

Wisdom – Sr. Susannah’s Resurrection Mass  
Sr. Patricia Bruno, OP – December 13, 2025

I’m sure you have already seen the photo of Susannah on the back of your Mass booklets. With Susannah’s arms outstretched... Just take a moment -- look at it...

The photograph comes from a video that Paul, one of Susannah’s nephews filmed when Susannah was saying goodbye to her family about 10 days before Susannah died.

Susannah’s wide-open arms are an icon of how Susannah lived her life— arms outstretched to all—her family, her Dominican sisters who have gone before her, and those of us who are present here today.

Arms out stretched to Harriet, her dear friend, and Harriet’s family..

Arms outstretched to her caregivers – those who were with her day and night along with the sisters holding vigil specially during her last days..

and all of her long-time friends present and afar.. and, of course, her students of long ago...

And Susannah lived her life with arms stretched in her search for truth - God – Holy Wisdom.

The reading from the Book of Wisdom that Sister Margaret read—is an unusual reading for a mass of resurrection, but Susannah was an unusual, an extraordinary woman – complex –a bundle of enthusiasm, joy and holy curiosity – a unique expression of God’s presence in our lives– a true child of Wisdom..

As you know the bible has many different creation stories. In the Book of Wisdom which we read today creation is described in poetic terms.

As the world was being formed, Holy Wisdom is with our Creator God from the beginning. Scripture says, “Before the mountains were settled, before the boundaries of the seas were defined, “I Wisdom was born.”

Wisdom – is personified in feminine terms and “She . . .delights in the children of the earth.” She is not aloof or distant from creation, but is close and intimate. She meets us at the crossroads of our lives when decisions have to be made and guides our choices. She is bright and never grows dim. and helps us discern what is right and just.

Holy Wisdom walks about looking for those who are worthy of her and graciously shows herself to them, as she did to Susannah.

From the loving arms of her parents Wisdom journeyed with Susannah from her beloved Portland soil into the arms of our sisters who taught at Dominican upper school in San Rafael. She was an industrious student.

Knowledge was important to Susannah; but as she grew in age and grace, her relationship with God – Holy Wisdom – grew deeper. In 1951 when Susannah made her final vows she chose as her motto inscribed in her ring. “Direct my path in your sight,” And, Holy Wisdom directed Susannah .

Susannah was on our Congregation’s council for two terms – close to 10 years.. Together Susannah and the council navigated our Congregation through the turbulent waters of Vatican II.

Susannah co-authored our Constitution – the one we have now. It has been recognized as one of the best Dominican women’s Constitutions.

She also taught in many schools and some of her former students are here today because, like Holy Wisdom, Susannah’s light has never grown dim..

Susannah’s vision was large, her curiosity strong. In her later years she earned three master degrees – in Latin, Greek and religious studies.

But, Susannah wasn’t just involved in academics.

At the crossroads of her life, Wisdom directed her path to Casa de las Pobres, in Tijuana Mexico, where the children’s playful spirits ignited Susannah’s joy and refreshed her spirit, as did those wise mothers and families in her inner-city ministries in San Francisco.

Susannah’s involvement with everyday people and grassroots organizations broadened her understanding and continued to transform her life.

Susannah was generous— generous with her experiences, insights and her time. During her 26 years as the director of Santa Sabina Center, Wisdom directed Susannah’s path: Scripture, poetry, mysticism, meditation, care of the earth. These retreats inspired all of us to explore the connections between theology and science – our spirituality and the New Cosmology – broadening our faith and inviting us deeper into the mystery of God.

It was during this time at Santa Sabina that the bright light of Wisdom directed Susannah's path to Genesis Farm in New Jersey, an experience that left an indelible mark on her heart. In her own words Susannah wrote, "I am growing in my understanding of the intimate connectedness not just between members of the human family on this our 'home planet,' but of all living things, all life systems."

We see now Susannah walked in good company because her insights are echoed in Pope Francis' Encyclical *Laudato Si*.

Throughout Susannah's life Holy Wisdom never failed to be at her side, directing her. Even during her last months when her pain and suffering became more intense – in humble acceptance – Susannah continued to stretch out her arms knowing she would be embraced by the One she had followed all her life – God, Holy Wisdom.

In the gospel today Jesus asked Peter, "Do you love me?" Without hesitation Peter and Susannah answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." – They fed Jesus' sheep

And that same question is also asked us of today, "Do you love me?" – Feed my sheep.