



Sister Candyce Rekart grew up in Kirkwood, Mo., the oldest of five children. "The IHM Sisters came to Kirkwood and began the parish school at St. Gerard Majella when I was a fifth-grader," she recalls.

One particular IHM became her mentor. Although she didn't have IHMs in high school, it was their kindness and interest they displayed that attracted Sister Candy to the congregation.

On a trip to Monroe, she was fascinated by the novices' joy. The call to a religious vocation began to "niggle" at the back of her mind, but she tried to avoid it. She remembers praying, "Let this go away. I want to be a mother. I want a husband and lots of children."

Her sense of calling persisted. "It was a sense that this is something from God that God wants of me." Her faith was strong but it was her mother's practical sense of faith that guided her. Sister Candy says, "Faith was not about laws but was much more relational." And that is what she saw in the IHM Sisters; their faith was lived.

She came to Monroe from Missouri alone on the train. The rule of silence the IHMs observed was challenging for her, but she took it in stride as part of the package and prepared for her ministries. Sister Candy attended Loyola University to study Spanish and education. After graduation, she taught second grade at St. Timothy in Trenton, Mich., and then went to Holy Trinity in Detroit. From there she went to Puerto Rico, where she stayed for 42 years.

She ministered at a grade school in a housing project initially, and later, after she had completed her master's degree in special education, she served children with special needs. She taught in a special education classroom in the Puerto Rican public schools for 10 years and loved it; she enjoyed interacting with children with diverse needs.

Sister Candy earned her master's degree in clinical psychology and then went on to minister in the sexual abuse program at the Caribbean Center for Post Graduate Studies. Her ministry took her to a diocesan Head Start program for three years before going back to the sexual abuse program, working with adults, adolescents and children for the next 17 years. During these years she also collaborated in the intercongregational formation program in Puerto Rico.

The 42 years Sister Candy lived and ministered in Puerto Rico had the greatest impact on her life by showing her the lifestyle of another culture and how generous people are. She currently is the candidate director for the IHM Sisters



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and works part-time as a family coach at Paula's House, serving those recovering from addictions.

Her great joy has been, "Being a part of a community of vision and of a group of women who live intentionally of that vision." Sister Candy is most grateful for "the women, each person, for what they have given to those they have served, and as a result, to all of us."

