

WOMEN IN OUR HISTORY

SISTER PATRICK JOSEPH KELLY 1892-1969

by Catherine Podvin, OP

In the last few months there has been a great deal of publicity concerning the Titanic, including a highly advertised movie. A young lady, 20 years of age, who was on the *Titanic* and one of the few saved, was Anna Kate Kelly, who later became an Adrian Dominican known as Sister Patrick Joseph. A short synopsis of her life seems appropriate at this time.



Anna was born in County Mayo, Ireland, on Jan. 14, 1892, one of 11 children. She, along with a cousin, a young man near her age, was emigrating to America on the *Titanic*. As the ship was sinking, women and children were evacuated first. They formed a long line. A young bride refused to leave the ship without her husband; and Anna, the next in line, was given the bride's place. As she was being lowered into the lifeboat, she looked up and saw her cousin watching, holding in his hand his rosary, which he raised to bless her. He was among the many who went down with the ship.

In Chicago, she lived with members of her family, and came to know and admire the Adrian Dominican Sisters. She stopped often in Holy Name Cathedral to thank God for her rescue from a watery death, which she considered a miracle, and to pray to know God's will for her. Eventually she saw clearly that she was meant to be an Adrian Dominican. She was 29 years old when she entered in June 1921.

She loved Chicago and taught for many years in Chicago and environs, including Our Lady of Good Counsel, St. Philip Neri, and St. Rita in Chicago; Ascension, Harvey; and Visitation, Elmhurst. She served in only six schools outside of Illinois, and only for a year or two in each place: St. Mary, Royal Oak; St. Ambrose and Presentation, Detroit; St. Paul, Owosso; Resurrection, Lansing; and St. Augustin, Des Moines, Iowa.

Sister Patrick Joseph was tall and slender, an attractive woman known for her honesty and wit. In every place that she taught she was much loved. In the 1940s she fell and broke a hip, but the resulting pain and limitation did not keep her from the classroom. She taught until June 1969. Her death occurred on Dec. 18, 1969, from a heart condition, shortly after she became a resident at Maria Hall in Adrian. ☉

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