For almost 50 years, Sister Angela Therese (Frances) Meram, IHM, has had a full-time ministry teaching and in parish work.

She’s taught in elementary schools in New Mexico, California and Michigan, and when she moved to San Diego in 2009 to care for her aging mother, she began working as a pastoral associate and director of religious education at Our Mother of Confidence Parish.

But Sister Angela has also been a volunteer within prison ministries for more than 40 years and campaigns against the death penalty at every opportunity. She recently had an article about the death penalty published in *The Chaldean News*.

“I became involved in prison ministry when I was living and teaching at St. Boniface/St. Vincent School near the old Tiger Stadium,” Sister Angela recalls. “I was approached by a former student who was volunteering in the Detroit’s jails. She said they needed a musician to play guitar and sing for the weekly Masses. I agreed to do it.”

When the shortage of priests began, Masses were no longer available to prisoners, but Sister Angela was still involved in the ministry.

“Some of the families of those incarcerated began contacting me for help,” she says. “I worked with them to review documentation and to search for lawyers who wouldn’t charge for working on appeals. They were few and far between, but we did find some. Together, we’d prepare and mail hundreds of letters for upcoming appeals. Some were successful; others, not, but I continue to work on cases in my spare time.”

There have been challenges and heartbreaks within this volunteer ministry. One of the prisoners with whom she’s worked is a former student; he’s serving a life sentence.

“Any way we can help people, we need to,” Sister Angela says. “Being present at all times so I can truly hear the needs can be a challenge, but I’ve seen the success stories, and they’re worth the difficulties. I demand honesty though.”

Within her parish ministry, Sister Angela works with the staff of Our Mother of Confidence Parish as she serves in leadership and administrative roles to address the needs of the parish. She also teaches six classes per week as part of her responsibilities as director of religious education and directs the children’s choir.
Even with a very full plate, Sister Angela has also volunteered with refugees, making sure they have what they need to get established.

“I’m grateful for my health, and I have a lot of energy!” she laughs.

Sister Angela also has a simple philosophy of life.

“You have to see the good in everything,” she reflects. “You have to have some fun and try to bring joy to someone each day – let them know they’re appreciated.

“Every day is an adventure, and every day I ask for the grace to face the challenges. And at the end of every day, I ask myself, ‘What have I done for anyone today?’”