

IHM Sisters - Then and Now

May 2009



Sister Dolora Neumaier, IHM, was born in Holloway, Mich. She attended St. Thomas the Apostle School in Ann Arbor, Mich. (taught by IHM Sisters), beginning in the seventh grade.

While at St. Thomas, Sister Dolora took violin and piano lessons from Sister Grace Maher, IHM, who became her mentor. Sister Dolora entered the IHM community a month after graduating from high school.

For 34 years, Sister Dolora ministered in education. She was the supervising teacher for the Marygrove College Preschool; a teacher of young children; a principal and an assistant principal.

In 1971, Sister Dolora began ministering in pastoral care. Three years later, she was able to return to her beloved St. Thomas in Ann Arbor, where she spent 18 years as a pastoral assistant. Much of her ministry involved caring for older adults and sick parishioners.

When she retired in 1992, Sister Dolora was determined to stay active. "Retirement brought me lots of joy," she says. "I was free to search out opportunities to volunteer."

She found many opportunities. Sister Dolora was an on-call chaplain for St. Joseph Mercy Hospital and pastoral minister for Arbor Hospice and Home Care. She volunteered at an Ann Arbor St. Vincent DePaul Thrift Store; served on the boards for the Washtenaw County Council on Aging (she was an emeritus member), the Diocesan Committee on Aging and the Advisory Council for Respite of Washtenaw.

Her most rewarding ministry, both as a professional and as a volunteer, was working with older adults.

"Older people have such joy in their friendships," Sister Dolora observes. "They know how companionship has enriched their lives. Being able to see that and be a part of it was such a gift for me."

Sister Dolora also saw her work with people in hospice care as a gift.



"It was a revelation to me to see how peaceful so many people were as they prepared for death," she says.

Sister Dolora moved from Ann Arbor to the IHM Motherhouse in 2004.

"I really appreciate the leisure and the time I have now," she notes. "The Motherhouse staff and services make retirement so comfortable."

She continues her volunteer pastoral ministry, visiting sisters who are sick and spending time in prayer. She is an avid reader, enjoying authors as diverse as Maeve Binchey and Joan Chittister, OSB. She is currently reading *JFK and the Unspeakable*, by James W. Douglass, and *Eternal Seasons*, by Henri J.M. Nouwen.