**Sr. Patricia Perry**

**Date of Birth: March 22, 1927**

**Entered Eternal Life: April 11. 2019**

**Eulogy by: Mary Lou Lafferty OSF**

Good morning! On behalf of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, I would like to welcome you to the celebration of life for our Sister Pat Perry. We want to extend our prayerful condolences to Pat’s family -her sister, Dorothy (better known as Dor), her brother John (also called Butch), and his wife Gloria, and her many nieces and nephews /grandnieces and grandnephews. Our Chapel today is filled with many people who loved Pat and, also, experienced that love from Pat. So to all of you, we extend our sympathy also. We have all lost a great Sister (small “s” and capital “S”), friend, and advocate.

There have been many significant dates in Pat’s life, but the two most important are her birth on March 22, 1937 and her death April 11, 2019. Between those two dates is a dash which signifies how Pat lived and loved, how she spent her life - and it was a full one.

Pat was the oldest of three children born to Charles and Charlotte Perry. From what her two siblings have shared with me, what Pat said was to be done. Butch was even a bit afraid of her. So she was a determined person and that remained with her throughout her life. Pat knew what she wanted, but it was never for herself. She was always out there for others.

Her ministry whether as an educator, physical therapist, or the administrator of “Sr. Pat’s Home”, was always dedicated to the people she served. She was fiercely loyal and there was never any discrimination.

Though Pat was an excellent teacher for 11 years, she always had that yearning to work in healthcare. After studying to be a physical therapist assistant, she came to Olean and remained here for 46 years, 11 of them at St. Francis Hospital. People loved her, even though she appeared not to have sympathy for the pain and torture (PT) they experienced with her. Her involvement was second-to-none for St. Francis Hospital - she knew everyone in the hospital and everyone knew her. She was even a “runner” for them and I don’t mean in a marathon. During the football season, in particular, she would be the person who would bring all the bets from the staff to the bookie at the local watering hole. I guess they thought nothing would happen if ‘Sister’ got caught! My heart was always in my mouth!

While at St. Francis, she saw a need for the elderly after they left the hospital. They needed care, they needed an advocate, they needed someone to love them. So Pat started plotting and planning, and believe me, she plotted and planned. Her mind was filled with many ideas of where this home could possibly be, but she knew she had to sell her ideas, many of which were not practical nor feasible, to the Leadership of the Congregation. But she would not give up. One day, she met Dr. Ben Hwang in the hospital and the rest is history - 35 years’ worth. He and his wife, Li, helped Pat bring that dream to fruition. They stopped at nothing. As soon as possible, Pat began rehabbing a house on First Street that they purchased. If you want to work nonstop, work with Pat. Believe me, I was on duty every free minute I had while when not attending to my duties at St. John School in North Olean. I was cleaning, scraping, and preparing the house along with many others for the list of people she already had waiting.

Dedication took on a new meaning with Sr. Pat’s Home based on Pat’s philosophy. Every resident was someone special in her eyes which gave each dignity. At the beginning, she cooked, she cleaned, she did the laundry, covered Doctor’s appointments etc. As time moved on, she had wonderful people assist her. Her most challenging trait was her gullibility. She tended not to be careful with money or circumspect with people. One night about 10 years ago she called to tell me something before I read it in the paper. She had been giving this girl, whom she had befriended, money with the understanding she would be paid back when the girl got her check. Come to find out that Pat was one of many Olean residents who had been stung. “But she was so sincere Mary Lou. We sat on the porch swing and she shared her life with me”. When the police came, they asked Pat if she always left her door unlocked and pocketbook sitting on the coffee table? “Oh yes,’” was her response. “Loretta keeps an eye on everything.” (Loretta was blind) Trusting was another strong suit!

There are many wonderful stories that could be told about Pat’s commitment and dedication. Pat was recognized by the Olean Chamber of Commerce in 2010, receiving the Good News Award for her ecumenical spirit of service in the area. She served on the Board of Genesis House and worked endlessly for the homeless, both men and women. She was on the Board for the Cancer Society and chaired their Annual Daffodil Drive. We had daffodils and more daffodils. She was always out there doing for others. That’s why today’s gospel - Matthew 25 - is so appropriate. She tended to all: the hungry, homeless, neglected etc. It was never herself, even to the last week she spent with us.

Pat did know how to relax, however, and enjoy life. She managed a night out at least once a week to enjoy her beverage of choice; took trips to the casino either in Atlantic City or Salamanca; and, maybe, her most impressive enjoyment was watching HGTV. “Flipping House”, “House Hunting”, “Flip or Flop” were among the favored. She not only flipped houses, but she knew all the stories behind the persons involved.

Though Pat was not living within the ordinary community structure while at Sr. Pat’s Home, she never forgot her commitment to her Franciscan vocation. Every morning she was at St. Mary’s Church to pray the office and attend the 7 o’clock Mass. She was a committed faith-filled Allegany Franciscan - definitely a “courageous woman filled with hope”.

Pat’s dash was filled to the brim making a difference in the lives of so many and you who are here today know more of what that little line between those two dates is worth in the life of Sr. Pat Perry. Pat, your dash was filled and so we say “well done – good and faithful servant!” You will be missed, my friend! Go in peace!