

Raised in Flat Rock, Mich., Sister Anita Pfeiffer and her four brothers and one sister attended public schools until the family joined St. Joseph Church in Trenton when she was in fifth grade. That was where she was first taught by IHM Sisters.



“The habit was absolutely gorgeous!” she says. She loved to sing, and her fifth grade homeroom teacher was a musician. “I thought she was beautiful. And when she walked it was like she was gliding,” Sister Anita recalls.

She saw the IHM Sisters as holy, prayerful women and enjoyed being with them. She often stayed after school to help prepare their classrooms. A sister also assisted her when printing the Sunday bulletins on Saturday afternoons. “I was raised with brothers – my sister didn’t come along until later,” she says. “I needed female companionship. The sisters were that for me.”

After eighth grade, she transferred to Mount Carmel in Wyandotte, taught by the Felicians, but she never lost her love of the IHM Sisters.

A highlight for her was to attend vocation days where she would circle the gym and look at all the displays of the different orders of sisters. She knew she wanted to be a nun and was interested in either being a teacher or a nurse. She chose the IHMs because, “I wanted to be a woman who made a difference in the world. The IHMs taught social justice; that spoke to me.”

Sister Anita spent 32 years teaching in Michigan, Ohio and Florida. In 1968, she was missioned to Mobile, Ala., which was extremely segregated. At that time, all the sisters in Mobile participated in the Civil Rights marches. Many of the black schools closed and the IHM Sisters at Peter Claver worked diligently to place all their students into another Catholic school, which forced integration of the Catholic school system. “The communities that were involved knew it was the right thing to do,” Sister Anita says emphatically.

After her years in the classroom, she returned to Michigan, ministering in a variety of capacities, including seven years on as secretary for the Congregational Business Office (CBO) and campus office. Sister Anita returned to Alabama to minister as a computer instructor for another six years. Back in Michigan, she served as secretary to Visitation and River House Spirituality Centers. Since retiring, Sister Anita has ministered as a baby cuddler in the NICU at St. Vincent Hospital in Toledo, tutored at St. John the Baptist School in Monroe and now works in the IHM CBO.



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Sister Anita's greatest joy since joining the community has been to be with women who have made a difference in the lives of others. "They are holy and vibrant and they bring out the best in me," she says. "Sometimes my happy gets to be a little much. They love me for that and I love them for loving me for that."

