

IHM Sisters Then & Now

November 2012



Sister Annette Boyle was born in 1924 in Detroit. She has two sisters, Patrice - who is also an IHM Sister - and Betty. The family moved to Dearborn and the girls attended Henry Ford Public School and graduated from Sacred Heart High School.

Soon after high school graduation, Sister Annette entered the IHM congregation.

“I was having a grand time in high school and becoming an IHM was the furthest thing from my mind,” she confessed. “But I just had this *feeling* that I should try it. I bargained with God. Then finally I just said ‘OK, I’ll try it!’ And I loved it as soon as I got here.” Her sister Patrice had entered two years before.

Her first teaching assignment was at Holy Redeemer in Detroit. There she taught first grade. “I loved the first-graders. That age group always loves their teacher! But it was also exhausting,” she said.

She also taught first grade at St. Charles Borromeo, Detroit; St. Mary, Mt. Morris; St. John, Benton Harbor; and Our Lady of Miracles, Gustine, Calif.

Beginning in 1960, she taught sixth grade at St. Patrick, Carleton; St. Columban, Birmingham; Gesu, Detroit; and St. Matthew, Flint, where she was also principal. She also ministered as principal at St. Frederick Mission/St. Vincent de Paul, Pontiac. Due to a lack of funding, the school was closed.

Sister Annette served as a councilor for the IHM Northwest Province team in 1969 and later ministered as renewal director at Visitation House of Prayer in Monroe, where she coordinated and developed summer houses of prayer.

In 1972 she was sent to South Africa to assist the Irish Dominican Sisters in establishing a house of prayer. While there, she gave workshops in Alphonsian spirituality and retreats to the Redemptorists.

In 1977 Sister Annette worked in parish ministry in Memphis, Tenn., in the diocese with deacons and their wives in marriage and engagement encounters, and



Sister Annette (kneeling in front) with others ministering in South Africa. Christine Dobrowski, IHM, is pictured in the center, standing.

divorced and widowed. Later, she returned to South Africa at the request of the IHM leadership to work with several communities of women and men in spirituality, retreat training and spiritual directors, always with an emphasis on prayer.

At this time, Sister Annette not only ministered to the Redemptorists in formation, but worked with them on rewriting one of Alphonsus' works, calling it *Praying to God as a Friend*. It has been translated into Zulu and a number of other languages.

Later, she ministered in the archdiocese of Capetown, South Africa, and Catholic Welfare and Development, which served all races. Here she was able to work with women's groups, the divorced and widowed, and deacons and their wives.

In 1997 she came home to Monroe where she now ministers in Pastoral Care at the Motherhouse.

“One of the things I learned as a spiritual director was so valuable to me and my work in Pastoral Care,” she explained. “When you go to see someone, you put aside everything and you're totally focused on them. So for a few minutes, that person, hopefully, realizes that they are unique, important and that somebody cares. If that was the only thing you gave them, it would be enough.”

She enjoys being home, leaving more time for prayer, reading, companionship and listening to music.

