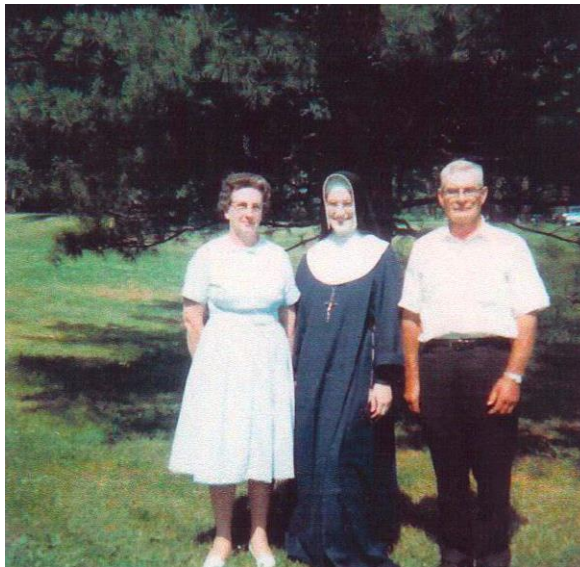


Sister Jean Booms grew up on a farm in Harbor Beach, Mich., with her parents and seven siblings. She attended Ashmore country grade school and Saturday morning catechism classes taught by IHM Sisters at her local St. Anthony parish, Helena.

She went on to Our Lady of Lake Huron high school, again taught by IHMs. The quote reading, "What shall it profit anyone who gains the whole world and suffers the loss of their soul?" hanging above the chalkboard somehow inspired her to join religious life. She was also encouraged by her teachers to become a sister. She did just that, feeling it was God's call, and has never regretted it!



The strict rules Sister Jean first encountered when she entered the congregation didn't bother her tremendously. "I think I was used to a rather simple kind of life," she says. The amount of silence, though, came as a surprise. She was delighted when she was finally allowed to visit her family at home, after those years of their sacrificing to travel the distance to visit her.

For eight years, she taught grades three through eight: in Michigan at Holy Name, Birmingham; St. John Vianney, Highland Park; St. Mary and St. Joseph, Monroe; St. Patrick, Carleton; St. Joseph, Erie; and in Mobile, Ala., at St. Monica.

After these years in the classroom, Sister Jean earned a master's degree in religious education and became director of religious education, first at St. Stephen, Port Huron for six years and then in the Atlanta area for 11 years. After a creative sabbatical year, she ministered in pastoral ministry at St. John the Evangelist, Essexville. She then earned both a BFA and MSA from Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti.

At the IHM community invitation, she became coordinator of the IHM Associate program for six years while interning in spiritual direction. Sister Jean ministered at the Dominican Center for Religious Development at St. Paul of the Cross in Detroit before moving to Visitation North Spirituality Center in Bloomfield Hills, Mich. After six years, she retired to the Motherhouse in Monroe, where she is charged with ambience in the Chapel. Sister Jean's greatest joy has been the closeness she has shared with people. Many of the people she met through her ministries have trusted her with very special times in their lives, including both births and deaths. "To be with families during those graced times is so profound," she states.



She is grateful for being part of a community that has always looked to the future and for its investment in her as an artist. “There are always people who care about you here,” she notes. Since Vatican II, Sister Jean has loved feeling more like herself and being able to express herself freely. “Vatican II helped me to be who I am and who I believe God created me to be.”