



## Remembering Sister Marian (Ann Charles) Rollison, IHM

Sept. 24, 1925 – Dec. 8, 2010

The version of Psalm 23 that Marian chose for her Page of Life captured my imagination in relating the story of her life, and so I use it as a framework for this "Remembering."

Psalm 23, *The Quiltmaker*

*God is my Quiltmaker, I shall not want; of many pieces, He makes me colorful... on a wide frame he stretches me..."*

Marian Mae Rollison was born Sept. 24, 1925, to Charles Benjamin Rollison and Clara (Compeau) Rollison, in Pontiac, Mich., and within two months baptized at the nearby parish of St. Vincent de Paul. She was the youngest of the family of three boys and two girls. In her autobiography she mentions that from the fourth grade she knew that she wanted to be a sister, "...although, no one ever thought that I would enter the convent because I was a real tom-boy until I was in the seventh grade." All her school life she was under the influence of the IHM Sisters, who taught at St. Fredrick School, Pontiac, during her 12 years of grade and high school. It was not surprising that she entered the IHM congregation soon after graduation, on June 6, 1944, accompanying the sisters on their return to Monroe for summer vacation. It was very hard on her mom to lose her youngest daughter, she remembers. Marian was received Jan. 2, 1945, as an IHM Sister and given the name Sister Ann Charles.

Marian's next-in-rank, George Ellen Brannick, recalls her good nature and friendly personality, especially during "Hall summer days" when they gathered behind the Academy sharing poems and stories. Marian's readiness for a good laugh in the crowded Hall Chapel could bring the whole pew shaking out of control.

Having taught for a short time at St. Joseph, Monroe, Marian writes that in September 1947 she went on her first mission assignment to Harbor Beach, which seemed like going to Alaska. She remembers making flash cards for her students to take home and felt that she had some of the smartest children in the whole school.

Sister Marian was an excellent primary teacher and relates that one of her favorite activities was the preparation of children for their First Holy

Communion, which she was responsible for during most of her teaching career. Marian shared that she loved teaching little ones, "they were like putty in your hands." She was delighted when, as she put it, she could "get them excited about nothing."

*Psalm 23 continues:*

*The Quiltmaker..." He guides needle and thread over devious paths for His name's sake..."*

Marian was moved to five missions in her first seven years of teaching: Harbor Beach, St. Boniface Detroit, St. Joseph Dexter, St. Patrick and St. George in Detroit. Marian herself attributes this to her easy adaptability and good humor, which was recognized by Mother Theresa, who felt free to move her around wherever needed. In her own words... Marian found herself "to be happy wherever I was planted."

In 1954, she was sent on her first mission outside of Michigan, Immaculate Heart of Mary, Glenn Lake, Minn., where she spent four very fruitful years. Then followed four years at St. Raymond in Detroit. After teaching her "little ones" in Detroit, Cleveland, River Rouge and Trenton, she ventured to the sunny south in 1971, being assigned to St. Michael in Miami. During these years, Marian became an expert teacher in a unique and specialized educational program for primary students, known as "The Workshop Way." She excelled and trained others in this method for some 12 years at St. Michael's, St. Lawrence School in North Miami Beach and Nativity School in Hollywood, Fla.

*Again from Psalm 23:*

*"...even though my Quiltmaker leads me to darkness I fear no harm, because He is there with strong backing to comfort me and hold me together..."*

Graciously, Marian met another challenge in her life, undergoing open heart surgery around 1987. After returning to her hospital room, her IHM companions of that time remember her asking "How does my hair look?" Recuperating in this sunny atmosphere, Marian found new life and gradually became involved in pastoral care ministry and religious education at St. William's Parish in Naples, Fla., where she shared her gifts as an open, loving and easy-going person serving the people of southwest Florida for seven happy years.

When it appeared time to retire from formal ministry, Marian returned to Michigan and found a welcome with the sisters of St. Hugo of the Hills in Bloomfield Hills, involving herself in part-time ministry as a substitute teacher, tutor and resource teacher.

In September 2004, Marian relates that she "came to Monroe to live in our beautiful new Motherhouse and I am very happy. God has been very good to me," she writes. "I don't regret any of my life," as she recalled being the only one left of her siblings.

*Psalm 23 continues, "My Quiltmaker "threads the needle with joy; my life overflows."*

In 2006 she was invited to move to the Memory Care unit, which she accepted with all the gracious, loving generosity for which she had been known to live her full life. Her creative ability found an outlet in the making of many decorative Kleenex box covers for the annual IHM Christmas Sale for several years. How proud she was to display her talent to anyone who paid her a visit.

As her condition required more nursing care, she moved to Health Care. Here, her caregivers experienced her as quiet, sweet, peaceful and smiling with her eyes.

It was no coincidence that it was Dec. 8, the feast of Mary Immaculate, that Marian was welcomed home to be with her Quiltmaker. With a twinkle in her eye, she might have said to us who are left behind, "Surprised you all, didn't I?"

Sister Marian, as we recall your ever-ready smile, your generous quiet spirit, we thank you for your faithfulness to the IHM spirit. We rejoice with you now, in your new-found life, as we pray the final verses of Psalm 23...

*"Surely the goodness and kindness of my Quiltmaker shall be with me all my life as I dwell in the house of my God to an old age. Because God is my true quiltmaker, in Him I find all COMFORT."*

Prepared by Dorothy Diederichs, IHM  
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