



**Remembering Sister Loretta (Thelma)
Gilloe, IHM
July 1, 1913 - Sept. 29, 2008**

Sister Loretta Gilloe's parents, Beatrice McLaughlin and Robert Gilloe, were born, educated, grew up and married in Sarnia, Ontario, Canada. Shortly after their wedding, they moved to Detroit where they settled in St. Vincent Parish and Mr. Gilloe found employment at the Ford Motor Company.

Loretta was the third of their five children -- all girls, two of whom besides Loretta were to become IHM Sisters, Sister Mary Robert and Sister Helene. Loretta attended St. Leo School. She made her First Holy Communion and was confirmed in the parish church. The family's next move was into St. Mary of Redford. Loretta started third grade at the parish school and went on to graduate from there in 1931.

"We lived a normal, happy life," Loretta wrote. "We enjoyed family boat trips to Boblo Island and picnics at lakes in the area."

A month out of school and on her 18th birthday, Loretta joined her two older sisters in Monroe as an IHM Postulant. She received the habit and her religious name, Thelma, in January 1932 and made first vows in 1934.

As a second year novice, she began her mission experience at St. Mary in Mt. Morris teaching music, a ministry she was to continue during the next 20 years in IHM schools in Ann Arbor, Mt. Clemens, Detroit, Chicago, Flint and Coldwater. During this period, Loretta completed studies for a bachelor's degree at Marygrove College and some time later for her master's degree from the University of Detroit. "My 20 plus years of full-time music ministry, private lessons, choral, choir and orchestra were a challenging but fruitful experience," she wrote.

In 1992 a former pupil sent her a newspaper clipping reporting his professional successes and wrote, "I thank you and salute you for your guidance and help so many years ago. The early years are the ones that really count in gaining techniques and motivation."

In the 1950s when Mother Teresa announced that many music teachers would change from full time music ministry -- although keeping choir and choral -- Loretta undertook a new area, classroom teaching in religion and English.

Some 14 years later Loretta embarked on still another ministry in guidance and counseling. In 1967 and for the next 19 years, sister would serve the students of St. Mary in Lorain, Ohio, as counselor and from 1970 on as coordinator of the guidance department. Sister was convinced of the dignity and worth of every person and sought, in her words, "to create and maintain an atmosphere in which each student will freely and openly seek guidance when coping with difficult problems." "In a counseling situation," she wrote: "I attempted to

establish a climate of trust and integrity in order to have a student identify with my supportive direction and advice."

After terminating 53 years of service in Catholic education, Sister Loretta returned to the Motherhouse and offered her services to archives. Work in archives, she wrote, put her in touch with the roots of IHM history, an experience which especially delighted her.

Finally, last year sister moved into Memory Care where she continued to pray for "the extension of the kingdom," a phrase she seemed to have particularly liked, a project she will likely continue 'til time is no more.

Sr. Jane Mary Howard
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