Carol Costen, first head of Network, a Catholic lobbying organization. Pat frequently acted as a "town crier" to alert the community to issues that needed attention; particularly in Latin America, El Salvador in particular. She let so many of us know of the assassination of Bishop Oscar Romero, as well as the 4 nuns and one lay woman in El Salvador.

More recently, Pat had a great desire to deepen her spiritual life. She made a 30 day Retreat, which she describes as life-changing. She entered a program to be certified as a Spiritual Director, completed it, and has been serving as spiritual director to several young Jesuits. At the same time, Pat has brought her compassionate presence to the youth at Juvenile Hall. She does her best to listen, pray with, and encourage. During her religious life, Pat was connected to so many social justice movements it would take pages to list them. She was unafraid of engaging people of all religious denominations, including Jewish, Muslim, and Protestant. Her work has been recognized by numerous awards some national, and some local. She formed lasting friendships with a vast variety of people. In her life, she was a fine friend to many. Pat was deeply connected to Dolores Mission. In Pat's own words, she describes the essence of her spirituality: "I appreciate the enormous humility of God who chooses to live in each one of us, no matter how limited or brilliant, poor or rich, no matter what personality, faults or gifts of grace. He's there."

One unforgettable trait of Pat's was the way she would end any conversation. She would say: "I love you." Now, dear Pat, you are in the unending presence of Love itself. Pray for us, your sisters, your family, your friends. Amen

