

TRIBUTE – SR. PAT BROCKMAN

By Trudelle Thomas

NJC 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

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Sister Pat Brockman was the principal at Ursuline Academy when she heard about a charismatic young priest named Richard Rohr. She offered him the gym for his Friday night prayer meetings—thus opening the floodgate of grace that touched hundreds of lives. Pat recalls, “At Ursuline, we had our first miracle. I often sat beside a girl who had cerebral palsy – she had never walked before. Someone invited her to a prayer meeting, and she experienced a complete healing there. She stood up and walked! Richard was stunned—we all were! It was the first of many dramatic healings in New Jerusalem.”

When Richard challenged us to actually live in community, Sister Pat was one of the first to move into a communal household. She soon became part of the very first pastoral team. And Pat was the person to first encourage Richard to record his sermons on cassette tapes so he could reach a wider audience.

But what comes to mind when many of us think of Sister Pat is Carl Jung and Pat’s dream work. She helped us learn about Jungian archetypes, the importance of symbols, the Shadow, the Collective Unconscious, and the interplay of feminine and masculine energy. Jungian psychology shed new light on the Christian story of sin and redemption. Pat led “dream groups” both inside and beyond NJ. We recorded our dreams in journals and turned to Pat to help us interpret them.

Pat was among the first of us to get training in Myers-Briggs, which helped us so much to live and work together. Much later, in her sixties, Pat earned a doctorate in Jungian psychology and published The Community Dream: Awaking The Christian Tribal Consciousness. Her book gave us hope while mourning Richard’s departure.

With the perspective of years, we can even better appreciate what a remarkable person Pat Brockman is. She joined the Brown County Ursulines at age 17 and worked as an educator until age 40 when she discovered New Jerusalem Community. Amazingly, the Ursulines freed her to devote herself fully to NJ for the rest of her life—50-plus years. Then came decades of living communally with much younger people; many recall her infamous “**Saturday-leftover soup!**” She was arrested in Washington for protesting the arms race; she overcame breast cancer with herbs; she spent time at Findhorn in Scotland, and later worked in Switzerland with Franciscans International at the United Nations. This happened in her 70s!

Like a great mother tree whose roots connect with all the vegetation in the forest, Sister Pat remains a constant source of nourishment. Always a nun, always committed to living in Winton Place, and always a wisdom figure for the many who trust and admire her. Sister Pat remains unwavering in her dedication to our early ideals.

Someone recently asked Pat if she ever considered leaving religious life. Pat answered, “Once I entered the convent at 17, I was **an Ursuline forever**. It’s taken me a whole lifetime to realize what an important step that was. The same was true of New Jerusalem--once I was in, **I was in forever**. I just wanted to serve the Lord. Now at 92 I’m amazed at how **the Lord pushes us around** wherever he wants us.”

We love you, Pat. Thanks!