

Sister Patricia Carson, SSND – 60 Year Jubilee!

“I knew right away that I belonged”



My name is Patricia Carson, and I was born November 4, 1944, the oldest of five girls.

My first memory of experiencing God’s call was when my sister Michelle was in grade 1. She had a young postulant (Janet) teaching her. I assisted Janet every day after school and got to know her better. One day, my mom said to me that Michele would make a good nun because she is so quiet.

When I told Janet this she said, “I don’t know about Michelle, but you would!”

This comment planted the seed, and I began to go to all vocation activities. I began to discern which community I would join. I had SSNDs teaching me and came to love their caring, their approachability, and their gentleness and peacefulness.

I didn’t talk much about it at home, as my dad was against it. Mom was always very supportive.

I entered September 2nd, 1962, and knew right away that I belonged.

I loved teaching. Mom always said she knew that I would teach, watching me, as the oldest of 48 kids on our block, turn our backyard into the community school. I had a hard time in school, which helped me to be supportive of students who were struggling. The community used this gift when choosing missions for me.

Cont’d

Sister Patricia Carson, SSND – Cont'd

Most of my teaching was with emotionally disturbed children. Sometimes it's hard to see how your efforts affect others, but I had two situations which I will never forget:

I was getting two of my younger students ready for First Holy Communion. I decided to try an imaginary prayer. I had them imagine sitting on a rock and talking to Jesus. After a few minutes, I asked them if anything happened. Robbie said Jesus had talked to him. I asked him what Jesus said, and his answer was, "Robbie, sometimes you are an awfully bad boy, but I love you anyway!"

Another time, my teacher aide and I took the little ones to the children's room at the museum. One of our students had "selective mutism," which is an anxiety disorder in which a person can't speak in certain situations, like school. As we were got off the bus, back at school, he stopped in front of me and said, "What a wonderful trip!" This touched my heart.

I now live on our health care floor at Notre Dame Convent Waterdown, and in so many ways this has been a blessing. I always knew I loved my Sisters but I really didn't know how much I loved them until now. They are aging so graciously and are so grateful for any little adventure.

However, it can also be painful dealing with so many deaths, and seeing beautiful, strong people descend into dementia.

Sitting at the bedside of a dying person has been one of my greatest experiences. I truly feel God's presence.

All these experiences combined have added to my feeling of fulfillment as a School Sister of Notre Dame.