

Mary Patricia Ann Akins, SNJM - Letter to My Younger Self

Roots - Family background

I have called you by name...you are mine...(Is. 43.2)

Patricia, returning to your roots, recall the very earliest moments of your existence. Imagine for a moment the immense joy of Geraldine and Joseph as you entered the Atkins family in Arnprior, Ontario on April 26, 1940. It was here and in Sudbury that you lived in the loving company of your parents, brother John and grandparents for a number of years.

Life was to change for you when your Father enlisted in the Military service. Multiple city moves and enrolment in different schools filled you with appreciation of the giftedness of persons of many different backgrounds. Your Father's military postings in distant lands highlighted for you the importance of close family and community ties. This strong belief still remains with you and is part of your youthful life today.

Church's Mission of Education - Education of Youth

*The disciples were filled with joy when they saw the Lord and he said to them again,
"Peace be to you. As the Father sent me so I am sending you." (Jn 20.21)*

Pat, throughout your years of schooling your gifts of mind and heart were recognized by dedicated teachers. It was in part their example that helped you respond to an inner call to follow Jesus Teacher. With readiness of heart, on July 24, 1959 you entered the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary committed to the education of youth. Do you remember the days when the young experienced the joy of learning responding to your artistic talent, lively sense of humour and creative teaching techniques? Your extensive professional training enabled you to recognize the unique and special giftedness of each child. You endeavoured to "...collaborate in the Church's mission of education, with emphasis on education in the faith and with a special concern for the poor." (Constitutions #3) Missioned to serve as Principal at Christ the King School in 1995 you responded great willingness and eagerness to collaborate with staff members in being instrumental in awakening students to the transforming presence of Jesus in their lives.

Pastoral Service - Ministry to the Sick and Elderly

*Wherever you go, I will go, where you live, I will live.
Your people shall be my people and your God, my God. (Ruth 1. 17)*

Patricia, in the year 2005, you once again returned to your roots to be inspired anew by the example of your Father, who served as a nurse, and the unstinting generosity of your Mother in caring for others, moving you to respond to the Holy Spirit's invitation to engage in pastoral care to the sick and elderly.

SNJM Spirituality

"Know that I am with you always." (Mt. 28.20)

Sister Pat, the deep rootedness of your being at this moment finds its source in the SNJM spirituality which is "...inspired by the Names of Jesus, our Saviour, and of Mary, his Mother ..." you "...desire to live in openness to the Spirit." (Constitutions #5) As you enter into the mystery of the lives of those you serve may you be attuned to the words of Jesus: *I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full. (Jn 10.10) The learned will shine as brightly as the vault of heaven, and those who have instructed many in virtue, as bright as stars for all eternity. (Dan. 12.3)*