

IHM Sisters - Then and Now

December 2009



Born and raised in Portland, Maine, **Sister Marie Andre Walsh** was educated in the public schools. Her mother taught her and her brother catechism, and her father taught them church history, doctrine, and impressed upon them the need for political activism.

She grew up during the Depression, but her family saved every penny so that she and her brother could attend Catholic colleges. She chose Marygrove College, and in 1939 graduated with a major in French.

Four weeks after graduating she entered the IHM congregation and began teaching at St. Mary Academy. Almost immediately Sister Rosalita recruited her to assist with the translation of IHM co-founder Louis Gillet's correspondence and sermons for the book *No Greater Service*, written to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the founding of the congregation. She taught French to the Academy students during the school year and to the sisters who needed credit for their diplomas during the summer.

Sister Marie Andre was on the original faculty at Immaculata High School and taught French there, then at Marygrove College. She received an M.A. in French from the Catholic University. Later she returned to the Academy to teach French and serve as the vice principal.

In 1966 she was sent to St. Edward's University as one of five sisters to establish Maryhill College for Women, a coordinate college of St. Edward's University. When Maryhill College was dissolved, she had completed a Ph.D. at the University of Texas, and developed a national award-winning program to prepare Spanish-speaking teachers for bilingual elementary school children. For 18 years she gained federal funding to educate the students, mostly children of migrant farm-workers. In 1980 and 1982 she was sent to the Samoan islands to assist Cardinal Pio Taofinu'u to establish a parochial school system in the Islands. In 1991, upon retiring from St. Edward's, she was named professor emerita. From 1986-2005, she served under two bishops as vicar for religious in the Diocese of Austin.



In 2005, at the age of 86, she retired to the Motherhouse--well sort of. Right away she was recruited to keep the Motherhouse Chronicles, to serve on the Elder Council, on the retreat planning committee and to lector at Liturgy.

Nowadays, she says her greatest enjoyment is the time available to pray, study the Bible, and read. She recalls the time when she was in active ministry, "When you're busy, you have to cram it all into your day and you struggle to make sure you have the time you need. But here the struggle is gone. We're living in a prayerful atmosphere at the Motherhouse."

She recently finished reading *A Pilgrim in a Pilgrim Church: Memoirs by a Catholic Archbishop*, Rembert Weakland. She enjoys reading religious magazines such as *America* and follows *National Catholic Reporter* online. She gives at least a half-hour a day to armchair activism, an interest instilled in her by her father.



Now 91, she says she has had lots of challenges in her life and has enjoyed every one of them.

Contact a sister or share a memory

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