

May 9, 2020

Dear Associates and Sisters,

Mary Pat Flaherty, loving mom, grandmother, loyal friend and joy-filled Franciscan, left her earthly life for a new life in Christ on Tuesday, April 5th, 2020. Influenced by the Franciscan charism of Oldenburg Academy, Roncalli High School and her good friend Sister Sue Johnson, she became an Associate over 25 years ago.



Mary Pat was a CNA and then drove a forklift at the Mercedes Benz factory. She raised her two children, Tommy and Angela while parishioners at Holy Cross Parish then later joined St. Judes Parish. She was on the Vocations Committee and active with Cursio. She attended funerals of anyone she knew, even if she didn't know them well, seeing this as an act of mercy.

The joy of her life was to spend time with her two grandsons, making tents inside her home and reading to them. Nicknamed, "Mama Bear" she would join them for grandparents' day and cheer them on at their sporting events. Mary Pat was a football fan, her favorite team was Purdue and she also listened to the high school football games on the radio on Friday nights. She loved having Saturday night card parties, playing chicken foot or Farkle. Another pastime for Mary Pat was watching the Soaps and her friends were humorously warned not to call her during *General Hospital!*

Everyone who spent time with Mary Pat appreciated her sense of humor and her gift of storytelling. Associate Judy Anne Dye was convinced that Mary Pat had a photographic memory and soon realized that an endearing quality of her excellent memory was that once she met you, you were never again a stranger. "She loved to visit with friends and reminisce, recalling events in striking detail. When she went to Oldenburg for overnight retreats, she "slept" in a chair downstairs where she could be close to the action. She loved attending mass at Oldenburg, especially to hear the choir, a special flute solo or the hand bell choir. She enjoyed singing and could often be found, close to the piano, singing oldies and her favorites. She truly missed the mass and sacraments when she became ill, but kept up to date on all the local news by reading *The Criterion* from cover to cover."

She invited many of her friends to consider becoming an Associate and encouraged all her family, friends, associates, local priests and religious with her words and actions. She was a member of the Associate Board and looked forward to the monthly associate meetings in Indianapolis, catching up on the local news of the parishes and Associates.

Keeping close relationships with her Associate friends she loved driving the back country roads by Oldenburg with Patrick Janitz and one of her favorite possessions was a wooden Tau cross on a brown cord that Veronica Ernstes brought from a trip to Assisi. She found strength in the Associate program to help her through challenging times. Over the years she reflected, "I know I can't change the world but I can change myself. I have learned creation is a gift to share and we need to encourage one another to be the best we can be and to be there for one another." We thank you, Mary Pat for sharing your best and being here for us. We will miss you.

Carolyn Meyer