



I purchased my first sewing machine the summer I graduated from college. My purpose was utilitarian; I needed clothes to wear to begin my teaching career. Discovering that buying them at my favorite browsing spot (Hudson's) was going to be expensive and I was BROKE prompted my decision. The investment in that shiny new Singer sewing machine has proved to be a continued blessing throughout my lifetime. In the beginning, it helped defray the cost of clothing me and then my husband and my three daughters. Since those early days, I have sewed my way through several different brands and styles of machines busily creating quilts, purses, wall hangings and on and on!

This past fall many of us, vowed members and associates, gathered in Monroe to celebrate with one another our weaving together as community, symbolized by the gift of a woven bracelet to be worn as a reminder of the day and of our connectedness. Later the next week, I was busy at my machine and abruptly stopped sewing. I left the machine and searched for the bracelet. As I looked at the combination of strands of thread and at the fabrics with which I was working, I was amazed at how each strand combined with the others to create a patterned harmony. So many colors, each one having its own inherent value and when combined in some fashion, creating new and added importance and purpose. Just like us, the IHM community.

As I look forward to our gathering in July, I am reminded of the telling of our individual story, our own strand of color and how the strength of each one, when woven together with others' stories, brings blessing to the whole.

*"Happiness can only be discovered as a gift of harmony between the whole and each single component."*

*Pope Francis, TED 2017*

Margaret Cardinal Clor, IHM Associate