**Sister Pat Bussman**

**Mass of Resurrection Homily**

Daleen M. Larkin, SNJM

***“This is my delight, thus to wait and watch at the wayside where shadow chases light and the rain comes in the wake of the summer.   
  
Messengers, with tidings from unknown skies, greet me and speed along the road. My heart is glad within, and the breath of the passing breeze is sweet.   
  
From dawn till dusk I sit here before my door, and I know that of a sudden the happy moment will arrive when I shall see.   
  
In the meanwhile I smile and I sing all alone. In the meanwhile the air is filling with the perfume of promise.”[[1]](#footnote-1)***

These words of the Bengali Nobel laureate Tagore capture an essential quality of Pat’s life: time for waiting, sitting, pondering words spoken and unspoken, anticipating a happy moment of seeing. Her air today *is filled with the perfume of the promise of eternal life.*

Our scriptures speak of the power of words, tables, bread and wine. These elements are the basis for daily living: words of companionship, tables of nourishment and conversation, and the sharing of daily bread and wine.

So I invite you to pause, close your eyes, and remember a table gathering with family, friends, community members, … a time of conversation and story-telling, a time of sharing of special bread, a time of toasting with choice wine … Are not our hearts warm as we remember …

Isaiah says God’s words will not come back empty-handed. Pat was a woman of the word. She enjoyed crossword puzzles. I remember working on a puzzle with her as I drove and she was in the passenger seat as we cruised up Highway 5 on a trip from southern California to the north. That particular day she did not have a computer to help with the clues. Pat used her library card regularly, checking out the latest best seller, and relaxed in a favorite spot, enjoying what she was reading. When she was in charge of the younger boarders at Ramona, years ago, after their baths in the evening, she gathered them for story time. Sitting in a rocking chair, she shared the words of the stories with these young girls. Once they were in bed, she went to the chapel for her own words of prayer. In her work in education words surrounded her: academic words; conversations with students, teachers and staff members; words of support and guidance as she mentored principals; words used to tell the story of the schools and archdiocese where she served.

God’s word is revealed in the Scriptures, a daily part of Pat’s spiritual pattern of practice. *“This is my delight, thus to wait and watch at the wayside where shadow chases light and the rain comes in the wake of the summer.”* Sitting in her chair in the Bethany House chapel, with her morning cup of coffee, Pat daily encountered God’s presence in the words of her morning prayer. When she retired to Los Gatos, this daily practice continued: sitting for her morning prayer and coffee, watching the wonders of the garden outside her window, listening to God’s word at the start of her day. As the reading from Hebrews says, “What God says goes. We can’t get away from it -- no matter what.”[[2]](#footnote-2)

Tables, tables of life, tables of companionship, tables of conversation, tables of encounter with the Holy.

The sharing of bread (preferably San Francisco sour dough) and enjoying a glass of wine (preferably Merlot) at the table was a source of pleasure and enjoyment for Pat. Regular evening dinners (especially with a serving of pasta); special meals with friends and guests; socializing with parishioners and friends at a gathering, a glass of wine in hand, and involved in a conversation … table encounters with meaning and grace, part of the rhythm and pattern of Pat’s life.

The ordinary and daily table time mirrored for Pat another table that was an essential part of her spirituality. The Gospel says, “When it was time, Jesus sat down, all the apostles with him, and said, “You have no idea how much I have looked forward to eating this Passover meal with you …”[[3]](#footnote-3)

Whether it was the convent chapel, the parish church, the chapel at schools, Pat looked forward to the daily Eucharistic celebration. She pondered the readings of the day, she ate the Bread of Life and drank from the Cup of Salvation, food for her day, a happy moment of communion with Jesus.

*“From dawn till dusk I sit here before my door, and I know that of a sudden the happy moment will arrive when I shall see. In the meanwhile I smile and I sing all alone. In the meanwhile the air is filling with the perfume of promise.”[[4]](#footnote-4)*

In today’s Gospel Jesus says he wanted to eat the Passover with his disciples before he suffered and then passed over to the kingdom of God. He wanted to share bread and wine with his friends. The covenant of Jesus – in good times and hard times, in understanding and doubt, in awareness and trust, in the giving over of capacity – the Covenant of Jesus, the Bread of Life and the Cup of Salvation, overflows for those who desire to proclaim by their lives the primacy of the love of God.[[5]](#footnote-5)

Words – powerful words of love

Tables – places of gathering and communion

Bread and Wine – food for the journey

*“My heart is glad within, and the breath of the passing breeze is sweet.*

*From dawn till dusk I sit here before my door, and I know that of a sudden the happy moment will arrive when I shall see.”*

Amen.

1. Rabindranath Tagore in *Gitanjali: Song Offerings*. <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/7491824-this-is-my-delight-thus-to-wait-and-watch-at> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Hebrews 4:12 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Luke 22:14-20 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Rabindranath Tagore in *Gitanjali: Song Offerings*. <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/7491824-this-is-my-delight-thus-to-wait-and-watch-at> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. SNJM Constitutions #3 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)