Sister Marie Gabriel Hungerman had IHM Sisters as teachers throughout her 12 years at St. Agnes in Detroit.

She didn’t think about a religious vocation until she was a senior in high school, when one of her teachers suggested it. “I really resisted the idea,” says Sister Gabe. “I thought of a lot of other things I’d like to do.”

Sister Gabe considered herself to be a devout Catholic but was not enamored with being a religious. She joined the IHMs right after high school because of a calling. “It isn’t a feeling ... it just keeps coming back and back to you. You think if God wants me to do this, I’ve got to consider it.”

While in formation, Sister Gabe recalls a time she and her classmates were picking berries when the silence bell rang. “So here we are, all in silence, in our rubbers and aprons and sweaty, marching on the road toward home. I had such a remarkable sense of unity. I felt we were all in this together.”

As a novice, and with only a day’s notice, Sister Gabe was sent to St. Gregory in Detroit to teach second grade. She taught second grade again at Gesu and then went to Holy Redeemer to teach fifth grade. By this time she had fallen in love with teaching.

She taught sixth grade at St. Mary in Monroe while taking philosophy classes in the evening. She had a summer of study at St. Louis University and came home “intellectually intoxicated;” she was sent to continue her coursework to pursue a doctorate in philosophy.

Sister Gabe enjoyed teaching young women and men for 12 years at Marygrove College and four years at Sienna Heights College in Adrian. In 1976, she was elected to the IHM Central Administration where she served as first assistant for six years.

At the end of her six-year term, Sister Gabe taught at Nazareth College. While at Nazareth, she also presented workshops for a program to teach philosophy to children. Following a sabbatical year in Hawaii, she ministered at Nazareth for its final year and then taught at Western Michigan University. This was followed by part-time ministry with the IHM Theology Project while also caring for her aging mother who lived on the health care unit at the
Motherhouse.

Sister Gabe served as the Congregational Library director for 13 years. Now retired, she is on the Monroe Community Foundation Board and is the chair of the IHM Health Care Ethics Committee. She volunteers in the library.

She notes, “The community has given us so many opportunities for growth, both spiritual and intellectual. I am filled with gratitude.”