

Sister Mary Patrice Bradshaw, SHF

February 23, 1922 - September 17, 2010

Entered the Sisters of the Holy Family January 6, 1947

Final Profession of Vows July 7, 1951

A Song in her Heart

Sister M. Patrice Bradshaw was born in Oakland, California and died on September 17, 2010 at the age of 88. She had been a member of the Sisters of the Holy Family for 63 years, entering the congregation in 1947.

As a Religious Educator and Pastoral Associate, Sister Patrice served in parishes in the Fresno, Oakland, Sacramento and San Francisco dioceses. She is remembered by parish friends as one who touched people deeply in her ministry of welcoming back fallen-away Catholics.

After Sister's retirement to the Motherhouse she entered into a long Ministry of Prayer. Suffering from increasing dementia, Sister nevertheless remembered the two loves of her life: teaching the children and singing. Even with her failing memory, Sister Patrice for years held onto the words of many of the "Golden Oldies" that we love to sing along to. When no one else could remember, Sister Patrice would be our authority for "Let Me Call You Sweetheart" or

"Daisy, Daisy." Her face would light up with a smile as she sang, and she would encourage everyone to sing along with her. When she finally lost the words to the songs, she would make up words to fit the meter. And when she lost words themselves, she used her own sounds and kept singing, a song in her heart that could not be stilled.

Her heart also remembered her years of teaching children, and in the middle years of her dementia, she would gather around her the children that only she could see, and would teach them and encourage them. She would also try to get the sisters around her in the Community Room to help her with setting up and planning her classes. The love of her previous ministry was still present in her heart, even decades after she was no longer able to go out and teach the children.

Alzheimer's manifests itself in different ways in different people. In the case of Sister Patrice, the disease was never able to completely take away her joy in ministry and song. Though it was heartbreaking at times to watch her, she always had a smile for people who took the time to stop by for a visit. And until her final illness, within a few days of her death, she still had a song in her heart and on her lips.

-- *Sister Carol J. Crater, SHF*