

## IHM Sisters - Then and Now

December 2010



**Sister Donna Marie Schroeder, IHM**, believes in staying active, and her varied ministries reflect that.

“I taught primary grades in Detroit, Chicago and Lorain, Ohio, for about 11 years,” she says, “and then I became principal of Nativity School in Hollywood, Fla., for four years.”

During her Christmas vacation in 1974, Sister Donna Marie visited the missionaries in El Salvador. “I was energized by that short experience,” she recalls, “and Sister Dorothy Diederichs, IHM, encouraged me to think about going to Honduras for mission work.

“I did pastoral work in parts of the country that had no priests, preparing people to receive the sacraments and helping them discover and realize their own potential,” Sister Donna Marie continues. “The experience made me aware of how the majority of people in the world live.”

She returned to the United States after four years and became the resident directress at St. Mary Academy in Monroe. Three years later, she became the secretary/treasurer for the mission province of the IHM Sisters and served for six years.



But mission work beckoned. She returned to pastoral ministry in Honduras and stayed for nine more years.

“When I came back to Monroe, I began to study energy medicine,” says Sister Donna Marie. “I found it to be a fascinating field and one that called me forth.”

Sister Donna Marie achieved the status of “healing touch practitioner” through the Colorado Center for Healing Touch, Inc. She also completed studies at the Polarity Center in Dearborn, Mich., and is certified to teach and practice polarity therapy.

“Energy medicine does not replace traditional medicine – it complements it,” she explains. “For me, it unifies spirituality, theology and complementary medicine and demonstrates the presence of God in the ordinary.

“Working with traditional medicine, it can help alleviate pain and promote relaxation and healing. It’s an exciting ministry, and underlying it all are prayer and contemplative opportunities – the basis and grounding for the ministry.”



Today, she ministers in healing touch at the IHM Motherhouse, working with three or four residents per day.

“Because healing touch is so all-encompassing, a person must ask for treatment. The patient is always in charge of what happens,” Sister Donna Marie notes. “Whether we talk or not – whether we continue or not. Many times there is an emotional release.”

When she is not working, Sister Donna Marie enjoys getting together with other healing touch practitioners for dinner and sharing. She also spends time with her family in Cleveland; likes to listen to books on tape; and crochets baby afghans for the IHM Gift Shop.