

St. John the Baptist School – Monroe, Mich.



The IHM Sisters began staffing St. John the Baptist School in Monroe, Mich. in 1917, but no IHM records exist until 1928. In fact, the chronicles remained spotty until 1936.

We know that the sisters teaching at St. John lived at the IHM Motherhouse and traveled to school each day on the IHM bus. We also know that enrollment during these years ranged from 210-240 in grades one through eight.

Students at St. John were civic-minded; the school earned a Minute Man flag in 1943 “for its cooperation in the selling of war stamps,” according to the convent chronicler. The “ransoming of pagan babies” – donating money to baptize children in foreign countries – was a large thrust for the school, and the chronicler proudly recorded the number each year.



The school had grown to nearly 300 children by 1948, and two new rooms were added to accommodate them. Just a year later, enrollment was up to 347.

New activities abounded at St. John. The first mention of sports teams appeared in the chronicles in 1949. (The football and baseball teams were district champions.) In 1952, the Valentine Mission Project began in order to raise money for the missions. Seventh- and eighth-graders had the option of ballroom dancing classes beginning in 1953.

St. John the Baptist School had some wonderful traditions. The first Sunday of the school year, parishioners could inspect the school and meet the faculty after all the Masses. The pastor’s birthday was always a free day. Students made Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets for those in need. Fire Prevention Week, Catholic Book Week and Michigan Week were all eagerly anticipated.

School uniforms became mandatory in 1957. That year, the school held civil defense drills to evacuate. “Classes were forthwith dismissed for the afternoon,” says the chronicler. “Previous drills had been held to prepare students for inside defense positions.”

St. John held its first Mardi Gras in 1959. Proceeds went toward the school’s stained glass window fund, as did the proceeds from the rag drive, paper drive and magazine subscription drive.

The early 1960s saw changes at the school. “TVs were procured for each classroom” so children could watch John F. Kennedy’s inauguration. A new cafeteria opened in 1962, and the 421 children were glued to their seats as they watched John Glenn orbit the Earth on the classroom TV sets.

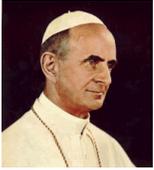


The football team went undefeated in the fall of 1962. The Class of 1963, our **Featured Class Year**, had **Principal Sister Agnes Rita Guthrie, IHM**, as their homeroom teacher. Bad weather during the May Procession didn’t stop **Kathy Mignana** from crowning the statue of Mary. **Patrick McNabb** received a scholarship to Catholic Central High School; **Judith Curtis** received one for St. Mary Academy. The 50 eighth-graders graduated June 9 after the 8 a.m. Mass.

The later 1960s saw the school mirror changes brought about by Vatican II. “The change in the regulations for fasting – one hour fasting from solid foods before receiving Holy Communion – resulted in a great increase in Holy Communion among the school children,” the chronicler wryly observes in 1964.

The IHM Sisters left St. John the Baptist School in June 1974; it remains open for grades two-four.

In 1963



Cardinal Montini, Paul VI, was elected pope following the death of Pope John XXIII.

The “March on Washington” civil rights rally was held with some 200,000 participants, both black and white.



The first commercial nuclear reactor went online at the Jersey Central Power Company.

The sedative Valium (chlordiazepoxide) was developed by Roche labs.

Poet Robert Frost, baseball great Rogers Hornsby and author Aldous Huxley died.



France and West Germany signed treaty of cooperation which ended four centuries of conflict.

The French Chef with Julia Child debuted on educational television.

The Feminine Mystique (Betty Friedan), *The Bell Jar* (Sylvia Plath), and *Happiness is a Warm Puppy* (Charles M. Schulz) were published.



Kenya achieved independence; 32 independent African nations established the Organization for African Unity.

William Faulkner’s last novel, *The Reivers*, won a Pulitzer Prize for fiction. Samuel Barber’s, *Piano Concerto No. 1*, won the Pulitzer in music.



The Los Angeles Dodgers swept the New York Yankees in the World Series; the Boston Celtics won the NBA Championship in six games over the Los Angeles Lakers; and the Toronto Maple Leafs beat the Detroit Red Wings four games to one for the Stanley Cup.