



Sister Kathryn (Kate) Pierce and her six siblings grew up on a farm in Emmet, Mich. While her brothers worked the farm, she learned to keep house, cook and garden. On weekends, her house was always full of friends and extended family. In addition to farming, her father was also a carpenter who finished homes in Detroit.

From first through the 10th grades, Sister Kate attended Our Lady of Mount Carmel School, where she was first introduced to the IHM Sisters. She graduated from St. Stephen High School in Port Huron, Mich., again taught by the IHMs. It was their friendliness, kindness and the opportunity to get a good education that drew her to the community. "Also, there was that desire down deep to see more of the world," she recalls. She wanted to do something with her life that encompassed a

sacrifice and care for the less fortunate.

She taught at St. Bede in Southfield, Mich., for three years and then at Colegio de la Merced in Puerto Rico. Sister Kate got fully enmeshed in the culture and formed many close relationships. During her 14 years in Puerto Rico, she taught at four different schools and ministered as principal in the Catholic grade and high school in Adjuntas. While principal there she integrated the Catholic school with the local public grade and high school. After a few years teaching in the public school she was awarded a full scholarship to New York University to get a master's degree in cross-cultural education.

From Puerto Rico, Sister Kate lived in New York, ministering in leadership with the IHM vice- province of foreign missions. During this time she completed her master's degree in theology, specializing in liberation theology and Scripture, at the Maryknoll School of Theology.

The Maryknoll Missioners hired her to help establish a Center for Mission Studies to support religious for global missions. Sister Kate implemented a four-week discernment/preparation program for missionaries prior to entering intercultural ministry, as well as programs to help them live and minister effectively in new cultural settings and debriefing them when they returned to their home culture. She started these program in 1980; they are still operating. During her 27 years with Maryknoll, she worked in five continents, "a powerful transformative learning experience of different cultures and the way people live."



In 2006, when Maryknoll could no longer subsidize the programs, Sister Kate returned to Detroit and established a nonprofit organization, Intercultural Consultation Services, where she continues to engage in sustaining cultural diversity and mediating cross-cultural conflicts nationally and internationally.

Her greatest joy is "feeling comfortable with any culture. That happened because the IHM community has allowed me to go and do whatever I needed to do in my work." She is grateful for the flexibility she received and for her expansive education. Knowing the community supported her has given Sister Kate an inclusive approach to life and freedom to move in whatever direction she has felt was needed.

