



Sister Charlotte Walby grew up on a farm in a small village in Ohio. She attended a Catholic school through the eighth grade; there was no Catholic high school in the area, so she stayed home and worked the farm.

During this time, an unrelenting desire for a religious vocation was percolating within her. Her calling felt like “an urgency that I just could not deny. It was like falling in love. The person of Christ became so real to me.” Sister Charlotte came to her cousin’s reception at the IHM Motherhouse in 1932. The grounds and the newly completed building were works of art. As soon as she walked in and saw a statue of the Blessed Mother in an alcove, she turned to her mother and said, “This is the place!”

Sister Charlotte became acquainted with the postulant mistress and they exchanged letters for a year. During that time, she went to visit relatives in Detroit and stopped at the Motherhouse for a visit, and she was measured for the clothes she would need as a postulant. It took her longer than expected to get her clothes made, but finally she entered the community.

Sister Charlotte was not deterred when she entered the convent with women who were older than she was and had more education. She finished high school and then went to college on the Monroe campus. Her first mission was teaching fifth and sixth graders in Erie, Mich. She continued to teach for 42 years in seven different dioceses before spending five years caring for her elderly brother.

After a year of renewal, Sister Charlotte ministered at St. Mary Conference Center while also ministering as a chaplain at Mercy Memorial Hospital. Being a chaplain was a very spiritual experience for her.

“To see God working through you, using you, especially for those who are sick, you become God’s hands and voice and manner. That is what is so enriching.” Patients were always eager to see a chaplain. “When I walked into the room, the patient just relaxed.”

For Sister Charlotte, “Vatican II was the most wonderful thing that ever happened. Changes in scheduled prayer time, imposed silence and the regulated dress code were freeing and welcome.” She realized that it didn’t make a difference to her students what she wore; when she first walked into the classroom with the short habit she asked if the students noticed anything different. After several minutes of looking at her, a student replied, “Well, you’re wearing your glasses.”



Her greatest joy in the IHM community has been the Jubilarian celebrations. Sister Charlotte is very grateful for her acceptance by the community and appreciates her education to prepare her to be a teacher. She is

grateful for the companionship of the sisters and the services she was able to give to the Church through the community. "I am very grateful for the nursing care I have received when I most needed it. My life as an IHM has been a prayerful journey that is impossible to measure, for which I am eternally grateful."

