



Sister Elizabeth Chmielewski is the youngest of four children. She attended Assumption Grotto School in Detroit through fifth grade and then went to Our Lady of Good Counsel (Detroit) through eighth grade, taught by IHM Sisters.

She joined a Sodality group in eighth grade, and while reading a book on Our Lady of Fatima and praying, she knew she had a religious vocation. "It was just a certainty. I knew it was right," she says. She continued in the parish Sodality as a student at Dominican High School.

In her senior year of high school, Sister Elizabeth went to a Holy Thursday evening Mass and was moved by the priest's sermon. Her vocation was confirmed for her that night and she joined the IHM community right after graduation. She found the formation schedule rigorous and exhausting. "You had no time to think; I was asleep by the time my head hit the pillow!"

Her first mission was teaching first and second grade at Holy Name in Birmingham, Mich. This was followed by teaching at Our Lady Queen of Hope, St. Francis de Sales (both in Detroit) and St. Mary in Mt. Morris, Mich. She then went on to teach algebra at Lumen Christi High School in Jackson Mich. During this time, Sister Elizabeth completed her master's degree in the teaching of mathematics at Villanova University, Pennsylvania.

After teaching 14 years, Sister Elizabeth became the business manager at the Hall of the Divine Child in Monroe, managing the financial business, the food service, housekeeping and maintenance. "I really liked working at the Hall. It was the first time I was making some decisions," she reflects.

After the Hall closed, she ministered in the business office at Mercy College in Detroit. Then her father died and, wanting to secure a home for her mother, Sister Elizabeth took a position in the business office at Mercy Bellbrook, a residential facility for older adults. Her mother lived there for three years before her death.

Sister Elizabeth took a sabbatical year, visiting and assisting at different ministries in Honduras; David, Ky.; and El Paso Texas. After her sabbatical, she worked in the business office at Marian High School before returning to Monroe. She served in the Congregational Business Office for 16 years. Currently, she runs The Shoppe in the Motherhouse. For fun, she likes to read, do counted cross-stitch and play cards.

Sister Elizabeth feels privileged to live in the Motherhouse with women who have professed and live their love and faith in Jesus. She recalls a Psalm that expresses what she is living: "Let us go up to the house of the Lord. To dwell in the house of the Lord all my days."



IHM Sisters Then & Now April 2019

She is grateful for the love and support she receives from the community to continue on her own spiritual journey. Sister Elizabeth is also grateful for the sense of belonging she feels every day.

