

IHM Sisters Then and Now

Jean Ann Gorman – August 2012



Sister Jean Ann (Viviana) Gorman

entered the IHM community a few weeks after high school graduation. She said she knew she wanted to be a nun ever since she was in the third or fourth grade.

“I think I prayed every day to the Blessed Mother that I would (become a nun) and that that was what the Lord wanted me to do,” she recalls.

Her father had a hard time letting go of his oldest daughter. After her family dropped her off at the Motherhouse, her father was so upset – because it was the first break in the family - that he couldn’t drive, so her brother had to drive home.

Sister Jean Ann lived in Dearborn until she was in the sixth grade. Then the family moved to Detroit. The three boys and three girls all attended St. Francis de Sales School. She often took care of her younger siblings. “Because of this,” she said, “I related well to my young students.”

As a novice, her first teaching assignment was as a substitute teacher in 1942 at Christ the King in Detroit. She had 64 first-grade students. Only three weeks after starting this assignment, she was sent to St. Agnes to teach second grade. She taught there for six years. Next, she was sent to Epiphany in Detroit. She had 120 first graders; they split the classes into morning and afternoon sessions.

Sister Jean Ann recalls that during her first year at St. Agnes they were building a coal chute on the building just behind the wardrobe



in her room so there was a lot of noise going on every day with bulldozers and cranes. “It was hard teaching phonics with all that noise going on. I said to a student, ‘Pick up your feet.’ And he replied, ‘I *am* taking my seat!’ That year was quite a challenge,” she laughed.



She taught grade one at Gesu, Detroit, and St. Alphonsus Liguori in San Leandro, Calif. She then began teaching grades six, seven and eight at St. Joseph, Monroe, St. Boniface in Detroit (she was also principal); St. Joseph, Trenton; St. Vincent de Paul, Detroit; and St. Cyprian, Riverview. She also tutored math and reading at St. Cyprian.

In 1985, after 44 years of teaching, Sister Jean Ann retired to the Motherhouse. Here she ministered as transportation coordinator, a driver, in the Service Office, and as a shopper for Motherhouse residents who weren't able to do their own shopping. She is also involved in prayer ministry.

Sister Jean Ann said, “All of these ministries have been a part of my 72-year journey as an IHM.”