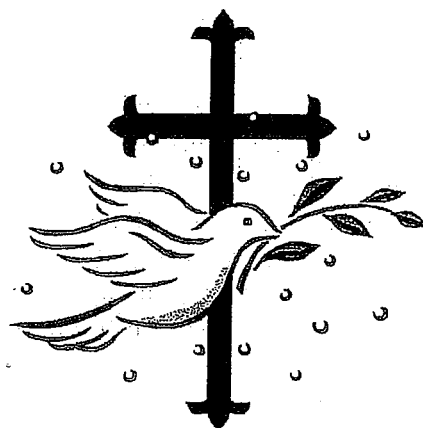


The Sister Patricia Geary, CSJ Christian Service Award 2020



Presented to _____ in recognition of all that you have done to reflect the values and ideals most exemplified by Sister Pat Geary. As a living example of Christian faith in action, you have selflessly given of yourself to promote and facilitate Christian service to others, the social mission of the church, and a call to respect the dignity of all people.

Your dedication to these ideals is an inspiration to the entire community of Saint Augustine's Parish.

You have truly "Lit the Darkness"
with the candle of Christian love.

Sister Patricia Geary, CSJ

Sr. Pat Geary was born in Utica, NY in 1934. She attended St. Agnes Grammar School and Utica Catholic Academy. Upon graduation from UCA she joined the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet and was a religious for 46 years until her death in the Spring of 1998. Over the years she served in the Albany and Syracuse areas as an educator, administrator, pastoral associate, Director of the Diocesan Formation for Ministry Program and Provincial Superior of the Sisters of St. Joseph.

Sr. Pat began her ministry at St. Augustine's in 1990. She quickly became a catalyst for growth and change for the parish as a whole and for the many parishioners who worked with her. She instituted a revised RCIA process that had a great influence on those preparing for Christian Initiation. She restructured the Pastoral Council by creating Standing Committees to increase communication. When the Pastoral Center was planned she accepted the responsibility for a fund raising program that emphasized community building while raising money.

Sister Pat was a woman of great faith. She was gifted with wisdom and insight. These gifts, along with her strength and strong convictions, allowed her to lead others to recognize their gifts. She offered a challenge to use these gifts to the fullest potential ("stretching" as she termed it) to minister to God's people.

Sister Pat believed in the dignity of each person. She advocated for the rights of all, especially women in the Church and society. She raised the consciousness level of each person of the need for social justice and compassion for all regardless of their position in life.

As a leader, she educated and called each person to recognize and live out their baptismal commitment, as she herself lived out her commitment in service to others.

The parishioner who is selected will be presented with an award recognizing the values exemplified by Sister Pat: Christian service to others, a call to respect the dignity of all people and a call to participate in the social mission of the church. This person's service may be either at St. Augustine's itself or in the community-at-large. The parishioner's name will also be inscribed on the permanent plaque in the Sister Pat Geary Gathering Room. In addition, \$1,000.00 from our parish tithing will be given to a non-profit agency of the parishioner's choice that espouses the above values.

Eligibility: The individual must be a registered parishioner of St. Augustine's.

Sister Patricia Geary, CSJ Christian Service Award
Nomination Form

Name of person you are nominating: _____
(must be a member of St. Augustine's Parish)

Nominee's home telephone number: _____

Nominee's address: _____

Approximately how long have you known this person? _____

I am nominating this person for the Sister Patricia Geary Christian Service Award because: _____

How does this person exemplify the values personified by Sr. Pat, namely
a.)The Gospel mandate to Christian Service to others? _____

Please list specific examples. _____

b.)The social mission of the church _____

Please list specific examples. _____

Please attach additional sheets of paper if needed

c.)A call to respect the dignity of all people. _____

Please list specific examples. _____

Approximately how long has this person been involved in Christian Service? _____

How has this person inspired you personally? _____

Your name: _____

Your telephone number:(Daytime) _____ (Evenings) _____

This form is due by March 5, 2020 by 4:00PM
Award will be presented at the 5:15 Mass, March 21, 2020

Please mail to:
Selection Committee
St. Augustine's Pastoral Center
7333 O'Brien Road
Baldwinsville, N Y 13027

Remembering Sr. Pat Through The Sr. Patricia Geary Award

As St. Augustine's parish remembers Sr. Pat through the Sr. Patricia Geary Award and looks back on the people and events that shaped our faith community, the contributions of Sister Patricia Geary stand out. For those parishioners who were not members of St. Augustine's prior to her



death in 1998, you've heard of her mission through the annual Sr. Patricia Geary award that is presented to a parishioner who exemplifies her values of Christian service to others, respecting the dignity of all people and a call to participate in the social mission of our church. You've seen her picture and plaque in the Gathering Room at St. Augustine's that she supported through her vision of expansion with the addition of our Pastoral Center.

For those people who spoke about St. Pat to me, one impression stands, that we all became more active in our personal missions through the empowerment of Sr. Pat and we will never forget her.

Sr. Pat was born in 1934 and was received into the Novitiate through the Sisters of St Joseph of Carondelet in March, 1953. She professed her final vows in August, 1960. She served in the Albany and Syracuse areas as an educator, administrator, pastor associate, Director of the Diocesan Formation for Ministry program and Provincial Superior of the Sisters of St Joseph.

Sr. Pat began her ministry at St. Augustine's in 1990, hired as Director of Spiritual Development. During her eight years at St. Augustine's, she revised the RCIA process and restructured the Pastoral Council by creating standing committees to increase communication throughout the parish. She served as facilitator for the Pastoral Council, the Christian Formation Committee and the Parish Welcoming Committee. She coordinated the Bethany Hospitality Committee, the Parish Social Reception Committee, and the Fun(d) Raising Activity Committee for the Pastoral Center. She was a leader in developing and implementing a

program for Parish Renewal. David Ditz was on this committee that envisioned yearly covenants that encouraged parishioners to formally commit in writing to sharing their talents in parish activities of interest. Sr. Pat had this concept in mind and through the platform of this committee, facilitated the process that remains in place today. David Ditz also shared that Sr. Pat was a great influence in forming committees that forecast our parish needs for future growth. Through these meetings the "dreaming" process took place that envisioned our building expansion of the Pastoral Center more than two years before we broke ground. While Sr. Pat did not live to see the completion, her vision fostered the project and her spirit remains with us forever as we use and enjoy this beautiful facility.

I initially worked with Sr. Pat through several different activities. When she asked me to consider sponsoring a RCIA candidate, I hesitated at first as it required several weeks of entire Sunday mornings, and my weekends were precious to me. Sr. Pat had a way of asking that made it difficult to refuse. It was never a forceful request, but when she asked something of you, you knew in your heart it was fueled by the Holy Spirit. I accepted her request and found it to be a very enriching experience for me, and hopefully for Heather, my RCIA candidate. Others who knew Sr. Pat also noted it was impossible to refuse her requests, but all agreed the personal rewards they received by acceptance far exceeded their initial concerns of commitment.

Sr. Pat led me to become a Eucharistic minister when St. Augustine's implemented the addition of the precious blood of Christ through wine at communion. She was strong in her belief that both the precious body and precious blood of Christ must be present at our masses and Father John Rose implemented this practice while he served as pastor.

I recently spoke with Father Rose, who shared this memory of Sr. Pat that exemplifies her physical endurance and determination to live life to the fullest while living with cancer. While picking up cookies for a First Eucharist gathering, she experienced extreme pain in her hips and legs. She drove herself to the hospital and underwent a battery of tests. The doctors diagnosed the pain as a reaction to one of her cancer meds, and said she would likely be wheelchair bound for the rest of her life and never walk again based on experiences of other patients. Sr. Pat said, "Oh yes, I will walk again", and not only walked out of the

(continued next page)

hospital, but continued to walk and work while living the rest of her life to the fullest despite her pain. The following poignant memories of Sr. Pat are from Bob Deming: "I enrolled in RCIA in the Fall of 1994, continuing through the process until I was received into the Church on Holy Saturday, 1995. Sr. Patricia Geary was one of the primary motivators getting the RCIA process started at St. Augustine's in the early 90's and remained as a 'guiding light' for the process."

"One of my favorite memories of Sr. Pat took place the evening of Holy Saturday in 1995 at the conclusion of the Vigil Mass. I and seven others had just been received into the Church and we as a group had decided to honor Sr. Pat with our actions. Prior to that evening, we had been collecting food for several weeks to donate in Sr. Pat's name. The group railroaded me into making the presentation/announcement. We had collected a two-car garage full of food and opted to symbolize that with two laundry baskets full at Mass that evening. As I read our group dedication/presentation, I saw Sr. Pat sitting in the front pew with tears running down her cheeks, something seldom seen. Later, I had a moment to sit with Sr. Pat and my first words to her were 'we got to you didn't we?' She looked up at me and with tears still in her eyes she responded with 'It's a teacher's greatest joy to actually see their students put into practice what they have been taught, thank you!' Sr. Pat's motto was 'Live simply that others might simply live', she lived that motto every day!"

Laurie Drake shared similar memories showing us the spirit of Sister Pat: "Sister Pat meant the world to me. She had the innate ability to see the gifts that a person had and then would work with you to develop those gifts. You learned well from Sr. Pat, including her leadership on Pastoral Council, where all decisions were made prayerfully by consensus. We held prayerful events, like the Stations of the Cross from around the world, where I helped narrate



each slide with another parishioner. It was presented in such a way that you could see the face of God in every person from all the countries portrayed. That evening opened our eyes to the famine and suffering that has been in our world for so long. Then we held the Living Stations, where all minis-

tries came together, especially the CYO, to bring to life the final days of Christ. No one left with dry eyes. She taught me to take my gifts out into the world by volunteering at the Brady Faith Center and the Spiritual Renewal Center. "

Laurie continues on, "One of her greatest accomplishments was Renew International, where material from that organization was used to form small faith sharing groups." She trained facilitators to "help people find and develop their relationship with Christ and where and how to continue to grow in their faith. She was a gifted speaker and presented the homily at St. Augustine's once a month. She often would tie in the themes presented in the Renew Group when we used the Sunday-by-Sunday format to come to a better understanding of Christ's teaching through the Gospels. Her best reflection was when she spoke about the movie *The Lion King* and tied it to Scripture." Laurie further wrote how Sister gave her a glimpse of her travels to NY City for cancer treatments, and as the end drew near, Laurie was blessed during her visits with Sr. Pat in the hospital. "She would let me stay 10 minutes and then said I had better get busy with my work at church. "Follow the path Christ has chosen for you."

"Sister Pat had the innate ability to see the gifts that a person had and then would work with you to develop those gifts."
Laurie Drake

Sr. Pat ended her journey in this life on May 28, 1998. Laurie Drake concluded her memories with "Her funeral left me wanting more of her, but she blessed us in allowing her to go. I remember the music and the 50 plus Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet who attended her funeral, with Sister Laura Bufano as Cantor. The music and songs raised the roof on St. Augustine's. You felt the power of her love expressed to all of St. Augustine's in a humbled and unassuming way..."

I remember Sr. Pat's funeral as well, a joyful celebration of a remarkable life. Knowing Sr. Pat, I strongly suspect she planned every aspect of this final celebration. Perhaps the best way to end this article on Sr. Pat is to quote the inscription on her mass card which says it all so simply: "This is what Yahweh asks of you – only this: Act justly, love tenderly, walk humbly with your God." Micah 6:8

Submitted by Parishioner Kathy Fisselbrand

Please remember the good works of Sr. Pat in our parish through the Sr. Patricia Geary Christian Service Award. Applications are available at the entrances of the church and on our parish website staugustinesparish.org. Applications are due back by March 4, 2020 by 4:00PM.