

It happened on February 17th in the early evening. It happened very quietly. Our Lord came to bring our dear Sister Patricia Barrett Home. Perhaps, we at Oakwood were a little surprised at His coming, yet we could not hold on to Pat when His call came, for now she was at rest with Him.

Born in Gary, Indiana, on July 28, 1914, Sr. Barrett spent the early years of her life there, her grade school years at a parochial school, high school years at a public high school. She enrolled at Maryville College in 1931, graduating in 1935. She entered the Society of the Sacred Heart in October, 1935. Of this experience, she wrote: "I learned about the vows of religious life when I entered the Society of the Sacred Heart at the age of twenty-one. The theory was clear and unequivocal in the days before Vatican II. By our vows we freely bound ourselves to serve God in the Society by poverty, chastity and obedience according to the spirit and rules of the Society. I made those on April 29, 1938."

"I lived the vows in a very active manner from April, 1938, until 1979 with retirement from Maryville College. During those years and until May, 1980, I taught grade school, high school and college: girls and boys, adults, including policemen, convicts and ex-convicts - people from every avenue and alley of life. All profited by the substance of the subject matter, whether conveyed in classroom, police station, or jail cell. My purpose was to help them grow in knowledge and love of God, to develop the concept and experience of His unfailing love for them."

What Sister Barrett does not mention in her own account is that on February 11, 1945, she made her profession at Kenwood under the direction of Reverend Mother Bodkin. To the Profession was given the name: Love of the Will of God, with the motto: Humility gives meaning to obedience.

She also does not mention that in the years following her profession, she was engaged in graduate study, receiving her PhD from St. Louis University in 1950. During this period she was also teaching college classes in Economics, Sociology, Government, and she was also a student counsellor.

In the 1960's and 1970's, new vistas opened up for Sister Barrett due to the relaxation of cloister regulations, and Sister Barrett was able to join social action to her full time college teaching. She says of this time: "These were active years, teaching, ministering to every kind of need whether the victims

were social outcasts, homeless, suffering street people, or troubled members of the more affluent segments of society. I made good friends among them and was constantly amazed at the virtue and generosity which emerged in the most adverse circumstances. All were grateful for the help and interest in them personally. They were not easily deceived and were quick to spot a phony and just as quick to detect genuine concern."

The time for retirement was, however, approaching. Physical handicaps found Pat unable to continue both her teaching and her work with those in need. In 1982, Sr. Barrett arrived at Oakwood. Handicapped she was, but this did not prevent her from taking brisk walks, being active in the Community, playing bridge, reading extensively, showing concern over world problems. In many ways, she was still using her Sociology, her knowledge of Government. She continued to be both a teacher and a student. At the same time, she was experiencing physical and mental diminishment, growing helplessness - a final test of her Love of the Will of God and of her humility giving meaning to obedience. This was, indeed, the final test, not an easy one, and one that she struggled to pass. The struggle gave way to submission, submission to peace, and while the community was praying with her, Sister Patricia Barrett quietly left us in the evening of February 17th. She had reached the end of her journey - Home, the everlasting Home where she, our Pat, rests in peace.

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