



Sister Sandra Schneiders was born in Chicago, the second oldest of seven children. Her father was a professor of psychology and her mother a homemaker and academic secretary. Growing up she attended seven schools in four different states, being taught by BVMs, Dominicans and Daughters of Charity, but was most influenced by the IHMs at Gesu from the fourth to the seventh grade and at Immaculata High School from the eighth to the 11th. She graduated in the Bronx, with Sparkill OPs at Aquinas High School.

Sister Sandra finished her first year of college at St. Joseph in Maryland before entering the IHM congregation in 1955.

“The idea of becoming a nun goes back as far as I can remember,” she says. “I was always sure that that was what I was meant to be.”

Although religion and literature, and later theology, were always her favorite subjects, her undergraduate major at Marygrove College was in sociology and social sciences. While still a student at Marygrove she began teaching at Holy Name Elementary School in Birmingham and later taught sixth and eighth grades at Our Lady of Good Counsel in Detroit. She was then assigned to teach religion at the newly opened Immaculate Heart of Mary High School in Westchester, Ill., while beginning studying for her master’s degree in philosophy at St. Louis University in the summer.

After three years at IHM, Sister Sandra began teaching philosophy at Marygrove while completing her master’s degree at the University of Detroit. She then taught senior religion at St. Mary High School, Akron, Ohio, for a year.

In 1968 she was sent to Paris, France, where she spent three years earning the Licentiate in Theology from Institut Catholique and studying languages in the summers. She returned to teach theology at Marygrove College for a year before going to Rome to earn her doctorate in Sacred Theology from the Gregorian University, specializing in biblical studies with a special interest in the Gospel of John and the theory of Biblical interpretation, and spirituality with a particular interest in the history and theology of religious life and mystical experience.

Upon completing her theological studies she went to Berkeley, Calif., where she has been a professor of New Testament Studies and Spirituality at the Jesuit School of Theology and the Graduate Theological Union (GTU)





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since 1976. She was involved in developing the GTU's ecumenical and inter-religious doctoral program in Christian spirituality. She is now professor emerita there, spending most of her time in research, writing, publishing, consulting and lecturing throughout the United States and abroad while continuing to teach in various programs.

Her greatest joy since joining the community is “being a Religious.” She says, “It is within the congregation that I have been able to do with my life what I most wanted to do: seek God, live and preach the Gospel. Religion has been the single greatest interest in my life since I was a little kid. In the IHMs I have been able to pursue that interest in the company of others who had the same desires.”