



REMEMBERING OUR SISTER ANN CORR, IHM
July 27, 1917-July 15, 2010

It has been a truly joyful privilege to prepare this remembering for our beautiful Ann Corr, known to so many as Sister Mary Campion. For the most part I plan to let Ann speak to you in her very own gifted words, for in doing this preparation I was treated to a share of Ann's inner life.

Shortly after Ann retired to the Motherhouse she made a retreat during which she focused on a review of her life which she called "Seasons of my Heart." So I begin there, with springtime – in which she sees herself "green and

stretching out to love."

Ann wrote, "I was born on the shores of Lake Michigan in 1917 in Sheboygan, Wis., the first child of William and Elodie Delbecq Corr. Both of my parents were second generation children of Irish and French emigrants. I had four brothers, William, Francis, Thomas and Patrick. We were a happy and loving family, even though my father's work required frequent moves."

My first sight of the IHM Sisters occurred when I visited my grandmother, who lived across the street from St. Catherine's convent on Seminole in Detroit. I had a good view of the line of sisters going back and forth to school and church. I liked their blue habit, but thought the white half curtains on the windows *very strange*. After I graduated from high school in Cincinnati in the depths of the depression, we moved into Gesu Parish in Detroit. There we found a number of Jesuits we had known in Cincinnati. One of them had always taken an interest in me, and he was able to help me obtain a scholarship to Marygrove. Thus began my real relationship with the IHM community.

After graduation from Marygrove, in 1940, I entered the IHM congregation. My first mission was Girls' Catholic Central, followed by 11 years at Immaculata. Most of my life was spent teaching math and science at a number of high schools. With the arrival of the 70s and the closing of many of our schools, I recognized in myself a growing desire to help people struggling with the changes brought about by Vatican II.

Ann writes about this new season in her life. "Holy is your name, Yahweh, as summer blossomed gentleness, radiant with light. Blessed are you, Enabler of deeds, as you spoke directly to me, as I spoke to you."

“I joined one of the first pastoral teams at St. Timothy, Trenton, where I enjoyed a rewarding ministry for seven years. As our mission efforts expanded westward, I migrated to the senior citizens at Holy Ghost, Albuquerque, N.M., for four years.” Ann wrote on her ministry commitment form, “I bring a gentle, patient, non-threatening attitude plus a strong personal conviction that aging years are a time given by God to grow spiritually.

“During this time I became interested in the Native Americans, and felt drawn to a wider ministry in pastoral concerns. I decided to follow the example of my father, who with my mother served as Jesuit lay volunteers at Holy Rosary Mission in South Dakota. I applied to St. Stephen Mission in Wyoming where I began six years of ministry to the Arapaho tribe.”

Ann and Sister Joy Halpin have been such very good friends from way back to their time together at Girls’ Catholic Central and Immaculata days. That’s some 65 wonderful years. When Joy and Ann teamed up to go to St. Stephen’s in Ethete, Wyo., in 1982, they were already at retirement age. To quote Joy, “Nobody believed we’d last very long out there – it was a new and very different culture, and it was *very* rural. But we did last! We joined the Native American’s in their pow-wows, in their life experiences, in their struggles and in their pain. We loved them, and they, in turn, loved us.” What a wonderful witness to your missionary hearts, Ann and Joy, and also to the gift of your friendship, by which you supported one another in so many seasons of your lives.

Next came four years of tutoring at Marygrove. Ann wrote, “By enabling disadvantaged students to succeed in their work, I feel that they gain hope to become self-supporting citizens who can help break the cycle of poverty for themselves and for their children.” “You are here, Yahweh, in the golden of autumn as the call to surrender becomes loud to my ears.” And again, “You are here, Yahweh, in the winter of my life, offering visions more clear - of new life in hiding. Blessings come running, new stars are appearing, never seen by me before.”

Ann shared her faith through the IHM Book of Life. Here again we seen her ever-expanding inner journey. “Considering the cosmos and finding that all creation - from the smallest quantum to the outer reaches of space - are interdependent was a grace-filled time for me. In fact it was quite mind-boggling! What a wondrous God to let all things develop without regard for time or space, with chaos slowly organizing itself into beauty unsurpassed. Most amazing of all was the thread of unity connecting the diversity.”

Ann always stayed close to family. Her niece, Mary Ellen, tells that in high school her brother Bill often went with her to the dances. Later when Sister Ann would

get a National Science grant, it was a joy to find one in New Jersey, where her family was living. Ann's niece tells that she was named Susan Campion Corr after Sister Mary Campion; and Susan has, in turn, named her youngest child Thomas Campion Decker. Niece, Mary Ellen, tells how she and Ann would go on retreats together and share a great deal of what was important to them. In fact, says Mary Ellen, "My aunt, the nun, taught me to be a feminist."

Not too long ago Mary Ellen accompanied Ann to New Jersey for the 50th wedding anniversary of Ann's brother Patrick and his wife. And Patrick was here in January 2008 to visit with Ann. At that time, family members saw Ann reach out to her dear brother. How very special this was for all of them!

Ann, we saw and loved you as you endured the winter years, waiting for God to call you again. Though you lost the ability to communicate in word or deed, your beautiful smile still bore witness to your rich inner life. And we thank you for sharing it with us. May the love you shared with us in this life continue to bless us as we wait to join you and the God you loved so tenderly. God speed, Ann.

By Roberta Richmond
July 18, 2010